

## **District Councillor Report December 2023**

### **Homes for Ukraine update**

So far, SCDC have supported 160 groups of guests into both private accommodation and social housing. There has been just under £53,000 spent on furniture packages, and a total of £18,000 from both rent deposits and rent in advance payments. There are currently 263 guests living with hosts in South Cambs, whom Council will be liaising with to help support into their own accommodation.

### **Funding available to set up new Community Hubs**

There is capacity for up to eight extra Community Hubs (formerly Warm Hubs) in South Cambridgeshire, and SCDC currently taking expressions of interest for this. Cambridgeshire ACRE, commissioned by us, are hosting a short online briefing session to explain more to interested parish councils, village halls management committees and other community groups about the support that would be available to set up a new Community Hub in their village

Please share with any groups that you think may be interested in this offer. These hubs will be in addition to the 12 existing hubs across the district <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/community-hubs>

### **Christmas Market – can you help?**

On Sunday 10 December from 11am until 3pm, SCDC will promote hosting an indoor Christmas Market, at Cambourne Village College. Please support the Christmas Market by visiting on Sunday 10 December 2023.

District and Town Councillors are also welcome for volunteering at the event if they wish. For more information, please contact the Team at [businesskeyprojects@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:businesskeyprojects@scambs.gov.uk)

### **Nature-based groups: Annual report**

Since 2020, the Council has continued to invest in an outdoor nature-based programme to support young people struggling with their mental health. If you'd like to speak to an officer about the programme, please contact Development Officer, Health Specialist Lesley McFarlane on [Lesley.mcfarlane@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Lesley.mcfarlane@scambs.gov.uk)

## Local Highway Improvement (LHI)

The LHI application window has now reopened. The window will remain open until Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January at 5pm.

More information can be found on our website at the following:

- **Application form and associated guidance** – [Applying for a Local Highway Improvement \(LHI\) - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)
- **Measures and indicative costs** – [Local Highway Improvement funding - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

As well as this you can find further information on those schemes currently in our LHI delivery programme here – [Local Highway Improvement Delivery Programme - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

What issue would you like to address?



Speeding

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Parking

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Route Management

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Cycling Improvements

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Walking Improvements

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Pedestrian Crossings

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- Town councils - one bid per county council division in the town is allowed to submit.

- Cambourne Town Council can ask the money for the Pedestrian Crossing.

## **I attended a Peer Review in November at District Council**

I attended the peer review team in **November, where I represented Cambourne ward and discussed many issues that we need to scale up in this town. I especially discussed about the efficient bus services for Cambourne and more youth engagements.**

## **Update on Waste announcements, in particular food waste**

The DLUHC announcements that the government has published its latest waste reform plans. Of particular interest for us are potential plans for food waste collection. Rebecca Weymouth Wood from the Shared Waste Service has summarised where we are with respect to future food waste plans below:

- GCSWS (Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service) has been collecting food waste commingled with garden waste, fortnightly since 2004.
- The Service conducted a 3-year trial of separate weekly food waste collection to 9,000 properties which ended in March 2023. The trial was successful (1,400 tonnes collected) and provided practical information to help us prepare for upcoming mandatory collections.
- As part of the new National Waste Strategy and to capture more food waste for recycling, central government will require councils to implement a weekly collection of food waste. This will now be made mandatory from 2026, with the collected food waste ideally sent for anaerobic digestion (to produce energy) rather than in-vessel composting (as is the case in Cambridgeshire at present).
- Central government will be making some funding available to councils to cover the extra costs of food waste collections (this is called 'new burdens funding'); however discussions are still being held with DEFRA about the impact of Cambridgeshire County Council's existing PFI contract (through which food waste is currently processed) – the outcomes of this may impact our ability to access funding when we need it.
- Most recent guidance from DEFRA indicated that it could be acceptable to continue to collect food waste commingled with garden waste but that the frequency would need to be weekly. The Service would need to consider what options would be most suitable, depending also on the outcomes of discussions with DEFRA and our application for new burdens funding.

