

Parish Report

Mark Howell: Cambridgeshire County Councillor for Bourn, Greater Cambourne, Little Gransden, Longstowe, Lower Cambourne and Upper Cambourne

CAMBRIDGESHIRE ROADS

With winter behind us and spring finally here, work to get Cambridgeshire roads ready for the year ahead is about to start.

Cambridgeshire County Council's £4.1 million programme of work, will see nearly 100 roads being treated with micro-asphalt, and a further 30 roads being repaired through a surface dressing programme.

The schemes will involve laying mixtures containing stones over the existing road surface to seal and protect - increasing the longevity of the road. Both programmes of work are weather dependent so dates are subject to change. Work will be carried out during the day from 8am to 6pm under full road closures.

Local people will be able to drive and cycle on the road soon after the work is complete, provided speeds remain below 20mph. Drivers and cyclists are asked to take extra care when using the road as some loose stones may remain.

Advanced warning signs will be displayed before the work is due to start and diversions will be in place at each location – and access to properties will be maintained.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Maintenance Manager, Jonathan Clarke said: "We are always working hard to ensure our roads are kept in good condition and prevent them from deteriorating.

"This repair work is part of our commitment to making sure the county's roads are protected from extreme weather conditions and provide smoother journeys.

"We are reliant on the weather for this type of work, which we appreciate makes it difficult for people to plan ahead. We would like to thank everyone for their patience while the work is carried out."

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BY-ELECTIONS

BY-ELECTIONS for Cambridgeshire County Council's Trumpington division and Cambridge City Council's Trumpington ward will be held following the resignation of Donald Adey from both councils.

The by-elections will be held at the same time as the scheduled city council elections on 2 May, meaning voters in Trumpington will be able to elect two Councillors for their ward as well as a county Councillor for the division.

Alconbury Weald Civic Hub.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Commercial and Investment Committee today gave the green light for the submission of planning permission for their new Alconbury Weald Civic Hub.

The committee heard how feedback from staff, citizens and local residents has helped shape the designs of the building; with flexibility and efficiency at the heart of the plans.

Careful consideration has been given to designing a building that is low-energy, efficient and future-proof, with forward-thinking features such as ducting in the car park allowing for the charging of electric vehicles from day one, with the potential to harness solar energy at a later stage.

The development of the new Alconbury Weald Hub is a key part of the council's plans to move away from its Shire Hall base, and locate services closer to communities by making better use of its own buildings and those of key partners.

Cllr Josh Schumann, Chair of Commercial and Investment Committee, said: "By using local build and design contractors, we are ensuring we keep an eye on social value and the local workforce, by sourcing local labour and materials where possible.

"I wholly believe our new Alconbury Weald hub will encourage a step change in how we operate as a council and I look forward to us breaking ground on site later this year"

The cost of the building will be offset by the council moving away from its costly six-acre Shire Hall site, a move the council believes will save in the region of £45m over 30 years; even taking into consideration the cost of the new, much smaller hub building.

Planning permission will now be submitted in April, with construction expected to begin in November this year.

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Social work

Social work is a hugely rewarding career choice which helps families experiencing difficulties and we are looking for new recruits to come forward and make a difference to the lives of people in Cambridgeshire. Today is World Social Work Day and some of those who have been helped by social workers have spoken about the impact they have had on their lives by spreading some positive messages.

Charge for computer use in libraries.

Earlier this week (Tuesday 12 March), members of the Highways and Community Infrastructure committee agreed to remove the charge for computer use in libraries.

The £1 charge for computer access, introduced in May 2018, was part of a package of measures based on public feedback and trialed to ensure fair access to limited resources as well as to generate more income. The decision to scrap the charge for computer use comes in response to a detailed report on the charge and its impact, as well as feedback collected in a customer survey and a detailed analysis of the anticipated income.

New computers will also be rolled-out in libraries before the end of the year to improve the service for all. Members also agreed to launch a debt recovery campaign to encourage people to pay their overdue fines and replacement costs for missing items

Joint Minerals and Waste Plan.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents have a second chance to have their say on a new Joint Minerals and Waste Plan.

The new plan is being produced jointly with Peterborough City Council and will look ahead to 2036.

A first round of consultation took place last year to gather views on what the plan should include and also asked for landowners to come forward with suggested sites. Since then work has been underway on a further draft of the plan, which now includes proposals to allocate a number of sites at locations where mineral supplies can support development as well as improve the local biodiversity.

No waste sites are being proposed, as most waste management needs can be met.

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The plan sets out a range of planning policies which will be used to decide planning applications for mineral and waste management development over the plan period. It will also provide guidance for new developments. The consultation will run between 15 March and 25 April

Smoking

A health warning given to a local councillor to quit smoking is the inspiration for a new hard hitting stop smoking campaign for Cambridgeshire.

County Councillor Peter Hudson was warned by his GP that he wouldn't see his grand children grow up if he continued to smoke over 20 cigarettes a day and needed to quit for good.

Peter's experiences are now the basis of a new major stop smoking campaign for Cambridgeshire called #missingmoments and it will be launched on No Smoking Day – 13 March.

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Peter Hudson said: "It was terrible shock to me. I always felt invincible but the Doctor's message was stark – quit smoking or face the strong possibility of dying before my time and not seeing my grandchildren grow up. I had been a diehard smoker all my life. I was quite stubborn about not quitting, but the GP's message really hit home that not only would I miss those key moments in life, it terrified me to think also of the pain and trauma my death would cause to my family. I've now quit smoking and I'm also losing weight from eating healthily and exercising more.

The #missingmoments campaign focuses on the people that are left behind when someone dies from smoking and the key events they are absent from, such as wedding, a birthday or playing with your grandchild. For younger people the campaign will [focus upon other losses](#), such as the damage that smoking can cause to physical looks.

