

**COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN  
24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2004**

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Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

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**COMMITTEE MEETINGS FROM:  
29<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2004**

<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 04</b>		Planning Inspections	
<b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 04</b>			
<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 04</b>	10 am	Development and Conservation Control Committee	Council Chamber
<b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 04</b>			
<b>Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 04</b>			

**Staffing Arrangements in Democratic Services**

Please note that Lucie Edginton will be on Maternity leave until further notice from Monday the 29<sup>th</sup> of November. Please redirect your enquiries as follows:

*Weekly bulletin and Home Improvement Agency Advisory Group meetings*

Contact Holly Adams (01954 713030) [holly.adams@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:holly.adams@scambs.gov.uk)

*Forward Programme and Housing Options Working Group (HOWG)*

Contact Maggie Jennings (01954 713029) [maggie.jennings@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:maggie.jennings@scambs.gov.uk)

*Windmill Estate meetings*

Contact Patrick Adams (01954 713408) [patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk)

*Housing Portfolio Holder meetings*

Contact Ian Senior (01954 713028) [ian.senior@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:ian.senior@scambs.gov.uk)

*Constitution review, Northstowe, LDF Council meetings & Member Training Queries*

Contact Susan May (01954 713016) [susan.may@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:susan.may@scambs.gov.uk)

**Call in arrangements**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or any five other Councillors may call in any executive decision recorded in this bulletin for review. The Democratic Services Manager must be notified of any call in by **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004 at 5pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004**.

*Any member considering calling in a decision made by Cabinet is requested to contact the Democratic Services 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.

### Decision made by the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Decision	Applicant and Reason
<p>To submit comments as set out opposite to the County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council on their study to research and analyse the key drivers of transport demand and to identify potential actions to capture an increased proportion of this demand by public transport, in particular (but not limited to) bus travel.</p>	<p>The improvement in public transport in the radial corridors out of Cambridge is an approach set out in the County's Local Transport Plan and SCDC has supported this approach.</p> <p>SCDC has also argued for additional Park and Ride sites in the rural area further out than the existing ring of sites on the periphery of Cambridge. The idea of a P&amp;R at Waterbeach also features in the CHUMMS study for the A14.</p> <p>Of the initial P&amp;R sites identified in the Waterbeach area, the preferred location would be on the east side of the A10 taking a spur off the roundabout access into the Cambridge Research Park. Alternative sites have poorer access; impact on Green Belt and, in one case, an Ancient Monument.</p> <p>The report suggests improvements to the rail service including additional car parking, bus services to the stations, and the development of the Chesterton station. There needs to be improvements to the rail service from Ely Station to encourage people to take the train close to home rather than driving down the A10 to access a Park and Ride at Waterbeach or take the train from the proposed Chesterton Station. SCDC does, however, support the development of Chesterton Station.</p> <p>SCDC supports improvements to bus frequencies on the B1049 corridor for Cottenham and Histon / Impington with an interchange with the Guided Bus. However, it is important that the B1049 is not seen as an alternative to the A10 for those driving from further north. Given the current situation on the B1049, and in particular at the B1049 / A14 interchange, bus priority measures will need to be considered an integral part of any proposals. Any proposals for this route should also consider ongoing discussions for traffic calming in Histon / Impington. No doubt the future of the A14/B1049 interchange will be an issue addressed in the forthcoming consultation on the A14 by the Highways Agency.</p> <p>The Cowley Road P&amp;R site would be needed for other development for the 2nd phase of the redevelopment of the Cambridge Northern Fringe East proposals. In this case, if Park and Ride is to be provided at Waterbeach it should be of adequate size to take into account the longer term loss of Cowley Road. There may be difficulties in finding an alternative site for P&amp;R north of the A14 in the Milton area.</p> <p>Opportunities for a bus link from a Park and Ride at Waterbeach to the railway station should be explored. Such a link might help modal shift in accessing the Research Park.</p>

### Decisions made by the Housing Portfolio Holder

Decision	Applicant and Reason
<u>Housing Allocation appeals and Management Transfers</u>	
Agreed to request for Management transfer	<u>Ref E/04/016</u> Mr H requires a transfer to ground floor accommodation
Agreed to request for Management transfer	<u>Ref S/04/029</u> Miss LR, a previous Sheltered Housing Scheme Manager requires a transfer with her partner Mr RB
Agreed to request for housing allocation	Mrs E requires a Council property for medical reasons

