



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN – ISSUE DATE 26TH MARCH 2003

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

<u>COMMITTEE MEETINGS</u>			
FROM 31ST MARCH – 4TH APRIL 2003			
 WEDNESDAY 2ND APRIL 2003	AT 10 AM	DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION CONTROL COMMITTEE (Contact Officer Ian Senior)	COUNCIL CHAMBER
FRIDAY 4TH APRIL 2003	AT 9:30 AM	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Contact Officer Ian Senior)	ROOM 317

Fees and Charges Clarification – Hiring of Rooms

The previous Member Bulletin (19th March 2003) contained a schedule of Fees and Charges reviewed by the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Staffing. The figures shown for use of the Council Chamber should have made it clear that free usage was only for organisations where the Council has a particular involvement or that provide facilities, support or advice for the benefit of the Council or residents (ie 'A' and 'B' as shown in the key.) The charges of £250 and £130 relate to other organisations ('C'), and reflect the fee for a full day and half day hiring respectively.

Extraordinary Meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council on 1st April 2003

The agenda for the extraordinary meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council on 1st April 2003, which will appoint the new Chief Executive, can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

<http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/db/reprack.nsf/e0c624b01b2e9ade80256b14004eb73b/402f575e0f8a779780256cf00039e594?OpenDocument>

Historical Resource & Cultural Centre Newsletter

Cambridgeshire's Historical Resource & Cultural Centre are currently sending out bi-monthly newsletters which can be accessed by viewing the Cambridgeshire County Council's web site: <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

New Electoral Arrangements

Detailed below is a schedule that indicates the years of District and Parish Council elections. These details will be published on the internet and the intranet shortly.

The grey shaded areas indicate a District Ward Election. One Councillor is elected each year, with the exception of 2004 when all Councillors are up for election.

Key:

♣ = last election in 2002

♥ = last election in 2003

District Ward		Parish Council Elections in			
No	Name	2004	2006	2007	2008
1	Balsham	2 (Dist. Cllrs)	Balsham West Wrating Carlton Weston Colville	Castle Camps Shudy Camps Horseheath West Wickham	
2	Bar Hill	2	Bar Hill	Dry Drayton Lolworth	
3	Barton	1		Barton ♣ Madingley Grantchester ♣ Coton	
4	Bassingbourn	Shingay-cum-Wendy 2	Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth Litlington		Whaddon ♥ Shingay-cum-Wendy
5	Bourn	3	Bourn Croxtan Eltisley Caxton		
6	Caldecote	1	Caldecote ♥ Toft ♥ Kingston ♥		
7	Comberton	1		Comberton	
8	Cottenham	3	Cottenham Oakington and Westwick Rampton		
9	Duxford	1		Duxford Ickleton	
10	Fowlmere and Foxton	1		Fowlmere Foxton	
11	Fulbourn	2	Fulbourn		
12	Gamlingay	Arrington Hatley Croydon Longstowe Little Gransden 2	Gamlingay		Arrington Hatley Croydon Longstowe Little Gransden
13	Girton	2	Girton		
14	Hardwick	1		Hardwick	
15	Harston and Hauxton	Hauxton 1			Harston ♥ Hauxton

District Ward		Parish Council elections in			
No	Name	2004	2006	2007	2008
16	Haslingfield and The Eversdens				Harlton ♥ Haslingfield ♥ Great Eversden and Little Eversden
		1			
17	Histon and Impington				Histon Impington
		3			
18	Linton		Linton Hildersham		
		2			
19	Longstanton	Longstanton			Longstanton
		1			
20	Melbourn		Melbourn		Great & Little Chishill ♥ Heydon ♥
		2			
21	Meldreth		Meldreth ♥ Shepreth		
		1			
22	Milton			Milton	
		2			
23	Orwell and Barrington			Orwell Wimpole Barrington ♣	
		1			
24	Papworth and Elsworth			Papworth Everard Elsworth Graveley Fen Drayton	
		2			
25	Sawston				Sawston ♥
		3			
26	Swavesey		Swavesey ♥		
		1			
27	Teversham			Teversham	
		1			
28	The Abingtons			Great Abington ♣ Little Abington ♣ Babraham Pampisford Hinxtton	
		1			
29	The Mordens	Guilden Morden Steeple Morden			Guilden Morden Steeple Morden
		1			

