

## LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT NOVEMBER 2023

### LONGSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL (6<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023)

### OAKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL (13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023)

#### CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

#### Community Hubs

Last winter, 25 Warm Hubs were in operation across South Cambridgeshire in collaboration with Cambridgeshire ACRE. The benefits of these Hubs quickly became clear; not only did they allow a warm space for individuals to go to keep warm but also to socialise with a hot drink and a snack. In the spring of this year, it was decided to continue the Hubs but with some changes to the format in the light of experience. These new facilities have been renamed Community Hubs and 13 are either already operating or will become operational very soon. Grant funding from the ICS has again made this possible. There is sufficient funding for up to 20 Hubs and any villages that wish to bid for funding should do so now via [alison.brown@camsacre.org.uk](mailto:alison.brown@camsacre.org.uk)

#### Flooding advice

The recent storm, Babet was a reminder (if we needed one) of how vulnerable we are to flooding in the Fen-edge villages, with parts of Longstanton Ward being affected, albeit (on this occasion) for a relatively short time. It is worth reminding those who live in high-risk areas of the importance of getting and remaining prepared for flooding in advance of the event.

SCDC has useful advice on the flooding page of its website. [Flooding - South Cambs District Council \(scams.gov.uk\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk) There is a useful list of things residents can do in advance under the 'Be prepared for flooding' section. This includes signing-up for flood warnings, using the Government's Flood Information Service to check for flooding risk and preparing a flood plan.

There are a number of authorities and companies involved in flood management and it can be confusing to work out who deals with what. On the same SCDC website, there is a list which residents can refer to for help.

Here is a summary:

**Flooding from a sewer:** Anglian Water. 0345 791 9155

**Blocked drain on the road or pavement:** Cambridgeshire County Council.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/report-a-flood>

**Flooding damage at a SCDC property:** Housing Services 0800 085 1313

Local authorities do not ordinarily provide sandbags as it is the responsibility of residents to protect their own properties from flooding. However, SCDC will help vulnerable residents, such as the elderly who do not have friends, family or neighbours who can help them quickly in an emergency.

#### Northstowe Western Park Sports Pavilion

The Western Park Sports Pavilion at Northstowe has been completed and will open very soon. In consultation with Northstowe Town Council, SCDC has appointed a management company (Elite Sports) to run the pavilion and the associated sports facilities. The pavilion has six large team changing rooms and separate facilities for match officials and will serve a number of football and rugby pitches, a MUGA and a bowling green. It has a large clubroom with well-equipped kitchen which will be suitable for social functions. Longstanton Bowls Club has told me that they are already preparing to operate from the Pavilion from Spring 2024.

## Climate Action Conference

SCDC is hosting a Climate Action Conference in Cottenham this month, coinciding with COP28, celebrating net zero action locally. It is being held at Cottenham Village Hall which benefited from a Zero Carbon Communities grant of £15,000 for the installation of solar panels. The event is free and open to everyone and is on Tuesday 28 November 9:30am to 1pm. More details can be found here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cottenham-conference-celebrates-local-climate-action/>

## **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><b>County Council</b></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><b>District Council</b></p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p><b>Parish/ Town Council</b></p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p><b>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</b></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><b>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</b></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><b>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough</b></p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p><b>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</b></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](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

## District Councillor's Report Nov 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 - Cllr Tom Bygott

### **Northstowe's sports pavilion set to open soon**

Construction work for Northstowe's phase one sports pavilion is now complete – with opening dates to be confirmed soon.

The sports pavilion meets the specifications of Sport England, the Football Association and Rugby Football Union – featuring a 4G astroturf pitch, fully accessible changing facilities and a large clubroom with a commercial kitchen. I am looking forward for these facilities to be enjoyed by local residents for many years to come.

This is welcome news for Northstowe residents, who have had to wait longer than expected for these important community facilities to be delivered. Residents will have to continue waiting for many other essential facilities and services in the new town, such as the first shop and a GP surgery. Surgeries in surrounding villages have to cope with an ever increasing patient list, further straining the ability for residents to get appointments. The Co-op in Longstanton, and residents living near by, are also struggling with a lack parking spaces.