### Decisions made by the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder

Decision	Reason
To authorise the Finance and Resources Director to write off £22,650.93 Non Domestic Rates, £9,761.43 Council Tax and £2,729.90 Rent as irrecoverable.	All efforts to recover the outstanding debts have failed and there appears to be no realistic chance of recovery.
<p>The Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder supports the principle of property attributes being added to the valuation list and its publication both nationally and on the VOA's website both before and after the valuation process has been completed.</p> <p>The Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder supports the addition to the valuation list of those attributes contained in the consultation paper and agrees that the VOA should send a notice to all Council Tax payers containing the information contained in the consultation paper relevant to their property. The information should not however contain a locality map.</p>	<p>Providing more information to Council Tax payers and making the valuation process more transparent and understandable should cut down on the number of appeals made following the revaluation.</p> <p>Providing more information and making the valuation process more transparent and understandable will cut down on the number of appeals following the revaluation. It will also enable Council Tax payers to check their banding using the information available to the VOA and early notification of this should resolve any glaring errors before the new bills go out in April 2007. Whilst the information contained in the consultation paper is vital to enable Council Tax payers to check their valuation it is not felt that a location map is necessary.</p>

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AREA JOINT  
COMMITTEE (SPECIAL MEETING): MINUTES**

**Date:** 8th November 2004

**Time:** 1430h – 1510h

**Place:** South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne

**Present:** County Councillors

T J Bear, J E Coston, S F Johnstone (Chairman) and  
J E Reynolds

District Councillors

D Bard, J D Batchelor, S G M Kindersley, D S K Spink and  
R Summerfield

CALC Councillors

G Everson

**Also present**

District Councillor J Williamson

**Apologies:** County Councillor P D Gooden and  
CALC Councillor M Williamson

**161. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor J E Reynolds declared a personal interest under the County Council's Code of Conduct in relation to item 162 by reason of him being an employee of a company owning land in Cowley Road.

**162. CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE – FOR INFORMATION**

The Joint Committee was informed of the development of projects associated with the Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE). Members noted the background to the projects, which included approval by the County Council's Cabinet of the outline proposals for the A14/A10 slip road and circulatory and Milton Road/Cowley Road junction improvements. The development of the second phase CNFE in 2005/06 would be informed by feasibility studies for the relocation of the Cowley Road Park and Ride site and a southern access to the CNFE site. The land requirements for the scheme construction involved the use of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers and negotiation. Traffic modelling used to test the proposals, which included trip rates for new dwellings in the Cambridge Northern Fringe, had confirmed that they would deliver considerable improvements.

Members noted proposed improvements to the A14/A10 circulatory, which included a dedicated left hand lane onto the A14 westbound slip road. Latest traffic control technology (MOVA) would be used to maximise the capacity of the junction. Investigations were underway to assess Butt Lane bridge with a view to upgrading and allowing cyclists to use it without dismounting. Members were informed of a proposal to redesign the layout of the Milton Road/Cowley Road junction. The proposed cycle link would remain on the eastern side of Cowley Road crossing at a new signalised junction at Milton Road/Cowley Road. An initial evaluation of options for new sites for the Park and Ride relocation was due in December 2004. A

feasibility study was underway to look at all forms of access to the southern end CNFE site. Members noted that it was proposed to consult the public at events in early December in Milton and on the Science Park. There would also be a corridor study involving petrol stations.

The Chairman reported CALC Councillor Williamson's comments, which had been sent to the Secretary before the meeting. He was aware that most of the proposals related to the roads to the south of the A10/A14 junction. One of the major problems with this junction was morning queuing southbound traffic to the north of the junction along the A10, which frequently reached back to the 'Slap Up' junction. This caused traffic to rat run through Waterbeach and Horningsea (and, to some extent, through Milton). He was concerned that as development at Ely continued, this problem was bound to get worse. He was keen to ensure that consideration was given to this point in any discussion of this junction, in particular that traffic light phasing should be adjusted to help to reduce the queues. He also suggested that a longer length of road where two southbound queues of traffic could form on the A10 would increase the southbound flow of traffic through the junction.

Speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Coston expressed her support for Councillor Williamson's comments. She stressed that the volume of traffic queuing on the A10 was a problem for local villages particularly for Waterbeach where access was available to another route to Cambridge. She queried whether plans were available to deal with an incident on the A14 resulting in road closure. It was noted that the County Council had agreed diversion routes with the Highways Agency, which would remain in operation until the introduction of the new junctions. She also queried whether plans were available to manage the Milton Road/Science Park/Cowley Road junction if the signalling system failed. It was noted that the Traffic Management Act would introduce a co-ordination duty on local authorities. The Highways Agency would be required to introduce uniformed Traffic Officers to stop and direct traffic as required to ease congestion. These officers were likely to be operational in the Eastern Region in the autumn of 2005. Finally, she urged officers to ensure that these proposals did not have a detrimental impact on provision for cyclists and pedestrians.

Also speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Summerfield queried the proposal to introduce only two lanes at the eastbound slip road from the A14 onto the circulatory. It was noted that the Council had tried not to prejudice future Highways Agency improvements on this stretch of road. This proposal was also considered the best solution financially. Councillor Summerfield expressed concern about the impact of the new signal controlled junction at Milton Road/Science Park/Cowley Road (south) on traffic leaving the St. John's Innovation Centre. Members were informed that the proposals were designed to make the traffic flow. Therefore it was important to ensure easy access at the junction to prevent a backlog occurring. Officers would investigate the possibility of introducing a mini roundabout to control traffic after 7.00p.m but it should be noted that it was not a particularly cycle friendly solution. He was also concerned about the cost of upgrading Butt Lane Bridge for the small number of cyclists who would use it. It was noted that the bridge was likely to be important in the long term with the relocation of the Park and Ride site. The Chairman suggested making the current bridge dual use and investigating some lower cost options.

The Joint Committee queried whether funding and land issues had been resolved to enable work to commence in six months. It was noted that Growth Area Delivery Grant was available from the Government. Officers were currently in negotiation with landowners and it was likely that CPO powers would not be needed. There was

concern from South Cambridgeshire District Council Members that they had not been invited to attend the Stakeholder Briefing. Officers apologised for this oversight and explained that the briefing had originally been established for Members representing this area.

It was resolved unanimously to note the progress made and support the public information and consultation programme.

### **163. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK IN THE CAMBRIDGE AREA**

The Joint Committee was informed of recent developments with regard to funding and construction of the National Cycle Network. Members noted that three schemes were planned for Route 11 in order to address significant gaps on the Network. The Department of Transport had recently allocated funding to Sustrans to plug these gaps and provide local links. Sustrans had allocated funding for proposals for a new cycleway link to Whittlesford station from the Sawston roundabout, an improved surface along the shared use path along Cambridge Road, Sawston towards Stapleford, and for resurfacing the "Halingway" towing path between the Pike and Eel pub in Chesterton and the Clayhithe bridge in Waterbeach. Members were advised that the time frame for the projects to be carried out to completion was very limited.

Members noted comments from the Local Member County Councillor Orgee who had been unable to attend the meeting. He fully supported funding to be allocated to a new cycleway link to Whittlesford station from the Sawston roundabout. This would complete a very useful link from both Sawston and Pampisford to the station and would widen opportunities for travel by rail rather than road. He also fully supported action being taken in relation to the shared use path between Sawston (Cambridge Road) to Stapleford. It was quite clear that the present surface of this path was not very good. He hoped that the funding would be sufficient to do a proper job on the path rather than a simple resurfacing with a thin coat of material on top of the existing surface. This was an important path used by cyclists particularly students going to and from Sawston Village College and people cycling to employment - some going to Sawston and some travelling from Sawston in the general direction of Cambridge. However, if this route between Sawston and Stapleford was to be improved then serious consideration should be given to siting the path on the eastern side of the road so that cyclists (and pedestrians) would not have to cross the Sawston bypass northern junction at a place where traffic could legally travel at up to 60 miles per hour.

