



# **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**WHITTLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

invites residents to

**The Annual Parish Meeting on**

**FRIDAY, 23rd MAY 2025**

**at 7.30pm**

**in the Millennium Room at the**

**MEMORIAL HALL, WHITTLESFORD**

Everyone is welcome to attend

Refreshments will be provided

## **Whittlesford Village**

# **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Annual Parish meeting will be held on **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May** in the Millennium Room at the Memorial Hall from 7.30pm.

This is an opportunity for any Registered Elector of the Parish of Whittlesford to come along and have their say.

Chair of the Parish Council and District Councillor Richard Williams will chair the meeting. Also in attendance will be County Councillor Peter McDonald.

The following reports have been submitted by the various organisations and clubs in the village. They are also available on the village website.

### **REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WHITTLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council. A large part of our work has been connected to village roads and pavements. We were pleased to see the footpath repair on the west side of Duxford Road – after many years of lobbying the County Council to undertake this work. The County is proposing to install a shared use walking/cycle path on the east side of Duxford Road and we have been heavily involved in scrutinising these plans. The Parish Council has concerns about the safety of the proposed path, and we are continuing to engage with the County Council. We are very aware of the poor state of many village roads, and have nominated West End as a priority area for proper resurfacing work by the County. The Parish is taking forward plans for better parking management around the railway station and on North Road around the Tickell Arms. We are also exploring improved safety at the A505/Ledo Road junction with the County Council.

The Parish Council has represented village interests in response to local planning applications and engages with significant local developments, like the Genome Campus expansion at Hinxton, to ensure our interests are taken on board. Proposed changes to the A505 are likely to come forward in the next year, and again we will be representing the village.

Two councillors - Cllr Standen and Cllr McPhee - left the Parish Council this year and we thank them for their work on the council. In their place we were joined by Cllr Dunn and Cllr Redman. Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to help represent and run the village, so we are very grateful to Ellie, Andy, Emma and Richard respectively for their willingness to help the village.

The Parish Council meets every second Tuesday of the month (except in August) and we like our meetings to be as inclusive as possible. There are always opportunities to ask questions about matters affecting the village and we would very much like to see as many residents as possible engage with and contribute to our work. If you would like to contact the council by email you can do so at [parishclerk@whittlesford.org](mailto:parishclerk@whittlesford.org)

*Richard Williams*

*Chair of the Parish Council 2024-25*

## **Reports from Village Societies, Organisations, Clubs and Elected Representatives**

### **William Westley CE (VC) Primary School Annual Report 2024/2025**

Prepared by Chloe Landucci and Andrew Westcott on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

At William Westley School, we are dedicated to “letting our light shine” in every aspect of our lives—within our school, our homes, and our community. Our mission is rooted in looking outward to support and uplift one another as we navigate the journey of life together. This vision is inspired by the generous legacy of William Westley, who, through a charitable gift, funded the education of the children of Whittlesford. Today, we continue to honour that legacy, nurturing the potential of each child in our care.

William Westley School continues to flourish, building on the strength and excellence of previous years. Our pupils have achieved strong results, with exceptional end of Key Stage 2 outcomes, and we are especially proud of our October 2024 Ofsted inspection, which awarded us an "Outstanding" rating for Behaviour and Attitudes. This recognition reflects the dedication of our entire school community.

Here are some highlights from the report:

- Values in Action: "This is a school whose values are well known and lived by everyone. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and kind towards each other. The oldest pupils take care and pride in looking after the youngest children. Pupils respect teachers and other adults, not least because of the example that staff set in showing good manners and in keeping everyone safe. As a result, pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school."
- Curriculum Excellence: "The school's curriculum extends step-by-step in a logical way from Reception to Year 6. Pupils enjoy studying a broad range of subjects throughout their time at the school. Teachers deliver the curriculum faithfully and confidently, showing good command of subject knowledge. Teachers and teaching assistants explain and model knowledge expertly."
- Support for All Learners: "The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Support from additional adults in lessons helps them make good progress with their learning. Resources and tasks are adapted well. This helps pupils with SEND to participate alongside others. This also makes a real difference to their personal development and behaviour."