District Ward		Parish Council elections in							
No	Name	2004		2006		2007		2008	
30	The Shelfords and Stapleford	Stapleford Little Shelford 3		Great Shelford				Newton ♥ Stapleford Little Shelford	
31	The Wilbrahams	Great Wilbraham Little Wilbraham Stow-cum-Quy 1						Horningsea ♥ Fen Ditton ♥ Great Wilbraham Little Wilbraham Stow-cum-Quy	
32	Waterbeach			Waterbeach Landbeach					
33	Whittlesford	Whittlesford Thriplow 1						Whittlesford Thriplow	
34	Willingham and Over			Willingham		Over			
		17	57	30	19	31	19	31	19

District Wards include the areas of the respective parishes which have parish councils shown in the columns and also the areas of the following parishes which do not have a parish council: **Bar Hill** Boxworth and Lolworth; **Caldecote** Childerley; **Linton** Bartlow; **Papworth and Elsworth** Conington, Knapwell and Papworth St. Agnes; **The Mordens** Abington Pigotts and Tadlow

Council Publicity and the Local Elections

The Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) has issued a briefing, detailed below, which advises on protocol for publicity in the run-up to local elections. It covers the relevant aspects of the Code of Recommended Practice, but also reminds affiliates of what they can do at this time. For further information The LGiU publication 'The Right Side of the Law' sets out the Code of Conduct on Local Government Publicity. It is available from the Information Unit on (01223) 443262 or 443289, in Room 214 at South Cambridgeshire Hall.

Summary

This briefing advises affiliates about publicity in the run-up to local elections. It covers the relevant aspects of the Code of Recommended Practice, but also reminds affiliates of what they can do at this time.

Introduction

The run-up to local elections is a particularly sensitive time in relation to local authority publicity. Those responsible for issuing publicity need to be mindful of the restrictions, but they should not suspend all publicity action because of the elections.

The time to exercise caution is generally defined as the period from the issuing of the notice of an election to election day. However, it is sensible to look at publicity issued shortly before this period, particularly if it may have a 'shelf-life' that takes it into the election period.

STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS AND THE CODE OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Definition of Publicity

Publicity is defined as 'any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public': it includes press releases, newspapers, newsletters and the council's web site.

The Broad Restrictions

It is worth recapping the general restriction on local authority publicity:

A local authority must not publish any material that, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect support for a political party. In determining whether material falls within the prohibition, regard shall be had to the content and style of the material, the time and other circumstances of publication and the likely effect on those to whom it is directed and, in particular, to the following matters:

- *whether material refers to a political party or to persons identified with a political party or promotes or opposes a point of view on a question of political controversy which is identifiable as the view of one political party and not of another; or*
- *where the material is part of a campaign, the effect which the campaign appears to be designed to achieve.*

Specific Restrictions at Election Time

The revisions to the Code of Recommended Practice which came into effect in April 2001 (that apply only to England) tightened restrictions around elections. It now adds a further recommendation to English authorities, that authorities should stop all forms of proactive publicity relating to candidates and other politicians involved directly in elections.

The Code says that at this time publicity should not deal with controversial issues or report views, proposals or recommendations in such a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members. Proactive events organised for this time should not involve members standing for election.

While the safest policy between the notice of the election and polling day is to avoid mention of any councillor who is seeking re-election, there is no need to cease all proactive publicity so long as the authority is mindful of the broad restrictions. This is illustrated by the Code.

When Members can be Quoted

It is acceptable for the authority to respond in appropriate circumstances to events and legitimate service enquiries provided its answers are factual and not party political.

Members holding key political or civic positions should be able to comment in an emergency or where there is a genuine need for a member level response to an important event outside the authority's control.

Other Politicians

Even where politicians are not standing for election, if they are quoted, what they say should not be identifiable as the view of one political party. Politicians from outside the council such as members of parliament, who are clearly identified with political parties should not generally be quoted at this time.

Press Releases

The safest route is to not mention councillors who are standing for election. If it is necessary to have a member comment, consider also including a quote from an opposition councillor (although press releases on politically controversial issues should be avoided at this time).

Council Newspapers

The authority need not suspend publication of its council newspaper or magazine, as long as the content does not fall into 'restricted' categories. If the paper is issued at this time, care should be taken to make sure that councillors who are standing for election are not featured and that the information in the paper is 'neutral'. It would be unwise to change publication dates so that a paper appeared in an election period when its normal schedule would not lead to this.

In practice, if it is possible to arrange publication so that it falls outside the election period, it would be wise to do so. Bear in mind, too, that papers published just before the election period will be circulating during it and may be subject to challenge.

