

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT APRIL 2024

LONGSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL (8TH APRIL 2024)

OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL (8TH APRIL 2024)

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (23RD APRIL 2024)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

SCDC Financial Accounts 2022/23

SCDC's accounts for 2022/23 have just been published, which brings the council up to date. As for the auditing of accounts, the government has introduced transitional arrangements for all councils' outstanding audits, and their final decision on the outstanding SCDC accounts for 2021/22 and 22/23 is awaited.

Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme 2024

SCDC's popular Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme is now into its sixth year and the latest scheme opens for applications on 2nd April. Since its inception, more than half a million pounds has been given to schemes across the district. Projects are invited under two main themes: to reduce carbon emissions or lock up carbon and to increase community engagement around climate change. Grants of between £2,000 and £15,000 are available to parish councils and community groups in the district and a total pot of £125,000 is available. Further information, help and advice is available by emailing zcc@scambbs.gov.uk

Weekly food waste collections

On 25 March, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced that [councils in England will be supported with up to £295 million in government funding to introduce weekly food waste collections by 31 March 2026](#).

The [funding will cover new food waste containers for homes and specialist collection vehicles](#), targeted at councils that have yet to fully put food waste service in place. We should have more details soon.

Mobile / Community Wardens Scheme

SCDC has agreed to use its reserves to underpin the Age UK Mobile/Community Warden Schemes across the district by £100K, which is additional to the council's usual financial support. All schemes are struggling financially but those serviced by Age UK have been particularly hard hit and without this support it is highly likely that they would have been wound up by the charity. The extra SCDC funding will allow all schemes to continue until 2025 and give the council extra time to conclude work that it commissioned several months ago to quantify the value of the warden schemes to the wider care service, allowing (as it does) vulnerable residents to remain at home rather than needing hospital and/or long-term residential care. It is hoped that the report will give the council persuasive evidence to present to the County Council and the NHS seeking

greater financial support of the wardens scheme. We very much hope that the new Integrated Care Partnership will live up to its name because, without increased financial support, the future for the schemes after April 2025 is bleak.

Local Plan Timetable Update

A timetable update has become necessary for producing the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This is a key planning document which would ensure that growth is delivered in a sustainable way for people and the environment. It is clear that the existing timetable for the Local Plan can no longer be met, owing to multiple external factors, including restraints posed by a lack of water availability, the failure to deliver a sustainable transport strategy and the intervention of the government which is demanding the building of homes in significantly higher numbers (“northwards of 150K new homes”) than that proposed by the Local Planning Authority (50K).

We are awaiting further information about the Government’s plans for Cambridge 2050. At the moment it seems local councils will have involvement via an ‘advisory council’ but we don’t have more detail than this.

Statement of Community Involvement for Planning

SCDC, together with Cambridge City Council has formally adopted a new key planning document which sets out how they will help residents have their say on a wide range of planning matters during the next five years. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is intended to increase public participation in the planning system and, in doing so, empowering residents to play an active role in shaping the future of Greater Cambridge. This goes much further than previous SCIs in ensuring that residents’ views are better reflected in the emerging Local Plan. More detail can be found here: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/about-us/state-ment-of-community-involvement/>

50th Anniversary of South Cambs

SCDC is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this month. A civic ceremony was held at South Cambridgeshire Hall in Cambourne. You can find out all about what happened as well as some of the history/ successes of the district council over the years here: [50 years of South Cambridgeshire District Council - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/50-years-of-south-cambridgeshire-district-council)

East West Rail Community Conversations

East West Rail have organised ‘community conversation events’ over the next couple of months to talk about their plans. There are three in the Greater Cambridge area: Cambourne 10th May, Cambridge 21st May, Comberton 22nd May. These are not part of the statutory consultation for EWR but should prove to be interesting/ informative events and it would be good to see parish councillors going along so that when it comes to the statutory consultation Parish Councils can feed into it fully. You can find out more here: [eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/community-conversation-events](https://www.eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/community-conversation-events).

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.

<p>County Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.</p> <p>Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.</p>
<p>District Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p>Parish/ Town Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</p> <p>'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.'</p> <p>Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.</p>
<p>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</p> <p>'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.'</p> <p>What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.</p>
<p>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough</p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</p> <p>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.</p>

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 April 8th 2024 - Cllr Tom Bygott

Funding for digital software to improve planning processes

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has secured £100,000 of funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) in the latest Digital Planning Improvement round.

