

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT JANUARY 2026

LONGSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL (5TH JAN 2026)

OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL (12TH JAN 2026)

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (27TH JAN 2026)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you all had a restful festive season and I look forward to continuing to work with you in 2026.

This month a few updates from SCDC to start the year.

SCDC pledges £900,000 to local organisations through 3-year Service Support Grant funding

SCDC has just committed Service Support Grant funding of £300,000 a year to local groups to underpin the delivery of services to support people with their mental health, independent living, advice services, and to help residents through the cost-of-living crisis. SCDC's Service Support Grant funding has almost doubled compared to the previous budget, made possible by prudent management of the council's finances and a recognition of the acute need for these services.

Grant recipients include

- Over Day Centre – £30,000 per year to provide transport and hospital discharge support service for older residents.
- Cambridge and District Citizens Advice – £105,000 per year to provide free, confidential advice services to residents.
- Disability Huntingdonshire – £12,998 per year to support people with disabilities to live independently.
- Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre – £10,000 per year to deliver specialist support for survivors of sexual violence.
- Support Cambridgeshire (CCVS) – £20,000 per year to strengthen the voluntary and community sector in the district.
- Hope Against Poverty CIC – £14,400 per year to provide a Wellbeing Programme for people experiencing anxiety, bereavement, or social isolation.

Others receiving funds which I know from my case work will be of interest in our ward include:

For Young People: Blue Smile children's mental health charity; Cambridge Acorn Project supporting children who have experienced trauma; Home-Start home-visiting services; Ormiston Families helping families facing adversity; Turtle Dove to improve mental health, wellbeing, and employment outcomes for young women.

For Older Residents: Care Network Cambridgeshire to help continue and expand support for Community Care Schemes; Sew Positive using sewing to help address mental health challenges, social isolation, or economic inequality; The Voluntary Network helping older residents maintain independence.

For all ages: CamSight helping people of all ages with low vision and blindness; Reach Community Projects supporting families facing poverty as well preventing others from falling into it.

More information, including the full list of grant recipients can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/exbkw6eu>

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Consultation

The government has now confirmed that the public consultation on LGR for our area will start in early February, and last for seven weeks. There will be statutory consultees (yet to be confirmed), and the general public will be invited to respond. I will include a link to this in a future report.

Local Authority Elections May 2026

As a consequence of the Local Government Reorganisation, just before Christmas the government wrote to all local authorities about next May's elections. Because of the short time between the 2026 elections and those for shadow Unitary Councils planned for 2027 they have invited local authorities in England to request the cancellation of their May 2026 elections. This has divided opinion, with some people thinking that a postponement would be undemocratic and, at the other end of the spectrum, there are concerns that the voting public might be turned off by having two local elections within 12 months of each other; a real concern since only around 30% of the electorate turns out for local elections at the best of times. This should be resolved quickly in the coming weeks. I will keep you informed about whether or not an election will be happening here.

Postal Voters

Regardless of whether there is an election in May, for elections in general, if residents previously had a postal vote and wish to continue to have one, they should **reapply now** if they have not already done so. www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote. If you have any questions or wish to cancel your postal vote, please email elections@scambs.gov.uk

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – new planning reforms

The government has launched a consultation on its proposals for reform of the NPPF and will run until March. The consultation can be found [here](#). The councils' planners will be digesting the proposals and will respond in the new year. I will report these comments to you when I can.

Food collections update

Food Waste Collections, as mentioned in my December report, are due to commence for some areas in South Cambs from 26th January. Wave 1 does not include our ward. We will introduce Food Waste Collections here later this year as we will be introducing the service in phases throughout 2026. **We will write to residents in advance with specific information, including the start date.** The collection dates will also show on your [bin collection calendar](#).

Our Member of Parliament

Ian.Sollom.MP@parliament.uk Ian is active across the constituency, and continues to hold regular surgeries which we will keep you informed of for residents. His office staff answer emails as soon as practically possible. He welcomes correspondence from residents requiring his assistance.

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 Jan 12th 2026 - Cllr Tom Bygott

Reminder for postal vote renewals

The rules brought in by the Elections Act 2022 means that if you are a postal voter you have to renew your postal vote every 3 years. This means that if you completed a postal vote application before October 2023, you will need to renew it by **31st January 2026** at the latest in order to remain a postal voter for the district council elections in May 2026. If you miss that deadline, it will be necessary to create a completely new postal vote application, and this requires ensuring that your application is received at least 11 business days before the election date.

