

# Cllr Lorna Dupré

## MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2020

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### COVID-19

The latest official figures at the time of writing show four patients daily being admitted to hospital with COVID-19 across the six counties of the East of England, and 28 COVID-19 patients currently in hospital in the East of England. In East Cambridgeshire, new laboratory-confirmed cases are down to one per day, with 0-2 positive cases currently in Little Downham & Sutton, and 0-2 cases in Haddenham, Stretham & Witchford.

These figures are encouraging, however the usual basic precautions of hand-washing, mask-wearing, and social distancing continue to apply if we are to avoid a second wave of the virus over winter.

The Government's decision to issue fresh guidance to schools on Friday 28 August, at the start of the bank holiday weekend and just days before the start of the autumn term, on coping with COVID-19 outbreaks and local lockdowns, has been described by the head teachers' union NAHT as 'reprehensible'. There will be four stages of response, depending on the level of virus cases in the area:

1. All pupils attend as normal.
2. Secondary schools and colleges move to rotas, with students alternating a fortnight attending and a fortnight at home. Primary schools remain open to all.
3. Most secondary pupils learn from home as secondary schools and colleges are only open to vulnerable children, the children of key workers and selected year groups.
4. All schools switch to remote learning, except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers, and students at alternative provision and special schools.

Another issue will be the return to university in the autumn, with hundreds of thousands of young adults moving around the country, in some cases to or from areas of local lockdown, studying together, and living at close quarters in halls of residence.

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### Solar Together

Households across Cambridgeshire will soon have the opportunity to club together to buy and install solar panels at a reduced price.

The County Council and District Councils have joined forces with Solar Together as part of the initiative to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon

emissions. From Tuesday 1 September households and small and medium-sized enterprises can register for free and without obligation for the group-buying scheme. When they register online for their complete solar PV system, applicants will be asked questions about their house, roof, and electricity usage.

The County Council will then arrange an auction with pre-vetted installers on Tuesday 6 October. The auction is a reverse auction, meaning the lowest bid wins. The winning bid sets the price for all solar systems and battery systems. All installers are pre-vetted and must comply with certain criteria to guarantee the quality of the offer.

After the auction, applicants will receive a personal recommendation based on their registration details. They then have six weeks to decide if they want to take up the recommendation and proceed with an installation.

Solar panels turn sunlight into electricity. In order to use this energy, the panels mounted on a roof need to be connected to an inverter using cables. The Solar Together offer is for a complete service, including all equipment, survey, installation, monitoring and warranties. Afterwards households or businesses will automatically generate their own electricity from the panels on their roof.

Households that already have solar panels installed can also register to have battery storage added to their existing solar panels to maximise the benefits of their system.

[www.solartogether.co.uk/cambridgeshire](http://www.solartogether.co.uk/cambridgeshire)

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### **Active travel funding**

Government funding for COVID-19 active travel schemes was divided into two tranches. The latest update on schemes in East Cambridgeshire to be delivered in Tranche 1 is as follows.

- Station Road Ely: agreed with the district council, and involves an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to remove parking, with Implementation of segregated cycle lane to follow.
- Cam Drive roundabout Ely: drawings awaited to show what is possible while maintaining adequate space for HGVs to turn.
- Little Green, Cheveley: white lining, not technically compliant with guidance for use of these funds, so implemented by a lining team when they were doing other work in the area.

The following two schemes have been moved to Tranche 2.

- Ely Centre to Ely North: now part of wider Ely City Centre package.
- Clay Street, Soham now part of wider Soham town centre package.

A bid has been submitted by the Combined Authority for funding from Tranche 2 of the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund. For East Cambridgeshire, the bid is £50,000 each for Ely and Soham, for unspecified packages of walking and cycling schemes. For Littleport, Mepal, Stretham, Sutton, Wilburton, Witchford, Witcham, Little Thetford, and Haddenham, there's cycle parking.

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### **Road recycling in Little Downham**

Road recycling and resurfacing works have been scheduled at Beild Drove for three days from Tuesday 1 September, and at Fourth Drove for five days from Thursday 10 September. These dates may change at short notice.

Working times are usually between 7:00AM and 7:00PM Monday to Sunday. During these times, access to properties within the affected area will be maintained though residents will be required to liaise with site traffic management operatives and follow appropriate instructions including awaiting site escort if needed. Some delays should be expected but will be kept to a minimum. At times residents may be required to wait for a short period for a section of work to be completed before they can access their property.

The Council is grateful to vehicle owners for not parking on the highway within the works area.

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### **New Road (BOAT7) Witchford**

At the time of writing the culvert necessary for the making of the new access road to the new houses behind 1-7 Sutton Road Witchford has still not been approved, nor a final drawing agreed.

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### **Welney Wash**

A reminder of the consultation being held by the Environment Agency on when to close the Welney Wash Road for flood barrier installation. The consultation began in March (just before lockdown) and has been extended to the end of September. The Environment Agency says:

"We are asking for your views on when to close the road to build a concrete foundation slab across the Welney Wash Road. This work will allow us to install the demountable flood barrier in, if needed, to help protect the communities from any water spilling from the Ouse Washes.

Please be mindful this barrier (see below schematic) will be installed across the Welney Wash Road only when the Ouse Washes flood and the water level at Welney reaches a predetermined level. When the Ouse Washes flood the Welney Wash Road is and will remain impassable to traffic. This is a flood

barrier that will protect against any water spilling from the washes and becoming a flood threat to the village.

We appreciate that closing the Welney Wash Road will have considerable impact to the local community. We want to reduce that impact as much as possible by working with you to identify the most appropriate time of year to close the road for the construction works. There are times of the year when we are unable to carry out this work, due to bird overwintering and breeding on the Washes (November to March).

