

Member of

**CIVIC
VOICE**
talking civic sense



NEWSLETTER

Feb 2015

Local Plan 2035 Update

Following discussions at the AGM it was noted that further input to the planning proposals were restricted to parish councils. Angela Owen Smith and Mike Humphrey commenced an email campaign directed at the various councillors at Huntingdon Town Council and HDC to ensure us a 'place at the table'.

Whilst not one recipient actually replied (!) we were rewarded with an invitation to participate in the planning process. To this end we attended a meeting at HDC in February and can report the following:

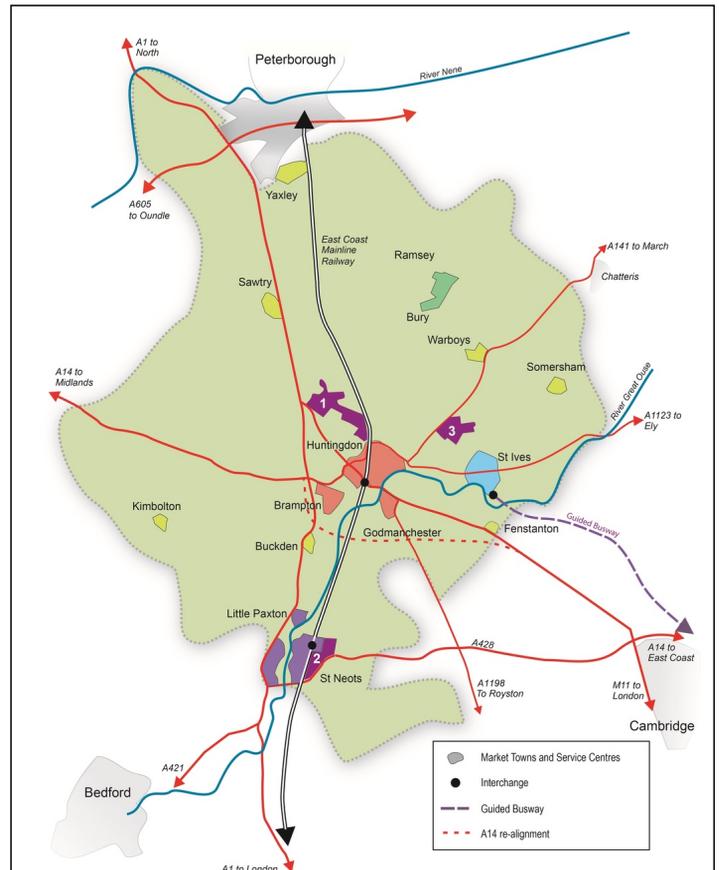
The question on most minds within the village is the routing of trunk roads through Houghton / Wyton and, more critical, the possibility of a road bridge across our section of the Ouse Valley. For all intents this has been hit into the long grass with the focus now turned to the alternative route from Wyton Airfield to skirt the north east of St Ives. *This does not mean we shouldn't remain vigilant as predictably there are clauses which keep all options open.*

The key elements of the plan will not come as a surprise: 3 major development areas: Alconbury Weald (1), Wyton Airfield (3) and St Neots East (2). Comment was made that the plan makes no allowance for the closure of RAF Alconbury and its consequent release not only of on site facilities and housing but houses in the surrounding villages currently occupied by airfield personnel.

The guided busway is seen as a major factor in the transport plan with 'dedicated' routes via Wyton onto Alconbury Weald. Presumably these are more likely to be bus lanes than concrete tracks.

Finally here's a fascinating fact that emerged from the meeting: going north on the A1 from Buckden, the next roundabout is at Berwick on Tweed (not a lot of people know that!)

The Hartford Conservation Group will keep you up to date as the Local Plan progresses with submissions by June, finalised in November, publication in Spring 2016 and adoption by the end of the year.



Tuesday 17th: Speaker Meeting at the Village Hall, 7.15 for 7.30
'A. V. Roe and the Avro Lancaster'
by David Taylor



Just who are civic voice?

Civic Voice works to make the places where everyone lives more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. They are the national charity for the civic movement and speak on behalf of civic societies and local communities across England. In promoting civic pride they believe everyone has the right to live somewhere they can be proud of and through a strong local presence all over England they are closely in touch with how people feel about where they live. Civic societies are the most numerous participants in the planning system and since its launch in April 2010 Civic Voice has been joined by 290 civic societies with more than 75,000 individual members...including Hartford Conservation Group.

Manifesto for General Election candidates

The Civic Voice manifesto, **Localism for Real** has been launched in time for the 2015 parliamentary elections. To achieve **Localism for Real**, the manifesto* calls on future Governments to:

- 1) **Make improving the quality of the public realm in our cities, towns and villages a priority**
- 2) **Give all citizens opportunities to actively shape the future of their place**
- 3) **Give local communities the powers they need to enable their town and city centres to prosper**

Chair of Civic Voice, Freddie Gick said "If the Government is serious about Localism, they have to listen to the concerns coming forward from civic groups, resident associations and local councils. The Civic Movement agrees with the Government that getting the economy moving is essential, but the proposals we have had so far do not add up to an adequate, coherent overall policy.

Civic Voice members should now contact their MPs and encourage them to take up our cause."



Representatives of Civic Societies from across East Anglia, including Mike and Trish Humphrey from Hartford Conservation Group attended Civic Voice's recent meeting in Norwich. We heard from other local groups how they had participated successfully in local planning decisions. It is hoped that we might host a future meeting in Hartford later this year.

Assets of Community Value

The new Community Rights measures are yet another leap towards localism and the decentralisation of power from Whitehall. The Localism Bill, announced in December, will enshrine in law rights for community and voluntary groups to draw on when determining what happens in their local area. They include

Community Right to Buy. Local groups will have a legal right to nominate any vital community asset including local shops, pubs, libraries and leisure centres to be assessed for recording on a 'most wanted' list by the local council.

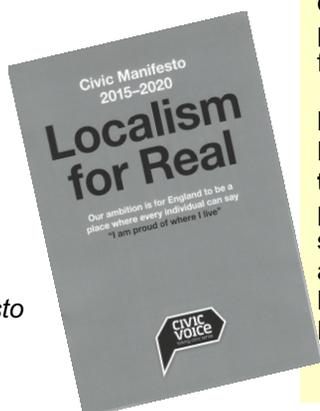
If a listed asset goes on the open market, its sale will be delayed triggering a 'community countdown' that will give people time to prepare their business plan and raise the funds they need to bid.

In practical terms it could allow us to nominate Hartford's shops and pubs. Not with the implication that we would purchase in such a case but at least provide a 6 months delay to consider options for saving these valued facilities. And we are not in this alone. Other community groups such as CAMRA have joined Civic Voice in the newly formed Localism Alliance.

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*www.civicvoice.org.uk/manifesto



Forthcoming Events:

Tuesday 17th: Speaker Meeting at the Village Hall, 7.15 for 7.30
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Saturday 21st June

Hartford Family Fun Day: Street party and dog show; stalls in the Village Hall

Saturday 5th September:

Art Display at the Village Hall
Tony Twist Retrospective