Our school continues to be a vibrant community, with everyone working together to support one another. We are deeply grateful for the many volunteers who offer their time and skills to enrich our pupils' experiences, and we always welcome further support from those who wish to contribute.

Currently we have 186 pupils enrolled, a slight decrease from last year's 188 and below our full capacity of 210. This reflects a wider national trend in the declining number of primary school-aged children. As school funding is allocated on a per-pupil basis, this presents some challenges, particularly in sustaining our seven-class structure. Despite this, we remain fully committed to ensuring that our school remains a place of growth, learning, and opportunity for all our pupils.

Our strong relationships with the Parish Church and the United Reformed Church are an essential part of our school's success. Rev. Olivia and Rev. Phil continue to support our Collective Worship each week, and we are immensely thankful for their ongoing contributions to our school life. Their partnership helps us foster a sense of community, faith, and shared purpose.

Some of our recent accomplishments include:

- Science Quality Mark Reaccreditation – A testament to our commitment to delivering high-quality science education.
- Royal Horticultural Society Award – Recognising our outstanding gardening efforts.
- Our school continues to shine in sports competitions across South Cambridgeshire, with our cricket team winning the Kwik Cricket tournament in Caldecote last year, and our Year 6 football team claiming the South Cambridgeshire League title for the second consecutive year.
- A new girls' football team playing their first match at Trumpington Park.

We also cherish our ongoing partnership with the University of Cambridge. Kate Rigby, partnership tutor for the faculty, recently expressed her appreciation for our school, stating, "I would like to thank you for your continued commitment to the partnership and the warm welcome I received on every visit. Our students both talk about their time at William Westley with such enthusiasm and they were truly inspired by the quality of learning in your school."

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated staff, pupils, and families who have contributed to the many achievements of this school year. Your hard work, passion, and commitment are the foundation of our success, and we look forward to another year of growth, learning, and community together.

William Westley is a school that truly sits at the heart of the community and many of the residents of Whittlesford have been involved in it in some way, as pupils, parents of pupils, teachers, staff and governors. If you would like to make a donation of support, you can do so by following the link from this QR code or by searching for the Charity of William Westley at [William Westley Charity](#).



## **Memorial Hall Management Committee**

The Hall continues to thrive with an average of 25 bookings per week. The Photovoltaic system installed in 2012 has now exceeded £56,000 of gross income. We are still considering installing two EV chargers which hopefully will soon be achieved.

The car park, which is for Hall Hirers' use only, has been resurfaced with parking bays which are larger than average which assists parents with children, plus the required number of disabled parking spaces.

Finally, I would like to recognise the Management Committee team of Felicity de Vries, Pam Freeman, Richard Williams, Martin Livermore (Secretary), Tim Stone, Paul Tibble (Treasurer) and Penny Toop (Booking Clerk) and our invaluable Cleaner/Caretaker Beverley Arnold, all of whom have continued to provide incredible support during the year ensuring our Hall is presented to its full potential.

*David Toop, Chairman*

## **Nicholas Swallow & Other Charities**

The village Charity has been caring for Whittlesford people since the 15th century and its aim is to 'help those in need'. The Charity continues to subsidise the village car service which provides transport for village residents to doctors, dentists, opticians and hospitals. Those wishing to use this service should contact either Mike or Lindsay on 01223 837038. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to extend our thanks and appreciation to both Mike and Lindsay for continuing the wonderful initiative of Michael and Ronnie Walker.

The Charity is extremely concerned that some people in the village may be finding it difficult to 'make ends meet' in this challenging current economic climate. Anyone in need should contact our Clerk Johnny Goodman on 07770 624769. All requests for assistance are treated in the strictest of confidence. Finally, in view of the growing demand for low-cost housing in the village, the Charity remains totally committed to provide additional affordable housing.

