

Parish Report June 2019

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

We need foster carers to transform futures in Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire County Council is supporting this year's Foster Care Fortnight which this year celebrates the dedication and commitment of foster carers to change futures.

Foster Care Fortnight runs from the 13 – 26 May and is the UK's largest foster care awareness raising campaign, it aims to show the positive impact foster care has on children's and young people's lives and this year the theme is Change a Future.

We urgently need people from all walks of life to come forward and help to change a future for children and young people in Cambridgeshire.

We are particularly keen to hear from those who can care for sibling groups of brothers and sisters, children with additional needs and teenagers.

Councillor Simon Bywater, Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee, said: "Our children are all individuals and come from many different backgrounds so it's really important that we encourage people to come forward and help support local children and young people."

"We want to hear from you if you have a spare bedroom and the passion to inspire children and young people.

"We would urge those who are interested in fostering not to discount themselves because of marital status, sexuality, employment status or because they are not a home owner."

All of our foster carers receive training and support, as well as a dedicated supervising social worker.

If you would like to register your interest then email fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk, call **0800 052 0078** or visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering

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Parents prosecuted for taking child out of school

The parents of a Cambridgeshire pupil have been given a four week suspended sentence for taking their child out of school during term time for the third time.

Cambridgeshire County Council had previously issued Penalty Notice fines for the two previous occasions in 2017 and 2018, but the parents failed to pay, resulting in a court summons and fines including costs totalling £440 for the first offence and £1752 for the second offence.

Summons were issued for the hearing on 25 April and the previous convictions taken into account by magistrates who issued the suspended sentence with a requirement for the parents, from near Ely, to work with the Probation Service over the next 12 months and complete 20 days of RAR (Rehabilitation Activity Requirement).

They were also ordered to pay court costs of £165 each.

Magistrates warned the parents that should they take the child on another term time holiday, the suspended prison sentence was likely to be activated and they would be jailed for four weeks.

They said the government was trying to discourage school heads from authorising term time absences and that the parents should have understood that taking their children out of school during term time was a serious matter.

Jonathan Lewis, Service Director for Education, said: "The Local Authority firmly believes that for pupils to progress and achieve their full potential they need to have a good level of school attendance.

"Regular school attendance gives your child the best possible start in life from the time they start in reception. Children who frequently miss school are far more likely to fall behind with their work across the curriculum, and thus fail to reach their true potential."

In Cambridgeshire, the attendance data for the academic year 2016/2017 shows there were 3,201 primary school aged pupils and 3,217 secondary school aged pupils who were persistently absent from school (they attended school less than 90% of the time).

To address this all schools in the county have put in place robust attendance management strategies and will make a referral to the Local Authority where attendance fails to improve.

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Child and Family Centre survey - you said, we did

Last year, we asked you to give us your views about Child & Family Centres and, in particular, whether the changes we made to our services in April 2018 had affected you.

You Said

A total of 330 responses were received. The survey ran online and was also available in a paper format within Child and Family Centres in September, October and November.

- **97.2%** of those who responded had used the services of a Child & Family Centre before.
- **62%** of you said that the changes **had not directly affected you**.

Of the 38% who said the changes had affected them, there were some clear themes:

1. You felt that closure of a centre meant that you had to travel further to access groups and activities
2. You feel that there are fewer activities on offer overall
3. You feel that number of health clinics in centres has reduced
4. You feel that it is sometimes difficult to find out what is going on and where

What are we doing now?

A year on from the change to the service, we have considered your feedback and we are making changes where we can:

1. Understandably, some of you will have been directly affected by closures of some centres. We are keen, however, to ensure that our services are accessible to as diverse a range of families as possible and that we are able to reach the most vulnerable. So we are continuing to build up our outreach programme; linking with voluntary organisations and partners such as local churches, parent and toddler groups, health partners and Foodbanks to jointly deliver support and activities across the area in community venues and outdoor spaces. Keep an eye out for our What's On guides and like our Facebook pages for details about what is on near you. Meanwhile, our individual support to those families most in need continues across all areas of Cambridgeshire
2. Our data indicates that Child & Family Centres are delivering about the same amount of activities as this time last year. It may be, however, that some of the activities delivered in centres by our partners, e.g. health visiting teams, have reduced. Also, the service

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offer may be different now as we target our resource to meet identified need such as the Recovering Together programme, currently being run by Cambridge City Child & Family Centres for mothers and children aged 8-10 who have experienced domestic abuse. Whilst there may be fewer weekday activities open to all, there are more weekend, after school and school holiday activities which are open to a wider age range so that the whole family can attend. Meanwhile, our Family Workers continue to deliver one-to-one intensive support to families who need it most; supporting with issues like low mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse and debt and group work is delivered to meet identified need, Our Child & Family Centre Workers are also ensuring that we reach our most vulnerable families by visiting hostels and Foodbanks to offer support and advice.