## **Councils encouraged to raise awareness of cheaper reliable broadband and mobile deals – reminder**

In October, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) encouraged councils to raise awareness of cut-price reliable broadband and mobile deals available to people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Ofcom has more details on its website of those eligible for the social tariffs. DSIT has produced a revised stakeholder toolkit based on feedback. This includes social media materials, posters and leaflets to help councils share this information across their communications channels. DSIT are encouraging councils to use these materials from 16 October to coincide with the latest Help for Households campaign, or to align with the next cost-of-living payment window of 31 October to 19 November 2023. The Help for Households campaign homepage brings together over 40 support schemes that the public may be able to access depending on eligibility. There are also online tools for the public to check the support they might be eligible for and how to access it. Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate.

## **Four-day week trials in SCDC**

### **(A) Government bans four-day week trials**

Government ministers have ordered councils to stop four-day working week trials and ban any new social experiments – even threatening financial consequences.

The Lib Dem administration at South Cambridgeshire District Council has long been defending its four-day week trial, where desk-based staff and now bin crews are being paid for five days of work a week – but only working four days.

The administration has received two letters from local government minister Lee Rowley MP, who ordered the Lib Dems to ‘end your experiment immediately’.

### **(B) District Council four day working week in the Full Council Meeting**

At the Full Council meeting on Thursday 5th October, Conservatives submitted a motion that would have allowed all councillors a vote on the four-day week. Unfortunately, this was unanimously rejected by the ruling group – who then voted to refer the issue to their Cabinet, ending the debate.

Based on the average wage and contracted hours figures for full-time staff as mentioned during the meeting, £3.3 million will be spent in 12 months on salaries alone for hours not

worked – and that’s before you include paying for part-time and some of the additional costs incurred by employing people.

The Government has issued SCDC with a non-statutory Best Value Notice. Under the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State has the power to inspect or intervene in local authorities where there is evidence of "best value failure".

### **(C) Four-day week trial update - An Extraordinary Council Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November:**

An Extraordinary Council Meeting was held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November evening. Liberal Democratic Members voted to note the report and agree that the Council engage with DLUHC to provide the data requested.

#### **Press Release on 21 November 2023**

<https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/local-news/south-cambridgeshire-council-will-not-28144077>

Earlier this month, the government issued a Best Value Notice to South Cambs District Council following concerns that the Lib Dems’ four days’ work for five days’ pay arrangements were not delivering best value for money to residents.

The government is requesting weekly and retrospective data to monitor the council’s performance. At an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on Monday – called for by the Conservative group at South Cambs – councillors voted on whether or not the data would be provided to allow the four-day week to continue.

South Cambs residents to pay the price for the Lib Dems ploughing on with four-day week social experiment – Conservatives commented.

The leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, Councillor Bridget Smith (Liberal Democrat) has said the authority will “not buckle under pressure” from the government to end its four-day week trial early.

### **Find your nearest pink bin to recycle electrical goods**

Bright pink bins for electrical waste have resulted in nine times more e-waste being collected for recycling since being introduced last year. Over 49 tonnes of small electrical appliances have been collected for recycling in the pink bins – instead of it all ending up in the black bin.

The pink bins are suitable for most small electrical items which have a plug or battery – including phones, toys, kettles, toasters, and many more. Items which cannot be reused are then sent to specialist operators for recycling into new products.

Pink bin locations can be found by entering your postcode at [www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk](http://www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk). For example, locations listed near Longstanton for recycling electrical appliances, batteries and light bulbs include:

- Longstanton Co-op, CB24 3BT
- Bar Hill Tesco, CB23 8EL
- Willingham Co-op, CB24 5ES
- Cambourne Morrisons Car Park, CB23 6FY
- Girton Co-op, CB3 0LW

### **Attended the meeting to sustain the Bus 18 Service.**

Attended the meeting along the other District Councillors, Mayor Nick Johnson, Town Councillors and County Councillor Mark Howell. The community in Cambourne asked to the Whippet bus company to take the pledges to maintain a better uninterrupted service during the school timings, and to update the status if the bus service is being cancelled.

### **Government approves parking enforcement changes across South Cambridgeshire**

New Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers in South Cambridgeshire will be given to Cambridgeshire County Council following a decision by Parliament.

