

# **Parish Report**

## **January 2020**

***Mark Howell: Cambridgeshire County Councillor for Bourn, Greater Cambourne, Little Gransden, Longstowe, Lower Cambourne and Upper Cambourne***

### **Cambridgeshire Registration Service**

Cambridgeshire Registration Service has introduced a new self-service booking system, letting couples see what's available so they can book their marriage or civil partnership on-line.

The Cambridgeshire Ceremonies website has also been updated, making it easier to find general information on everything from locations and fees to legal preliminaries and what happens on the day.

Customers need to register for an account via the website. This lets them see when registration service staff at one of the Registration Offices or for attending an approved venue in Cambridgeshire.

Once the booking has been submitted and the ceremony fee paid, customers will receive an immediate confirmation by email. The system also allows customers who have booked to select personalisation options where offered, and if one or both live in Cambridgeshire they also book their notice appointment through the system.

The process has been designed to improve customer services as couples can now look at availability and book a ceremony for up to 2 years in advance. If any couples are planning to have their ceremony in the next 3 months, they will still have to contact us. This is to make sure the legal preliminaries are completed in time."

### **Cambridgeshire County Council's new Civic 'hub'**

As work began in earnest on Cambridgeshire County Council's new Civic 'hub' building in Alconbury Weald today, councillors and contractors celebrated the start on site of a building which aims to deliver environmental excellence – as well as unlocking in excess of £45m to spend on local services.

"I am delighted to be marking the start of work on site today. In siting our new Civic Hub in Alconbury Weald, with its developing transport links, we aim to improve access to the democratic heart of the council." said Cllr Steve Count, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council.

“The new building is being constructed with as little impact as possible on our carbon footprint. It is designed both for how we work now, and how we will work in the future, and around the needs of those who work in it and who will visit it.”

The £18.3m, 3600sqm building, set in four acres of former brownfield land will accommodate 350 desks along with flexible breakout areas, formal meeting rooms and ancillary spaces (toilets, tea points etc.), a public reception, a multi-purpose function room for council meetings, and political group meeting rooms. The car park includes more than 20 spaces with electric car charging points, and below ground infrastructure ready to link up all spaces to electric charging points in the future.

An increased number of photo voltaic (PV) panels on the roof will provide a renewable energy source to improve the energy efficiency of the building, and the building will look to maximise use of renewable energy now and in the future.

A business case to install a solar array within the car park – underway in the council’s park and ride sites in St Ives and Trumpington - is currently being developed by the Council’s Energy Investment Unit.

All of this adds up to the building achieving a reduction of emissions ‘BREEAM’ standard of ‘Excellent’ in line with the council’s ambitious target to reduce its own carbon footprint to net zero by 2050 – as part of its Environmental and Climate Change strategy which is to be discussed at Full Council this week. The new building will also massively reduce the council’s building maintenance bill – from an annual £1.3m for Shire Hall to just £500k a year for the new Civic Hub.

The project management, design and construction of the Civic Hub has been contracted to local businesses Faithful +Gould and R G Carter – with Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) the building’s architects.

The project team are applying the principles of the WELL Building requirements to the design of the building, which includes easy access to nearby open space, increased levels of ventilation and natural light – to help 600 + staff, 61 Members and all visitors to the building remain well and healthily while they are in the building.

Throughout the development, the project team has consulted staff and Members through workshops and focus groups, as well as representatives from the council’s Equality and Diversity network.

This has led to a number of inclusions to make the new HQ suitable for people of all ages and abilities, including a number of accessible toilets in different parts of the building, the option to include a Changing Places facility (for adults with high levels of additional needs), and accessible workspaces and tea points – with differing heights of sink and desk levels, and fire evacuation passenger lifts.

“When you plan to spend £18.3m on developing a new building, it is right that a council such as ours which is dedicated to promoting local economy should make sure as much of this as possible is spent with local firms and developing local skills,” said Cllr Josh Schumann, chair of the council's Commercial and Investment Committee. “I am thrilled that so far we are smashing our own target of spending at least 70% of the budget with local firms – and that even after we have covered the full cost of this new Civic Hub, we will still be able to re-invest a minimum of £45m into essential frontline services.”

The council is planning a café in the HQ to be run as a social enterprise, helping to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. And 95% of the first £6.6 million of orders placed by R G Carter for the project so far have gone to businesses based less than 50 miles from the site.

“We are delighted to have been entrusted to provide Cambridgeshire County Council with a new and sustainable home. From the design to the landscaping, planning to the construction, we are very proud of our team and the collaborative approach of all stakeholders. Over the upcoming months, using our local supply chain, we will deliver this high quality and innovative home for the county council that embodies their sustainable vision” said Rob Carter, Company Director, R G Carter.

### **Watch Cllr Josh Schumann, chairman of the council's commercial and investment committee on the Climate and Environment Strategy**

Following its declaration of a Climate and Environment Emergency in May 2019, Cambridgeshire County Council today (Thursday 19 December) agreed to launch consultation on ambitious plans to reduce its own and the County's carbon footprint, and to support others in their efforts.

Since its declaration, an officers working group and a cross-party Member steering group have developed a draft strategy using the very best information available, including work commissioned by the council from the University of Cambridge.

The strategy looks at: what the council can do itself; where the council can collaborate with others; and the actions of others it can further encourage and support.

This outlines how the council plans to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council, and a range of measures to help communities adapt to the change already happening, and enhance nature and the benefits it provides.

“As a council we have done lots already we can be proud of to reduce our carbon footprint – planting 25,000 trees, already investing £22million into carbon reductions and having a further £56 million identified in our business plan to continue to support measures to protect our environment. We are not a council that rests on our laurels. We are looking towards the future and the decisions we must take today to address the urgent changes needed to protect our environment,” said Cllr Steve Count, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council.

“This strategy is how we plan to move forward working together with our partners.”

“The message on climate change is clear - none of us can afford not to do this,” said Cllr Josh Schumann, chairman of the council's commercial and investment committee who seconded the motion. “This strategy sets ambitious yet realistic targets, based on clear research and highlights how we can achieve them.” As part of the Strategy development, the council is keen to understand what the wider community thinks of the targets and actions it plans to set itself and its suppliers, and how it can work to help community action to accelerate. The consultation begins on 20 December until 31 January during which time the council will be gathering feedback at a range of events across the county, and via an online survey.

The Council is particularly interested to hear the views of younger people following the engagement of Council Leader Cllr Steve Count with Cambridgeshire students during the past year.