

# District Councillor's Report Dec 12th 2022 - Cllr Tom Bygott

## Election results

May I take this opportunity to thank all those who voted in and helped with the by-election on the 3rd of November. I am delighted to be given the opportunity to serve as your District Councillor, and will work hard to represent your interests at the District level. I would like to congratulate Cllr Natalie Warren-Green who was also elected in Longstanton ward, and to thank Sarah Cheung-Johnson and Alex Malyon for their service as your retiring councillors and to wish them well as they now focus on raising their young families.

During the many doorstep conversations that I had with residents of the ward, three issues clearly emerged that need to be addressed:

- Ensuring that the District Council takes action to resolve the problems with the groundwater and underground aquifer that have led to the ponds in Longstanton and Northstowe drying up
- Holding the developers and the District Council to account for the delivery of community facilities such as shops, a community centre and GP's surgery in Northstowe, and
- Campaigning to stop the imposition of a Congestion Charge in Cambridge

## Congestion charge

The Greater Cambridge partnership is currently running a consultation on its Congestion Charging scheme. The consultation runs until noon on Friday 23rd December and the documents and survey can be found at: <https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/making-connections-2022>

There is also a petition asking for Cambridgeshire County Council to hold a referendum before implementing this new tax: [https://cambridgeshire.emis.uk.com/ccc\\_live/ePetitions/tabid/115/ID/60/-Petition-demanding-referendum-to-decide-on-congestion-charge-for-Cambridge.aspx](https://cambridgeshire.emis.uk.com/ccc_live/ePetitions/tabid/115/ID/60/-Petition-demanding-referendum-to-decide-on-congestion-charge-for-Cambridge.aspx).

The £5 daily charge would cover the whole city, including Addenbrooke's and Royal Papworth hospitals. Hospitals are usually sited at the edges of cities so that city residents can easily access them via the convenient public transport that operates within cities, but where residents of outlying villages can also access them. In most villages, development is too sparse to support viable public transport, and most long-distance travel is done using the car. We need to make sure that our hospitals are easily accessible from both the city and the countryside.

## East West Rail

Over the past couple of years, I have met four times with the East West Rail project team (in my previous role as District Councillor for Girton, Dry Drayton and Madingley) to discuss the route and its likely impact on our and neighbouring villages. The official routes that were consulted on pass by Cambourne, with a station either north or south of that town, before heading south to join with the existing line from Royston near Harston. Two pressure groups - the Cam Bed Rail Road (CBRR) and Cambridge Approaches (CA) - have been campaigning for a "northern route" that would pass through Oakington with a station on Cambridge Road. I have reminded the EWR team of the major technical reasons why this northern route is unsuitable and suggested an alternative route along the A428 and M11 that would reduce the impact on the southern villages without impacting ours.

We have been waiting to hear their announcement of the route that will be put to the official statutory consultation, most likely in 2023. There had been speculation that the Government might drop its support to East West Rail and cancel the project, but an announcement was made on 17th November confirming support for the project.

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## **COST OF LIVING**

### **Cost of living help and Go Fund Me appeal**

The Council has kick-started a scheme to help people cope, this winter, with the cost of living crisis and escalating fuel costs. It has provided £10,000 to supply free electric blankets and slow cookers to people who need them. This initial funding could see around 400 people supported and eligible people have already been identified and they will receive a letter soon advising them how to apply.

Even more could be done with donations from businesses and the public and SCDC has, this week, launched a fundraising page in order to help boost the fund for cost of living support, aiming to raise a further £10,000. The Go Fund Me page is part of a wide range of support worth almost £400,000 being put in place by SCDC to support residents through the coming winter.

The page can be found by clicking the following link <https://www.gofundme.com/f/scdcccstofliving>

### **Community Chest Cost of Living support**

SCDC's Community Chest fund provides grants to voluntary and community sector groups, charities and public sector bodies wishing to further improve quality of life locally. Criteria have been expanded to allow bids that include contributions for any project that has a positive impact for communities related to the cost-of-living crisis. Parish Councils of any size can also now place grant bids. A ringfenced total sum of £20,000 has been made available for these new Community Chest grant applications, provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System, to ensure support is co-ordinated effectively and directed at those in need locally this winter.