*David Toop, Chairman*

## **1st Whittlesford & Duxford Scout Group**

1st Whittlesford & Duxford Scout Group had an eventful year filled with diverse activities across all age groups. The Beavers explored local sites, learned safety skills from special guests, and engaged in creative projects like boat building and international cooking.

Highlights included visits to the RSPB reserve, fire stations, and churches, as well as earning Nights Away badges during a sleepover. The Cubs delved into science, knotting, gardening, and crafts, with their skills put to use at summer camp and in community events like the Christmas tree festival. Meanwhile, the Scouts tackled advanced challenges such as pioneering structures, navigation exercises, and competitive hikes like the Chiltern 20 and Silver Fox Night Hike. They also raised £759 for charity through a creative fundraising challenge and participated in cultural activities like Chinese calligraphy. Camps ranged from the frosty Fire and Ice camp to a summer adventure at Gilwell Park, capped off with kayaking on the River Cam. Across all sections, teamwork, creativity, and outdoor adventure were at the heart of their achievements. All this was made possible by the amazing team of volunteers across the sections.

We are looking for more volunteers to come and join us as well as children ages 6-8 to join our Beaver sections. Please get in touch if you are interested.

## **Welcome to Whittlesford Tea Party**

There has been a long tradition in Whittlesford to welcome those who move into the village. This year we welcomed 43 newcomers who were able to meet 26 of the clubs and societies that operate within the village.

If you have not been able to attend one of these parties, please do get in touch and we will be happy to contact you for the next event, planned for early in 2026.

*Organising Committee: Judy Oswald & Penny Toop.*

*Annie Appleyard 01223 830200 [annieappleyard11@gmail.com](mailto:annieappleyard11@gmail.com)*

## Whittlewomen

It all began one evening in December 1974. The name was proposed, seconded, unanimously approved and Whittlewomen was born, or at least conceived. The first official meeting was a cookery demonstration held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1975 at 11 Ascham Lane. We still have three original members, namely Judy Arnold, Pat Butler and Meg Holland, who attend regularly. The aim is for ladies of all ages to enjoy each other's company and listen to professional and most interesting speakers. Our year runs from September to June – mostly meeting at 8.00 pm on the third Tuesday of the month. Pre-Covid we would meet in members' houses but now we are lucky enough to meet at Lettice Martin Community Centre. We have a Christmas Tipple and a Summer Garden Party.

Occasionally we invite the men of the village when we think a speaker might be of interest to them.

We have had a diverse range of speakers, namely Lucy Lewis, the first female bomb disposal officer to operate in the armed forces, a transgender person, numerous cookery demonstrations, charity talks and a host of other meetings.

If you noticed on the front cover of April's LOOK you will see that we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday in style at The Tickell Arms, where we enjoyed a delicious meal and were looked after wonderfully well by James and his colleagues – no one went home thirsty!

The annual membership is £13.00 plus £2.00 for each meeting which includes tea/coffee, refreshments and the opportunity to win a wonderful raffle prize! Visitors are always welcome, and their cost is £4.00 per meeting. We are very lucky that in spite of the 2020 pandemic when we stopped meeting for some considerable time, we still have 32 paid up members.

There are always more details in LOOK magazine. If you would like more information, please phone me on 01223 835252.

*Penny Toop*

## **URC Annual Report**

The URC would first like to thank its user-groups for their patience (especially through the winter months) as we have endured another year without heating! Much of the year has been taken up with the hard slog of putting together funding applications, juggling deadlines, getting quotes for the work to be done and dealing with the frustrations of the planning process.

