

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT SEPTEMBER 2023

LONGSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL (4TH SEPTEMBER 2023)

OAKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL (11TH SEPTEMBER 2023)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

I hope you all enjoyed August and had a good break. I realise that some of you have been busy on case work with me, and others with Cllr Tom Bygott, according to when we were respectively available. Thank you to Parish Councillors for being available and working so closely with us and respective SCDC officers during the month. The teamwork is really appreciated.

General council information to share this month:

New Bin Collection Dates from Mid-September:

Bin collections are going to change for approximately 80% of households in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire from week/commencing 18th September.

Longstanton Ward residents ought not to be disrupted, but do please feel free to contact me with concerns.

Residents throughout South Cambridgeshire can check their bin collection dates at:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/updates/2023/08/22/changes-to-bin-collections-from-monday-18-september>

Council tax collection rates:

Government figures show South Cambridgeshire District Council collected 99.2% of the Council Tax funds it was due to in the 2022/23 financial year, compared to the England average rate of 96.8%.

As a result, South Cambridgeshire District Council is the joint top performing District Council out of almost 320 tax-collecting authorities in England. South Cambridgeshire District Council collects Council Tax on behalf of the Police, Fire Service, County Council, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Parish and Town Councils.

District Councils are responsible for council tax collection for all local authorities; their piece of the pie is about 9%. For the average band D house, South Cambridgeshire District Council only retains £165 a year from the whole Council Tax bill.

The Government figures also show that South Cambridgeshire District Council collected 98.2% of the Business Rates that it was due to collect from local companies during the 2022/23 financial year – a total of £92,053,000.

Support is available if residents are struggling to meet Council Tax payments. Visit the South Cambridgeshire District Council website for details.

This year the Council sent out over 63,000 Council Tax letters by post at a cost of nearly £33,500. Registering for an online account would help the Council spend more on vital services rather than paying for postage. South Cambridgeshire residents can also sign-up to receive their Council Tax bill online.

Grant for EV chargers at community buildings

A reminder that South Cambridgeshire District Council offers an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Grant. Up to £5,000 per project is available, towards the capital costs of purchasing and installing public EV chargers at community buildings and village halls. Applications will be appraised for their deliverability and positive impact with funding allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. To be eligible for funding, EV chargers must be publicly accessible, and projects should demonstrate that there is likely demand for an EV charger at the chosen location.

Autumn Covid booster announcement:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has announced its advice on who will be eligible for a COVID-19 booster vaccine in autumn 2023. The following groups be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine this autumn:

- residents in a care home for older adults
- all adults aged 65 years and over
- persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- frontline health and social care workers
- persons aged 12 to 64 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression

Government announcement on a massive expansion of Cambridge

It would be remiss of me not to mention the extraordinary announcement by Michael Gove of the expansion of the Cambridge area on a completely unprecedented scale.

Plans by the Government for a major expansion of dwellings, along with scientific research space, in and around Cambridge were leaked to the national press in mid-July. None of the local authorities affected had been informed or consulted about these plans. A formal announcement was made by Mr Gove on the morning of Monday 24 July:

"Proposals will see Cambridge supercharged as Europe's science capital, addressing constraints that have left the city with some of the most expensive property markets outside London, and companies fighting over extremely limited lab space and commercial property with prices that rival London, Paris and Amsterdam..."

This is extremely significant news for our area, already struggling with water stress and huge transport deficits, as well as an acute shortage of affordable housing. The original leak referred to 250,000 additional homes in Cambridge. The announcement by Mr Gove neither repeats these numbers, nor offers any others. It is not specific about the geographical extent of the plans.

To our already five tiers of local government (parish, district, Greater Cambridge Partnership, county, Mayoral combined authority) the announcement adds a sixth layer, to which it is unclear how the others will relate. Large amounts of work have already gone into development planning for Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire) by the respective local councils, with a robust evidence base and following local consultation.

Given the situations we are already managing with building across the Ward, I will keep a close watch on this situation and keep you informed.

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

County Council Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate. Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.
District Council Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.
Parish/ Town Council Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.
Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'

Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.

The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor

'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'

What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough

To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the above, or any other matters.

Cllr Natalie Warren-Green for Longstanton Ward including Longstanton, Northstowe, and Oakington & Westwick

Email: cllr.warrengreen@scambs.gov.uk

For those on social media we have a highly active Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/> - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe

District Councillor's Report Sept 11th 2023 - Cllr Tom Bygott

Wilson's Road Bridleway

On August 31st I visited the Wilson's Road Bridleway in Longstanton with representatives of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign and groups representing horse riders, walkers and users of countryside rights of way, including the Swavesey and District Bridleways Association (SDBA), the British Horse Society, the Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum and the Trails Trust. Also present were members of Longstanton Parish Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's planning officer for Northstowe. Wilson's Road Bridleway connects the end of Wilson's Road in Longstanton with the bridleway along the south side of the rebuilt A14, enabling cyclists, walkers, horseriders and others to cross over the access road to Northstowe (see below) using a new cable-stayed bridge, with a connection to Bar Hill and its Tesco store using a second new cable-stayed bridge over the A14. Cambridgeshire County Council and Homes England had decided to install a new hard surface along the route to enable a projected increase in cycling and other non-motorised wheeled vehicles, such as scooters, once the southern part of Northstowe is complete.

