

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

District Councillor's Monthly Report – November 2023

Best Value Notice

News broke yesterday that the Department of Leveling up, Housing and Communities has issued South Cambs District Council with a “Best Value” notice. They are seeking assurance that the 4-day working week trial has not affected service standards. Normally, responding to such a notice requires the council to provide certain metrics or KPIs to the government every week. Officers are still reviewing the notice in detail but are confident service standards have been maintained since the trial began. More details on this as it becomes available!

Bin Collections – Interesting Statistic

The Shared Waste Service reports that, thanks to the hard work of the crews and the preparation from their colleagues in the depot, the transition to the new working arrangements appears to have gone smoothly. In the four weeks since the 18th September, it has emptied more than 99% of bins. To put that in context, during the first 4 weeks of the new collection arrangements, the service was due to empty 717,488 bins. It emptied 715,383 of them. For the ones not emptied, the main reasons were bin not out, contamination or wrong bin out. As always, if any bin is missed, the resident can simply report it on the website at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/recycling-and-bins/report-a-missed-household-collection/> and the service will return to empty it within two working days.

On a related topic, there has been a lot of publicity in the media about major changes coming to bin collections across England. There will be new rules on recycling, which the Government hopes will reduce the amount of waste going into landfill. Before Cambridgeshire can implement these changes, it will be necessary to renegotiate a PFI contract governing the waste centre management as well as to make modifications to allow them to process food waste. Consequently, it is likely to be 2025 at the earliest before changes are seen here.

Green Grants for Business

South Cambs has launched a scheme of green grants for small and medium size enterprises with a minimum of three employees. Businesses can apply for grants to reduce their carbon footprint, adopt more sustainable practices and/or reduce energy costs. For more information and a link to the application form, go online to <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/green-grants-for-cambridgeshire-businesses/>

Young People Engagement

One of South Cambs' goals is to have young people more involved with the work of the council. If your local school or youth organisation would like to visit South Cambs to observe a meeting, please drop me an email and I will submit your request. We can also send speakers to schools, youth clubs, scouts, guides and similar groups.

Community Chest Grant funding

Funding is still available for community projects through the Community Chest Grant. Up to £2000 may be available for approved projects. For detailed information, go online to <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/grants/community-chest-grants>

As we approach winter, I would like to specifically highlight the available funding for cost-of-living related projects, of which over £17,000 remains. This fund can be used for start-up and capital costs. If

any community group would like assistance in completing an application, they can email community.chest@scambs.gov.uk

Pink Bins for Electrical Recycling

A reminder that pink bins were introduced last year for recycling small electrical items such as toasters, computers and phones. Since these bins have been provided, the Shared Waste Service has recycled 49 tonnes of appliances. The closest pink bin to the Caxton and Papworth villages is near Just for Pets in Cambourne, across the main car park from Morrisons.

Corporate Peer Challenge

This week, South Cambs has been the subject of an LGA (Local Government Authority) Corporate Peer Challenge, which has been described as an Ofsted inspection for councils, if less confrontational. The lead peer was Cllr Joe Harris, leader of Cotswolds District Council and the Lib Dem lead at the LGA. He was assisted by Cllr Sam Chapman- Allen, Leader of Breckland Council and leader of the District Councils Network together with several officers from other authorities.

The peer review team created 25 slides of observations, some good and some not so good. From the “not so good” observations, they provided a list of areas needing improvement. They will write a detailed report which will be available on South Cambs web site in February. The peer review team will return this time next year to see how their recommendations have been implemented.

Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill becomes law

On 26 October, new laws came into force on the planning system, holding developers to account, and encouraging plans to enable the building of new homes. These measures have become law after the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent. Measures in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act will:

- Make it easier to put local plans in place and require design codes that set out where homes will be built and how they will look.
- Require developers to deliver vital infrastructure. Further details on these measures will be set out shortly.
- Rebalance the housing and land markets – giving councils the power to increase council tax on empty homes and reforming compensation for compulsory purchase orders.
- Encourage developers to build – giving communities updates on the progress of development and councils the chance to consider slow build-out rates when approving planning.
- Give councils the powers to work directly with landlords to bring empty buildings back in to use by local businesses and community groups through high street rental auctions. Measures will also make it faster for councils to give hospitality businesses permission to use outdoor seating.

The Shared Planning Service officers are evaluating the impact of this legislation on South Cambridgeshire, especially on the Emerging Local Plan.

Volunteer Cambs Website

Support Cambridgeshire has recently unveiled a resource for managing volunteer recruitment needs. Volunteer Cambs is a website that empowers members of the public to explore various ways they can contribute to their community. It serves as a unified hub for non-profit organisations to showcase their initiatives and engage with local communities.

The platform, supported by NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum (CPLRF), serves as a website, database, portal, and more. It connects organisations with volunteers.

Charities and community groups in Cambridgeshire that would like to find out how Volunteer Cambs can help them find and communicate with volunteers are invited to attend a workshop on November 22nd. More information here: <https://supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/event/volunteer-cambs-an-online-introduction/>

Local Highway Improvement (LHI) project funding

In case you haven't heard from our County Councillor, the LHI application window has now reopened and will remain open until Friday 12th January at 5pm.

More information can be found on the County website at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/improving-the-local-highway/local-highway-improvement-funding>

Information available includes:

- Application form and associated guidance. Information on those schemes currently in the LHI delivery programme is also provided.
- Measures and indicative costs

Over the course of the application window, officers have arranged two on-line drop-in sessions for applicants should they have any questions or queries. These are on 9th November 2023 (14:30PM-16:00PM) and 5th January 2024 (10:30AM-12:00PM). If you wish to attend one of these sessions, please confirm by email to Local.Projects@cambridgeshire.gov.uk, including any questions you would like addressed at the meeting. The intention of these sessions is to answer any questions applicants may have and provide general guidance towards completing the application form.

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