

CAMBOURNE TOWN COUNCIL

District of South Cambridgeshire

Inclusive Development

Phil Priestly will be in attendance to update Councillors on the progress within his role. Please see attached his previous report to the Annual Council Meeting.

Inclusive Development – Update for Cambourne Town Council

Sunday 24th April 2022

Primary Schools Update:

It has been an extremely busy period since my last update to the council. As we have come away from Christmas, and concluded the Spring Term, I have been spending a higher percentage of my time visiting the Primary Schools – with Monkfield Primary School, Cambourne and Hardwick Primary Schools and the Vine all having assemblies on aspiration, community and positive behaviour.

In addition I have been assisting The Vine Primary School with a ‘family v family’ problem that centres on two feuding boys in the upper part of the school (Year 6). I’ve done a session with the boys to remedy the problem and I am looking to provide mediation between the parents of both. I know that this has been a difficult and long-standing issue for the school and we hope to be able to come to a reasonable understanding by improving the dialogue between both families.

I will be visiting Jeavon’s Wood in the coming weeks as our efforts to have me visit have been frustrated by Covid circumstances (very sadly Sue Wright has been unwell herself with COVID-19).

Covid circumstances across the schools are fluctuating but I know that Monkfield Primary (Annie Howells particularly) have also suffered and while the general government message is that we are moving on from the pandemic, the real-world circumstances within schools doesn’t always agree with that assessment.

It is worth noting from a COVID-19 perspective that there has been a gradual increase in cases nationally, this includes hospitalisations and deaths. Vaccination levels within the 12 – 18 year old category stands quite stubbornly at about 51% (fully vaccinated). A vaccine drive for young people might be a think to consider.

Emphasis through the Summer term is very much with Year 6 and transitional arrangements – supporting young people who are about to go to secondary school, and particularly in their transition to Cambourne Village College.

Cambourne Village College Update:

Work at the Village College continues. I've been supporting the PSHE agenda with specific inputs on knife crime to all year groups. I've done in person assemblies prior to Easter and I am about to deliver video content for years 8 and 9.

There has been a noticeable uptick in antisocial behaviour in town – specifically during the Easter holiday and this has caused a lot of comment and traffic on the main town Facebook sites. I am assisting the Town Council in identifying young people caught on CCTV causing criminal damage to the rear door to the sports pavilion. Certainly we have one very prominent young woman on CCTV that needs to be identified – she has failed to hide her facial features at all and the likelihood of a full identification is very strong. At least one – possibly two other males are also involved – albeit they have done a better job of hiding their facial features. All of the imagery is currently with Deputy Principal Philippa Boyns. The female shown on the CCTV was a surprised because I don't know her immediately and I showed the imagery in person to the school Safeguarding Team – Jamie Rice didn't recognise her readily either. She may or may not attend the Village College. Certain boys within the group caught on CCTV definitely do attend the Village College – so it may be a mixed group from more than one location. I am sure identifications will be made.

An earlier incident which happened in Cambourne resulted in the arrest of a young man for possession of controlled substances with intent to supply, driving otherwise than in accordance with a license, and having no insurance. The circumstances – as detailed by the police on Facebook and on other social media platforms – suggested that he was in possession of cash, drugs, and the keys to the car. This has to be credited to excellent proactive measures by the police locally. It is believed that the young man has denied wrong doing and the matter is under evidential review. I have worked with the young man on and off for the last three years and I knew him before I left the police in September 2019. There are all the hallmarks of a young man subjected to criminal exploitation and I have had an extended one to one with him to offer him advice and guidance. I have also connected with his parents – who I have got to know quite well over a period of time. Parents have also approached me for advice and guidance – but quite frankly the young man is scared of what might happen if he says or does the wrong thing, or implicates anyone else in what led to his arrest.

“I have to take all the blame for this – I'm on my own.”

For what it is worth I think that the arrest of this young man will do little to prevent the circulation of drugs in Cambourne and in South Cambs. From my perspective he is the front end of a system that we know has been present across the county representing a 'County Lines' system of supply. Without him acknowledging anything it is clear that he – at 15 years old – has been groomed and exploited to protect others from prosecution. My concern is that this is symptomatic of a far bigger issue. I would be more than willing to speak to parents about County Lines if the Town Council would like to host an information event to help adults spot the signs and symptoms.

Other matters of antisocial behaviour are jarring and very upsetting for local residents – but by comparison are mindless and represent a minority of young people who are creating a negative reputation for their peers more broadly.

We've seen examples of 'door knocking' (with verbal abuse), egg throwing, and general vandalism. This definitely does undermine some excellent work that is being done by both Town and District Council in Cambourne and it does impair quality of life.

I have connected with Katie Ixer who is the Community Connector for South Cambs on the Think Communities Team at County Council. Katie and I were police officers together at

Parkside police station and she is now employed by the County Council (she is no longer a police officer). She is really keen to do work that addresses the issues of ASB and County Lines/Criminal Exploitation in Cambourne specifically. She has invited me to the Cambourne Support Partnership meeting which will be taking place at 10AM on 10th May. I will be attending that meeting to look at what joined up approaches can be organised to make the community more resilient.

Inside school I have been working with the new Year 10 lead – Frankie Rose – who is absolutely excellent. We have been evaluating individuals in what is quite a challenging year group - with a number of individuals each capable of causing enough trouble on their own. The collective dynamics are harder to manage when they are grouped together. Frankie and I did a home visit regarding one specific individual who has turned towards 'school refusal' and has started to heighten concerns as a consequence. *It is difficult to offer further details without breaching GDPR regulations.*

I am keen to sit down with the Town Council well ahead of the Summer holiday to look at what we might be able to do to reinforce efforts to prevent negative behaviours over that time. I think that there are specific individuals that we could share information with police regarding – with a view towards limiting community impact and negative outcomes. I am happy to support the Town Council in coordinating such an approach over the next ten weeks.

Cambs Youth Panel

My final notes give regard towards the Cambs Youth Panel, which I continue to organise and run. We are still basing ourselves from Cambourne and we are keen for this to continue – although plans around what this might look like are being formulated. Our current premises – which we have been guesting in – are possibly going to be sold and we may need to vacate soon. We have some contingencies in mind.

I would welcome a conversation with the Town Council to look at what we could do to keep the Youth Panel based in Cambourne – and also to contemplate the long-term plans that we have with partners and sponsors towards something more ambitious for young people in the local area.

Please let me know if you would like me to attend a Council session to explain any of the above – and do feel happy to forward any questions that you might have.



Phil Priestley

