

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT DECEMBER 2024

LONGSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL (2ND DEC 2024)

OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL (9TH DEC 2024)

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (17TH DEC 2024)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

SCDC's Christmas Market

This year's annual South Cambs Christmas Market will take place at Cambourne Village College Sheepfold Lane, CB23 6FR on Saturday 7th December between 11am and 3pm.

This year's event promises to be the biggest yet, with close to 100 independent traders participating, presenting a range of Christmas arts and crafts, gift ideas, food, decorative pieces and more. A number of food trucks and pop-up cafes will provide refreshments and Mrs Claus' Workshop will be opening its doors this year with a host of activities for families to participate in.

Six Free Trees

SCDC is again offering Six Free Trees (or a large potted tree) to parish councils across the district to help create habitats and food for wildlife, while also playing a small part in the battle against climate change. The Six Free Trees campaign is now into its fifth year during which more than 750 trees have been planted across the district. Parish Councils have until 20th December 2024 to apply, selecting from a list of native species including field maple, alder, silver birch, hornbeam, hawthorn, beech, wild cherry, oak, rowan and crab apple. Bio-based and compostable guards, stakes and ties will also be supplied. The trees will be delivered in January 2025. More information can be found here: [Free trees for South Cambridgeshire towns and villages](#)

SCDC contacts hundreds of South Cambs residents who could be claiming Pension Credit

As mentioned in last month's report, recent government changes have restricted access to the Winter Fuel Payment with only pensioners who receive a means-tested benefit, such as Pension Credit, now able to receive it. It is estimated that as many as 880,000 eligible households in the UK are currently not claiming the benefit. As part of its continued cost-of-living support for residents, SCDC is using innovative software to better target its support and advice to residents, using data that they have already provided. Using this software, the council has now contacted nearly 300 households who may be missing out on the Winter Fuel Payment and is urging all pensioners in the district to check their entitlements.

The following eligibility criteria applies for the Winter Fuel Payment are if you are over the State Pension age and are receiving one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit (for example, through a joint claim with your partner).

You must have been eligible between 16 and 22 September 2024 (known as the 'qualifying week') to receive the Winter Fuel Payment this winter. It is, however, still possible for qualifying residents to receive the payment this winter if they apply for Pension Credit by 21 December 2024 and backdate their application to 21 September 2024. It is stressed that this must be done by 21 December. More information is available here:

www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim and for additional advice and support, email SCDC's local partner

Hope CIC at office@hopeagainst.org or call them on 07474 725477. More information about SCDC's cost-of-living support programme can be found here: [Cost of living support - South Cambs District Council](#)

Consultations launched on new planning development guidance documents

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service (for SCDC and Cambridge City Council) recently launched a consultation on three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs provide further information and detailed guidance on policies in the councils' Local Plans and provide developers and infrastructure providers with clearer expectations for new schemes. The SPDs should also streamline the planning process and lead to higher quality developments across the Greater Cambridge area. The three draft documents under the consultation are:

- Planning Obligations: section 106 financial contributions which mitigate the impact of new development on homes or businesses.
- Health Impact Assessment: the impact of development on health and wellbeing.
- Cambridge Biomedical Campus (Addenbrookes): creating a well-integrated campus that benefits those working and receiving care there, and in the wider district.

The consultation is open until 24th January 2025 and the feedback gathered will play a crucial role in shaping the final documents, which are set to be completed in Spring 2025. More information and links to the consultation can be found here: [Consultations launched on new development guidance documents](#)

Bringing Empty Properties Back Into Use

SCDC estimates that there are around 2,640 empty properties in the district. This seems perverse when there is a serious shortage of homes in the district (especially smaller, more affordable ones) and so the council has recently voted to address the problem by introducing a new policy on Council Tax premiums for empty properties.

In future, properties standing empty after 2 years will pay £400 (100% increase), after 5 years they will pay £600 (200% increase) and after 10 years they will pay £800 (300% increase) although there will be some exemptions. The changes will come into force in April 2026. More information can be found here: [Empty homes - South Cambs District Council](#)

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND 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 Dec 9th 2024 - Cllr Tom Bygott

Supporting family farms

I am proud to back British farmers – strongly opposing the Government's family farm tax. It was encouraging to see over 20,000 farmers and their families protesting against the tax in London on 19th November.

Our farmers put food on our table and care for our natural environment. We depend on them for our survival, so it is simply wrong that the Government's farm tax threatens Britain's farming families who have fed our nation for centuries.

For those on Facebook, there is a video at www.facebook.com/share/r/1Dsg7mKqS/ supporting British farmers. There are also petitions that can be signed at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/700138> and stopthefarmtax.com.