Earlier this year an application was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) to enable Council Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to issue Penalty Charge Notices for the majority of on-street offences such as parking on double or single yellow lines. Previously only the Police could do this. Highways officers have worked closely with South Cambridgeshire District Council on the development of the scheme.

Benefits are expected to include increased compliance with parking restrictions which in turn would improve traffic flow, road safety and lead to a reduction in obstructive and dangerous parking. It will also support economic growth in the district.

Following the decision by Government, the CPE scheme in South Cambridgeshire will officially come into effect 19 December. To give people notice and a chance to find a more suitable parking place, information has now begun to be placed on vehicles that are parked in some areas where parking is in the greatest demand, such as commuting and shopping areas.

A Warning Notice will be issued to people who continue to park where there are restrictions throughout January – this looks like a parking ticket but there is no fine attached. Penalty Charge Notices will be issued from 1 February which will mean a fine of between £50 and £70, depending on the severity of the offence.

Under CPE powers, CEOs cannot enforce all restrictions. Restrictions such as dangerous parking, obstruction of the footway and moving traffic offences will continue to be enforced by the Police.

The initial set-up costs to get CPE underway in South Cambridgeshire will be covered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership. Visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cpe](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cpe) for more information.

### **Email from Nic Goddard, Communities Policy Officer**

It's a great opportunity for you and people in your community to follow the Commissioner's progress against his Police and Crime Plan. There are often features on specific areas or initiatives that would be of interest too, for example local solutions to tackling anti-social behaviour, details about funding etc,

To subscribe simply <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/contact-us-and-get-involved/contact-us/pccs-newsletter/> where you will be asked to enter your email address and we will do the rest.

At the same time, I would be grateful if you could share any details about any local newsletters/social media pages you are involved with – I would be more than happy to share news updates relevant to your area.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Nic

**Nic Goddard**  
**Communities Policy Officer**  
**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

### **Social Prescription patients go on regular trips.**

I work with Social Networking Team to addressing the escalating concern of social isolation and loneliness among the elderly in our communities, I have taken proactive steps to enhance their well-being. This includes organising regular group excursions, small trips to garden centers, group cooking sessions, tea parties, and group lunches.

### **Took part in EWR Public Consultation**

I actively took part in the East West Rail (EWR) public consultations, I contributed to areas that will bring substantial benefits to Cambourne residents. Additionally, I have initiated discussions with the District Council to reinstate Social Badminton.

## **I am keeping the Youth towards positive growth, and not to fall into the trap of anti-social behaviours.**

I am pleased to announce that Cambourne's local charity, CamCare UK, and CERC have been selected as Elektra's Charity Community Partner 2023—a prestigious global recognition in the electronics industry for outstanding performance, innovation, and contributions.

Cambourne's local STEM, Science Technology Engineering Mathematics initiative has acknowledged by Electronics Weekly, a global magazine for the Electronics Engineering and became their Charity Partner.

The initiative has significantly expand youth STEM learning, I have elevated Cambourne's Robotics Club CERC, enabling 12 competitive groups to participate in regional and national competitions, including the upcoming FIRST LEGO Robotics. Nearly 200 children now receive regular lessons in Electronics and Engineering outside of school.

## **Keeping the Community in the best of their mental health:**

Over the past three months, I have organised and hosted several impactful events in Cambourne, including International Languages, Diwali, an Art Exhibition and Sale, and a Christmas Party.

## **Volunteering in Cambourne:**

I am serving as a Trust Governor at the local Primary School in Cambourne. Additionally, I hold the position of Trustee for Cambourne's Community Cinema at Cambourne Village College, fostering community engagement through cultural and cinematic experiences.

## **Merry Christmas to the members of Cambourne Town Council**

I wish the wonderful residents of Cambourne a joyous and festive season! May your Christmas be filled with warmth, and may the New Year bring you good health, happiness, and prosperity. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Cllr Shrobona Bhattacharya (SCambs - Cambourne)**

[cllr.bhattacharya@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.bhattacharya@scambs.gov.uk)

07852753216