**District Councillor’s Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC May 2019**

**Community Chest Grants**

I have previously vowed to many of my residents that I will continue to make the case that a cut off of 160 electors is too low and that using the number of electors in my view is an inappropriate criterion, as not all residents are able to vote and thereby not being on the electoral roll. I also believe that given council tax is paid on a household basis, this ought to be the appropriate method of measurement. At a recent Grants advisory committee meeting I raised this once again and am pleased to say there was general consensus that this ought to be looked at as part of the Community Chest Review. I very much hope that I shall be able to report in the future that more parish councils will have access to the grant and on a fairer criterion. While this is in the gift of others at this time, I will continue to campaign for more parishes to qualify.

**Cambridge Airport**

There is a possibility of Marshall’s Aerospace and Defence Group relocating. This could lead to the Cambridge Airport Site being redeveloped for housing. The next local plan for our area will be a joint plan between Cambridge city and South Cambs District Council. One of the three potential sites for Marshalls to relocate to is Duxford airport. There has not been a formal planning application submitted, but the councils and Marshalls are beginning talks.

**Retail Rate Relief**

In the Government’s Autumn Budget, a scheme was announced for the next two years that enables small retailers to apply for a Retail Discount to their Business Rates, potentially this can create a reduction in a business’ rates bill of a third. The types of businesses that can benefit from this are Shops, Restaurants, Cafes, bars and pubs in England. I very much welcome this news as I know how important these vital facilities are to our villages.

**Fly-Tipping**

There has recently been an increase in fly-tipping through the district including an estimated 30 tonnes dumped on private land near Fulbourn. Some of the fly-tipping being witnessed by our Environment Enforcement Officers is being described as ‘industrial-scale’. A request I and others are making is if residents can check that operators collecting rubbish are properly registered waste carriers, this can be done via the link below.

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>

**Audit of 2018 accounts**

It has now been reported to Councillors that the year ending March 2018 accounts (due to be audited by July 2018) are not expected to be audited until August 2019, this has been a key concern for many councillors especially when we had not had an audit and corporate governance meeting for over six months. There will now be an Audit Task and Finish Group that I will be involved in to monitor this as closely as possible. This does mean that we know the March 2019 accounts will be late also. Though there are no financial penalties for Local Government bodies filing late accounts there are extra external auditor costs expected as a 5-6 number figure. This is something that I feel the administration ought to be taking very seriously, and I hope to see an improvement. This is particularly concerning in my view due to the economic frailty of the budget that was approved (though I personally voted against) in February.

**Cllr Heather Williams**

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