We are happy to be able to report that we have now raised £100,000 (in round figures) to refurbish the building and achieved the necessary planning permission. This will include Air Source Heat Pump heating backed up with solar panels - eliminating gas-usage from the building. The kitchen will be completely refurbished, and a proper cafe-counter will be installed. The lobby/cafe area will be properly separated from the main meeting/worship space with a folding screen to replace the curtains. There will be a new entrance into the main meeting/worship space so that people using that space will not have to walk through a busy cafe. The main meeting/worship space will have its own dedicated tea-point so that refreshments can be offered independently from the cafe. The Audio/Visual equipment will be upgraded and will include two screens. New furniture will replace the old heavy wooden chairs.

We hope that this work will be completed over the summer and that we will then be able to have an Open Day to introduce the village to our new worship and community hub-space to serve our congregation and our village community into the 21st Century.

Alongside all that we have had another great year running the Ark after-school club, our Little Fishes baby group, our Wednesday Coffee Morning and our school uniform “shop”. In our newly refurbished premises, we will be looking to develop a new worshipping congregation, on a day other than Sunday, which we hope may be a blessing to villagers who have a Sunday congregation elsewhere, but who would also love to be able to worship alongside fellow villagers.

*Rev'd Phil Nevard*

## **Eco Whittlesford**

Eco Whittlesford started in 2022 as a community response to concerns about Nature and Climate. At the heart of this is really how we put into practice ways of looking after our wider home for the benefit of people as well as nature. There can be a lot of anxiety about the future, and getting together to do something really does help us to know that we have agency to improve things. We have a membership of 120 people, and anyone can join us easily via the website to be kept up to date with events and news: [ecowhittlesford.org.uk](http://ecowhittlesford.org.uk).

Over the last year we've had some great events: a talk about food sustainability and quiz with Cambridge Sustainable Food, a workshop on Waste and Recycling from the waste education officer at Cambridgeshire County Council, a third successful Village Litter Pick ably headed up by Eco Whittlesford members Judy and Alan Oswald - thank you to the Parish Council who helped to fund this - , a bird watching walk by Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Officer, Cambridge City Council, and another Dawn Chorus walk led by Ann Beeby.

We are fortunate that we have a computer recycling collection in Whittlesford offered by Neil Barber, and a Thermal Imaging Camera is hosted by Lucy Folan during winter months. This is loaned out from Cambridge Carbon Footprint and can be booked through them after completing the training to use the camera.

We have three ongoing projects:

A number of Village Nature trails (funded by a Community Chest award and the Summer Ball) devised by Ashley Arbon, assisted by Eleanor Norman and Terry Bareham. These are short and generally accessible trails with QR links to our website with information about flora and fauna. Two are up and running already. The next one is just about to go on the website. A group of us got extremely wet in October as we walked around the circular trail from the Tickell Arms, up to the church and back again for a welcome coffee at the pub afterwards!

In partnership with the Parish Council, a proposal is being developed to improve the green area next to the allotments on Middlemoor Road for wildlife and the community. Hugh Frostick has been leading this with Parish Councillor Ian Beeby, Ashley and others advising.

An aim to reduce our village carbon footprint, initially getting together representatives from public buildings to think about improving energy use and conservation. There will be a follow up meeting in the autumn to see how things have progressed.

There is a Hub group which meets once a month and currently there are 11 of us. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to join us to plan together – we have a vacancy for another person. We are all of us learning and it's all work in progress, so if you would like to know more, do get in touch or come to our AGM on June 30<sup>th</sup> at the URC.

If you have ideas or would like to get in touch with us for any reason, email Chris Gaston our secretary: [secretary@ecowhittlesford.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ecowhittlesford.org.uk)

*Sue Ginsberg, Chair Eco Whittlesford*

### **Celebrating Over 50 Years of Learning, Laughter & Play – Whitsers, Your Village Pre-School**

We're proud to be at the heart of the community, having welcomed generations of local children to our pre-school for over 50 years. Based in the spacious and well-loved Village Memorial Hall, we're lucky to have a large indoor space and a beautiful, secure garden — the perfect environment to encourage learning through play for children aged 2½ to 4 years.