He passed on his unqualified support for a new cycleway between the Sawston roundabout and Whittlesford station and for improving the quality of access by cycle and by foot between Sawston and Stapleford. In the latter case his first preference would be for a dual use path on the eastern side of the road which he believed would be safer and more extensively used than the present dual use path. If relocating this path was not possible, then he would fully support a proper reconstruction of the path to produce a much better surface coupled with the installation of safety barriers in both directions near the crossing point at the bypass junction where the path runs very close to and almost parallel to the roadway. Members were informed that it was unlikely that there would be sufficient funding for some of these suggestions. It was noted that cyclists would still need to cross the bypass further north.

Also speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Bard explained that there was a ready-made underpass in the shape of the railway bridge and only a small strip of land would need to be acquired. He supported locating the path on the eastern side

of the road, as this would ensure that cyclists entered Sawston at the signalled controlled junction. Members were informed that any land acquisition was unlikely within the limited time frame. Councillor Bard expressed concern about the historic drainage problem on Huckeridge Hill, which included mud deposits and standing water on the cycleway/footpath. It was noted that officers would investigate the whole route. Finally, he welcomed the proposed connection with Whittlesford Station.

Members noted Councillor Williamson's comments relating to the safety of the exit from the "Halingway" onto Clayhithe Bridge. He had asked for the final few metres at the north end of this path to be diverted to the west so that the exit did not come out just on the bridge. It could also possibly link up with the bridleway around the eastern side of the Waterbeach Millennium Wood. Members were informed that it was proposed to use the existing bridleway to Waterbeach station.

Speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Coston highlighted the need to prevent quad bikes and motorcyclists from accessing the improved path. Members noted that the Disability Discrimination Act could make it difficult to restrict motorcyclists, as it could inadvertently exclude wheelchairs. She also explained that there was no link to the station from the Clayhithe Bridge bridleway. It was noted that officers would consider the attractiveness of on road provision at an appropriate exit.

The Joint Committee requested clarification of the surface being used for the "Halingway". It was noted that it would be a sealed surface covering the whole length of the towing path. The section between the Pike and Eel pub and Baits Bite Lock would be of a higher standard due to the number of users.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) note recent progress in the development of the National Cycle Network;
- (b) endorse the construction of an improved surface to "The Halingway" downstream of the Pike and Eel public house in Chesterton, the cycleway between Sawston and Stapleford, and a cycle link from the Sawston roundabout to Whittlesford Station; and
- (c) note the extremely limited time frame for the scheme to be carried out to completion.

Chairman



## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Conservation Advisory Group held on  
Wednesday, 27 October 2004 at 10.20am

PRESENT: Councillor SJ Agnew – Chairman  
Councillor NN Cathcart – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Mrs CA Hunt Dr JPR Orme  
RJ Turner NIC Wright

and Councillor Mrs JM Healey (Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder).

Councillors RF Bryant and Mrs DSK Spink MBE were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr JA Heap.

### **1. FORMER COUNCILLOR RGR SMITH**

The Chairman of the Conservation Advisory Group paid tribute to former Councillor RGR Smith, who had been a member of the Advisory Group and who had resigned from the Council for personal reasons relating to conflicts of interest.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor SJ Agnew declared a personal interest in Minute no. 7 (Linear Sites Project) as Chairman of the Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke.

### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Conservation Advisory Group authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2004.

In relation to Minute no. 7 (Chapel Orchard, Orwell Village Green Space – consideration of Management Plan), the Conservation Manager stated that a site visit to enable Members to see the position prior to development would be finalised as soon as outstanding legal work had been concluded. The intention was to make a photographic record of both this site and one at Elsworth as part of the Council's overall Community Strategy.

In relation to Minute no. 8 (English Heritage support – redundant Church of St. Denis, East Hatley), a recent inspection carried out by an architect instructed by English Heritage had revealed that the roof timbers were not in as poor condition as originally feared. A formal offer of grant aid would be subject to the decision of a committee of English Heritage, due to meet on 15 November 2004. If grant aid (up to 50% of the anticipated cost of repairs) was forthcoming, the Council would invite tenders in early 2005 for repairs based on both a corrugated iron roof and tiles.