The DLUHC Digital Planning Programme is a government initiative to further support local planning authorities to improve digital services. It aims to enable a modern and efficient planning system in England, shifting a documents-based system to one that is data-driven, standards-based and powered by modern user-centred products and services. The Digital Planning Improvement Fund is providing 43 planning authorities with £100,000 each to support the adoption of modern planning practices within planning data, digital capabilities and development management software.

Each of the 43 authorities who were successful in this round of funding will embark on a five step process that includes joining the Open Digital Planning community, <https://opendigitalplanning.org/> and publishing the first four spatial datasets (Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Tree Preservation Orders and Article 4 Directions) to the Planning Data Platform, www.planning.data.gov.uk. This is an online platform, currently under development, to collect planning and housing data from local planning authorities across England, transforming it into a consistent format and making it available to anyone to view, download or analyse.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) is a partnership between South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Councils. The funding will enhance GCSP's digital capabilities and development management software, facilitating smoother operations and better integration of planning data. These upgrades will make planning processes faster and more efficient, which will directly benefit residents and other planning applicants. Moreover, it will enable GCSP to prepare for forthcoming legislation, ensuring compliance and readiness for future regulatory changes.

Four-day week update

We are continuing to scrutinise the four day working week trial at South Cambridgeshire District Council that is being carried out by the administration of the current ruling group.

A wellbeing survey completed by 328 staff showed that almost 100 staff are working more than four days a week. Of those, 11% said they worked up to one additional hour, 53% working two to three additional hours, 17% working four to five additional hours, 5% working five to six additional hours and 14% working six or more additional hours a week.

This means that performance is being propped up by some staff working more than four days a week – which is not fair to those staff members and is dependent on their continuing good will. Performance in seven out of 16 working areas has stagnated or declined during the trial, showing staff are struggling to fit all their work in to four days.

The ruling political group repeatedly assured us that any drop in performance would stop the four-day week trial. Yet on Tuesday 12 March, their Cabinet voted to continue the trial. The trial had begun in January 2023 and has been extended twice. It had been planned that the trial would conclude in March 2024 and that councillors would get a vote on whether to make the trial permanent. However, the full set of councillors, including myself, have never had an opportunity to vote on whether to hold this trial. In February a report by the Employment and Staffing Committee recommended that before the vote there should be a consultation, and that the consultation should only be carried out once the council understood “the full implications of any proposed changes” by the Government, which is investigating a change to the rules to prevent schemes such as the Four Day Week.

We will continue working hard to ensure residents get what they are paying for – that is, five days' work for five days' pay. We are analysing the data sent to the government each week and will continue to hold the administration to account over their reckless social experiment.

Increased fines for fly tipping

In July 2023, the government announced that maximum fines for fly tipping, littering, household duty of care offences, and graffiti would be increased to help reduce the issues of environmental crimes and target the worst offenders.

The new fines for South Cambridgeshire which come into force on 1 April 2024 are:

- Fly-tipping Fixed Penalty Notices will increase from £400 to £700. The government maximum is £1000.
- Littering or graffiti fines increase from £150 to £400. The government maximum is £500.
- Breaching a household waste duty of care increase from £400 to £600.

Fly tipping is a blight on our beautiful countryside. We are encouraging people to dispose of their waste responsibly to prevent environmental destruction and landscape damage – whilst also avoiding a hefty fine.

Grants for community groups and parish councils

South Cambridgeshire District Council has enabled all of its available grant schemes to be searched in one place using the GrantGrabber service, <https://funding.idoxopen4community.co.uk/supportcamb>. This was developed by Support Cambridgeshire, a partnership funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, bringing together infrastructure organisations who work together to support community groups and organisations across Cambridgeshire.

The GrantGrabber Service is now available as a self-serve facility for any voluntary and community groups and Parish Councils wishing to search for funding opportunities for community projects. The scheme enables users to search online for a wide range of funding sources and other information at any time of the day.

For further information on receiving a grant for a community project from the council, please visit the council's webpage: www.scamb.gov.uk/community-development/grants/

The Support Cambridgeshire organisation aims to deliver better outcomes for local organisations across the county, with the expectation of a more robust and more vibrant voluntary and community sector. More information about it can be found at: <https://supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/about/>

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