At our pre-school, every day is filled with enriching experiences that spark imagination, promote development, and most importantly, bring fun and enjoyment to the children. Here's a look at some of the highlights from this year so far:

- **A Visit from PC Chris** – The children were thrilled to meet PC Chris, who brought along his police car. The excitement was palpable as they listened to the loud sirens, explored the equipment in the boot, and asked lots of curious questions!
- **Remembrance Day** – We took a walk to the village War Memorial where the children proudly laid their handmade poppy wreath.
- **A Magical Nativity** – Our Nativity performance was a huge success with the biggest audience we've ever had! The children shone on stage and made us all incredibly proud.

- **Festive Fun** – Elf on the Shelf came to stay and got up to all sorts of cheeky antics! We also had a very special visit from Father Christmas, bringing festive cheer to all.
- **Lunar New Year Celebrations** – We embraced the sights, sounds and tastes of the celebration, making a delicious vegetable stir fry (chopping and stirring helped develop those fine motor skills!), trying chopsticks, and dancing with our colourful dragon.
- **Pancake Day Races** – We joined William Westley in Whittlesford for the annual Pancake Day races on the village Lawn — a wonderful tradition and a lot of fun!
- **Pirate Adventures** – Our theme this term was pirates, and the children loved turning our raised garden area into a pirate ship, complete with ladders and planks. They went on treasure hunts and explored with great enthusiasm!
- **Easter Celebrations** – We shared the Easter story, made beautiful crafts, and visited Olivia at the village church for a morning of creativity and reflection. We ended the term with an exciting Easter egg hunt at the village play park, where families joined in the fun using Easter baskets made by the children.

Looking ahead, we're excited to celebrate VE Day with the children and dive into a new theme — DINOSAURS! We have also had a successful year so far with our fundraising efforts and have raised - £1,834.27.

If you're looking for a warm, welcoming, and enriching early years setting for your child, we'd love to hear from you. Come and see for yourself what makes our pre-school such a special place to learn and grow. For more information email - [info@whitsers.org.uk](mailto:info@whitsers.org.uk) or contact us by telephone - 07799 092056.

### **Whittlesford Gardening Club**

The Whittlesford Gardening Club hosts a selection of speakers from October - April, meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 8pm at the Whittlesford Memorial Hall. This year we've had a range of talks, including setting up a flower farm, gardening in a changing climate and controlling garden pests without chemicals.

In May we have our village plant sale and there are two summer garden visits as well. Membership is £5 a year and new members are always welcome. Contact Sue Weller for more information- [gardeningclub@mail.com](mailto:gardeningclub@mail.com) or 07480234635.

## Lawn Trust

This year has been one of progress and consolidation for the Trust, with continued efforts to improve site infrastructure, strengthen governance, and enhance financial oversight.

### **Governance and Administration**

We welcomed Rob Tregidgo as a non-voting Associate Member, supporting practical site initiatives. Trustee membership was restructured to align with best governance practices, and we drafted proposed amendments to the constitution, including formalising the role of Associate Members.

### **Financial Management**

We focused on clearer budgeting and cost categorisation. Funds from Section 106 and Ball donations were moved to interest-bearing accounts, with M&G funds to follow. An anonymous £500 donation and £200 from the clothing bank supported our finances. Despite this, we reported a loss of ~£4,400 (income: ~£20,785; costs: ~£21,134), highlighting our ongoing reliance on community and council support.

### **Site Maintenance and Projects**

Key works included:

- **Tree management** and scheduled Picus testing.
- **Pavilion:** Approved in principle for window/door replacement; minor internal works completed.
- **Black shed & grounds:** Tidied and reorganised.
- **Drainage & electrics:** Repairs completed; safety upgrades identified.
- **Play area:** Bark replenished; long-term surface improvements under review.
- **Risk assessments:** Updated and consolidated into a live document.
- **Football goal:** Reoriented to reduce wear and safety concerns.

