

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

District Councillor's Monthly Report – October 2023

Bin Collections – New Rotas Operational

The new bin rotas are now in operation. From now until at least the end of the year, Caxton and Papworth ward bins will be emptied on Fridays, with the exception of Caxton itself, which remains on Thursdays. I haven't heard of any problems with the new rotas yet, although a few residents seem to have missed the notifications and put their bins out a day early.

If bins are missed at any time, residents can report them online at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/recycling-and-bins/report-a-missed-household-collection> or by calling 01954 713000. The Waste Service will then return within two working days to empty the missed bin. Each missed bin should be reported individually to ensure they have a complete list of properties to visit..

A428 Upgrade – Work Commenced

Work on the replacement A428 between the Black Cat roundabout and Caxton Gibbet has recommenced. A large number of yellow construction vehicles can be seen moving mounds of earth opposite the Shell station at Caxton Gibbet. The “red lines” of their working area are marked with red and white tape. The East West Rail tracks will be located north of the “new” A428, assuming the rail project goes ahead.

Civil Parking Enforcement

As I mentioned in a previous newsletter, responsibility for parking enforcement will move from the police to the district council later this year. The council will recruit several civil parking agents (formerly called “traffic wardens”) to manage parking in our villages. In preparation for the transition, the yellow and white lines will be repainted throughout Papworth, while signs will be refurbished along Ermine Street and Varrier Jones Drive. Some of this work has already started, if in a rather random order! Ermine Street in Caxton and most the roads in Eltisley are scheduled to have their lines repainted. Signs will also be refurbished in those villages, as well as in Elsworth.

Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) Next Steps

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Executive Board decided at its meeting on 28th September not to proceed with the STZ and congestion charge. There is currently no information as to what, if anything, might replace the STZ. Officers are evaluating various alternatives, including new sources of funding for improved bus services.

Bus Network Review

The CPCA (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority – the Mayor's office) has conducted a Bus Network Review ahead of the re-tendering of all subsidised routes next March. All the subsidised routes in our ward are meeting the CPCA criteria and are safe for now. They are expected to be re-tendered next year on their current routes. There are six routes elsewhere in South Cambs that are under threat because their financial performance is poor. (Councillors are aware that

there have been issues on some routes with late running and short notice cancellations. This information has been passed to the CPCA to include in their decision making process.)

Warm Hubs and Electric Blankets

South Cambs has renewed its contract with Cambridgeshire ACRE to continue the delivery of Community Hubs (previously called Warm Hubs) until October 2025, with funding from the Integrated Care Board.

Cambridgeshire ACRE will be recruiting the three 'Village Agent' job roles as part of this project. The Village Agents team will provide help, support and solutions for the health and social care needs of members of the community, by engaging with local neighbourhood volunteers, health and care sector, statutory and voluntary organisations. It is hoped that the successful applicants will already be members of the community that they serve as part of the role. If you know of anyone who might be interested, details of how to apply can be found here:

<https://www.cambsacre.org.uk/recruiting-village-agent-south-cambs/>

On a related subject, more than 530 residents will be offered a free electric blanket (also known as a heated throw) in a scheme to further help people in need through another winter of high heating bills. Residents selected to qualify will be those who are (as of 1 July 2023) claiming Council Tax Support and at least one of the following:

- Attendance Allowance.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) mobility element at the enhanced rate.
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component at the higher rate.

These people have been selected because they experience mobility issues so are more susceptible to cold weather pressures. They are also experiencing some financial hardships, so are less able to afford their heating bills this winter.

Qualifying residents will receive a letter in the coming weeks from the Council telling them they are eligible and how to claim their free blanket. Only people who receive a letter will be able to claim a free blanket.

Analysis has shown that running an electric blanket costs just 5p per hour, compared to an average central heating cost of £2.03 per hour (Ideal Home, 2023). The accumulation of these savings over the winter months has the potential to provide financial relief to those residents. Funding for the electric blankets comes from Council reserves at a cost of around £30,000.

Road-side Weeds

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways implemented a change to the road side weed management policy for this year. The change was designed to reduce the use of potentially harmful chemicals in the environment to help support nature recovery and to reduce operational costs. However, many residents have commented on the proliferation of weeds, some of which may be considered hazardous.

