

Every year seems to throw up new challenges for local authorities at all levels and this year is no exception, while dealing with the usual challenges of having to deliver additional services with even less financial resources, the latest challenge of protecting the county from the Covid crisis has stretched every sector as we have to learn a new way of working. Before I proceed further can I offer my condolences to anyone who has lost someone to this insidious, awful and frightening disease, which is new to us all. I say this because Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for Public Health, therefore we have been tirelessly working with all other agencies in ensuring food, PPE and all other associated items reach those who require them in a timely manner particularly those who are classed as vulnerable or have the 'Sheltered' status, 17,500 people county wide. This of course leaves out staff exposed to Covid despite all precautions being taken as they serve the public and to date we have 72 staff members showing symptoms and 30 diagnosed !

My own area of special responsibility is with the Fire Service, who unsurprisingly have been in the middle of the Covid Crisis working as ever quietly and effectively behind the scenes supplying personnel to assist Ambulance Crews, food delivery and house calls to those who are Sheltered / vulnerable. The saga of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) continues to rumble on, even though there has been a widely published change of PCC. You will recall we challenged the widely unpopular decision by the PCC to try and take over the Governance of the Fire Authority this is now being looked at in detail by the courts !

Possibly, the most satisfying aspect of the year was to be recognised by central government as one of the best Fire Authorities in the country, something we all knew but was confirmed after a long and detailed inspection process. We have consistently been seen as one of the lowest spending but highest performing Fire Authorities.

I attempt to give a regular update / overview on a variety of subjects in your Villager magazine. If there is any specific area you would like more detailed information please get in touch.