

Councillors Geoff Harvey and Henry Batchelor

## **Councillor's Report - April 2020**

We hope that you and your families are all keeping safe at this difficult time. There is only one subject and that is how we are all working to prevent the spread of Covid-19. We know about all the good work going on in the villages to support the vulnerable and elderly. Well done everyone, keep up the good work.

### **South Cambs District Council**

You will have been bombarded with advice from all quarters, we certainly have. Do please work with the SCDC Patch Manager, Sarah Grove, who is coordinating the effort in our area. Her contact is: [duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk) and, of course, we are available to help where ever we can. If emailing Sarah, please put 'Patch 1' into the subject line, so that it gets to the right person faster.

### **Cambridgeshire County Council**

The County Council has a 'hub' online where information regarding volunteers can be accessed - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/covid-19-coordination-hub-your-community-needs-you> - also a simple online search should find you the correct webpage. This is a hub for links to volunteer support as well as help/advice for businesses.

A few practical points about carrying on the work of your parish councils:

### **Remote Working and Voting**

At the time of writing, 1 April, the situation was that the act that went through parliament gave the government the power to change the rules to allow meeting to be held remotely and to have the ability to vote without having to have a quorum of people physically in a room. The government has not yet actioned these powers, so the situation has not changed. We are being told that new rules will come into force 'any day now'. We will just have to wait until that happens.

At the District Council we are unable to hold meetings or make decisions until these new rules come in.

### **Planning**

As of now the District Council cannot hold Planning Committee meetings or process requests from Parish's or Members asking for applications to go to committee. There is a growing backlog of application that will have to wait until we have the legal framework in place to deal with them

However, the planning process is still working, Planning Officers are taking decisions where the delegation rules allow. Which are most applications.

Parish Councils should continue to process planning applications that come to them. This can be done remotely as you are being consulted and asked for your recommendation. The decisionmaker is the District Council so the issue over the voting rules, in this case, do not apply to the Parish Council. However, there may be variations on this depending on your own Standing Orders. NALC is a good source for further guidance: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

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