Representatives of the users' groups unanimously agreed that the decision on the hard surface should be reversed and the funding used instead to complete the bridleway along the B1050 from the main part of Longstanton and the northern end of Northstowe. It was noted that once the Southern Access Road opens, trips from Northstowe and Oakington could be made along the new paved bridleway alongside and that access from this bridleway has been preserved at the request of the SDBA to the southern end of the cable-stayed bridge. I have agreed, working with the planning officer for Northstowe, to arrange a meeting with the County Council, Homes England and the landowners for the users' groups to present their case.

Although I currently use this route to cycle from Oakington to Tesco in Bar Hill, the current grassed surface is sufficient for this purpose and provides a pleasant journey for leisure cyclists. Paving over a very ancient and beautiful grassed route would be a form of urbanisation of the countryside.

Naming of the Northstowe Southern Access Road West (SARW)

As catchy as the current temporary name may be, the South Cambridgeshire District Street Naming and Numbering team and Homes England are currently in the process of choosing a new name for the road that has been built, but not yet opened, to connect the Northstowe Town Centre with the B1050 south of Longstanton. The road partly follows the route of the old runway, but will extend outside the perimeter of the old airfield and also contain addresses for houses, shops and other buildings.

The first name that had been suggested was 'Vickers Varsity Way', named after the Vickers Varsity, a type of aircraft manufactured by the Vickers company that had been operated on the airfield: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vickers_Varsity. It was first flown in 1949 and had been operated by the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1976. An objection was received for that name, but I have not been told what the reason for that objection was.

The next official suggested names were 'Farmland Road' or 'Wheatsheaf Way'. Given that most of the country is covered in farms and that most of them grow wheat, I objected to these two names on the grounds that they are "geographically anonymous". I also think that they are innocuous and feeble, and fail to convey the importance that that road will one day have as the main entrance to Northstowe.

Since then, a resident of Longstanton has suggested the names "Queen Elizabeth II Avenue" or "King Charles III Avenue". I fully support both these suggestions. The latter has the benefit of uniqueness, which is important for the findability of addresses, particularly in emergencies. These are compliant with SCDC's Address Management Policy, which also says that it is "preferable" for a person after whom a road is named to be "related to the particular area or village where the development is taking place". The Sovereign is by definition related to each village over which he or she reigns. The Royal Family has had a long connection with the airbase. His Majesty learnt to fly at 5FTS Oakington, was based at RAF Oakington and had his 21st birthday photographs taken there in 1969.

Cambridge and District Blue Plaques

Visitors to Cambridge may have noticed that on the front of The Eagle pub opposite St Bene't's Church, just off King's Parade, there is a blue plaque commemorating the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA. On 28th February 1953, Francis Crick and James Watson, who had been working at the nearby Cavendish Laboratory, walked around the corner to the Eagle where their laboratory colleagues had gone for drinks after work, to tell them about the scientific breakthrough. Francis Crick is reported to have told his colleagues that "we have discovered the secret of life".

The original plaque was installed on the 50th anniversary of the discovery in 2003 but its condition had deteriorated and it had started to become illegible. Using a black marker pen, someone had written "+Franklin" underneath. As a member of the Cambridge and District Blue Plaques Committee, I was asked to work with a small group, including biochemists and scientific historians, to compose the wording for a replacement plaque and to decide whether Rosalind Franklin's name should also appear on the new plaque.

After more than two years of discussion and debate, we decided that it would say that "This breakthrough relied on data from Rosalind Franklin, Maurice Wilkins and other scientists." I spoke at the official unveiling of the replacement plaque on 30th August, and presented the old plaque to the Whipple Museum of the History of Science, as the graffiti and discussion about Rosalind Franklin's role has had become an interesting part of our social history.

www.cambridgeppf.org/FAQs/announcement-of-the-discovery-of-dna

I would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to nominate a building in Oakington or Westwick to hold a blue plaque. Plaques can be erected to commemorate individuals or events; the nomination criteria can be found at: www.cambridgeppf.org/Pages/Category/blue-plaques. Plaques erected in Cambridge City carry the Cambridge City Council coat of arms on a light blue background, and those in South Cambs carry the South Cambridgeshire District Council coat of arms on a dark blue background. We have in recent years installed plaques to the astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle, the Rev W Awdry (who wrote Thomas the Tank Engine) and the founders of Girton College.

Cllr Tom Bygott
cllr.bygott@scambs.gov.uk
07765 475 513