### **District Council four day working week**

At the Full Council meeting on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October, my group submitted a motion that would have allowed all councillors a vote on the four-day week. Unfortunately, this was unanimously rejected by the ruling group – who then voted to refer the issue to their Cabinet, ending the debate.

We made very clear our opposition to this decision, which showed complete contempt for the majority of residents in South Cambridgeshire. Based on the average wage and contracted hours figures for full-time staff as mentioned during the meeting, £3.3 million will be spent in 12 months on salaries alone for hours not worked – and that's before you include paying for part-time and some of the additional costs incurred by employing people.

By prematurely shutting down debate on the four-day week, backbench councillors and those from other groups were denied the chance to vote on this important issue. We are continuing to analyse the facts and figures and will continue to challenge the four-day week, which sees residents paying for five days' work but only getting four days' service.

Despite requests from the national government, the council's leadership has refused to back down and are setting themselves up for a full-on confrontation.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has requested further detail on the impact of the trial under Section 230 of the Local Government Act 1972. In a letter sent on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> to South Cambridgeshire's chief executive, the Deputy Director of Local Government Stewardship, Max Soule, said the DLUHC was concerned that the council was not "fully analysing the impacts of the trial on services or the productivity of its workforce".

The Government has issued SCDC with a non-statutory Best Value Notice. Under the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State has the power to inspect or intervene in local authorities where there is evidence of "best value failure".

### **Find your nearest pink bin to recycle electrical goods**

Bright pink bins for electrical waste have resulted in nine times more e-waste being collected for recycling since being introduced last year. Over 49 tonnes of small electrical appliances have been collected for recycling in the pink bins – instead of it all ending up in the black bin.

The pink bins are suitable for most small electrical items which have a plug or battery – including phones, toys, kettles, toasters, and many more. Items which cannot be reused are then sent to specialist operators for recycling into new products.

Pink bin locations can be found by entering your postcode at [www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk](http://www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk). For example, locations listed near Oakington and Westwick for recycling electrical appliances, batteries and light bulbs include:

- Bar Hill Tesco, CB23 8EL
- Histon Co-op, CB24 9LQ
- Girton Co-op, CB3 0LW
- Longstanton Co-op, CB24 3BT
- Cambourne Morrisons Car Park, CB23 6FY

## **Failure of Cambridgeshire County's policy on weeds**

Numerous residents have complained to me about how weeds have been getting out of control. For example, in Manor Farm Close weeds have destroyed the gutters along almost the entire length of the road. It turns out that the County Council had changed its policy on spraying weeds.

A petition with 1,797 signatures calling on the County Council's ruling rainbow alliance to reconsider its no-spray policy was presented to the County's meeting on 17th October. The petition stated:

"We the undersigned believe the state of the roads, paths and cycleways in Cambridgeshire are in a shocking state and unacceptable condition, due to this administration's change to the weeding policy. Active travel is discouraged due to the state of these roads, cycle ways and foot paths. Any assumed savings they thought the council would make will be eaten up by higher repair bills in the future. Roadside gulley's and drains will become blocked more often, this will undoubtedly increase the likelihood of flooding.

"The sight of rapid decay in our town and village centres is unacceptable, as well as the state of the highways between settlements, these all look more appropriate in a post apocalypse movie, than a first world country.

"A policy where common weeds will only be removed when they become injurious is ridiculous (i.e a trip hazard as an example). The new bureaucracy imposed, involved the public reporting those weeds, CCC tasking an inspector to examine those weeds (up to 14 days later) then to decide whether to instruct a contractor or not, is ludicrous in the extreme. We ask for immediate action to return to a pro-active weedkilling regime."

The Council then voted against a motion to return to a proactive weedkilling policy.

The current policy may have been well-intentioned; to foster biodiversity and reduce the amount of man-made chemicals used in the environment. However, our roads, pavements, gutters and footpaths are not built to be strong enough to withstand the out-of-control growth of weeds, which break through asphalt surfaces and shift concrete blocks as they grow. They need active maintenance in the form of proactive weed-spraying to protect them from damage. When this misguided policy has ended, it will cost residents an enormous amount to repair the damage caused, far more than the policy's projected savings of £125K per year.

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