

Cambourne Town Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council report: Tuesday 5th September 2023

Councillor Stephen Drew
Councillor Helene Leeming

Contact details for Cllrs Drew and Leeming:

Cllr Drew
cllr.drew@scambs.gov.uk
07445380811

Cllr Leeming
cllr.leeming@scambs.gov.uk
07974219202

This is the fourth report to the town council in our second year as district councillors since being elected in May 2022.

1. West Cambourne links

The path that councillors Leeming and Drew pushed for the construction of with the developers of West Cambourne will be opened on Friday 1st September. This will link the new residents of West Cambourne with the rest of the town on a shared use footpath and cycle path. It comes out on the bridle path to the north of Lower Cambourne near to the end of Swansley Lane, and just a minute's walk from the village college and the primary school. Work has been done over the summer with the county council and district council to get the necessary permissions for the developers in relation to building the path and cutting through the existing hedge on to the bridle path. We are delighted that everyone involved, also including the town council, has been able to work so constructively for the benefit of local residents.

The shuttle bus service funded by the developers that started in April ended on Friday 1st September when the path was opened as it is no longer necessary. Residents have greatly appreciated the service provided to them at no cost, and the fact that the developers have run the service throughout the school holidays over the summer. Although it was reduced to an hourly service with one bus rather than two, this proved sufficient.

The developers and county council are currently hopeful that the link road through the middle of West Cambourne linking up to Sheepfold Lane will be open by the early summer of 2024. This will be hugely welcomed by residents, as it will cut their journey time to the rest of the town significantly and also make them feel fully connected. Councillors Drew and Leeming will continue to monitor progress on this and report to residents over the coming months.



2. Cambourne travel improvements

Councillors Drew and Leeming met with South Cambridgeshire District Council's Chief Operating Officer, Anne Ainsworth, and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service's Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, Stephen Kelly, on Friday 11th August 2023. We had requested the meeting to discuss a range of matters related to planning and development affecting Cambourne as well as the work we are seeking to progress on travel issues in the town.

Our aim is for this to be the first of a series of ongoing meetings where we will make sure that the relevant officers of the councils involved give Cambourne the focus it needs and deserves. We discussed East West Rail plans and how the council intends to ensure Cambourne gets the maximum benefit from the construction of the railway and the station. Issues such as access to the station, the integration of new housing into Cambourne, the provision of services and impact on plans for the development of the High Street. It is clear that work needs to be done by everyone involved to ensure that the rapidly developing plans for the railway and the station are effectively used by the councils to maximise the benefits available to Cambourne residents. This is complicated by the lack of clarity by East West Rail at this time in terms of actual plans for the station's location and design, as well as transport links. However, this must be a key focus for us all in the next few years at all levels of local government.

Councillors Leeming and Drew will be holding a further meeting in early September with Anne Ainsworth regarding the recent travel summit in order to progress the plans. We expect to see priorities and a timeline emerge and look forward to forming a group of key stakeholders in order to start delivering on the matters discussed. We will update further on this in our October report to the town council and residents.

3. Mental Health services and support in Cambourne

Following meeting with MMP's social prescriber, Cllr Leeming has formed a group of local experts from the council and health services to focus on addressing the mental health needs of the town. The first meeting will be held mid Sept, and such meetings will be held quarterly going forwards.

4. Coronation Living Heritage Fund – opening next week

The Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) Coronation Living Heritage Fund opened last week. The fund will support local tree planting projects across communities, in celebration of the King's Coronation this year. Applications will be welcomed from district, borough, city, and county councils, unitary authorities, and metropolitan boroughs. Parish, community and town councils, as well as community groups should apply through the above's tree officers or environmental team. The application window will be open until 10am on 26 September. Councils can apply for an amount between £10,000 and £50,000 per option, for one or both of the following options:

- Coronation Micro Woods: enabling councils to plant miniature areas of rapidly establishing woodland in urban areas
- Coronation Community Orchards: enabling councils to provide grants to local people and groups to establish community orchards

Defra has also updated the required date for the planting to take place, up until 31 March 2025. This gives an extra year to facilitate the planting. Councils will be able to find out more information, including how to apply, on Defra's webpages. You can contact CLHF@defra.gov.uk if you have questions.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronation-living-heritage-fund-clhf>

5. Fly-tipping in South Cambridgeshire

Fly tippers beware - crackdown in South Cambridgeshire

Fridges to furniture, bedding to builders' waste, children's homework to a letter date- stamped from 1972, no two days are the same for the District fly-tipping investigators.

South Cambridgeshire District Council is determined to crack down on illegally dumped rubbish and has prioritised it as a key objective in its Business Plan by:

Prompt clearance of rubbish to reduce further occurrences at the same site.

Deterring criminal activity using 'fly tip under investigation' stickers to highlight ongoing investigations.

Joint roadside check initiatives with the Police, HMRC and other partners.

Fly tipping is a criminal offence which can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £400 or could end up in court with fines of up to £50,000 or even a prison sentence.

The Council receives around 1,600 reports a year on its online reporting page which amounts to more than four reports a day, every day, throughout the year - including Bank Holidays. Rubbish dumpers don't take the day off, not even for Christmas.