3. Health clinics in Child & Family Centres are run by Cambridgeshire Community Services (NHS) and the way their health visiting service is delivered has also changed recently. However, we do work closely together and we are considering the possibility of self-weigh stations in Child & Family Centres so that families will have the facility to weigh their baby at any time during opening hours.
4. Respondents were asked how they find out about the services and activities provided by the Child & Family Centre and they were asked to mark their top three ways. Facebook was the most popular choice, with almost twice as many respondents using this than the 'What's On' guide. The third most common way of finding out about our services is via word of mouth.

What's On

Most (66%) of you said that the What's On guide is easy to use. However, some of you find the layout confusing. Some would prefer the guide to be organised by geographical area, whilst some would prefer to see it laid out by days of the week. We will be looking at re-designing our Autumn 2019 What's On guides, so that they are easier to use.

Other ways of communication

We asked you if there were other ways (apart from Facebook and What's On) that we could use to let you know about our services. Your top five other communication methods are:

1. Email
2. Text
3. Internet search engine
4. Parish/local magazine
5. Instagram

We have refreshed our email distribution lists following the implementation of GDPR, so we will now be able to send you more by email. Also, we are

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looking into mass texting methods and, where possible, we will advertise in local parish magazines. We will be piloting the use of Instagram in East Cambridgeshire and reviewing it after a period of three months. If successful, we will widen use across the county.

Cambridgeshire pledge to take further action on protecting the environment

Cambridgeshire County Council has unanimously supported a proposal to put its support behind national and global calls to address environmental and climate change issues – and to explore even more ways it can take direct action itself.

A motion put before Full Council by Cllr Steve Count, Leader of the Council, outlined the council's significant track record of success in this area, leading to it becoming acknowledged as a national leader and recommended steps to move further faster in recognition of the need for urgent action.

Saying that the council had a responsibility as a 'caretaker' of the environment for future generations, he said "People of all ages, all walks of life and all social and economic backgrounds in Cambridgeshire are becoming increasingly concerned they will leave or inherit an environment that is irreparably damaged, forcing others to live with the consequences of the decisions we make today."

Cllr Count recommended that the council worked with partners, with the private sector and crucially with representatives of young people who had recently demonstrated their concern about the environment outside Shire Hall, to develop even more ambitious plans and use the council's significant influence locally and nationally to encourage others to do the same.

During the meeting he agreed with Cllr Susan Van der Venn's proposal to alter his wording of the motion so its first recommendation includes the words 'Accepts, in line with the recent declaration by Parliament, that the world is facing a climate and environment emergency.'

He outlined the work the council was already involved with, having developed a strategy to reduce single-use plastics, a corporate Energy Strategy - which aims to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and invest in renewable energy to displace fossil fuels - a variety of schemes to protect the natural environment and reduce the impact of waste, promote walking, cycling and public transport, and development of the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme which, through improved digitalisation, aims to reduce the need for travel and therefore reduce transport emissions to in turn improve air quality.

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As part of the motion Full Council unanimously agreed that officers look at all these initiatives and more, bringing together a combined single environment and climate strategy for Full Council to consider within six months.

Preferred bidder agreed for the disposal of Shire Hall site

Following the successful marketing of the six acre Shire Hall site in Central Cambridge – resulting in bids from more than 30 organisations - Members agreed award winning regeneration company **Brookgate** as their preferred bidder.

Full Council on 14th May discussed the results of a three stage selection process that included a Member working group. The merits of the four final shortlisted bids were debated which included their proposals on how the Castle Mound and the Civil War Earthworks, the site's major heritage assets, and access to them, would be protected or enhanced.

Brookgate was agreed as the council's preferred bidder to lease the site and further negotiations will now begin between the developer and the Council to agree the full terms, including the length of the lease - expected to be for a term between 30 and 40 years.

Brookgate, who are responsible for the CB1 development and the developer of the area around the Cambridge North station, in Cambridge, has proposed subject to planning permission, a prestige hotel and prime office accommodation on the site.

The lease arrangement does mean the site remains in public ownership, confirming Cambridgeshire County Council's commitment to enshrine continued existing public access to the Castle Mound and Civil War Earthworks in the final agreement.

