

## Annual General Meeting

The Design Group held its 2014 AGM on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March at Cottenham Community Centre.

Prior to the formal part of the meeting a couple of guest speakers introduced the major transport infrastructure improvements that are planned for the area.

## Committee 2014-15

Steven Poole

*Chair & Membership Secretary*

John Williams

*Vice Chair*

Robin Heydon

*Treasurer*

Alex Darby

*Planning Comments Coordinator*

Alexander Thoukydides

*Secretary & Information Officer*

Cllr Alan Leeks

*Cottenham Parish Council nominee*

Mike Smith

*Fen Edge Community Association nominee*

Kerry Hunt

Bill Miller

Cllr Tim Wotherspoon

## Committee Vacancies

There are several empty committee positions, up to three of which may be filled by co-option. If you might be interested in joining the committee then please contact Steven Poole on 01954 203961 or at [steven.j.poole@ntlworld.com](mailto:steven.j.poole@ntlworld.com).

## A14 Improvements

Marcus Thompson from Jacobs Engineering gave an update on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme. The cost of the scheme is now estimated at £1.5 billion, covering both improvements to the A14 between Ellington to Milton, as well as to the stretch of A1(M) from Brampton to Alconbury. The idea of tolling has been rejected following complaints that it would increase rat running and be perceived as a tax on local businesses.



A public consultation was held from 7<sup>th</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> June. This will lead to a Development Consent Order (DCO) application around October. The Secretary of State is expected to make a decision February 2016, allowing for construction to start December 2016. The upgraded road should be open to traffic by 2020.



A smaller scheme to remove pinch points on the A14 is already underway. This adds extra lanes between Girton and Histon.

## Science Park Station

Chris Poultney from Cambridgeshire County Council discussed the history and plans for a station on Chesterton sidings. The idea was first proposed in the early 1990s, but the scheme in its current form originated in 2001.



The intention is to build a transport interchange rather than a regional hub, so it will be smaller than Cambridge station. Some trains that currently terminate at Cambridge will be extended to the new station, but it is primarily intended to be an extra stop on services that continue to King's Lynn.



A public square will join the station building to a 450 space car park, taxi drop-off area, bicycle parking, and a (guided) bus interchange. The two platforms will be accessed from the station building via a bridge; there will be stairs and lifts, but no escalators.

Planning permission has been obtained. The station was expected to be operational towards the end of 2015, but this has now been delayed until May 2016.





### Planning Summary

Recent years have seen a fairly consistent level of development in Cottenham.

A large proportion of the applications are for extensions or alterations to existing domestic property; this remains much as previous years. The rest of the applications are generally a mix of small and large scale applications for new housing and such.

There have been approximately 64 planning applications made for development within the parish per year since I took over from Steven Poole (as the planning comments coordinator) just over three and a half years ago, with this year on-target for a similar number. This is slightly lower than in the previous few years which had averaged around 74.

Of these applications the Design Group makes comments on around

70% of them, with some proportion of these being 'no comments'.

The Design Group continue to monitor all applications for development within the parish. We prepare and submit comments to the planning authority when appropriate, these are always based solely on the principles and guidelines set out in the Village Design Statement. Copies of the comments are available on our website and in paper form at the local library. Development proposals, especially within the Conservation Area, are mainly of a good quality and in-line with the Design Statement, however on occasion we do have to prepare negative comments, with sound reasoning attached, to ensure that proposals are of a good quality and will sit well within the generally good quality of development which we all enjoy.

As mentioned, a number continue to be for development, or re-development, of small parcels of land within the village. Permission has been granted for at least 70 new dwellings on such sites during the last three years; a number of these are currently being built.

The most visible in the village at the moment is the one on the corner of Long Drove and Landbeach Road which is currently being constructed. The Design Group were initially invited to meet the developer's agents for a presentation on this scheme in 2011 and subsequently prepared a number of detailed comments. It is possible that there will be differing views on the quality of this development on completion, but the overall aim of the group in commenting on the application was to protect the appearance of the village edge in this location, to ensure the houses being provided were of a good design and to maintain the quality of Long Drove at this location as a village asset for walking and enjoyment of the surrounding countryside.

I must also mention recent, perhaps controversial, plans to increase the size of the village (made as a forerunner to the development of a local plan (which sets planning policies in a local authority area)). As most of you will know, these proposals were intended to bring many benefits to the village, but many saw them as a counter productive and a threat to the existing village. Such a development would have significantly added to our traffic problems and would have greatly impacted the landscape to

*(continues on next page)*

**COTTENHAM VILLAGE DESIGN GROUP**

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### Planning Application Comments

All planning applications for Cottenham are viewed by the Village Design Group. Where appropriate comments are submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council by two members of the Group. Copies of these comments are also sent to the Parish Council and deposited in Cottenham Library.