The easiest way for residents to re-apply is online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote, but the council can send paper forms to anyone who needs them. Please email elections@scambs.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Local Government Reorganisation - Consultation

At an extraordinary meeting on 24 November, South Cambridgeshire District Council reviewed draft business cases for five unitary reorganisation options to replace the current two tiered structure where South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council are responsible for different functions:

- Option A - Cambridge City + South Cambridgeshire + East Cambridgeshire
- Option B - Cambridge City + South Cambridgeshire
- Option C - Cambridge City + South Cambridgeshire + Huntingdonshire
- Options D and E - The same for us as Option B but with different arrangements for the north of the county

By 21 votes to 6, it resolved to **recommend Option B** as the council's response to Government ahead of submission. My group and I voted for Option C because the two new unitary authorities would be better balanced in terms of population and because South Cambridgeshire would be better protected from becoming fully urbanised with Cambridge's growth being concentrated in our villages.

The Government has announced the next formal stage in its plans to reorganise local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by replacing the current two-tier system of county and district councils with new single-tier "unitary" authorities.

In a letter dated 17 December, the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness confirmed that a statutory consultation is expected to begin in **early February** and will run for **seven weeks**. This consultation is required by law before any reorganisation can be implemented and will cover a number of areas across England, including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The purpose of the consultation is to allow councils that did not submit proposals, along with other interested parties, to formally comment on the plans. At this stage, the Government has not expressed any view on the merits of individual proposals and no final decisions have been taken.

The Government has invited councils involved in local government reorganisation to consider postponing their scheduled **May 2026 elections until 2027** to free up capacity for reform delivery. Councils must submit views by mid-January, after which the Secretary of State may make an order delaying elections for participating authorities. Town and parish polls would proceed as normal.

The Council hasn't taken a vote on this issue and I haven't been asked for my position on it, however my view is that it is essential for local democracy for the elections to proceed as normal.

Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework

The Government has launched a consultation on a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to make it easier for developers to build more houses and more difficult for local communities to object: www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-sec-pledges-to-go-further-than-ever-before-to-hit-15-million-homes

The consultation is being held at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system. Major changes include:

- A permanent presumption in favour of “suitably located” development, intended to make development in urban areas acceptable by default.
- A proposed “default yes” approach to new housing around railway stations, both within existing settlements and around so-called “well-connected” stations outside them, including some sites within the Green Belt. Minimum density standards of 40 dwellings per hectare are proposed around all stations, rising to 50 dwellings per hectare around better-connected ones.
- Strong encouragement for urban and suburban densification, including redevelopment of corner plots and other lower-density sites, upward extensions to existing buildings, infill development, and building within residential curtilages (that is, gardens).
- The introduction of a new category of “medium development” for schemes of 10–49 homes, with proportionate requirements intended to support small and medium-sized builders.
- Exemptions from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements for developments up to 0.2 hectares, alongside further proposed simplifications for small and medium sites. Additional exemptions for some brownfield residential development are also under consideration.
- £8 million of new funding for local planning authorities to speed up post-outline planning stages for major residential developments, targeted at areas with high volumes of deliverable schemes and strong economic growth prospects.

When people are asked their opinions about brownfield development, they are often favourable. However, the name "brownfield" is misleading because it not only includes disused factories but also any previously developed land, even if it is green and full of vegetation. Private houses can become brownfield if they are used for commercial purposes in between, such as a house that become an office or a hotel. Historically, residential gardens were treated as brownfield land until this was changed in the 2012 NPPF.

The current consultation does not seek to overturn this definition, but instead creates new mechanisms to enable "garden grabbing" where developers build large numbers of small dwellings on the gardens of existing houses. Local councils will be asked to positively encourage this style of development, particularly on large corner plots, wide-frontage suburban houses or shallow-built plots with extensive side or rear space. Upward development means adding extra storeys to existing houses, roof conversions and the replacement of bungalows with two or three story buildings. Local planning authorities would be expected not merely to permit but to actively promote this form of development.

The cumulative effect of successive national planning reforms has been to place increasing emphasis on housing delivery and density, often at the expense of local character, space standards, and resident preferences. Quality of life, the ability of local communities to shape the places in which they live and the social benefits of widespread home ownership need to be given a higher priority than a 'growth agenda' based solely on increasing population and consuming more resources. Our villages are losing their precious rural character and are becoming merely pieces of city scattered in remote locations.

