

# Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

## MONTHLY REPORT MARCH 2023

### Priors Field surgery

The announcement on Thursday 23 February of the closure of Priors Field GP practice in Sutton with effect from the end of March has been met with shock, anger and concern.

The Fenland Group Practice, who hold the contract for services at Priors Field, told NHS England in November that it would not be continuing with the contract after 31 March.

Attempts by NHS England to put alternative provision in place in Sutton in the following months were unsuccessful, and NHS England therefore made the decision to start a process of 'managed list dispersal' to transfer Sutton's nearly 6,000 patients (including us!) to neighbouring practices.

These discussions took place behind closed doors until the announcement on 23 February, which has added to residents' strong feelings.

We immediately launched a petition calling on NHS England and Sutton's MP to protect health care in Sutton and neighbouring communities and ensure the ongoing provision of GP services locally. The petition has attracted over 2,000 signatures and is still open for residents to sign.

[www.change.org/save-gp-services-at-priors-field](http://www.change.org/save-gp-services-at-priors-field)

We have been working closely with Priors Field's Patient Participation Group since the closure was announced. We decided early on that, while there were questions to be answered about how this situation had arisen and been managed, our absolute and immediate focus should be to ensure that health services should continue to be delivered in Sutton to residents of Sutton and surrounding villages.

We have also heard from several residents with professional experience offering ideas.

A packed daytime meeting in Sutton on Tuesday 7 March, the first of several, heard from Jan Thomas and Gary Howsam of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICS (Integrated Care System) that they are continuing to pursue options for GP and other services to remain in Sutton in some form.

We are convinced that the powerful response of residents of Sutton and neighbouring communities is having an effect on NHS England, and we will continue to press for local services and keep residents informed.

---

## Full Council

### Budget

The Conservative budget was passed by a majority at the Full Council meeting on 21 February. Unlike last year, the administration decided not to amend its own budget on the night.

The Liberal Democrat group moved an amendment, proposed by Lorna, retaining the council tax freeze for 2023/24 but with the following changes.

- To initially create a reserve and then fund the forecast costs of a new Local Plan
- To fund the initial capital (£500,000) and then on-going revenue costs to implement Civil Parking Enforcement within the District (£40,000 in 2024/25)
- To increase the Environment Fund from £100,000 to £200,000 per year
- To provide grant funding to local parish councils and community groups to mark the Coronation (£20,000 in 2023/24 only)
- To build in a (£200,000) 'turnover allowance' saving on staff costs in recognition that there will be staff vacancies throughout the year

The amendment was defeated.

### East Cambs Street Scene costs

We noted with grave concern the £500,000 overspend by the council's waste company ECSS in the current year, which was only brought to councillors' attention at the end of January after a year of failing to meet its agreed levels of service. The Conservative administration approved an additional one-off management fee payment to ECSS in 2022/23 of up to £500,000 to cover the shortfall.

The Liberal Democrat group proposed an amendment to this decision, to

- approve a loan to ECSS in 2022/23 of up to £500,000;
- require the Directors of ECSS to provide a written report to the Operational Services Committee meeting on 27 March and attend the meeting to answer questions from members and explain why it took so long to report the financial issues to members and what improvements the Directors have made to controls to prevent a recurrence of this late reporting;
- require the Council's Observers to the Board, Cllrs Julia Huffer and Joshua Schumann, to provide a written report to the Audit Committee meeting on 20 March and attend the meeting to answer questions from members and explain why they did not report the financial issues to members and what they plan to do in future to ensure shareholder interests are protected;
- instruct the external auditors for ECSS to review the governance and controls in the company and report to shareholders, detailing any

weaknesses and recommendations for improvements to ensure delivery of agreed service levels on waste collection and street cleaning and sound financial management;

- instruct the Council's internal auditor to review the governance by ECDC of ECSS and ECTC, detailing any weaknesses and recommendations for improvements to ensure better oversight of service delivery and financial management; and
- request that the Council's external auditor reviews the 'Value for Money' being achieved by delivering the waste collection and street sweeping services through this structure.

This also was defeated.

## Voter identification

Lorna's motion on voter identification, which will start with the May elections, was also defeated.

Voters in person at polling stations will now require an approved form of photo ID. If you do not have approved photo ID, you can apply for something called a Voter Authority Certificate. Nationally, only 21,000 of the two million electors nationwide who do not have approved ID have applied for a Voter Authority Certificate. In East Cambs as of 20 February just 33 applications had been made.

---

## Planning updates

### Garden Close (reserved matters)

We are still awaiting a committee date for this application to be determined.

---

## Meet your councillors

- Monday 3 April, 6:30-7:30PM
- Our May event will need to be rescheduled as it currently falls on the additional Bank Holiday following the Coronation.

All Meet Your Councillors events in the Community Room at Sutton School. Residents can continue to contact us by email, Facebook, or phone.

---

**Cllr Lorna Dupré**

**Cllr Mark Inskip**

District Councillors for the Sutton ward