In relation to Minute no. 11 (National Heritage Awards Scheme), the Conservation Manager stated that entries were still being received. The Chairman of the Advisory Group suggested extending the deadline, and inviting local Members to identify potential entrants in their wards.

**4. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WOODLAND TRUST PROJECTS IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE - "THE FOREST OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE"**

The Conservation Advisory Group considered a report outlining proposals to develop major new countryside access projects in South Cambridgeshire, and received a PowerPoint presentation from Liz McLelland, Regional Development Officer with the Woodland Trust.

Members established that:

- Mechanisms were in place to ensure that the Trust's aspirations for a large wooded area did not override the continued importance of identifying, supporting and developing smaller, community-based woods
- The Trust was eager to include local people and organisations, such as parish councils, in the planning of local woods, highlighting such things as landscape changes and future public access
- The principal aim of the proposal was to promote the ecological aspects and public enjoyment of woodland, using native species of trees where possible. Formal management, as a way of renewing the woodland, was not a priority.
- It was anticipated that tree planting would commence in late 2006 with substantial school involvement
- The rationale behind the Trust's choice of site for the proposed woodland was the offer of land and the chance of linking a number of areas of ancient woodland
- It was hoped that funding would be in place by the end of 2005

The Portfolio Holder welcomed the proposal and, in particular, its involvement of schoolchildren and focus on "planting trees instead of houses."

The Chairman of the Advisory Group reminded those present that funding could be helped by the appropriate drafting of Section 106 Legal Agreements.

The Conservation Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder:

- (1) Supports, in principle, the development of the Woodland Trust's ambitions to create substantial new woodlands in South Cambridgeshire, and invites the Trust to present more detailed plans (as and when developed) for examination and consideration by the Conservation Advisory Group; and
- (2) identifies appropriate funding sources, across portfolios, which might contribute to the implementation of the scheme, and develops a strategy supporting the initiatives, initially over a three year period.

**5. THE MONUMENT MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE: APRIL - OCTOBER 2004 AND 2005/06.**

The Conservation Advisory Group considered a report on progress being made with the Monument Management Project (MMP) in 2004/05, and received a PowerPoint presentation from Adrian Scruby of the Archaeology Department of Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Conservation Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED**

- (1) that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder endorse Option 5(b) set out in the report from the Conservation Manager, and supports the allocation of £3,000 from the Archaeology Grants budget as a contribution to the Monument Management Programme in 2005/06 and the following two financial years, with a review of the allocation each year; and
- (2) that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder Invite the County Archaeologists to continue to present a six month progress report to the Conservation Advisory Group and Portfolio Holder on the on-going Monument Management Programme during 2005/06 and possible initiatives for the year for consideration and prioritisation for the future development of the project.

## 6. **COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS**

The Conservation Advisory Group considered a report on progress being made with the Community Archaeological Projects initiative, which it established in April 2004, and received a PowerPoint presentation from Adrian Scruby of the Archaeology Department of Cambridgeshire County Council.

As part of a general discussion, it was agreed that local Members and communities should be proactive in identifying potential projects worthy of receiving a small grant intended to assist in procuring, for example, some professional advice. The scheme could also be promoted in the *South Cambs' Magazine*.

The Conservation Advisory Group reaffirmed its support for the work of the Community Archaeology Project during the remainder of 2004/05, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder invites the County Archaeologists to present a full progress report and Review to the Conservation Advisory Group in April 2005, prior to commitment to further initiatives in 2005/06.

## 7. **LINEAR SITES PROJECT - FLEAM DYKE**

The Conservation Advisory Group considered a report on the Linear Sites' Project, and received a PowerPoint presentation from Adrian Scruby of the Archaeology Department of Cambridgeshire County Council.

In response to a question about a maintenance regime for the site, it was stated that Cambridgeshire County Council had a statutory duty to keep Rights of Way accessible and was also engaged in scrub clearance.

Members felt that, while it was appropriate to have some interpretation boards on site, numbers should be restricted, they should be in keeping with the character of the area and, so far as possible, should be vandal-proof.

