

Lode Parish Council
Notes of a meeting held on Tuesday 4 August 2015

Purpose: The meeting was held in response to an offer from recently-elected MP Lucy Frazer to make herself available to the PC in order to introduce herself and listen to Cllr's concerns.

Present: Mrs Lucy Frazer MP, Cllrs C Rickard (Chairman) and E Mitchell, Mr M Lord, Mr R Stevens and Mr A Tomlinson (Clerk).

Apologies: Cllrs P Dean, F Platten and J McNeely.

Introduction:

Cllr Rickard welcomed Mrs Frazer to the meeting and apologised for the small attendance. Mrs Frazer responded by saying that she was attending a number of such meetings with the aim of introducing herself to her constituents and advising that she would be pleased to respond to any concerns raised by them.

Notes:

Mrs Frazer reported on progress in three areas on which she was campaigning:-

(1) Education

She has been elected to the Education Select Committee. She believes that this is very relevant to Cambridgeshire which has been under-funded for many years. It is true that an extra £23 million had been allocated for the present financial year and it looks hopeful that this will continue into next year, but more needs to be done. As a member of the Education Select Committee she will continue to apply pressure to obtain a fair allocation, not only for her constituency, but also for disadvantaged rural areas. In this latter case by working closely together with the F40 group of MPs.

(2) Infrastructure

Transport is the main thrust of her interest under this heading. She has been focusing on the Ely by-pass to make sure that it reaches a successful conclusion.

(3) Business Support

She is supporting small businesses with whom she has already held a number of meetings. During the campaign she worked with the local councils to bring together 16 grant providers with small business leaders to raise awareness of the funding possibilities available. She recognises the importance of apprenticeship schemes such as those run by Marshall's, but is keen to see more of these schemes. She also considers that the on-going development of broadband infrastructure is of vital importance to businesses, especially those in rural areas.

Discussion:

The meeting then opened up to discuss matters of importance to Lode. These included:-

The Lode to Quy Cycle Way

Cllr Rickard stressed the importance of this project to Lode and the surrounding parishes. Funding has been secured and the design work is being progressed by Sustrans. Negotiations with landowners are underway and some difficulty is being experienced with one owner (or his agent). There is no need for any intervention by Mrs Frazer at this stage, but we would appreciate her support for the project and her help if any obstacles arise.

Adult Education

Cllrs expressed concern about the reduction in adult education services which have been a fundamental part of the village college system since its inception. Mrs Frazer understood these concerns, especially in an era when the concept of a “job for life” no longer existed.

Primary Education

Cllr Mitchell raised concerns about local schools (for example Bottisham Primary) which are heavily over-subscribed and the proposed house building projects already in the pipeline can only exacerbate the problem.

Housing

Mr Stevens was worried about the proposed sale of Community Housing stock as this could make it even more difficult for local people to find suitable accommodation.

Cambridge Roads

Mr Stevens pointed out that commuters from a large catchment area converge on the Quy interchange at peak times making the commute into Cambridge difficult. This problem is made worse by the universally unpopular traffic calming measures in Quy which not only hold up vehicles unnecessarily but encourage unsafe driving.

Conclusion:

The introductory meeting with our new MP was appreciated as a good basis for future communications with her and her office.