**District Councillor’s Report to Parish Councils for The Mordens Ward SCDC**

**The Council**

There is a full council meeting on 28th September, the public are welcome to attend council meetings. Questions from the public can be entered in writing, to find out more on how to do this please get in touch.

**Planning & Housing**

We continue to refuse applications on the basis of a 5 year land supply, the independent inspectors report is now back and has approved our Local Plan, I am hopeful that we shall be able to adopt the Local plan at the full council meeting this month. I have spoken to John Koch who is team west leader in the SCDC planning department will be coming to The Mordens ward on Tuesday 9th October and Wednesday 24th October. Meetings will start at 7.30pm with the venues to be confirmed. I am also hoping that an officer from the Housing department will also give a short presentation on affordable housing options where the parish councils can be actively involved, for example exception sites. If anyone has specific questions in relation to planning department or affordable housing then please do send them to myself in advance and we can incorporate them within the agenda, there will also be a Q&A at the end however in case.

**Community Chest Grants**

During September’s cabinet meeting the recommendations for the new community chest criteria were agreed and the scheme will re-open by the end of Autumn. Half the funding will be available in April and the second half will become available in October. The scheme will be closed to parish Councils with more than 160 electors. I raised the issue of allowing smaller parish councils the ability to apply at the Grants Advisory committee, so I am pleased that an allowance has been made however I do hope that the cut off of 160 is extended when the scheme is next reviewed, as currently parishes there are still small parishes that will not be able to apply. Something for parish councils to be aware of is that there is an expectation for the parish councils to pay 50% towards schemes on parish council land. At the last Cabinet meeting I asked if the parish councils that were below a population of 160 electors would be exempt from this also however this is not the case so all precepting parish councils/meetings will be expected to fund 50% of schemes on their land. The reasoning for this has been given that Parish Councils are able to raise funding via their dedicated council tax precepts. If anyone has feedback they would like me to pass on about this then please do get in touch, I’m really keen to hear your views.

**Environment**

The refuse collection team have worked incredibly hard throughout this summer's heatwave period. There are more than 150 frontline bin collection staff with each crew emptying up to 1,300 bins each day. On average each refuse collector will walk around 12 miles per shift. If you combine this with often moving heavy bins from kerbside to refuse truck the job really does make for hard work, especially during a heatwave while wearing thick protective clothing.

As the weather starts to become more autumnal please try to place your bins where they can be accessed easily and safely.

Contamination continues to be an issue so please do join the wash and squash campaign.

**Policing**

There will be a police surgery in The Mordens on 26th September, when I have further details I shall pass these as soon as possible.

**Universal Credit**

Universal credit rollout is ever nearer with the roll out due 17th October. SCDC is encouraging anyone who has any particular concerns over UC or has concerns this could get them into difficulty to get in touch as soon as possible.

**Council Tax**

I would like to thank residents, businesses and revenues staff as SCDC for the last financial year, came third out of 326 Councils for collecting Council Tax on-time.

Overall, £107 million in Council Tax was due to be collected by the Council on behalf of itself, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner’s office, Fire Authority and parish councils. Also, SCDC came 25th out of the 326 authorities for Business Rates collection. This was for collecting 99.4% of Business Rates on-time.

Councillors are thanking residents and businesses for paying their bills on time and encouraging anyone having difficulties making payments to contact the Council early for support and advice before debts begin to accumulate, part of this success is due to how revenues staff work with those who are struggling, please do not struggle alone we are here to help.

Heather

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