The campaign will encourage people to visit the Cambridgeshire's Be Well website where people can get a free quit kit and advice on how to give up smoking for good

In Cambridgeshire, more than 2400 people died between 2015 and 2017 from smoking related illnesses. If you smoke, you are more likely to experience chronic illnesses such as cancers, coronary heart disease, heart attack, stroke, peripheral vascular disease (damaged blood vessels) and cerebrovascular disease (damaged arteries that supply blood to your brain).

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LGBT Fostering

The LGBT community in Cambridgeshire is being encouraged to consider fostering after new figures revealed the number of children in care in England has reached a new high.

Cambridgeshire County Council is supporting the campaign led by the charity New Family Social to encourage more people to pursue a rewarding role as a foster carer with some 75,420 children in England classed as looked-after in 2018 (just over 750 in Cambridgeshire), a four percent rise on the previous year.

The charity provides support to LGBT+ adopters and foster carers. Sherwin, 43, who lives in north Cambridgeshire, decided to become a foster carer after working with children as a one-to-one carer for children with disabilities. He also has a degree in child psychology, while he has worked in educational psychology and specialist learning. During the decade he has been a carer, Mr Cox, who is single, has raised six children, all boys. He said: "The most important thing for me is to give the children somewhere to call home where they feel secure.

"There is no reason why potential carers from the LGBT+ community should be discouraged from fostering or adopting whether it's a short-term or long-term placement, he added.

"My children have never had any issue with gay people, or my gay friends, or going to the Prides, nothing, they just accept people for who they are. They call me Sherwin and the boys know me as Sherwin and that is it. He said, "there was no reason why LGBT+ carers could not go for nights out with friends; they just needed to manage their responsibilities accordingly. "I am home with my kids in the daytime and we do lots of fun things at the weekends and I have my time with my friends. Lifestyle is not a barrier to fostering whatsoever, it is just managing it."

Councillor Simon Bywater, Chairman of the Children and Young People committee, said: "Fostering provides an opportunity to help children to grow up and lead fulfilling and successful lives and I would encourage members of the LGBT community who are considering fostering to find out more. "To be a foster carer you need to be over 21 and foster carers can be single, married, in a civil partnership or living with a partner. We welcome applications from people of all ethnic backgrounds and from people who have their own children, as well as those who haven't raised children of their own. You don't need to be a homeowner to foster."

"There are children across the county who need your support, as well as a stable home so why not give a child a chance in life?"

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Apprenticeship Celebration Event for National Apprenticeship Week 2019

A select group of apprentices from across Cambridgeshire gathered in Alconbury Weald yesterday to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week 2019 and the positive impact apprenticeships have on local businesses.

The event, sponsored by Urban&Civic Plc and delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council, with the help of LGSS Learning and Development, was organised to recognise and celebrate apprentices in this county.

Apprentices, and their employers, who live and work in Cambridgeshire were invited to come and share their experiences. They also had the opportunity to participate in two free workshops focusing on the key skills needed to support their End Point Assessments, including tips on compiling a portfolio and how to prepare for a professional discussion.

“Blaze a Trail” has been the theme for the 12th National Apprenticeship Week, and the annual celebration helps to highlight the fantastic opportunities that apprenticeships bring not just to individuals but to businesses and the wider economy.

Along with employers in the region, a selection of students from local schools were invited to attend the event, to learn about the career opportunities an apprenticeship can offer and support blazing a trail for future generations, in line with the national campaign.

Apprentices from Marshall AeroAcademy spoke about their experiences as did a selection of representatives from RG Carter Construction plus speakers from the Education and Training Foundation, Form the Future and the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

East West Rail (EWR)

The County Council's response to East West Rail (EWR) Company consultation will be discussed at the Economy and Environment Committee

At the end of January EWR Company launched a consultation on the central section between Bedford and Cambridge outlining their proposals.

There are five route options and the council has to consider its response to the recommendations.

It is proposed that the council strongly supports the delivery of the EWR central section, the council wishes to see a route that provides fast connectivity between the East of England and Central England and supports housing and economic growth planned in the Oxford to Cambridge arc. Finally, the EWR central section should not duplicate existing plans to tackle transport demand from planned housing and economic growth.

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The key recommendations to be discussed at committee include the council's proposed preferred option being route A via Bedford South, Sandy and Bassingbourn, the council agreeing the central section should enter Cambridge from the south and to confirm the vital importance of the early delivery of Cambridge South station and four tracking between Cambridge Station and the Shepreth Branch junction.

Cllr Ian Bates, Cambridgeshire County Council's Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee, said: "Based on this work we propose from the five route options, option A is the favourite as it appears to provide the shortest journey times and is the lowest cost in comparison.

"We have looked at the proposals from a transport and highway view, and we'll work with East West Rail Company and local authority partners, to consider what growth might be appropriate along any of the route options."

Secondary school places

This year we received nearly 6700 applications for secondary school places - an increase of more than 300 compared to the last academic year.

A total of 6691 applications were received by the deadline of 31 October 2018. Of these more than 5990 (89.5%) resulted in children being offered a place at their first preference school compared to 5561 last year. A further 449 (6.7%) children have received the offer of a place at their second or third preference school.

Jonathan Lewis, Service Director for Education for Cambridgeshire County Council said, "We dealt with significantly more applications for secondary school places in the county this year and we expect this trend to continue for the coming years and are planning for this by working with existing schools to increase their capacity and to plan for new secondary schools in the areas where demand is greatest with a planned investment in secondary school places of £200m between 2019-20 and 2023-24.

"We advise all applicants to use all three of their preferences when applying for a secondary school place and to ensure that they include their catchment school as one of their preferences to give themselves the best chance of securing a place

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