These comments assess applications in relation to the principals set out in the Village Design Statement and adopted by the District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. Members draw on their local knowledge and experience to interpret these principals.

The aim of this process is not to prevent change, although we do sometimes object to applications, but to enter a positive dialogue with the aim of producing better developments. This process also helps the group to monitor changing trends in planning and to assess the effectiveness of the Design Statement in relation to these.

View the full [code of conduct](#) for planning comments.

Subject to conditions, the Group may also agree to respond to requests for [informal advice](#).

#### Comments

Available for download below in pdf format:

**2014**

**Weeks 1-5** (104k .pdf)

**Weeks 6-7** (88k .pdf)

**2013**

**Weeks 1-3** (104k .pdf)

**Weeks 4-6** (104k .pdf)

**Weeks 7-9** (104k .pdf)

**Weeks 10-12** (104k .pdf)

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# Cottenham Village Design Group

## Newsletter Issue 19 – October 2014 (cont.)

the north of the village. The Design Group opposed this type of major development for many reasons and these were generally discussed at the public meeting preceding our AGM last year. It was our most successful event to date.

We also continue to monitor the surrounding area for proposals that may equally impact the landscape, such as those related to the Minerals and Waste Plans of Cambridgeshire County Council. The impact on the landscape from these being seen as quite damaging to the open fen-edge views currently enjoyed from footpaths to the north of the village especially.

Finally, a great number of alterations are made within the village for which no application is required (and no comments are made or sought). The decisions taken by householders on replacement windows, position of satellite dishes and routing of external cabling can have a detrimental effect on the quality of the village as a whole; this is especially felt within the conservation area.

The quality of the conservation area depends upon the care which individual owners take with the maintenance and repair of their properties and in any alterations or extensions they make. The general presumption is that the materials used in any works are a match to those used in the original construction of the property; this is especially pertinent presently as we have seen a number of properties 'improved' with UPVC replacement windows which does unfortunately have a negative impact on the area, if not on heating bills! We should all

strive to maintain the quality of our local built environment where possible and it is pleasing when preparing comments to see the care that is generally made with the proposals.

The planning comments are prepared by a small team of individuals from the Design Group, but we would welcome other interested individuals becoming a part of this process (help with the reading of plans etc. can be given, as not everybody finds such document readily understandable). Please get in touch with me at [ajd100@btinternet.com](mailto:ajd100@btinternet.com) if you are interested or if you would like any further information on our comments process etc.

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### Cottenham Village Design Group

#### Planning application comments

**S/0032/14/FL**  
**22 Rampton Road Cottenham - Rear extension, part two storey part single-storey**

The proposals are aiming to create a large double fronted property from an existing single sided house. The extensions are quite large and it is noted that the plot has recently been subdivided to form a site for a large executive home behind it, now built.

As the new extension to the front elevation is not set back from the face of the existing house there is a danger that this could appear out of keeping with the original. To achieve a good finish the applicant should take care to ensure that the bricks are a good match to the originals and that the mortar is a good match as well, some repointing may be required to achieve the design intent.

'B/2: Buildings should be maintained using original or sympathetic materials and details. Brickwork should be retained in its original state, characteristically unpainted. The colour of the mortar should be carefully applied. The colour of the mortar is close in tone, but just a little lighter than the brick itself.' (Design Statement p.18/19)

'B/3: Relationships between buildings are as important as the design of buildings themselves. Pointing should not over-pack the mortar and should be carefully applied. The colour of the mortar is close in tone, but just a little lighter than the brick itself.' (Design Statement p.18/19)

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'B/4: Extensions should remain in scale with the original building and are usually most successful when matching materials are specified. Setting back walls or lowering the roofline of extensions can help to reduce apparent bulk.' (Design Statement p.19)

**S/0027/14/FL**  
**57 High Street, Cottenham - Proposed conversion of existing outbuilding to form annexe**

In the conversion from outbuildings to annexe, we welcome the use of matching materials such as featheredge boarding, stained timber windows and doors to the existing outhouses. The proposed annexe has a pitched slate roof, an improvement over one part of the existing outhouse, which has a flat concrete roof.

'B/5: Reuse barns and outbuildings through conversions where appropriate. Minimise changes to the existing building such that its existing character is maintained. Avoid piercing the facade and roofline; lighting can be achieved by the minimal use of roof lights and by glazing existing openings.' (Design Statement p.19)

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