The Conservation Advisory Group reaffirmed its support for the work of the Linear Sites Project – Fleam Dyke during the remainder of 2004/05 and **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder invites Cambridgeshire Archaeology to present a progress report to the Conservation Advisory Group on the project and any future initiatives related to the Dyke early in April 2005, to

enable further consideration and prioritisation.

## 8. **CONSULTATION ON PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 9: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION**

The Conservation Advisory Group considered a report outlining the contents of the draft Planning Policy Statement no.9 (PPS9), and introducing some key elements of the draft Government Circular entitled *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system*.

Distributing copies of PPS9, the Ecology Officer expressed his wish to get some national recognition for the work being carried out at Cambourne.

Members acknowledged the need for a carefully balanced approach, given the potential for conflicts between a number of different pressures within the same area. Clarification was needed and, at this stage, the most useful role Members could play would be to monitor the situation as it unfolded. The Leader of the Council also urged officers to approach neighbouring local authorities and Cambridgeshire Horizons in order to agree a joint approach to PPS9.

The Chairman of the Advisory Group and the Portfolio Holder thanked the Ecology Officer for his précis of Planning Policy Statement no. 9.

The Conservation Advisory Group endorsed option iv set out in the report from the Conservation Manager, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder submits a formal response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in consultation with the Ecology Officer.

## 9. **PROPOSED PARISH TREE INITIATIVE - 2005-2006**

The Conservation Advisory Group considered a report outlining proposals by South Cambridgeshire District Council for a Parish Tree Initiative whereby, in consultation with Parish Councils, selected sites would be enhanced by tree planting and, if appropriate, quality trees in need of remedial attention would be considered for tree surgery works to ensure their longevity.

It was anticipated that appropriate Parish Councils might be identified through liaison with the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils (CALC), and publicity in the *South Cambs' Magazine*. Officers would monitor progress on a year-on-year basis.

Members were keen to preserve some flexibility in the selection of trees, principally in connection with cost, and asked officers to explore options for securing guarantees from suppliers as to tree quality, and acknowledging the District Council's promotion of the scheme, perhaps on plaques located nearby.

Members asked officers to reconsider the nature of land qualifying for the scheme, both in terms of profile and ownership, arguing that the principal factor to be taken into account should be that of public accessibility.

The Conservation Advisory Group endorsed the report, subject to minor amendment as referred to in this Minute, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder authorises the adoption of the Parish Tree Initiative, and that a pilot scheme be implemented in 2005-2006.

**10. TREE AND HEDGEROW PARTNERSHIP - 2005-06**

The Trees and Landscape Officer summarised the background to the partnership, highlighting progress in seeking its continuation, following the withdrawal of support from Cambridgeshire County Council. He outlined a proposal from the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group to oversee a scheme, based on the previous one but focussed on farmland.

Precise costing had yet to be finalised.

The Conservation Advisory Group supported the principle of a pilot scheme being implemented in 2005-2006, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder identifies an appropriate budget and level of financial support.

**11. HISTORIC BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA ENHANCEMENT GRANTS POLICY PROPOSED REVISIONS - 2005/06.**

The Conservation Advisory Group considered a report reviewing the criteria for assessing grant applications for the repair or restoration of historic buildings.

The Group noted a Member's plea to subsidise traditional rural crafts, such as thatching, and received an explanation of the processes involved in harvesting and working with both long straw and combed long straw.

The Vice-Chairman welcomed the initiative as a way of preserving traditional roofing methods, and urged the Council to encourage the sourcing of materials locally, where possible. Ways of promoting the scheme included the *South Cambs' Magazine* and specialist insurance companies.

The Conservation Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED**

- (1) that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder authorise the amendment of the Historic Building Grant policy to accommodate an increase in potential grant contributions for the repair of thatch, as outlined in the report from the Conservation Manager, from April 2005, in accordance with the adopted thatch repair policy and subject to the availability of resources; and
- (2) that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder instruct the Conservation Manager to update the guidance leaflet on the grant programme to include the adopted thatching policy and promoting the changes to the grant programme; and
- (3) that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder authorise the Conservation Manager to write to all local interested parties, including thatching companies, to remind them about the policy and advise them about the forthcoming changes in relation to available grants

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**The Meeting ended at 12.55 p.m.**

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