

Good evening everyone

After providing an update for last months meeting only a few things have changed.

I would like to start with an update on This Land, my previous discussion having caused so much interest. I will start by reiterating my apologies for the wrong information shared about Private Eye magazine. I move on.

I have attached the latest monthly report to me, as head of Commercial and Investment committee, from David Lewis This Land interim CEO. I trust that this brief update and the information in this report concludes matters about This Land, which in short is developing land, building houses and making money for its share holder, which is 100% Cambridgeshire County Council.

Secondly, an update on the county farms estate. I am delighted that we have concluded the acquisition of Lower Portland Farm, Burwell. 265 acres of well run farm with associated buildings now added to the existing 33k acres. This shows our commitment to our rural and farms estate for the future. It remains one of the largest estates of its kind in the UK. In addition this month we have met with NFU to discuss the estate and future challenges. We are working through a change to tenancy rules allowing tenants the right to remain running their tenancy holdings until they reach the government retirement age. This is a fundamental and right change for all parties, even though a tenancy agreement is NOT an employment contract.

Planning permission granted the North Angle solar farm should commence construction this spring/summer. A 34mw solar farm it will produce the equivalent green electricity consumed by 12k average homes. Around the perimeter of the solar farm CCC are developing a circular public path including landscaping, planting and management. I'm sure you will agree this will make a welcome addition to the Town's walkways.

Highways continue to be busy especially fighting flooding across the county. Locally, we have had the news that from Pratt St through to Sand Street the whole street works will be cleaned and repaired. New lines to roads, painted and repaired planters and railings, posts and more. I still await a confirmed start date but it is expected before the end of the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, general repair works have happened across the parish, but would be of a great help if the public reported pot holes and more via the council web site. It is easy to do and when done this it really helps me to chase Highways off needed.

I am supporting Soham VC in their pursuit of a Floodlit all weather 3G playing surface. A cross party group of interest people is being created to move this great project into fruition. It will see the school use the surface during daytime but then it being available to the general public at all other times. This is long overdue with the current appalling level of sports facilities available to the residents of Soham. I hope that this is a project that the Town Council can also support as things develop.

My CCC colleague Cllr Bill Hunt will add or has added further update.

As many will know I am chair of Soham Town Rangers but in the capacity as CCC too I am thrilled that the club is hosting the NHS lateral flow test site. This is for essential and key workers to check if they are asymptotically carrying the virus and therefore spreading the infections. Please spread the news and encourage attendance which can be done regularly. This is the site for East Cambridgeshire, there also being four others across the county, one per district.

Finally, it has been confirmed that elections for CCC, PCCC and CPCA mayor will take place in May. We await rules on how these can operate under covid rules but I can assure all that I will not be delivering leaflets or knocking door to door whilst under covid restrictions. This is illegal and irresponsible at this time and putting people at risk of covid-19 contamination.

Kind regards

Mark Goldsack
Member Soham North and Isleham
Chair Commercial and Investment Committee