We expect that the total construction time will be 14 weeks. Out of these 14 weeks, we will need to close the road for 6-8 weeks.”

The consultation can be found at <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/east-anglia-c-e/welney-wash-road-barrier-work-timings/>

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### **E-scooters and the law**

The law covering e-scooters has become even more unclear since legislation was introduced on Saturday 4 July to allow rental e-scooters on British roads.

E-scooters are personal light electric vehicles (PLEVs), so they are subject to rules regarding MOTs, tax, and licensing, as well as specification requirements. The law allows anyone to own an e-scooter, but not to use it on pavements, cycle paths, or the highway. To do so is to commit an offence carrying a £300 fine and six points on one’s driving licence—which you would need to ride one anywhere except on private land.

Electric bikes and e-scooters will be available in Cambridge from September as part of a year-long trial. Swedish start-up Voi Technology has won the contract to run a trial paid for by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority which it says will create 50 jobs. Hundreds of e-scooters will be available across the city including at park and ride sites with key workers likely to be offered free use.

But if you own your own e-scooter, it will still be illegal for you to ride it on the highway—even in the trial area in Cambridge.

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### **Waterbeach to Cambridge**

Waterbeach to Cambridge is one of four public transport projects being developed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) to deliver a sustainable transport network, enhance quality of life by relieving congestion and improving air quality, and help support the Greater Cambridge economy.

The GCP has recently finished a period of online engagement about the options for Waterbeach to Cambridge and the scheme will now be discussed by the Partnership's Joint Assembly on 10 September and Executive Board in October. The Board will consider which options to take forward to formal consultation later this year when the public will have a further opportunity to input.

This project, along with other GCP public transport, cycling and walking routes around Cambridge, could also form an integral part of the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM).

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### **Stagecoach bus timetable changes**

Changes to the Busway and a number of other Stagecoach service timetables take effect from Sunday 30 August. Details can be found at <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/east/august-30th-service-changes>

Stagecoach say these changes are “to ensure that we’re providing sufficient capacity across our network, ready for the return of schools and colleges and in anticipation for increasing numbers returning to work”.

One of the effects of these changes is to divide the journey from Cambridge to Alconbury, requiring passengers to change at St Ives—hardly good news for people trying to reach the County Council's new HQ at Alconbury.

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### **Ely to Peterborough rail closures**

Essential work to replace wheel timbers on the railway tracks on four bridges at Manea is to take place in the coming months—but will not now mean closing the Ely to Peterborough rail line for the whole of September.

Instead Network Rail will close the line for eleven weekends leaving it open during the working week. The work is now expected to be completed on

- Sunday 6 September
- Weekend of 12/13 September
- Saturday 19 September
- Weekend of 26/27 September
- Weekend of 3/4 October
- Weekend of 10/11 October
- Sunday 25 October
- Weekend of 31 October/1 November
- Weekend of 7/8 November
- Weekend of 21/22 November
- Weekend of 28/29 November

Full timetables will soon be uploaded so passengers can check how their journey will be affected at [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or with their train operator at [www.greateranglia.co.uk](http://www.greateranglia.co.uk), [www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk](http://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk) or [www.eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk)

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## Swaffham Prior heat scheme

Cambridgeshire County Council has now submitted its planning application for a community heating scheme for the village of Swaffham Prior.

The application (20/01016/CCA) is for 'Creation of an Energy Centre to serve the village of Swaffham Prior via a heat supply network. Centre will include a small visitors, education and exhibition space within an existing agricultural building. Erection of solar photovoltaic PV Panels, a borehole ground source heat collector with associated pumps and machinery, landscaping and associated works.'

Details of the project can be found at <https://heatingswaffhamprior.co.uk/>

This is a hugely exciting project which hopes to take the village off oil and onto a more sustainable energy supply, and county council officers and the village community have put in a huge amount of work to bring it to this stage.

There's still a long way to go to make this a reality, but as a member of the County Council's Environment & Sustainability Committee (and its Green Projects Investment Internal Advisory Group) I'll be taking a close interest and wishing the scheme well.

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## Communities Capital Fund

A meeting of the Council's Communities & Partnership Committee on Thursday 3 September is expected to award the last of the £5M Communities Capital Fund which was launched in April. Assuming the recommendations are agreed:

- 13 bids totalling £2.5M were submitted for schemes in East Cambridgeshire, of which only five totalling £1.6M were approved.
  - Two bids totalling £700,000 were submitted for schemes in the Sutton division, neither of which was approved.
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## Mobile library service set to return

Cambridgeshire County Council's mobile libraries are set to make a comeback on Monday 21 September. The fleet will be headed by two brand new vehicles. The service will be returning to its regular stops, but unfortunately access to the vehicle is limited to help keep staff safe, so customers will need to choose books in advance. This can be done

- on the usual reservation service <https://cambridgeshire.spydus.co.uk>
- on the new Select and Collect service which allows you to request a collection of books based on your tastes [https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Select\\_and\\_Collect](https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Select_and_Collect)
- by telephone on 0345 045 5225

Choose the mobile library as a pick up point, and order as far in advance as possible to ensure a selection is ready and issued for you to pick up from your stop - ideally a week in advance, but the service will do its best with forms received after this.

If you have any queries contact [MobileLibraries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:MobileLibraries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

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### **Meet Your Councillor**

Sutton ward district councillor Mark Inskip and I will be holding our virtual surgery via Zoom from 6:30 to 7:30PM on

- Tuesday 8 September
- Tuesday 13 October

Please contact Mark at [mark@markinskip.org.uk](mailto:mark@markinskip.org.uk) to book your timeslot.

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### **Cllr Lorna Dupré**

County Councillor for the Sutton division