Cllr Henry Batchelor, Lead Cabinet member for Environmental Services, said: "Fly tipping is not only antisocial it is a crime which blights communities, poses a risk to public health and the environment, and costs up to £392 million a year nationally. In South Cambridgeshire it cost us £68,000 for fly tip removal in 2022/23. This is just the cost for time and labour alone. Uncontrolled illegal waste can be hazardous to the public, especially if it contains toxic material or asbestos. There could be a risk of damage to watercourses and soil quality from the dumped waste. In short, dumped rubbish is a disaster for people, natural wildlife, watercourses, plants and hedgerow – as well as the obvious immediate concern of looking unsightly and ruining our beautiful countryside."

He continued: "Sadly many people are conned into thinking they are having their waste removed responsibly by answering "man with a van" ads on social media and have no idea that their rubbish is destined to be fly tipped. What many people also don't realise is they are then responsible and could be fined for not properly checking the removal business was a reputable waste collection service."

Once a report comes in, the Council gets to work. This could be arranging for immediate removal if the dumped rubbish is on public land and it looks unlikely that any evidence of ownership can be found eg an empty fridge.

Alternatively, if the report involves a pile of fly tipped rubbish, investigators make an onsite visit to look for vital clues to track down where it may have come from.

Wearing protective clothing, in case of syringes or toxic chemicals, onsite visits involve sifting the rubbish to look for identifying information from things like letters, parcel address labels or invoices from dumped business waste.

Investigations could result in issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or, with sufficient evidence, launching criminal proceedings.

Everyone has a legal 'duty of care' to ensure their household or business waste is disposed of correctly. You can be prosecuted even if your waste is fly-tipped by someone else on your behalf. If it is your waste, it is your responsibility.

Allison Ogden-Newton OBE, CEO of Keep Britain Tidy, said: "As leaders in our field, we at Keep Britain Tidy know only too well the devastating impacts of fly-tipping and have piloted successful methods of curbing this kind of behaviour and effecting meaningful behaviour change. I am delighted that South Cambridgeshire District Council will be taking this important step forward in combatting this dreadful problem and we continue to offer our support to councils throughout the country in bringing fly-tipping numbers down."

South Cambridgeshire District Council is urging residents to do the right thing and properly get rid of their rubbish by:

- Consider giving it away for free on Facebook marketplace, Gumtree or taking to your local charity shop.
- If possible, reuse, repair or recycle your items before getting rid of them.
- Ensure you choose a reputable registered waste carrier disposal service.
- South Cambridgeshire District Council can arrange for collection of bulky items for many common household goods. We collect a maximum of nine items per collection. Up to three items can be booked for the minimum charge of £32.50. Additional items are then £5.50 each.
- Take your rubbish to one of Cambridgeshire's Household Recycling Centres

What should you do if you see fly tipped waste?

- Report using our online fly tipping tool
- Make a note of exact location
- Date and time you discovered the fly-tipping
- Details and photos of the items
- Vehicle's registration number and other identifying features such as colour and model

6. Funding for New Council Homes

The Council has been awarded significant funding to provide 13 additional homes from phase 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund for refugees. This is in addition to the funding for 40 homes that we received for in phase 1. In total the council has been granted just over £2.4m. The latest award, together with Council borrowing, will be used to provide 10 homes for refugee families from Afghanistan, plus 3 additional properties which we can use for temporary accommodation to reduce the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation. Under the terms of the funding when the properties are no longer needed for either refugee or temporary housing they will be treated as normal HRA housing (ie added to council stock). The longer-term legacy for this project will be an increase in social housing within the District. The Council must complete the purchases by the end of the financial year and is looking to acquire a mix of new-build properties from developers, and open market properties through Estate Agents. We will work with the Strategic Migration Partnership (linked to EELGA) to understand the housing needs of refugees. This is a testament to the trust the government have in the council's ability to deliver, and I'd like to thank Peter Campbell and Duncan Vessey for all of their work on this project to date.

7. Grant for EV chargers at community buildings - Would your village benefit from a public electric vehicle charger?

If so, then South Cambridgeshire District Council's Electric Vehicle Charge Point Grant may be of interest to you. Up to £5,000 per project is available, towards the capital costs of purchasing and installing public EV chargers at community buildings and village halls. Applications will be appraised for their deliverability and positive impact with funding allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. To be eligible for funding, EV

chargers must be publicly accessible, and projects should demonstrate that there is likely demand for an EV charger at the chosen location.

8. Community Automated External Defibrillators fund and expression of interest form – reminder

Organisations in England are being invited to bid for a share of £1 million of government funding to buy defibrillators for community spaces like town halls, local parks or post offices. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is inviting interested organisations to register expressions of interest for its Community Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Fund, aimed at increasing the number of AEDs in public places. An estimated 1,000 new defibrillators are to be provided by the fund. As part of the grant award, applicants will be asked to demonstrate that defibrillators will be placed in areas where they are most needed. Examples could include town halls, community centres, local shops, post offices and local parks, to ensure that defibrillators are evenly spread throughout communities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bids-invited-for-1-million-defibrillator-fund>