### **Warm Home Discount scheme reopened**

The Warm Home Discount scheme will provide a discount of £150 off electricity bills for three million low-income households this winter. Most households will receive the discount automatically. The government has launched a new online tool, to make it easier for the public to check if they are eligible for the discount. The online tool will guide customers through the eligibility criteria in England and Wales, asking questions about electricity supply, the benefits they receive and characteristics of their property. All customers will receive a letter between this month (November) and mid-January 2023 confirming their eligibility and the payment will be made automatically through energy suppliers by March 2023. The government is also writing to customers who may be eligible, advising them to use the tool linked below to check eligibility, as well as to use the helpline for particularly complex cases. <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

### **Help for Households campaign – social tariffs**

The government has worked with a range of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to deliver low-cost broadband and phone service packages, called social tariffs, for those on low incomes. Social tariffs are available for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits, with some providers offering deals from £15 a month.

## UKRAINE

### New hosts needed for Ukrainian guests

Our current batch of hosts have done a fantastic job of making Ukraine refugees feel welcome, but we know from our research that around 20% of them cannot continue after the initial six-month period that they signed-up for. We know that many guests have children who have settled into local schools, have found work and built friendships and it is important that we try to find alternative hosts in the same vicinity (or as close as possible to it) in which they have been living in the first six months. We are keen to find them alternative hosts close to where they have been living.

Our 'Spare Room' campaign is to encourage more local people to join our current Homes for Ukraine hosts. This is now appearing on our social media channels, on digital indoor and outdoor signage, in local Sky television ads and in the local press, such as a news item on the BBC Look East bulletin on Tuesday evening. Anyone who can offer help simply needs to text **ROOM** to **88802**.

Our messages on social media can be found at the top of our [Council Facebook page](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Please share and spread these messages so we can encourage more people to get in touch with us to explain what it is like to be a host and to see if it is a good fit for them. You can read more, and watch video stories from current hosts and guests, at [www.scambs.gov.uk/support-for-ukraine-it-all-starts-with-a-spare-room](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/support-for-ukraine-it-all-starts-with-a-spare-room)

It would be appreciated for any help you are able to give us with spreading the word.



## FREE TREES OFFERED TO PARISH COUNCILS

### Six Free Tree Scheme

Trees are being offered to parish councils across the district to help provide homes and food for wildlife and combat climate change. The Six Free Trees campaign is into its third year and has seen 390 trees planted across South Cambridgeshire since it was launched. This is one of a range of initiatives by South Cambridgeshire District Council which supports its ambitions to double nature and get the district to net zero by 2050.

Trees can be chosen from a list of native varieties including field maple, alder, silver birch, hornbeam, hawthorn, beech, wild cherry, oak, rowan and crabapple. Bio-based and compostable guards, stakes and ties will also be supplied.

Parish Councils have until 21 December 2022 to apply; trees will be delivered from 30 January 2023.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/grants-funding-and-community-support/six-free-trees>

## WARM HUBS UPDATE

We will soon have 27 Cambs Acre facilitated Warm Hubs (including Northstowe Warm Hub. Venue: Northstowe Secondary College, Stirling Road, Northstowe, Cambridge, CB24 1DJ.) and a number of additional ones that are self-funding that will take the number to well over 30. <https://www.cambsacre.org.uk/introducing-warm-hubs/>

## SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL ZONE

### 'Making Connections' Consultation – Future bus services, more walking and cycling links, and a Cambridge City Access congestion charge

I would like to emphasize that SCDC would like YOU to give feedback. The Greater Cambridge Partnership 'Making Connections' 2022 **consultation runs until 23 December 2022**. This is about a completely different way of running bus services, more active travel links and a congestion charge for Cambridge. We are being asked to share this information as widely as possible, and to encourage everyone to respond. **Points of local detail are vital and in their best form these can only be provided by local residents based on their everyday travel needs.** The proposals are a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change how we travel in Greater Cambridge and the wider area, relieving pressure on the road network and responding to air quality, cost of living and climate crises; and also, creating workable public transport and active travel links in more rural areas where currently, costly private vehicle transport is the only way to get to jobs, education and other essential daily travel needs.