The deadline for consultation responses is **10th March**, and residents with an interest in planning and development may wish to review the proposals and submit their views.

Local Plan consultation

Late last year the Draft Local Plan for Greater Cambridge was published. A consultation is being held until 30th January at: www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2025/12/01/have-your-say-on-the-future-of-greater-cambridge-consultation-on-draft-local-plan-opens.

This Local Plan is being promoted by both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council using a joint "Greater Cambridge" branding. You will notice that Cambridge City Council has redesigned its website www.cambridge.gov.uk to use dark blue with white text, as SCDC's website www.scambs.gov.uk has long been, visually presupposing the outcome of the Local Government Reorganisation.

Within the consultation's document library are a series of detailed inset maps covering individual villages. Oakington and Westwick share a document with Orchard Park:

<https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2025-12/PDGCLPDGCLPIMOWOPDec25.pdf>.

Oakington village is shown with two areas marked S/NS in a shade between pink and purple - the same colour that is used to show land that is to be developed - and additional areas in pink-purple shading overlaid with green crosshatching. These areas - alongside and behind Station Road, Church View, Manor Farm Close, Day's Meadow, Coles Lane and Lowbury Crescent - comprise almost the entirety of the land that adjoins Northstowe, where assurances had previously been given that a wooded separation zone would be maintained. Similar issues arise on the Longstanton map.

The absence of a clear map key makes it difficult to understand precisely what these designations mean, or whether such land is intended for development, safeguarded open space, or something else. A further map (Figure 85, page 312) places these areas within the red boundary of the "Site Plan of Policy S/NS: Northstowe", yet the accompanying text does not clearly describe any development proposed within them.

It is important that Longstanton, Northstowe and Oakington do not gradually merge into a single, continuous settlement, connected by uninterrupted housing. Maintaining clear green separation is essential to preserving the identity and character of each community.

I asked about these maps at the Northstowe Quarterly Town and Parish Council update meeting. Homes England indicated that they were not aware of any current plans to build on this land, and the South Cambridgeshire planning officer present undertook to seek clarification from the Planning Policy team.

I am planning to request, as part of the Local Plan consultation, that green separation zones be shown clearly and unambiguously on all relevant maps. Maps within an adopted Local Plan carry legal weight alongside the written policies. Where text is unclear or silent, mapped designations can be decisive in shaping future planning decisions.

The most significant development proposed locally is the redevelopment of Slate Hall Farm as a logistics and industrial hub. This proposal, set out on pages 378–383 of the consultation, covers land between the A1307, Dry Drayton Road and close to the B1050. Alongside other proposed developments along the A14 corridor, this raises the longer-term risk of incremental strip development, bringing substantial employment growth (potentially 3,800 jobs) to an area already experiencing acute shortages of housing and labour. I attended a meeting of parish councils in Boxworth in November where these issues were discussed, and they remain a matter of ongoing concern.

What to do in cold weather

Even in the middle of winter, the UK now only rarely experiences prolonged snow or ice. When it does happen, however, it can catch us out. A short cold snap can make pavements slippery, disrupt daily routines, and pose particular risks for older residents, families with young children, and anyone with mobility difficulties.

The most important thing is not to be deterred from using a little common sense. Clearing light snow from paths early in the day is usually easier and safer than leaving it to be compacted into hard ice by foot traffic. Removing the top layer allows daylight and any weak winter sun to do some of the work for you, reducing the chance of ice forming later.

If paths do become icy, a small amount of salt can make a significant difference. Ordinary household salt is perfectly adequate. If salt is unavailable, sand will not melt ice but can provide much-needed grip underfoot. Water should not be used, as it often refreezes and makes conditions worse.

There is sometimes concern that clearing snow might create legal liability if someone later slips. Government guidance is clear that there is no law preventing residents from clearing snow or ice from the pavement outside their property, and that it is highly unlikely anyone would be held responsible if they have acted carefully and sensibly. Doing nothing out of fear of consequences is far more likely to leave paths hazardous for longer.

Cold weather is also a good moment to look out for neighbours. A quick check on someone elderly or unwell, or an offer to clear a short stretch of path, can make a real difference. Small acts of neighbourliness often matter most when conditions are difficult.

Severe winter weather may be infrequent, but when it arrives, calm, practical action and a bit of community spirit go a long way toward keeping everyone safe.

Here is a link to the government's advice page: www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway

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