

## **County Councillor report February 2021**

### **Flooding issues**

Last month I reported on plans to elevate our flooding issues caused by surface water. Talks have been ongoing and very intensive. Meetings by the County Council's Environment and Sustainability team with both Anglia Water and the Environment agency have been held and more are planned to make sure that they maintain their responsibilities and consult with local parishes. However, my priority was the surface water. Last week the new crew cleared around 1,637 gullies/drains, and I have pushed to get us to the top of the list. To that end, the Crossroads, Water Lane, Cambridge Rd, and Dry Drayton Rd should all be done before the end of this month. On top of that, the whole system will be camered and mapped with any repairs needed completed. The map will be shared with the Parish Clerk who can then distribute it to all interested parties. Once this is all complete, the requested meeting can then be held to discuss all issues and maintenance programmes etc....

### **Covid-19 update.**

The last two infection rate figures for comparison. Although it all reads very encouraging, this is due to both lockdown and the fantastic vaccination data coming through. However, rates are still fairly high, and it has not gone away nor will it. We still need to adhere to the advice on social distancing and stay at home as much as possible. Hopefully if all goes to plan, the 21<sup>st</sup> June get out of jail date, will still happen as planned, but this date is not set in stone and as always it will depend on people's behavior over the next few months.

### **Covid-19 Epidemiology for week ending 26th February 2021**

	<b>Average weekly cases per population</b>	<b>Rate of change (comparing week ending 19th Feb with the week ending 26th Feb)</b>	<b>100,000</b>
England	91	-24%	
East of England	75	-23%	
Cambridgeshire	89	-12%	
Cambridge	71	+9%	
East Cambs	57	-20%	
Fenland	195	-7%	
Hunts	95	-25%	
South Cambs	50	-5%	
Peterborough	196	-28%	

### **Average daily deaths within 28 days of a positive test (average over one week to 26th Feb)**

Cambridgeshire	2.1
Peterborough	0.3

### **National rankings**

Peterborough 4<sup>th</sup> and Fenland 5<sup>th</sup> in England for all-age case rates per 100,000.

Neither Peterborough nor Fenland is in the highest 20 local authorities for case rates among people aged 60+

### Covid-19 Epidemiology for week ending 25th February 2021

	Average weekly cases per population	Rate of change (comparing week ending 18th Feb with the week ending 25th Feb)	100,000
England	97	-21%	
East of England	79	-23%	
Cambridgeshire	92	-10%	
Cambridge	68	-14%	
East Cambs	56	-25%	
Fenland	214	+9%	
Hunts	98	-22%	
South Cambs	46	-17%	
Peterborough	210	-23%	

### **Average daily deaths within 28 days of a positive test (average over one week to 16th Feb)**

Cambridgeshire	2.6
Peterborough	0.4

### County Council Budget

Cambridgeshire County Council pledged to fund improvements to footpaths and roads as the annual budget was passed. The council voted through a £660.3million budget for the 2021-22 financial year with an increase of around £47.3million – or 7.7 per cent – compared to last year’s budget, for county services, which include schools, social care, public health, highways, libraries, waste disposal and recycling. An example of some of the new extra spending which is **on top of existing budgets is:**

£20million extra in footpath maintenance with half on surface treatments, such as footway repairs, and the other half on deeper treatments, such as resurfacing and reconstruction. This is in addition to the current £1.3million annual budget for footpath maintenance.

£2.73million extra in measures to prevent flooding and improve local biodiversity, including rapid gully/drain clearing, better verge maintenance on rural roads avoiding peak flowering times, plus initiatives to provide both active and practical support for local communities to address flooding.

£6.97million to reconstruct the B1050 Shelfords Road at Willingham. The council said this road had been a longstanding concern for a number of years. A busy route crossing the River Ouse, it is the main commuter route from the Fens towards Cambridge and the A14. While “significant work” has been undertaken to keep it serviceable, the council said “historic construction destabilised by poor ground conditions” means full reconstruction is needed to prevent its eventual closure.

Council Tax will rise by 1.9%, and the Adult Social Care Precept will rise by 1% giving a total increase of 2.9%.

### **Self-isolation support**

Self-isolation support totalling almost £1million helping residents reduce spread of Covid-19 - Almost £1million has been awarded to residents across Cambridgeshire to support them to self-isolate and reduce the spread of Covid-19. Since the scheme launched last October, almost 2,000 claims from people requesting financial support to self-isolate have been approved totalling £996,500. The scheme was due to expire at the end of February but has been extended until the end of June to allow the County Council to continue supporting everyone who needs assistance to self-isolate. It has also been expanded to include parents who need to have time off work to look after a child who is self-isolating. Parents will be able to apply for this support soon and further details will be provided by in due course.

Hundreds of families across Cambridgeshire have been supported to self-isolate since the financial scheme launched last October and it is great news that this support will continue. For some people, financial assistance is the only way they feel able to self-isolate when needed, which is why the scheme is so vital. Rates are reducing in most parts of Cambridgeshire, but to ensure that trend continues we have to make sure we all continue to self-isolate when asked to by NHS Test and Trace. There is no better way to break the chain of transmission. There is light at the end of the tunnel, but we can only reach that light if people continue to self-isolate when they are told to.

This support includes:

- one-off payment of £500 if they lose income as a result of not being able to work. This payment can be made available on multiple occasions if a person comes into contact with people who test positive a second or even third time
- For anyone not eligible for the government support – a local discretionary fund which offers financial support to make sure people don't suffer financially.

To be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme people must meet all the following criteria:

- have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive
- they are employed or self-employed
- they cannot work from home and will lose income as a result
- they are claiming at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Working Tax Credits, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit or Housing Benefit.
- If they do not receive one of the above benefits they may still be eligible for a discretionary payment if they are going to suffer financial hardship by isolating.

NHS Test and Trace ID number, bank statement, and proof of employment or self-assessment returns will need to be provided.

Details of both schemes are available at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## **Schools prepare re-opening on March 8**

Schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are preparing to re-open their doors on March 8. Director for Education for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Jonathan Lewis, held a session with around 400 school staff to go through the latest Government guidance and answer any questions in order to facilitate a smooth return. There will be additional help to support the COVID testing process. Children will do three tests at school, followed by home testing. Test and trace will continue. The number of positive cases in schools last term was relatively low, helped by good ventilation and schools' rigorous approach to cleaning. There have been some small changes since last term but headteachers have been advised as to what they need to do differently, including guidance around face coverings. Guidance is still emerging on examinations and testing. The County Council recognises this is a difficult time for students and will be sharing this guidance as soon as possible.

Headteachers, staff, governors and education officers have done an extraordinary job in keeping our children educated in what has been an intensely challenging time. Children have suffered a lot less because of the care, commitment and support of all the staff.

**Peter Hudson**  
**County Councillor**

**Oakington, Westwick, Longstanton, Northstowe, and Over.**



