

DON'T MISS YOUR Cambridge News NEXT WEEK

From Saturday, your weekend paper will be packed with even more features



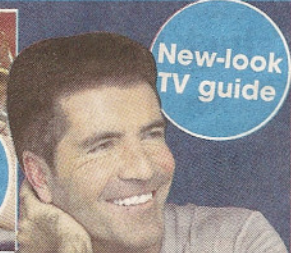
More nostalgia



New sports content



Launch of our Wine Club



New-look TV guide

MON WIN BALLOON FLIGHTS TUE-THU WIN GERMAN TRIP FOR TWO THU SAVINGS AT FEAST EAST

Over to you

"What is so fundamentally necessary about a hugely expensive infrastructure just so that the bus driver can drive the bus with his hands off the steering wheel?"

– David

"Can I just remind readers of a poll the News conducted on November 19, 2009? It asked 'When do you think the guided busway will open?' Of the 2,909 votes cast, 22.9% thought January 2010, and 5.2% thought February 2010. Along with the daft 1.2% who thought December 2009, this means that 29.2% optimists have already been proven wrong. How about another poll asking how much money readers think BAM Nuttall will refund? My vote will be for nothing!"

– Paul Miller

'Biggest shambles' verdict for busway

■ STEPHEN EXLEY

SOARING costs for building the controversial guided busway have been savaged by furious residents.

On Wednesday, we revealed the bill for the St Ives-Cambridge route had rocketed to £161 million – £45 million above the original price.

Cambridgeshire County Council has borrowed £41 million to ensure the



NO COMMENT ON COSTS: But the construction firm says it will deliver a sustainable transport system

We will continue to work with the council with a view to providing Cambridgeshire with a reliable and totally sustainable transport system

– BAM Nuttall

Big push to make cycling attractive

A SERIES of cycling events are coming up to get more women and girls to take it up as their preferred mode of transport.

The events are being hosted by Cambridge Cycling Campaign.

Amy Fleuriot, of Cyclo-delic, will be guest speaker at the campaign's monthly meeting on Tuesday.

Amy, who graduated from the London College of Fashion, set up her own label designing bike accessories which have been showcased at Tenison at

"It amazes me that the council can borrow this amount of money to finish a project that is immensely overdue, and yet they think it's great to make cuts to salaries and make redundancies in other areas of the council that desperately need the funding. This money would have been a vital injection for other public amenities that desperately need decent funding – the library service and the school service, for example."

– Flumoxed

"Why on earth are we paying Nuttall more than agreed for a job they have done badly and which is very, very late? Clawbacks do not work. The money should not be handed over to them in the first place."

– Disgusted

"Has everyone at the county council forgotten where the £92.5 million contributed by central government is coming from? It's not coming from the tooth fairy – it's coming from OUR taxes."

– Frank

"The county council could learn from 'third world' India. The Delhi Metro will open the 15km long Inderlok-Mundka line on schedule in March, with 13 trains initially. The line will have 14 stations, all of which will be elevated."

– Martin

scheme is completed – but insisted it would claw back £40 million after contractor BAM Nuttall hands over the busway.

It is feared the matter could end up in a lengthy court battle.

Former bus driver Stephen Ryder, 59, described the guided bus project as "the biggest shambles that this city has ever seen".

Mr Ryder, of Campkin Road, Cambridge, said: "The guided bus should never have existed in the first place. It's something that was pushed through to the public with very little consultation. It seems like a huge amount of money."

The council is fining BAM Nuttall almost £15,000 for every day the opening of the busway, which was scheduled to take place in November, is delayed.

But a Swavesey resident said: "People are so fed up with it. The project seems to be going nowhere, and will it really justify that cost as a transport system?"

Tim Phillips, chairman of pro-rail group Cast.Iron, which opposed the building of the busway, said: "Everyone should bear in mind that the true construction cost of the Cambridgeshire scheme is 250

per cent over the cost originally advertised to the public, 100 per cent over the cost on which the public inquiry inspector made his (delayed) decision and 40 per cent over the cost to which the Government finally agreed, based on the county council's allegedly detailed surveys."

A council spokesman said a "robust" contract was in place with BAM Nuttall, adding that when the project was completed, "the contractor will be required to pay back the difference between the target price and the actual cost they have been

paid," minus a "small share of the overspend".

A spokesman for BAM Nuttall said: "BAM Nuttall has no comment to make in relation to the current financial situation regarding the guided busway as we are not party to the preparation of Cambridgeshire County Council budgets.

"We will continue to work with the council with a view to providing the people of Cambridgeshire with a reliable and totally sustainable transport system."

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discussed at Topshop at Oxford Circus, London.

The meeting is at the Friends Meeting House in Jesus Lane, Cambridge, at 8pm. There is no need to book.

This will be followed by the Ride for Joy, a fashion cycle ride, on Saturday, March 20. This will take place on the streets of Cambridge from 2-4.30pm, illustrating that people can cycle stylishly in normal clothes.

Sally Guyer, from the campaign, said: "Part of the problem is that we need to dispel the idea that cycling is a second-rate form of transport or that you can't wear your normal, stylish clothes when cycling."

A pre-ride social event will take place at The Guildhall in Cambridge on Wednesday, March 10, between 7-9.30pm when a film, *Beauty and the Bike – Why British Girls Don't Cycle*, will be shown.

All events are free. Visit www.camcycle.org.uk for more information.

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