Highways are assessing the impacts of the policy change and would welcome residents' feedback on what the results have been this year. You can complete the short survey, and submit it back to

the County before Friday 20th October 2023. The following link will take you through to the survey.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeur3ZPAuTuO7df29uYX6sooxUAfaX0sMAvTR4cr-R8fcwIfg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Note that South Cambs DC has been following a similar policy. However, staff have been directed to remove weeds manually where practical, rather than use chemical sprays. It should of course be appreciated that the District Council has a much smaller estate than the County.

Four-day week trial update

On Thursday 5th October's South Cambs Full Council meeting, a motion was submitted to request a report on the four-day week trial be submitted to the November Full Council for discussion. This was not voted on but a technical motion was passed to authorise the Cabinet review the trial in the same period. It is likely Cabinet will allow the trial to run for the planned 12 months, subject to no further government intervention. After 12 months, Cabinet may decide to discontinue the trial or make four-day working permanent. Before implementing permanent four-day working, residents will have the opportunity to give feedback through a formal consultation.

The Executive has provided the following update: "With the continued interest in the four-day week trial, a website page with further factual information is available at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/four-day-working-week-trial/>. This page is intended to help residents to understand key elements of the trial. The council has now had success in filling 13 of 23 posts that were identified as 'hard to fill' before the trial began. That is, they could not permanently be recruited to before the start of the four-day week trial. Filling these posts – many of which were especially hard to recruit to, such as those in Planning – means the Council expects to spend around £760,000 less on agency cover this year. Having permanent staff also has a significant effect on the consistency of service provided to residents and businesses. However, the Council's agency spend still fluctuates – and has increased recently due to the need to bring in agency staff to carry out short term programmes where permanent staff are not required. For example, this includes employing temporary staff to support the Council's commitments under the Homes for Ukraine scheme."

Christmas Market in Cambourne

A date for your diary - this year's Cambourne Christmas fair will take place on Sunday 10th December at Cambourne Village College. Last year's event had around 70 stallholders and over 1000 attendees, so a good place to pick up those last minute gifts.

Electrical Safety

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) are running a campaign about safety when using electrical devices, especially those with Lithium-Ion batteries. You may have read about several fatalities caused by such batteries overheating and catching fire. Lithium-Ion batteries can be found in many electronic devices including mobile phones, laptops and tablets, vape cigarettes and games console controllers, as well as e-scooters and e-bikes. Two tips: (1) always use the correct charger for the device, and (2) don't leave charging devices unattended, particularly when you go to bed. For more information, visit CFRS online at <https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/community-safety/take-charge-and-be-safe>

Getting involved in the planning process across Greater Cambridge

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire residents are being encouraged to have their say on an important document that outlines how they can become involved in the planning process.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP), a partnership between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, is consulting on a new ‘Statement of Community Involvement’ from 18 October to 29 November 2023.

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the councils will involve communities in the range of planning related activities it undertakes. Planning affects the lives of everyone who lives, works, and visits Greater Cambridge. For that reason, it is important that people can engage with the Council and its officers in the processes that lead to planning permission, and preparing the plan that sets out future development of the Greater Cambridge area.

The Statement of Community Involvement outlines the types of engagement designed to capture views to inform the preparation of the plan the future of Greater Cambridge, involvement in neighbourhood planning, and the consideration of planning and related applications for new development.

Besides inviting online comments, GCSP is also attending two events later this month where members of the public are welcome find out more and to give their views.

These are at:

- Northstowe Market: 9.30am - 12.30pm on Sunday 22 October 2023 at Northstowe Hub, The Community Centre, 1 The Green, Pathfinder Way, Northstowe CB24 1FD
- Café Drop in: The Meadows Community Centre, Arbury, Cambridge: 11am - 2pm on Friday 27 October at The Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Rd, Cambridge CB4 2JL.

You can find out more information about the Statement of Community Involvement on the GCSP website at <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/about-us/statement-of-community-involvement/> When the consultation opens on 18 October, you can add your comments at the same website. Anyone who would prefer to receive printed literature should call 01223 457000 or 01954 713 000.