### **Licensing and Facilities**

We secured a premises licence for the pavilion and continue to evaluate site needs, including dog bins and the shared clothing bank.

### **Community Engagement & Future Planning**

Community involvement grew through the Carol Service and ongoing outreach. Future plans include a permanent Christmas tree, a potential fair, and continued coordination with the Parish Council on responsibilities and funding.

### **Closing Note**

Thank you to all our volunteers, supporters, and groundskeeper Ian. We look forward to another year of progress, ensuring the Lawn remains a valued community space.

## St Mary & St Andrew Whittlesford Parish Church

It has been a blessing and a privilege to be the Vicar of St Mary and St Andrew Whittlesford for 6 years now. The Parish Church in Whittlesford continues to flourish and I am delighted that in the last year we have seen growth in the numbers of families attending, not just for our monthly All Age service but for each Sunday.

This is mostly due to our '*Time for God*' volunteer Nike Nehlsen from Germany who has come for a 'gap year' to serve in our church and community. This has especially allowed us to provide '*Children's church*' each Sunday with between 4 and 18 children attending of mixed ages 2- 11 years. Nike has really enjoyed getting to know the families and teaching bible stories each Sunday.

Nike has also been helping out each week at William Westley school as a volunteer and then with our after-school club *The ARK*, for children year 5 and above. *The ARK* takes place every Monday during term time from 3:30pm-5pm and we get between 24-30 children a week, which is fantastic. We have a wonderful team of volunteers who help serve hot chocolate or play board games with the children and Nike sorts a new craft for the children to do each week. We have also now been able to put on our youth club ARKEXtra each month with a Christian focus. The children enjoy games, activities, discussion and pizza! This is led by Hannah Elphick, a youth worker (working with local churches in the area and *Youth for Christ* in Cambridge) along with Nike, Rev Phil Nevard and myself.

Together with Revd Phil Nevard (the URC minister for Whittlesford and Sawston) we do weekly assemblies at William Westley Primary school – always a highlight of the week. We really enjoy getting to know the children and families through our contact and good relationship with the school. It is wonderful to have all the school and staff come for their Harvest, Christmas and Easter services to the church through the year. Likewise, the preschool Whitsers come each term to visit the church, enjoy a fun craft activity as well as biscuits and juice. They loved the recent Easter egg hunt in the churchyard. We are also looking forward to welcoming the afterschool holiday club WOSC this Easter for a special visit to the Parish Church.

We are delighted that so many in our community feel an attachment to our church and building, and visitors continue to come from locally or further afield to enjoy visiting our church and churchyard or to see our fabulous caring 1000 years commemoration-stained glass window. We recently had a visit of volunteers from across East Anglia with the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* to hear about our very special CWGC graves in our churchyard. Similarly, Eco Whittlesford have hosted a bat and moth event in the churchyard and bell ringers from different regions have come to visit and ring in our bell tower.

We are enormously grateful for all those who help care for our church and churchyard, whether on the cleaning team, decorating our church throughout the year and for the special festivals, volunteering with the churchyard team or serving on our rota for services each Sunday. We also are grateful for the ongoing donations towards our church, whether for the fabric of our church, *Raise the Roof* or for our children and families work – such as hosting the *ARK*, *ARKEExtra*, *Children's church* and our popular monthly *Campfire church*, when we meet around a fire pit for fun, fellowship, worship and hot dogs and toasted marshmallows! It has now become something of an annual tradition since Covid to host our *Campfire Carols on the Lawn* at Christmas, when over 150 people of all ages gather to sing carols, enjoy mulled wine and raise money for the homeless. Last year we donated over £600 to Jimmy's night shelter and then over £350 to the Children's Society from our Christingle service on Christmas Eve.

