

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

District Councillor's Monthly Report – December 2022

Season's Greetings

This will be the final report from me in 2022. Can I take this opportunity to wish everyone an enjoyable Christmas and a happy New Year (or simply a pleasant holiday if you follow another faith or no faith). 2022 was certainly an “interesting” and busy year! For me, as a newly elected councillor, it meant learning how the council works or, sometimes, how it doesn't work. I also have been learning about the many different needs and priorities of the 10 villages that make up our ward. I hope I have contributed positively to your lives and look forward to working with you all again in 2023.

Christmas Market

South Cambs District Council (SCDC) is sponsoring a Christmas market at Cambourne Village College, Sheepfold Lane, CB23 6FR, on Sunday 11th December, between 11:00AM and 3:00PM. 70 independent stallholders have booked to attend and entry is free for all. Note that parking on the village college site is limited but there will be overspill parking on Cambourne Business Park, the next street along from Sheepfold Lane.

Contact list for parish clerks

SCDC has sent all parish clerks an updated contact list with the recent parish e-bulletin. Parish clerks find it useful to be able to strike up direct relationships with named contacts across the organisation, and the previous list of service areas that allowed them to do this was out of date. The contact list comprises a Word document and accompanying PDF maps attached to the regular email. If you didn't receive this email, please let me know – it may be trapped in a spam filter or SCDC may not have an up-to-date email address for the current clerk.

Black Mould

We were all shocked by the recent death in Rochdale of two-year old Awaab Ishak from respiratory illness caused by black mould in the family home. As a matter of priority, SCDC is reviewing housing records to identify residents who have reported black mould that hasn't been eradicated. If any of your parishioners live in a council property and have concerns about black mould, they should contact the Mears service desk, the housing department or drop me an email.

Six Free Trees

SCDC's Six Free Trees offer has returned for a third year. Parishes have until 21st December to apply for their trees and select their preferred species. Apply online at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/grants-funding-and-community-support/six-free-trees>

Homes for Ukraine update

SCDC and Cambridge City Council are appealing for more local hosts to support families from Ukraine. Between the two areas, a total of almost 500 hosts have already been providing housing to guests. However, with the war in Ukraine continuing, and with it not being safe for many families to return, there is an ongoing demand to provide them with a safe place to stay. Around 20% of existing hosts are not able to continue with their arrangements beyond the initial six-month point, which makes the need to find further hosts more pressing. All local households need to be able to be a host is a spare room. Anyone who can offer a spare room is asked to text ROOM to 88802 so that the councils can support them through the process and match hosts to guests who have already started to settle in the local area.

East-West Rail

As you may have heard in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the government has now confirmed funds to build East West Rail (EWR) through from Bedford to Cambridge. The next stage of the planning process will be for EWR to develop a business plan for the government's approval. No word yet on the location of the Cambourne station, or whether the Northern or Southern route into Cambridge will be chosen. South Cambs leader, Cllr Bridget Smith, will be writing to the new rail minister to explain concerns of residents about this project.

Boundary Commission Review

The Boundary Commission recently reported on the results of its consultation on proposals to (amongst other changes) create a new parliamentary constituency called St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire. As well as St Neots, the new constituency will include all of the Caxton and Papworth ward villages, in addition to 14 other South Cambs wards including Cambourne, Swavesey, and Bar Hill. If residents want to see the latest proposals, they should go to the following link:
<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

Cost of Living Support Update

SCDC is implementing a wide range of support worth almost £400,000 for the most vulnerable, after hearing how the rising cost of energy and food bills is having a major impact on individuals, families, and businesses across the district. A total of £180,000 has been put towards support measures from the District Council and a further £211,000 will come from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS). The ICS are providing this funding to ensure support is co-ordinated effectively and directed at those in need locally.

£100,000 in top-up for Discretionary Housing Payments will be available to support an extra 100 eligible families with housing costs. £60,000 of Discretionary Council Tax discounts are available to anyone who can show they are in financial hardship and are not claiming from a scheme elsewhere. Localised Council Tax Support will provide up to 100% discount to some households and increase support for working claimants.

A charitable giving fund www.gofundme.com/SCDCcostofliving has been created that residents can donate to; SCDC is pledged an initial £15,000. The money will go towards low-cost methods of staying warm and cooking such as slow cookers and electric blankets.

There will be an expansion of [Warm Hubs](#) which are free spaces where residents of all ages can visit to socialise, work, and catch up with friends. Food parcels will be available for people attending the Warm Hubs who are identified as being most in need, in parishes where there is no foodbank already in place.

An additional £15,000 has been set aside to expand the Warm Packs that are provided to Council tenants. They will now include an electric blanket, hot water bottle, thermos flask, blanket, thermal socks, gloves and hat. Environmental Health officers can distribute Warm Packs to residents living in very cold conditions.

4 Day Week Trial

Some concerns have been expressed as to whether the 4 day working week trial planned for the first three months of next year will affect the council's service quality. While details are still being hammered out, councillors have been assured that there will be no reduction in opening hours. In fact, SCDC is looking to extend opening hours, whether via telephone, a soon-to-be-launched webchat service, or Teams or Zoom meetings.

Sustainable Travel Zone Consultation

The Greater Cambridge Partnership's consultation on their "Making Connections" proposals remains open until noon on the 23rd December here:

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/making-connections-2022>

Please do encourage your residents to have their say on each element of the package, including the improved bus services and the congestion charge. GCP expects to publish high-level responses in late January, although detailed analysis of comments will not be available until later in 2023.

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05 December 2022

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