Cllr Steve Count, leader of Cambridgeshire County Council said: "We are very aware of our responsibilities to safeguard and enhance public access to the heritage assets on the site – which has been an important part of the selection process. But we are also mindful of the need to make the very best use of our assets in order that we can re-invest resources in the essential frontline services which the people of Cambridgeshire rely upon."

"This potential lease arrangement looks likely to exceed figures outlined in our business case, and see the value of our asset enhanced, but still retain ownership of the site for future generations – which strengthens our original decision to vacate the site."

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About Brookgate

Brookgate is a development and investment company based in Cambridge which delivers high quality mixed-use urban projects. We specialise in the regeneration of strategic sites around city centre transport hubs creating office, hotel, student, residential and retail developments

Local organisations join forces to end loneliness

Local organisations are joining forces with a campaign to end loneliness to encourage people to hold a Big Lunch or Great Get Together event this June.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Campaign to End Loneliness is part of the #50000reasons campaign which was launched last year with the aim to reduce loneliness within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Communities can hold these events to share food, have fun and are a great way to bring neighbours together and reach out to members of the community that might be more isolated.

Statistics suggest that around 50,000 older people who live alone across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough may be at risk of loneliness. Being lonely can have a serious impact on someone's health, with research showing that lacking social connections is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. So these events in communities are a great way for people in isolation to meet new people.

Here's how to make it happen:

1. When will you hold your event? The Big Lunch is held 1–2 June and The Great Get Together is held 21-23 June. However remember community events can be held any day of the year!
2. Decide where to hold your event – Why not organise a street party, sports day, BBQ, picnic or a coffee morning.
3. [Get some support](#) – Don't think you have to run the whole event by yourself! Ask other members of your community to get involved and help plan the event.
4. Send the invites out!
5. Are you planning to have food? – Make the food as simple or fancy as you want and don't forget to ask people attending to bring something.
6. Enjoy your event!

The Big Lunch:

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

The Great Get Together: <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

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County Council wins 'Bikeability Grant Recipient of the Year' Award

Cambridgeshire County Council has won the award for 'Bikeability Grant Recipient of the Year' after being nominated by training provider Outspoken.

The award recognises the fantastic support and importance the Council places on Bikeability training, enabling thousands of pupils to receive lessons.

The nomination recognises the work the Council is doing to encourage and support thousands of children in Cambridgeshire receiving Bikeability training.

The Council's Cycling Projects Team has also contributed significantly to year-on-year increases in Bikeability participation across all levels. Councillors back Bikeability enthusiastically as it supports Council objectives around public health and supporting people to live independently, as well as transport strategy aims on reducing congestion, improving air quality and reducing car-based trips.

Cllr Ian Bates, Chairman of the County Council's Economy & Environment Committee, said: "This is splendid news. I am delighted that all our hard work has been recognised. Congratulations to everybody involved with Bikeability, who work hard to ensure that the scheme continues to be a great success. "We are always working to raise the profile of the scheme, as well as getting more people cycling, more safely and more often.

"It will be a double celebration this year as one of Outspoken's Instructors, Chris, has been awarded the 'Instructor of the Year' Award as well."

Due to the success of training across the county, demand for training exceeds the funding the Council receives from the Department for Transport. When this challenge was presented to the Council's Economy and Environment Committee, councillors tasked officers with finding funds to keep the training free for all pupils. Councillors have since been active in identifying and setting up leads for local companies to help sponsor cycle training which led to the recent donation of £6,000 from Cambridge Assessment.

The award was presented to Mike Davies, Team Leader Cycling Projects and John Stanley, Project Officer Cycling Projects at Cambridgeshire County Council, by Paul Robison from The Bikeability Trust on 28 May at the Outspoken offices in Cambridge.

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Guided Busway safety is a priority

Safety on the Guided Busway is a priority for the County Council and taken very seriously.

Regular inspections and assessments are carried out on all our roads, footpaths and cycleways. The Guided Busway is no different, it is continually reviewed for maintenance purposes and any potential enhancements.

Since the busway opened in 2011, the surrounding area along the route has changed and evolved, particularly, where numbers of people and cyclists are increasing as more businesses are expanding along the route.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Chair of the Highways and Infrastructure Committee, Councillor Mathew Shuter said: "Following the recent incident on the Guided Busway on 1 May at King's Hedges Road, officers are assessing all the crossing points along the busway to ensure we're doing all we can to increase awareness and promote safety."

As a result of this review, some additional enhancements, such as extra signage and a guard rail, will be installed on the busway at King's Hedges Road over the next few weeks. A temporary barrier will be installed today (Wednesday 29 May) before the permanent work is completed. The aim is to increase awareness at the crossing point, reminding cyclists and pedestrians to stop and look for buses before crossing the busway.

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