

JANUARY 2023

STILTON PARISH COUNCIL

We hope everyone managed to have lovely Christmas in spite of the ever-growing financial pressures that are being faced. It was lovely to see so many Christmas decorations around the village, which does create a wonderful feel-good factor.

At our December meeting, one of the major discussions surrounded the Planning Application to Huntingdon District Council by Bellway to build 70 further houses. The Parish Council was concerned that the application documentation did not include comments from the Lead Local Flood Authority, Anglian Water or Highways, as a flood risk should and needs to be addressed. There is further worry about the current infrastructure being overwhelmed by all the additional houses.

We continue to have concerns about road safety too and have requested that the developers be asked to provide a zebra or pelican crossing across North Street. North Street is a wide road and children and elderly people need to be able to cross safely to access the shop, hairdressers, school and Church, etc. The Parish Council also felt a roundabout at the junction to North Street is required. We reminded Huntingdon District Council that Stilton has no pre-school provision and the high quality public transport system claimed in the application is untrue due to the cuts in the 904 service and the unreliability of buses.

The Parish Council recommended REFUSAL. Our response to the application was quite detailed and the above are just a few of the points that were made. The full response can be read on our website at stiltonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Still on the subject of road safety, Tim Alban arranged a meeting between Jez Tuttle from Cambridgeshire County Council and the Stilton Parish Council's Traffic and Parking Working Group (which is made up of residents and councillors). This meeting concentrated on North Street and the issues with parking, speeding traffic and difficulty for some residents being able to cross the road safely. Jez Tuttle said he found the on-site meeting very helpful because he could see the problems that we face and he is going to report back with his advice and suggestions.

In 2022, the Parish Council looked at applying for an LHI (Local Highways Improvement) bid for a 20mph zone near the school and nearby roads but the initial cost was excessive, so we undertook a feasibility study as an initial step forward. Subsequently, Cambridgeshire County Council has put forward Stilton as a village to be considered for a blanket 20mph zone. There will be another formal consultation early this year on the proposed scheme, which also now includes a 40mph buffer zone along Caldecote Road as you approach the village. This was added as a result of comments from residents from the initial consultation so it is well worth passing on your feedback.

Many of you may be aware the swimming pool at Sawtry closed its doors on 31 December 2022 due to financial pressures. The pool is no longer owned by the council and is now owned by Meridian Trust. We believe both Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council should be trying to get this decision reversed as we understand the plan to close will be revisited again in the spring. The Parish Council is writing to express our concern in taking away the opportunity for our young people to learn to swim. Local primary schools have taken pupils to the pool at Sawtry for swimming lessons since the late 1960s. Swimming is an essential life skill, and the opportunity to learn should be provided, so we ask you to join us in writing to Huntingdon District Council to put pressure on the councils help save this local facility and keep our young swimming.

The Coronation of King Charles III will be on Saturday 6 May 2023 and there will be a Bank holiday on Monday 8 May 2023. Following the huge success of the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations we have been asked if a similar celebration could be arranged to celebrate the Coronation of our new King. This is an enticing idea but it will need far more people to come forward to volunteer to help (and turn up on the day!) if this is to happen. We are willing and hope you are too! Please let us, or Tianda Woolner, know as soon as possible as May 2023 will come round very quickly.

We had the first of our Village Meetings in the Pavilion on 4th January 2023 to introduce village groups and clubs to Stilton's Neighbourhood Plan. It was a very social evening. All residents were warmly invited but if you missed it, there will be additional meetings soon. Further details will be posted on the Stilton Parish Council website, Facebook and village notice boards.

We conclude with an apology: last month we referred to the Open Gardens being organised by the Gardening Club which was incorrect. The Open Gardens Weekend is being organised by a Working Group made up of members from the Gardening Club, the YES group and the Church. This will be a wonderful weekend for the village.

We wish you all a Happy New Year and welcome you to attend the first Parish Council meeting of the year tomorrow night at 7.30pm in the Church Meeting Room. The agenda can be found on our website.