East West Rail (EWR) - ground survey work and archaeological trial trenching

East West Rail continues to hold Local Representatives Group (LRG) meetings across our area. Although they are not starting construction in the near future, their Engagement Manager has sent out the following request:

“ I’m reaching out to let you know about the voluntary access agreement requests we will soon be sending to landowners. These agreements, initially spanning two years, will enable us to begin a programme of ground investigation surveys, an essential and routine part of the development of all major infrastructure projects. These surveys will primarily cover the proposed new section of railway between Bedford and Cambridge, providing our Design and Engineering Teams with a clear understanding of the environment and ground conditions surrounding the preferred route.

- **The ground surveys** will use a variety of survey techniques, including drilling boreholes and digging trial pits to examine, sample and test soil and rock or monitor groundwater. This information is important for us to gather detailed information about the existing ground conditions and to develop our proposals in a way that takes account of the impact the project may have on local environments. It will inform our Environmental Impact Assessment and the development of mitigation measures.
- **The archaeological trial trenching** will ensure important archaeological sites are identified and that sufficient steps are taken to protect them.

The voluntary access agreements will set out the payment of professional fees to landowners (up to a set limit), an annual access fee, an early return payment for return of the signed licence within 28 days, as well as payments for each survey undertaken on their land. We'll include a survey guide with the letter to supply further information, and this guide will also be available on our website shortly. We will also provide each landowner a draft survey activity programme for their review before we start any work. This programme will detail the types of surveys, indicative locations, and proposed dates.

I also want to draw your attention to some information in the letter that landowners will receive to provide some clarity and reassurance. We're committed to working with the landowners to agree voluntary access agreements over the next few months, if this isn't possible, we may need to use our statutory powers to enter and survey the land. These powers were brought in by government to ensure that infrastructure projects stay on track. Further information on this can be found in the survey guide which will be available on our website shortly. Please be assured that we would only use these powers as a last resort and will work with landowners closely to reach a voluntary agreement.

Due to the confidential nature of land ownership and the legal status of licence agreements we can't proactively disclose details about who we are contacting and the nature of the specific surveys we're undertaking on their land. However, if you are approached by any landowners in your area who would like you – or other representatives - to talk to us about their case, please ask them to give us permission to do so – preferably in writing – and we will be happy to.

If you or any of your constituents have any questions about the surveys, I encourage you to contact the Land Team directly by email land@eastwestrail.co.uk, our website www.eastwestrail.co.uk/get-in-touch or by phone on 0330 8387 583.”

Polling District Review

All councils are required by law to keep their polling districts and places under review. Polling districts are the building blocks of electoral areas (such as the district's wards). Most of our polling districts are formed along the same boundaries as parishes. To make the review more inclusive, South Cambs is asking for views on our polling station arrangements, including looking at accessibility of stations for disabled voters.

Full details can be found on our website at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/elections/polling-district-review/> The consultation runs until 27 November and an outcome report will go to the council's Civic Affairs Committee on 14 December. Their recommendations will proceed to Council on 27 February 2024. If you have any comments or questions, please contact elections@scambs.gov.uk

Water

Cambridge Water has published their revised Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). Preliminary reading of the document does not point to any dramatic new conclusions around the fundamental challenge of supply and demand imbalance, and the risk of environmental deterioration. The plan also indicates that the government's stated ambition for 250,000 new homes in Greater Cambridge cannot be achieved without further additional supplies of water over and above the planned Fens Reservoir.

Noting these early conclusions, South Cambs has outlined to government that in our view "resolution" of the issue requires a whole system based approach, covering three broad elements:

1. optimising and enhancing water supply.
2. sophisticated and ongoing demand management and/or behaviour changes, and
3. a strategy for mitigation and building resilience as well as reducing risk.

The Shared Planning Service has met with the Environment Agency for a discussion centred around ongoing planning appeals and water. The discussion was positive with regard to progressing a shared understanding. Subject to the Environment Agency's continued review of the WRMP, it hopes to continue engagement around settling on some positive next steps for plan making and decision making on planning applications.

Cambridge 2040

Cambridge 2040 is the code name for the proposal put forward by Michael Gove for 250,000 new homes in Greater Cambridge, including a new quarter for Cambridge City. The Shared Planning Service team have had any initial meeting with the consultants appointed by Peter Freeman, who is nominated to lead the Cambridge Delivery Group. The Cambridge Delivery Group is responsible for this project, but has not yet met and its final membership is also unknown at this time. In late August, the Shared Planning Service submitted a bid to government for £500,000 capacity funding to support this project but has not yet received a response.

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