

County Council report to Buckden Parish Council, April 13th, 2021

- a. The County Council held its last full meeting of this four-year term on March 16th. As to be expected, there were no dramatic innovations at this stage in the council cycle but there were motions on creating a 'Biosphere' in the Fens, on the Council's actions as a land developer, the poor deal that Cambridgeshire gets from government grants and an attempt (unsuccessful)n to get the Council to pay its employees the 'real living wage'.
- b. The Council committees have been continuing to meet via Zoom. Their work has been dominated by Covid – looking after adults and their social care workers, getting children back to school, supporting the vaccination programme. Highlight reports are available for anybody who has a special interest in any aspect of the County's work and I will be pleased to supply those on request.
- c. The County Council now faces an unsettling few months: the once-in-four years election may alter the balance of political power; in addition Shire Hall, the CCC HQ for decades, is already closed and has been sold. The council will move to new buildings in Alconbury Weald but these may not be available until September.
- d. The over-riding priority at the moment is to ensure that the elections on May 6th, which include the Mayoral election postponed from last year and the Police and Crime Commissioner, can be carried out safely. There will be restrictions in place at the polling stations to prevent cross-infection.
- e. The early plans for a dualling of the A428 from Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet have been published. Although this new stretch of road will not go through the parish, I recommend that you keep in touch with the proposals, not least because the Highways England planners said it would have an effect on your A1 roundabout. This might strengthen your claim for measures to be taken.
- f. This will be my last meeting as the County Councillor for Buckden so I would like to place on record my appreciation of the courtesy and interest you have shown in the reports I have presented for you. My special thanks go to your Clerk and the various Chairpersons of the last four years. I have learnt a lot from being your councillor and I hope I have been able to make a useful contribution to the community over the past four years. I am acutely aware of the problems I have not been able to solve, e.g. the A1 roundabout traffic jam.
- g. Buckden is a very fortunate village in that it has a lot of good facilities, a vibrant (in normal times) social and artistic life, many supportive voluntary associations and a very well-informed and committed parish council. I wish you success in all your ambitions for the village.

The current requirements in terms of social distancing etc continue to make it very difficult for me to carry out my normal expectation in terms of local casework but I am always pleased to be copied in to correspondence and, if appropriate, I can give my support or guidance, albeit remotely!

Contact me on 01480 509471, peter.downes@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Peter Downes, April 6th, 2021