I seconded a motion at the District Council on Thursday 28th November on this topic. South Cambridgeshire is a rural district. Although only a small proportion of our population is still actively involved in farming, many of us are descended from farming families and others have chosen to move to this area because we love the countryside.

The end of the family farm, which the Government's policy wants to bring about, by extending the scope of Inheritance Tax to prevent farmers' children from inheriting their parents' farm, poses grave risks for the sustainability of the countryside. Today's farmers will become employees of giant agribusiness corporations that are not subject to the tax. The concern that farmers have in maintaining and preserving the countryside, its hedgerows, woodlands and wildlife for future generations will be replaced by corporate indifference and an exclusive focus on short term profit targets.

There is a video recording of the debate at: www.youtube.com/embed/QeIgiZ0FSfM beginning at 3hrs 18mins into the meeting.

Non-compliance checks on South Cambs taxis

Recent stop checks on taxi drivers and their vehicles have revealed alarming levels of non-compliance with licensing conditions. Out of 17 drivers inspected, only two emerged without issues, while the remainder received advisory letters or had penalty points issued against their Council-issued licences.

Conducted by licensing officers from South Cambridgeshire District Council and police officers from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, these stop checks scrutinised essential compliance measures, including the display of driver badges, door signage, and the presence of a first aid kit and fire extinguisher.

Several violations were identified, including:

- Two vehicles parked illegally on double yellow lines, and one parked on double red lines at Addenbrooke's Hospital, disregarding a clear 'no parking at any time' sign. Additionally, some drivers failed to display their identification badges or had missing door signage.
- One driver faced a fixed penalty notice for failing to wear a seatbelt, despite regulations stating that private hire drivers must use a seatbelt once their customer has exited the vehicle.
- Two vehicles were in breach of policy due to aftermarket window tinting in excess of the regulations, resulting in one immediate suspension and one delayed suspension notice.

This operation has raised serious concerns about the commitment of some taxi drivers to uphold the safety and legal standards required of licensed operators. Most drivers were cooperative, but two had a poor attitude towards Council and Police officers, leading to one driver being cautioned by the Police. Their suitability to continue to hold a licence may lead to a referral to the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee.

Fraud awareness - #DoTheRightThing

Residents are being encouraged to #DoTheRightThing to prevent or avoid fraudulently claiming Council Tax discounts or exemptions.

Since July 2023, over £800,000 in lost Council Tax has been identified – placing an unfair burden on others and reducing the funds available for essential public services. Residents should check if they are eligible for Council Tax discounts at www.scamb.gov.uk/council-tax/what-council-tax-discounts-and-support-can-i-get/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-a-discount, and to report suspected fraud online at <https://reportafraud.co.uk/southcamb>.

Pension Credit

Pensioners are being encouraged to check if they are eligible for Pension Credit this winter to receive help with Winter Fuel Payments.

Applicants must apply by 21 December 2024, and backdate the application to at least 22 September 2024, in order to be eligible. Please visit the council's webpage at <https://www.scamb.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support> for more information.

East West Rail update

The East West Rail organisation is holding another consultation on their plans for the proposed railway from Bedford to Cambridge. It closes on Friday 24th January 2025 and can be filled out at: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>.

This is the first of two consultations, the second of which will be statutory. Once they have completed their consultations and finalised the proposals, they will prepare and submit their DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate, which processes applications on behalf of the Secretary of State. Following the examination into the DCO application, the Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether development consent should be granted.

The route that they are consulting on is essentially unchanged from the previous consultations, but more technical work has been done and the route maps are more detailed. The proposed route is parallel to the new A421 dual carriageway from the Black Cat roundabout at the A1, via a new station interchange with the East Coast Main Line at Tempsford, passing north of Croxton and Eltisley and south of Papworth Everard. There is to be a station north of Cambourne, after which the route passes close to the villages of Caldecote, Hardwick, Toft, Comberton, the Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield and Harston before joining the main line from King's Cross and entering Cambridge from the south.

The EWR project team has decided not to include the suggestion of a northern route into Cambridge with a station at Oakington.

A series of consultation drop-in events are being held, those in Cambridgeshire will be held in:

- Cambourne, Cambridge Belfry, 3 December 2024, 2pm - 7pm
- Tempsford, Stuart Memorial Hall, 13 December 2024, 2pm - 7pm
- St Neots, St Neots Town Football Club, 7 January 2025, 2pm - 7pm
- Comberton, Comberton Village Hall, 10 January 2025, 2pm - 7pm
- Cambridge, The Clayton Hotel, 18 January 2025, 12pm - 5pm
- Cherry Hinton, St Andrew's Parish Church, 21 January 2025, 2pm - 7pm

Cllr Tom Bygott
cllr@bygott.net
07765 475 513