

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

District Councillor's Monthly Report – July 2023

Mobile Food Hub

A new Mobile Food Hub, funded by the District Council and run by not-for-profit organisation, Hope CIC, is being launched to support residents during the cost-of-living crisis. The Mobile Hub will offer fresh produce and essential items, some of which will be free and others at below retail price. It will stop in the car park behind the Papworth Everard Co-Op every Monday between 1:00PM and 2:00PM, starting on 3rd July. No vouchers or referrals are needed, just turn up on the day. Hope CIC is also looking for donations and volunteers to help with their work. More information is here: <https://hopeagainst.org/hope-cic-mobile-food-hub>

Bin Collection Changes Delayed

In previous newsletter, I mentioned changes to bin collection arrangements would be rolled out in July. The changes are proving more complex than anticipated and will now be implemented in September at the earliest.

CCTV in Taxis

As long ago as 2019, South Cambs decided that all taxis should be fitted with CCTV. The implementation date was delayed due to the pandemic but all new and renewing licenses now require CCTV to be fitted in the vehicle. Private hire vehicles and limos are exempt from this requirement.

Cambourne Repair Cafe

Cambourne's 4th Repair Cafe will be held on Saturday 8th July between 11am and 2pm at The Hub Community Centre, High Street, Cambourne, CB23 6GW. For a list of items residents can take in for repair and a booking form, go online here: <https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/events/cambourne-repair-cafe-4/> (bookings take priority over walk-in requests).

Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey

As part of the County Council's vision to make Cambridgeshire greener, fairer and more caring, they have launched a countywide survey, speaking to a random sample of 5,500 residents to understand their views on the quality of their lives. The County Council aim to make this an annual survey so they can track the responses over time to see how council decisions and policies – and the work of other public sector bodies in the county - affect their views. Fieldwork will continue until August, allowing results to be fed back into the council's meetings from September onward as members begin to discuss priorities for setting budgets.

The telephone survey – run by an independent market research company Thinks Insight – aims to speak to 1,100 people aged 18+ living in each of the five Cambridgeshire district areas. Contacts will broadly represent the area's population. In addition, they will be talking to people from specific groups who are less often heard from, including people who may have been homeless or are from migrant or Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities. They are also planning to work with younger people via youth engagement teams at the end of this month. The survey also be published on the County Council's own website from the end of June and anyone who wants to can take part.

If residents are contacted, the market research team will identify themselves as working on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, and will give the council's main contact number to allow people to check the caller is legitimate. No one will be asked for identifying personal details beyond the first four or five digits of their post code, or for any financial information. Further details are available on the County Council website here: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/cambridgeshire-launches-quality-of-life-survey-to-track-residents-views>

Cambridgeshire Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

This summer Cambridgeshire County Council is again running a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, funded by the Department for Education. Children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals can access a holiday scheme for up to 64 hours over the summer. The County Council have registered 145 participating schemes, who are offering enriching experiences, a daily meal and physical activity to over 3,000 children and young people. Ukrainian and other refugee families are also eligible to attend as well as families struggling financially. Further details and a booking form are available on the County Council website here: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

Council Tax Support

Depending on their circumstances, residents may be entitled to a discount on council tax even if they are working. To check eligibility and apply, use the online calculator on the South Cambs web site: <https://hbcalc.scambs.gov.uk/HBCalculatorPaged/launch>

Even if they are not eligible but are struggling to pay their Council Tax, they may be able to get a reduction under the Council's discretionary council tax support scheme. They should call 01954 713000 and speak to a Communities officer for advice.

Civil Parking Enforcement

Later this year, probably in November, the County Council will take over responsibility for parking enforcement from the police. As part of the transition, two Enforcement Agents (formerly called Traffic Wardens) will be recruited to cover South Cambs. Priority will be given to hot-spots for illegal parking such as near railway stations. Yellow lines are being repainted throughout the district to eliminate any doubt as to streets where parking is illegal. The cost of setting up this scheme is being covered by the GCP (Greater Cambridge Partnership).

Solar Panels

Residents in South Cambridgeshire are installing solar panels at a faster rate than anywhere else in the country. 15 percent of properties have them, which is the third highest proportion in the UK.

There are several reasons for this including the cost of living crisis, which has seen many households re-assessing their energy needs. The District's high property prices are prompting more families to upgrade the home they are in instead of moving. There's also the increased prevalence of climate concerns, and a strong network of community groups engaging the population on these issues.

In South Cambs, 400 households had solar PV installed through the Solar Together group-buying scheme, led by Cambridgeshire County Council. The next round of the scheme is currently pending but you can find more information and register interest here: <https://solartogether.co.uk/cambridgeshire/home>.

East West Rail (EWR)

Most of you will have seen the announcement by EWR of its proposed route between Bedford and Cambridge. At this time, the route is a broad line on the map, passing between Cambourne and Papworth, before turning south past Caldecote. Their “red line” boundaries will not be published until the autumn – these lines show the areas within which the railway will be built. Construction will start in 2027 and trains will run from early 2030s, assuming the government signs off the business case. There doesn’t yet seem to be agreement whether the motive power will be electric, diesel or hybrid. If you want to talk to EWR directly, they will be holding another open event at the Cambridge Belfry Hotel, Back Lane, Cambourne, CB23 6BW between 2.00 and 8:00pm on Tuesday 11th July.

Late Breaking News:

GCP Reworking Sustainable Travel Zone Proposals

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Board has completed its review of the comments received from its consultation on proposals for a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) in Cambridge. It was determined the proposals were not acceptable to the majority of respondents. The board has instructed its technical team to come up with a range of alternative, costed solutions. Changes could be made to the days and hours of zone operation, the congestion charge amount (including exemptions), and the boundaries of the STZ (for example, excluding Addenbrookes). The team will report back in the autumn.

Minister Instructs South Cambs to End 4-Day Week Trial

As has been widely reported, Local Government Minister Lee Rowley has written to South Cambs DC instructing it to end its trial of a 4-Day working week. Legal advice has been sought, as it is far from clear the minister has the authority under current legislation to issue this directive. The timing of this move coincided with the Local Government Association’s annual conference, where discussions will take place with other councils considering starting their own 4-day week trials. No doubt the lawyers will be busy for weeks and I will update you when there is anything substantial to report!

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