

NEWS

Teenager accused of possessing knife

A MARCH teenager has denied charges of possessing a kitchen knife in a public place, and assault. It is alleged Jacob Long had the knife in Robingoodfellows Lane, March, on August 1. Long, 18, of Robingoodfellows Lane, is also accused of assaulting Shane Marchant on the same date. Fenland magistrates are due to set the date of his trial at a hearing on September 15.

Drink-driver banned

DRINK-driver Carl Jackson has been banned for three years by Fenland magistrates. Jackson, 23, of Fodder Fen, Manea, admitted driving with an alcohol level of 51 mcgs of alcohol in 100 mls of breath, when the legal limit is 35 mcgs. He committed the offence in Christchurch on August 1. The court fined Jackson £150 and ordered him to pay £60 costs and a £15 surcharge.

Assault charge denied

TWENTY-year-old Nicholas Larkin has denied assaulting Julie Pearce at his home on July 29. Larkin, of Grounds Avenue, March, is due to face trial before Fenland magistrates on November 24.

Mayor: A larger shop is needed

TESCO'S plan for a store on the site of Whittlesey Fire Station may not be enough to make residents shop locally, says the town's mayor. The company wants to build a store between High Causeway and Cemetery Road, which includes the site of the fire station. "We know that many people currently travel to Peterborough to do their weekly shop and we hope that our scheme will keep people shopping in Whittlesey," said Nick Gellatly, Tesco corporate affairs man-

ager. But Councillor Derek Stebbing, the Mayor of Whittlesey, thinks a much larger store is needed. "I don't think it will stop people shopping outside of Whittlesey," he said. "There is not enough room on that site to compete with stores in Peterborough, March or Wisbech. "I want Whittlesey to be developed as a place to live, to work and to shop." Public consultations are in the pipeline for the scheme, which will create 150 jobs. Tesco will also fund a new fire station and is working with

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to find a suitable location. Graham Stagg, chief fire officer, said: "We strive to seek value for money in all that we do and if we can get a new modern fire station built at no cost to us - and, therefore, no cost to the taxpayer - we will give serious consideration to any offer. "In Whittlesey, providing any new location allows us to operate the same level of service to the people of Whittlesey and surrounding area, we would agree to the move."

Store set to close

A POPULAR Fenland hardware store has announced it will close before the end of the year because of the recession.

Costmill has traded in Whittlesey for 25 years, but six people will lose their jobs when doors close for the final time. Company director Veronica Carter cited the recession for the closure of the business.

"The fall in customer numbers and increasing overheads have contributed to the demise of yet another local business," she said.

"Six members of staff are to be out of work before the end of the year and another property in the town will be empty."

For years Costmill, in High Causeway, has supported the town in various ways. It has donated raffle prizes, sponsored a youth football team and contributed to the cost of installing CCTV in the town.

Councillor Derek Stebbing, the Mayor of Whittlesey, said: "I am very sad that Costmill is closing, it is going to be a big, big loss."

'Time to scrap unused centre'

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bridgeshire fire service in any way - this is a Government initiative and a questionable one at that.

Both Mr Moss and Mr Barclay have found an unlikely ally in the Fire Brigades Union whose spokesman Duncan Milligan, head of communications and research, described it as "classic Government cock-up".

Mr Milligan said: "They still can't get the software to work which has caused these massive delays. This system will never work as the Government outlined it. It is a question of whether this Government abandons the plans this year or the next Government abandons them next year."

He conceded it was odds-on the Tories would win the election "and they have made it very clear what their views area. They should tell the

contractors now that this bird simply ain't going to fly."

He said monthly running costs had doubled this year because of the need for 24/7 security at the site and the fact rents, leasing and maintenance costs needed to be met.

Shahid Malik, the Government minister responsible for the fire service, told Mr Moss that the project had been put back 10 months because of technology delays.

He claimed the strategy of replacing 46 stand alone control rooms with nine regional centres would have "very substantial benefits". In fact a Government paper outlining the business case for all regional centres shows the negligible projected savings for the Cambridge project - potential savings of just £66,000 on current costs of £7.43

million per annum running costs.

Mr Malik promised the Government would continue to foot "all upfront costs associated with the project" and to ensure no costs were placed on local fire authorities.

He remained confident the first regional centre would open in the spring of 2011 with the last to switch over by the end of 2012.

Mr Barclay brought up the costs at a recent meeting with Graham Stagg, Cambridgeshire's chief fire officer.

"Mr Stagg confirmed that central Government was footing the bill for this, so basically it's not affecting local services," said Mr Barclay.

"However, it's preposterous to be spending this money at a time when many services are facing cuts and taxpayers worried about their jobs have to pick up this bill.



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