Our Church Room is used regularly by an Art Group and two different Mah-jong U3A groups who want a smaller space for a meeting. We also host regular visits from the cubs and rainbow uniformed groups who come and help clean the church (as part of their community service) and get to visit the bell tower to find out about bell ringing. Since the winter we have loved hosting the twice a monthly baby and toddler group *Little Fishes* with between 7- 20 parents or grandparents/carers and babies and toddlers.

Our online livestreaming continues to be a blessing with many of the elderly or housebound and those around the world joining for our Sunday services, as well as for funerals, weddings and baptisms. We currently have regular attenders from Germany and Canada!

Our Partnership with the URC (United Reformed Church) of Whittlesford continues, with the URC congregation now regularly worshipping on Sunday mornings in the Parish Church and a shared URC style service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month. We are still hoping to open a community café (with work to upgrade the kitchen and hall planned at some point this year). We have a shared vision to see the URC building used as a community centre/ hub which encourages the well-being and flourishing of all our community with all the activities that are held there.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for their support towards the churches of Whittlesford. It is wonderful that the community and our churches work together for the good of all in our community and village.

Olivia

Revd Olivia Coles

Vicar of St Mary and St Andrew Whittlesford

## **Annual Report - Cllr Richard Williams**

### **Planning and Development**

There have been a few significant planning developments in the village this year. A revised planning application for the old Scrap Yard site on Station Road was approved by the District Council this year. The revised application reduced the number of parking spaces provided in the scheme, but not the number of dwellings, with the result that some dwellings are likely to have very little, or no, parking provision. I supported the Parish Council's objection to the scheme on the basis of inadequate parking, but unfortunately the application was narrowly approved by the District Planning Committee. This is part of an unfortunate pattern of approvals where the District fails to enforce its own standards for parking provision for new houses.

The District Council is itself continuing to develop a new District wide set of local planning policies, including a plan for around 50,000 new homes across the City and District by 2040. This new local plan is set to be completed in late 2026. However, as I'm sure everyone has seen, the new Government has committed itself to significantly more development around Cambridge than is contemplated by the local plan, with talk of 150,000 more houses by 2050 and a government-appointed Development Corporation that would take control of major developments away from elected local councils. There is still little detail on these national plans, and even with the new reservoir in the Fens going ahead, there is no credible plan for how such a huge number of new houses could be supplied with water (the reservoir will barely create enough new supply for the Council's plan for 50,000 more houses). Further, if anything approaching 150,000 houses were to be built, then it seems inevitable that there would need to be significant development in the Cambridge Green Belt. But with little to no detail in the public domain beyond headlines about 'boosting growth in Cambridge' it is impossible to know at this stage what the specific implications of Government plans could be for Whittlesford.

### **Five Days Pay for Four Days Work at the Council**

The administration at South Cambs Council has continued with its 4 day week experiment whereby council staff get paid for 37 hours work but are only expected to do 32 hours. Councillors have still not been given a vote on whether council tax-payers' money should be spent paying staff for a working day when they are not expected to work. The experiment remains

controversial with concerns about the impact that staff only being available four days a week is having on service delivery and availability to deal with problems. For its part, the council claims the 4-day week helps it retain and recruit staff. A public consultation was held early in 2025, but the results had not been published at the time of writing.

### **Local Government Reorganisation – Plan to Abolish District and County Councils**

The Government has brought forward a plan as part of its Devolution in England White Paper to abolish District and County Councils and replace them with new Unitary Councils that deliver all council services. The Government has suggested that new Unitary Councils should have a population of at least 500,000 people, although there can be exceptions. The combined population of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is around 900,000, so the most obvious structure would be some form of 'North Cambridgeshire and P'bro' Unitary Council and a 'Southern Cambridgeshire' Unitary Council (perhaps including the existing South Cambs, Cambridge City and East Cambs district). At the time of writing there is no formal proposal for our area and the government expects existing local councils to come up with a plan for new Councils.

