

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

District Councillor’s Monthly Report – April 2023

Changes to bin collections

With Easter approaching and three Bank Holiday Mondays in May, you won’t be surprised the Waste Service is changing many of the bin collection days in the next two months. The new dates have been widely circulated but in case you missed them, here are the dates which have been announced so far:

Usual collection date	Revised collection date
Thursday 13 April	Saturday 15 April
Thursday 20 April	Friday 21 April
Thursday 4 May	Friday 5 May

Bins

As I mentioned in my last newsletter, the Shared Waste Service has begun a review of its routes. This will ensure routes are accommodating new developments in the most efficient way. The review will also allow the service to start to plan for its own 4 day week trial. The results of the review will be published in late May and adequate notice will be given to residents of any changes.

Separately, all households will be provided with a waste food caddy later this year, in addition to the three wheelie bins. This is a central government initiative to reduce food waste and has been piloted in a number of villages including Milton. Cambridgeshire’s waste disposal sites and systems require adaptation before they can handle large quantities of food waste.

Composting

If any of your parishioners are thinking about home composting but don’t know where to start, South Cambs has some pointers online here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/recycling-and-bins/reducing-waste/home-composting/>

The council’s collaboration with www.getcomposting.com allows them to buy low-cost compost bins. A basic composter costs local residents about £32.50 from this site, compared with roughly double that for the same product on popular online shopping sites.

Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) Grants

A new round of Zero Carbon Communities grant funding opened on Monday April 3 and remains open until Friday June 2. Parish councils and community groups in the district are invited to bid for a share of £125,000.

This is the fifth round of grants since they were established in May 2019. Since then, more than £400,000 has been allocated to more than 60 different grass roots projects. Previous funded projects have included cooking classes that reduce food waste, tree planting, a community e-bike rental scheme, solar panels for village halls and a men's mental health and well-being project that runs a mobile library for gardening equipment and tool hire.

Groups can apply for between £1,000 to £15,000, with applications invited under two categories.

1. Projects which reduce carbon emissions or lock up carbon in a measurable way such as low carbon, energy saving improvements to community buildings, or tree-planting initiatives.
2. Community engagement projects which support and encourage lower carbon living.

Full eligibility criteria and ideas for projects are available at www.scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant

East West Rail

The government has said in the Budget that the route alignment of East West Rail will be announced in May. The possible choices are south via Harston and the Shelfords or north via Northstowe. Both options include a new station at Cambourne. The government also says it will be providing up to £15 million in economic support for communities along the route.

EWR recently held their usual round of quarterly briefings from councillors in affected wards. These meetings were principally focused on station design and accessibility. I did ask how much detail will be included in the March announcement - just the route direction or a detailed map. I haven't received a response yet.

South Cambs leader Cllr Bridget Smith has written a second time to rail minister Hew Merriman, asking for a meeting. He hasn't responded yet.

Buses

I submitted a question to last week's Council, asking that the Combined Authority (the mayor's office, which manages subsidised bus services) ensures council tax payers are receiving value for money. The question was fielded by the Deputy Leader, Cllr Brian Milnes, who meets regularly with the Combined Authority. Everyone, including the bus operators, recognise services are currently unreliable, with the shortage of drivers being the principal reason. Bus franchising is being suggested as a long-term solution and we await more details of how that might work.

At the present time, we need more robust monitoring of service standards and easier ways to report issues with specific buses. I have suggested the Combined Authority publishes the KPIs (metrics) it uses to monitor bus service standards. It might also be helpful if their web site provided an easier way to make comments (good or bad) on a particular service.

The next Parish Councils forum will include a Q&A session with someone from the Combined Authority and (hopefully) the Managing Director of Whippet buses.

Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ)

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) continues to work through the nearly 24,000 responses received to its recent consultation about a Sustainable Travel Zone for Cambridge. The STZ is a package of proposals that include an improved bus service across the county, which will be subsidised by a congestion charge in Cambridge. The GCP has so far analysed half of the responses and is promising to provide the final results of the consultation by the summer. Depending on those results, the proposals may go forward unchanged, be modified with a possible re-consultation, or be scrapped. Based on the data provided so far, we will want to see Addenbrookes excluded from the charging zone, charging restricted to rush hours only, and a longer list of exemptions (no charges for delivery drivers, trades, carers etc.) Any changes affecting Highways (including the congestion charge) will have to be approved by the County Council as the authority responsible for most of our roads and that will probably happen at their July meeting. The District Council has limited influence but no legal authority over such changes. Motions for a referendum on just the congestion charge portion of the package were defeated in both the County Council and South Cambs, as hugely expensive and duplicating the data already gathered during the consultation.

Four Day Week Trial

The initial trial of a four day working week for office-based council staff is now drawing to a close. It has been successful – the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are largely unchanged, and staff health and well-being has improved. Subject to Cabinet approval, the trial will be extended for another year and long-term trends monitored.

As mentioned above, a separate trial is being planned for Shared Waste Service employees. If approved, this will begin in July to coincide with changes to the bin lorry routes.

OxCam Partnership

The OxCam (Oxford-Cambridge) Partnership is a new body that brings together councils and other bodies between the two cities. It is responsible for strategy around economic development and the environment. Unlike the ARC, which it replaces, it is not responsible for planning housing. For more information about the OxCam partnership, go online to <https://www.oxford-cambridge-partnership.info/>

Use of South Cambs Hall for Business

The council's offices in Cambourne are being reconfigured to make better use of the available space. As part of this work, some of the office space will be made available at attractive rents to start-ups and small businesses. If you might be interested in occupying some of this space, please email businesskeyprojects@scambs.gov.uk for details.

The business team has also suggested some of the space could be used for community activities such as exhibitions or pop-up food stalls. Again, if you have any suggestions, please contact them as above.

March Parish E-Bulletin

The latest South Cambs e-bulletin was sent out on 28th March. It includes several useful attachments, particularly a list of contact details for all the council departments. If your copy didn't arrive, please let me know and I will forward the email to you.

Community-Led Plans

Funding is available for parishes and communities in South Cambridgeshire to develop or refresh their Community-Led Plan. SCDC can offer advice and support which will help you bring forward the changes that the Community would like to see.

The Council has Community Chest Funding ring-fenced for this purpose until October 2023. You can also [check out the Community Led Plan Toolkit](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/community-action/community-led-plan-toolkit/) at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/community-action/community-led-plan-toolkit/>. If you have any questions, please email CLP@scambs.gov.uk

South Cambs Magazine

A copy of the South Cambs magazine should have been delivered to every household in the district by Royal Mail before the end of March. It seems some copies have gone astray. If your village or street didn't receive a copy, please let me know and I will notify the distribution manager.

Social Housing Decarbonisation

South Cambs Housing Department has successfully bid for £1.7 million from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This funding will go towards some of the projects already started to improve the fabric of Council homes. It will also support measures being put in place to help the Council achieve its own and the Government's Net Zero targets. The Fund is designed to upgrade social housing stock that is currently below Energy Performance Certificate C, up to that standard. Energy saving measures such as exterior wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, new windows and doors, draft proofing measures, as well as heat pumps and solar panel installation can be provided with the funding. These measures could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills. Contact the Housing Team for further details.

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