

Since the county council election in 2013, no one political party has been in control at Shire Hall and no party has a majority on any of the council's committees.

County Council Budget 2017-18

The County Council carried out a survey in late 2016 regarding its 2017-18 Budget and the willingness of residents to pay an increased Council Tax. A majority of residents were prepared to pay an increase, but only a minority felt that any increase should be greater than 2%.

After a lengthy debate at its budget-setting meeting in February 2017, the County Council decided to support no increase in basic Council Tax and a 2% increase for Social Care. This means an increase in the County Council's portion of Council Tax of about £24 per year for a Band D property, with proportional increases for other Council Tax bands. This 2% rise will bring in an additional £4.8 million.

Social Care budgets all over the country are under great strain, and further financial support for Social Care was announced in the national budget. Cambridgeshire County Council will get an extra £8.33 million for Social Care in 2017-18. This is over and above the additional money raised by the County Council's 2% rise.

Sawston Library

After some delays, work on the new Sawston Library is due to get underway within the next few weeks. Throughout the lengthy process so far, we have always kept a very close watch on funding to ensure that it remained a permanent part of the County Council's budget.

Local Highways Improvement (LHI) Bid by Sawston Parish Council

Sawston Parish Council was one of many parish councils that submitted LHI bids to the County Council. Tony was one of the Panel members who considered and scored these bids, though Panel members could not score schemes in villages that they represent. The Sawston bid was for a pedestrian crossing in New Road near the Village College. We supported this bid and are pleased that it was successful. We also supported the successful bids in previous years for the two pedestrian crossings in Babraham Road and the crossing in Link Road. The Parish Council funds a proportion of the costs of each successful schemes.

We all need to be aware of and respond to a number of possible developments outside the parish boundaries that may have an impact on Sawston or on Sawston residents. One such example is the Cambridge Sporting Village proposals.

Cambridge Sporting Village

The Cambridge Sporting Village is a proposal to build sporting facilities and several hundred houses on land south of the Trumpington Meadows development, though with some facilities on the Hauxton side of the M11. It is associated with the Cambridge Community Stadium proposal, which seeks to develop Cambridge United's Newmarket Road Stadium and immediate surroundings.

It would appear that the main issues relating to the Cambridge Sporting Village application are the special circumstances put forward by the applicants weighed against issues such as loss of Green Belt, loss of high grade agricultural land and the appropriateness of any proposed traffic mitigation measures.

Road maintenance

Residents rightly complain about the state of local roads and pavements, and ask why more is not done.

In 2013 the County Council's Cabinet, of which Tony was a member decided to invest £90 million over 5 years to tackle the poor state of many Cambridgeshire roads. This money was over and above that given to the County Council by national government through the local transport plan. The investment plan was to spend the £90 as follows:

2012 - -2013	£15 million
2013 – 2014	£10 million
2014 -- 2015	£20 million
2015 -- 2016	£20 million
2016 – 2017	£25 million

Tony took over responsibility for highways in mid-2012, and thought it strange that the investment in the second year of the programme was lower than the first. He therefore proposed to the Cabinet that the spending should be re-profiled by bringing £5 million from 2014 – 2015 forward to 2013 – 2014 so that more repairs could be carried out earlier.

The 2013 election result led to the County Council being in no overall control, and the Committee system was introduced from May 2014, with each committee having responsibility for determining the level of spend in its remit.

The Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on 19 August 2014 decided to re-profile spending on road maintenance, and changed the planned £20 million in 2015 – 2016 and £25 million in 2016 - 2017 into £9 million per year for each of the five years from 2015 – 2016 to 2019 – 2020.

So instead of an additional £45 million being spent on road maintenance from 2015 to 2017, only £18 million has been spent, and it is not possible to reduce spending on road maintenance by £27 million in the last two years without it having an effect.

Local Government Boundary Commission – electoral review of the County Council

At last year's APM we reported that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England had carried out a review of County Council divisions and would be making recommendations in September 2016. In the recommendations Sawston will say in the same division, now renamed Sawston and Shelford division, a two-member division enlarged by the addition of Babraham and Haslingfield. The first election to the new county divisions will take place on Thursday.

Tony Orgee and Gail Kenney, County Councillors for Sawston