Cambridgeshire is in the second tier of council reform, and we have been told that proposals will need to be submitted to the Government in the autumn. If that timetable holds, it is likely a new Council would take over from the existing Districts and County in 2028 (probably with elections to this council as a 'shadow council' in 2027).

There are certainly some advantages to a Unitary structure, which would be easier for residents to understand than the current set of Districts delivering some services (planning, waste collection, environment services etc) and the County Council delivering other services (road maintenance, education, adult social care etc). However, there are also potential disadvantages in that a single council will likely be larger than existing districts, so local government may become a bit more remote.

As ever, please don't hesitate to get in touch about any local issue whether mentioned in my report or not, and I will do my best to help.

*Richard, [cllr.richardwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:cllr.richardwilliams@gmail.com)/07584037016*

## **Whittlesford County Council Report 2025**

### **Peter MacDonald**

The key thing to update residents is the proposed budget for 2025/26 so I summarise here.

#### **County Council Budget 2025/26**

The County Council has shared its proposals to continue delivering its vision of a creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire. Part of these proposals will identify the Council's priorities for where to spend over £1billion to deliver services and support for people and communities across the county. Priorities included with the draft Business Plan and Budget are:

- Investing £21 million into the county's 4,500 miles of road network, footpaths, cycleways, and drainage systems in 2025-26, with a further £20 million being invested in 2026-27.
- Investing £20 million over the next 3 years to support providers of adult social care services to pay care workers the Real Living Wage, helping to recruit and retain people to deliver these essential services.
- Investing £6.8 million in low carbon heating for schools and council buildings and £8.7 million being invested to deliver enhanced and upgraded household waste recycling centres in Milton and March.
- However, rising demand for the services we provide, along with the costs of those services also rising, continues to impact the County Council's available funding, just as is the case with many other local authorities. That means we also must continue to make difficult choices about where we spend and where we make savings.
- This means we have a budget gap of £34.2 million in 2025-26 which needs to be closed.
- As part of the report to be discussed by councillors, this includes a proposed council tax increase of 4.99% for 2025-26. This increase, if approved, would generate around £20 million in additional funding, not only helping the council to balance the books and set a legal budget, but more importantly, meaning we can commit to:

- continuing the record level of investment in the county's highway and cycleway network that we started last year.
- ensuring that adult care services can continue to support and protect vulnerable adults by investing over £30 million to meet rising demand and costs and supporting the social care workforce.
- funding almost £0.8 Billion investment in capital expenditure to build vital schools, investing in care and community facilities, including libraries, and continue to deliver our ambitious net zero target.
- provide £2.5m to maintain holiday school vouchers for those most in need.
- sustaining home to school transport for children in education right across the county by a further £4.7 million in additional funding to help meet rising demands and costs.
- helping to provide extra capacity to support children and young people in care and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- In our pre-budget engagement exercise, just over 50% of respondents supported an increase in Council Tax of up to 4.99% to help maintain or improve essential services.
- In reports, published for the Strategy, Resources and Performance committee, councillors considered:
- Progress to date and key investment areas for 2025/26 aligned to the council's recently updated and approved Strategic Framework – setting out how the authority will deliver its vision of a creating greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire through its seven ambitions and responding to the needs of residents gathered through its annual Quality of Life Survey.
- The proposed council tax increase of 4.99% and what this additional funding will mean in terms of helping to meet some of our increased costs, as well as additional investment in priority areas.

- The council's long-term approach to changing the way it operates so that it can improve efficiency, value for money and productivity. This means getting the basics right and innovating the way services are delivered so the council can maximise the value of every pound it spends. This work includes saving £1.5m from rationalising office accommodation, and £0.5m from making greater use of technology.
- Have your say - [complete our consultation survey](#).

### **Whittlesford Highways:**

There have been a few much-needed repairs to West End and The Lawn potholes, the West End footpath etc. Additionally, a completely repaired walking path on the western side of Duxford Rd. A new shared path to the east side is under consideration.