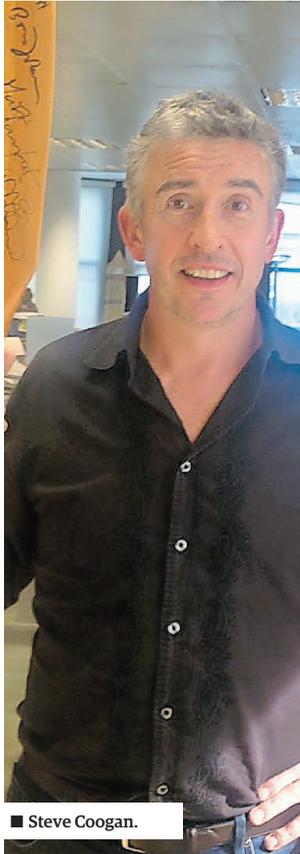




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■ Stephen Merchant.



■ Steve Coogan.



■ Fern Britton.



■ Paul Westerman.

**IN BRIEF**

Find out about BID's progress

**HUNTINGDON:** Find out more about the Huntingdon BID at the annual general meeting on November 12. The company invests the money collected from the town's retailers and firms in the business improvement district, spending it on events aimed at increasing footfall, offering training, and supporting business.  
**INFORMATION:** 12.30pm at the Town Hall, Market Square.

Cyclist injured in collision with car

**ST NEOTS:** A cyclist was taken to hospital after being hit by a car on the B1428 on Friday afternoon. Ambulance crews were called at 1.45pm to help a woman in her 60s. She was taken to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital with neck injuries.

A swinging night of music on the bill

**HUNTINGDON:** Swing and blues orchestra The Big Nine will be playing the town hall on Saturday. The Summertime Blues event, organised by the Rotary Club of Huntingdon Cromwell, is raising money for the Alzheimer's Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Doors open 7pm.  
**INFORMATION:** Tickets £17.50 from 01480 457642 or 01480 386242.

Former councillors honoured for service

**HUNTS:** Four former district councillors are to be honoured for their public service at a special council meeting on Wednesday, October 29. Madhabi Banerjee, Terry Clough, Peter Downes and Nick Guyatt are to become honorary aldermen. Mr Clough, Lib Dem, and Mr Guyatt, Tory, both stood down this year, while Mr Downes, another Lib Dem, resigned last year. Conservative Mrs Banerjee lost her seat at this year's election to Ukip's Barry Hyland.

Jackie's close shave for breast cancer charity

**HUNTINGDON:** A Ford dealership employee is to have her hair shaved to raise funds for a cancer charity. Jackie Foreman has worked at the Huntingdon branch of TC Harrison for 14 years. On Friday (October 24), she will be given her new look, watched by staff who will be in fancy dress for Wear It Pink in aid of the Breast Cancer Campaign.

# Paddle power to pedal power – Paul's bike challenge from Fern

Lauren Nash

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It's not every day that you travel to Edinburgh to meet Billy Connolly and are challenged to a charity bike ride by Fern Britton.

But that's just what happened to a Catworth man who has been rubbing shoulders with the stars in aid of his Charity Oars campaign.

In April, *The Hunts Post* reported how 47-year-old Paul Westerman had been collecting signatures on a pair of oars which will be sold at auction for Lifeblood: The Thrombosis Charity.

His fundraising mission has seen him collect autographs from Britton, along with London mayor Boris Johnson, Paralympian Tanni Grey-Thompson, and comedian Steve Coogan to name just a few.

But Britton's support didn't stop with her autograph. While Paul, of High Street, Catworth, was busy getting Connolly to ink his autograph on the oars, she sent him an email and Twitter message challenging him to join her on a mammoth bike ride from John O' Groats to Land's End in May next year.

She is undertaking the ride, called Challenge57, in aid of the Genesis Research Trust, which finances research and teaching in the field of gynaecology, obstetrics, and paediatrics.

Paul said he's almost been convinced to take part.

"I am about 85 per cent there – I will give some training a go once the weather settles down and I can start cycling again. My friends and family have been very supportive and it's a good way of saying 'thank you'."

He added: "Fern's very persuasive – I did say I'd only do it if her husband Phil Vickery does the sandwiches."

Paul started fundraising after he almost died from a pulmonary embolism in 2011. He collapsed in his bathroom when a blot clot travelled from his knee, where he had suffered deep vein thrombosis (DVT) following an injury, through his heart to his lung. He was taken to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Huntingdon, where staff saved his life.

He later hoped to run a half-marathon in aid of Lifeblood, but he and his wife Elissa were seriously injured when a car drove into the back of their broken down car in August last year.

He said: "It is a physical recovery and a mental recovery. But when things like this pop up it is a

fantastic opportunity to give yourself a new goal and a target. I expect it to be quite a daunting thing to do because of the distance and the commitment to the training.

"I can't run anywhere so I'm not sure how I'm going to cycle it. We will cross that bridge when we come to it."

The oars will be sold at auction on World Thrombosis Day (October 13) next year, when there will be a dinner and speeches at the Houses of Parliament.

**INFORMATION:** For more, go to [www.charityoars.org](http://www.charityoars.org), [www.facebook.com/charityoars.org](http://www.facebook.com/charityoars.org), follow @charityoars on Twitter. Paul is also seeking support from a cycle shop to help with a bike for the challenge.

He can be contacted via the form on the Charity Oars website.

## Delay to homes in 'last rural area' hearing but more plans submitted

Villagers in Sawtry will have to wait a while longer to discover if they will see their "last rural area" developed for housing.

The Davidsons Developments scheme, which would allow 43 homes to be built behind Chapel End, close to the A1, was deferred by Huntingdonshire District Council's development management panel on Monday.

The scheme, which is facing opposition on a number of grounds including the loss of a rural area of the village and traffic concerns, will be heard at a later date.

Meanwhile Sawtry is facing the prospect of more development – this time for up to 80 homes on the western edge of Sawtry.

Like the Chapel End site, the Glebe Farm site in Gidding Road, has been included for housing in HDC's draft Local Plan.

This time Linden Homes has submitted an outline planning application for 3.76 hectares of land bordered by Sawtry Brook, Glebe Farm, Gidding Road and the Mulberries estate.

Linden says the development would be for high quality homes – up to 30 of them offered as affordable – with areas of public open space and landscaping.

Vehicles would enter and exit the estate from Gidding Road. **INFORMATION:** Linden has set up a website for the project, visit [www.lindenhomes.co.uk/community/sawtry](http://www.lindenhomes.co.uk/community/sawtry).