The Council's Web Site

Electronic communications now come within the scope of the Code, although there is no specific guidance. Web sites represent a particularly 'grey area' because of the amount of material archived but available. Common sense would dictate that any current content should be checked and gauged against the rules and caution should be exercised about material posted on the site during the election period.

Other Publications

A good question to ask about the publication of material around election time is 'can it wait and if it can't might others think that it appears to be designed to influence how people vote?' An information leaflet about a major initiative, for example, could be regarded by some as promoting the majority party because of the timing rather than the content.

Consultation

Consultation exercises are also within the scope of the Code of Practice and while it is unlikely that consultation would breach the code even outside of elections, it is a good idea to check that no consultations are taking place on issues that could be seen as politically sensitive.

Other Organisations

The restrictions apply to publicity issued by other organisations that receive local authority funding. While this is unlikely to be a problem with most partners, authorities may want to check if tenant groups or community groups that they fund are planning publicity around election time, as they may be more likely to deal with issues that are politically controversial.

An LGIU publication

"The Right Side of the Law" is an LGIU guide, which has been the bible of local government publicity since the introduction of the Code of Conduct on Local Government Publicity in the 1980s. The most recent edition incorporates changes to the Code that came into force on 2 April 2001. The guide aims to help councils - councillors, chief executives, legal officers and communications officers - through the maze of new regulations and challenges from about by the Local government Act 2000. It includes sections on scrutiny, referendums, the law regarding local government publicity and the code. It can be obtained from:

Central Books Ltd., 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN. Fax orders on 0845 4589912 or E-mail mo@centralbooks.com. Credit card purchases can also be made by phoning 0845 4589910. Affiliate members and Subscribers will be invoiced for their purchases.

Mary Wimbury

Head of Communications

DECISIONS MADE BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Decisions Made By Portfolio Holder For Community Development

Virement	Reason
To vire £4,900 from the Community Development Grants (projects) budget 02/03 to Travellers Security Services.	To pay Group 4 security for work on the Blackwell site.
To vire £7,900 from Community Safety Grants 02/03 to Community Safety Projects 02/03.	To fund the Connections Bus project.

Applicant	Decision	Reason
Varrier-Jones Foundation	To award a Sport and Recreation Grant of £21,900 to the Varrier-Jones Foundation	To improve the drainage on Papworth Everard playing fields

Decisions Made By Portfolio Holder For Housing

Subject	Decision	Reason
Right to Buy Scheme: Restricting the Resale of Social Housing in Rural Areas to Local People	To make an application to the Secretary of State for the designation of the South Cambridgeshire district as 'rural'	For the purposes of Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985 in order to restrict the resale of properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme to someone who has lived or worked in the District for the last three years.

Subject	Decision	Reason
Cambridge Women's Aid, Refuge Accommodation	To lease a property in the District to Cambridge Women's Aid for an initial term of three years	For use as emergency accommodation for women fleeing domestic abuse.

Subject	Decision
Rent Deposit Partnership Scheme	a) To approve the continuation of the Rent Deposit Partnership Scheme managed by King Street Housing Society in 2003/04. b) To confirm the allocation of £15,000 within the Housing General Fund Estimates for 2003/04 for this scheme which will be funded from the £20,000 to be received from the ODPM towards actions taken to meet national objectives in relation to homelessness. c) To review the scheme at six monthly intervals to ensure that it continues to meet our strategic objectives.

Decisions Made By Portfolio Holder For Planning and Economic Development

Applicant	Decision	Reason
Invest East of England	To award a grant of £3,000	Set out in Economic Development Grant Application for 2002/03 Report.

This grant was included in last week's bulletin but the name of the applicant had been missed off.

GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS

Grant Agreed by Community Development Partnerships Manager

Applicant	Description	Reason
Bottisham Orchestral Workshop	Awarding of a £250 Guarantee Against Loss Grant (AGAL13). For a day long orchestral workshop involving adult and young musicians working towards a high standard performance with professional input.	The workshop gives amateur musicians a chance to train alongside professionals and have the opportunity of playing as part of an orchestra.

Call-in Arrangements

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee or any five other Councillors may call in any executive decision recorded in this bulletin for review. The Committee Manager must be notified of any call in by **5pm Wednesday 2nd April 2003**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on Thursday 3rd April 2003.

Any member considering calling in a decision made by Cabinet is requested to contact the Committee Section to determine whether any relevant amendments have been incorporated.

The call in procedure is set out in full in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, 'Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules', paragraph 12.