

Spaldwick Parish Council Meeting – February 2022

At the Full Council Meeting on 8th February Cllr Stephen Ferguson who is an Independent and represents St Neots East and the Gransdens was elected as the New Chairman of the County Council, following the retirement of Cllr Derek Giles due to ill health.

The Demand Responsive Bus Service for West Huntingdonshire, known as Ting has commenced. It is a service for all residents. The cost of the service is £2 per trip and £4 return as is free for all Bus Pass Holders.

At the Full Council meeting on 8th February, the Liberal Democrat led Administration put forward a budget that would increase General Council Tax by 1.99% along with a 3% increase on Adult Social Care. From which £6.878 million will be put into reserves and not into frontline services. A Band D properties County Council element of the Council Tax will be £1,469.61

The Conservative proposed alternative Budget would have seen no increase in General Council Tax and reversed the decision to put £6.878 million into reserves. In addition the Highways maintenance grants from government would be ringfenced for additional expenditure on Highways, its intended purpose. Unlike the Lib Dem Administration who have left this open, possibly to reduce borrowing.

The Conservative alternative budget would also see £4.1 million made available for flood prevention measures which could be used in our Villages and Towns such as Alconbury & St Neots, which suffered from extensive flooding in December 20

The joint administration are expecting an underspend in the Capital Programme budget of 11 million, and they are also expecting an underspend on the Revenue budget of 7.66 million at the year end.

The County Council has decided to provide everyone on Universal Credit some 39,000 recipients with an additional £20 to help them manage rising costs of living this winter. It will not cover the additional Council Tax increase.

This year's Huntingdonshire LHI meetings will be on 28th February and 2nd March between 8am and 5pm.

The County Council is preparing a Flood Risk Management Strategy for Cambridgeshire and the County Council Climate Change Strategy as produced by the previous administration came second in a National award. The strategy has now been updated, which was agreed at yesterday's full council meeting.

The Administration now appears to recognise that Children's health issues are not being fully represented at the Adult & Health Committee. Therefore they are looking at ways of improving this – I would suggest the reintroduction of the Health

Committee. Areas of Children's Health that are being neglected are Mental Health issues.

Cllr Ian Gardener

County Councillor for Alconbury & Kimbolton