The survey, plus information about the proposals, including maps, frequently asked questions, dates of public meetings etc can be found at: <http://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/mc-2022>.

### My Ward Activity as in my first month as one of the two District Councillors for Longstanton Ward

Since becoming a District Councillor on 3 November 2022, I have attempted to balance my Council time between training sessions at SCDC, council meetings, and getting closer to understanding the concerns of the ward communities so that I can develop actionable insight. This has included having several handover meetings with the two outgoing District Councillors, meeting the ward County Councillor, Cllr Firouz Thompson, weekly, and people noted below for each of the three areas:

#### Longstanton

- Attending Parish Council Meeting to assimilate current concerns
- Picking up a resident case from a previous District Councillor to refer to planning
- Locating SCDC officers responsible for addressing Ground Water concerns, requesting an update on status, and lining up meetings in December to become fully informed and support the community on this issue.
- Assimilating awareness of the Judicial Review outcome related to the planning decisions made by SCDC regarding Northstowe since 2019. Becoming aware of the SCDC point of contact for this Review, Jane Hunt, and its outcome. Jane has advised that anyone who has any queries about this should email [SPOC\\_Fews\\_Lane@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:SPOC_Fews_Lane@scambs.gov.uk)

#### Northstowe

- Attending Town Council Meeting to assimilate current concerns
- Attending the multi-faith remembrance service on 11 November
- Meeting Principal Planner, Luke Mills, to gather detail on the phases and situations to be managed / priorities. Regular update meetings, quarterly, will now be held with Luke, and he will continue to invite myself, Cllr Bygott, Cllr Thompson and Cllr Handley to these meetings.
- Having unfortunately had to send apologies to the delivery group meeting in November, I met with Anne Ainsworth (COO at SCDC) and Cllr. Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Communities, receiving this

summary update for the Ward on Community Building progress (which was also given by the delivery team at the Town Council Meeting on 22 November 2022):

- The Pavilion – work has begun on site. Scheduled for completion in Summer 2023.
- The Interim Community Building – lots of work going on in order to submit a planning application as soon as possible. We have received Expressions of Interest and are speaking with the interested parties about design and timescales for the building. The intention is to submit a planning application for either February or March 2023 Committee. The timescale is very tight, and we will seek to update partners on any changes during this period.
- The permanent Community Building – Lots of work going on to get us to a position where we can develop a full technical design and consult with the community. We intend to do this in early 2023.
- The Enterprise Zone – a recent survey of businesses which closed on 14 November 2022 had 104 respondents. We are now reviewing those responses to find out what local businesses are telling us they would like to see on the Enterprise Zone.
- The Phase 2 Civic Hub – this sits alongside the development of the Town Centre. Consequently we will be working alongside Homes England to ensure we produce a complementary scheme and in January an announcement will be made about their preferred developer. We intend to work closely with them to move towards the design phase of the Civic Hub in the new year.

### Oakington & Westwick

- Attending Parish Council Meeting to assimilate current concerns
- Visiting Chess Café to assimilate the goals of this social enterprise and respond to their questions on the consultation on the sustainable travel zone (STZ) in which they can express their requirement for more buses
- Giving Leaflets for the STZ consultation to the Post Office and the Café to make available to people
- Accepting an invitation to visit James Youd and EAG at one of their Leaf clearing events to understand the environmental issues EAG are tackling, and to understand support needed. They spoke very highly of the County Council and Parish Council for their support.
- Speaking to local craftspeople at the Garden Centre Christmas Fair and being briefed about their hobbies and support for local markets

## 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](mailto: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