

An update from Rita Drinkwater, Central Bedfordshire Councillor

12 January 2010

Dear Residents

The past few weeks have been challenging for most of us, unless you like the snow and ice that is! Getting around either by road, train or just walking has been tricky. Grit and salt supplies have become almost a luxury as we find ourselves being rationed. Still I must admit to it looking absolutely lovely, especially walking through a wooded area with it's snow topped branches.

In my last article I explained about the site allocations for development within Stondon and that I was asking officers to work with the developer to see what this would mean for the village and how the community would benefit. At Central Bedfordshire Council's Full Council meeting on the 7th January, the decision to take the two sites within Stondon through to the next stage was approved. However, I must stress there will be another public consultation starting next month and all responses will help inform the Inspector when considering all the sites on offer.

One of these sites is currently industrial, behind the Jet station, and the policy states 13 dwellings. The other (on land to the rear of Bedford Road and Station Road) is more significant and the policy going to the inspector will be for either 70 dwellings or a 60 Bed Extra Care Unit plus 30 dwellings. Both of these developments include 35% affordable housing. Section 106 agreements are taken out against a development, to include contributions for education, health, highway upgrades, a standard list or matrix is available and has been adopted by the council. Where you have a larger development there can sometimes be scope to ask for additional facilities or additional funding that can go towards a large community project. These additional section 106 agreements have to be demonstrated as being deliverable against the housing development.

As you may already have heard or read, the Parish Council are extending the public open session at the meeting on the 27th January. This will start at 7.00pm in the Village Hall. I have been asked by the Parish Council for an officer to be in attendance to answer questions on the next stage of the process and how the public consultation will operate.

A boundary review is taking place within Central Bedfordshire that will see a reduction in the number of councillors from 66 to 59. This means the existing ward boundaries will change, presently two councillors represent the villages of Silsoe, Gravenhurst, Shillington, Stondon and Henlow Camp. A proposal was recommended at the Full Council meeting on the 7th Jan to create a three member ward, to include Stondon, Henlow Camp, Henlow Village, Clifton and Arlesey, this will go to the Boundary Commission for consideration. This is never an easy process and the reduction of seven councillors has made the exercise all the more difficult, however, it will be for the commission to decide on how to divide us up!!

Regards

Rita Drinkwater
Central Bedfordshire Councillor