

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT JULY 2025

LONGSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL (7TH JULY 2025)

OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL (14TH JULY 2025)

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (29TH JULY 2025)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

As we enter the summer period, it seems to be announcement season for the government, and there is plenty to be aware of by SCDC and Parish/Town Councils in this month's report. There are a few consultations to be aware of too over the period so I'm highlighting this here in the knowledge that fewer Parish and Town Council Committee meetings happen in August.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION: PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL BRIEFING

In June, SCDC held two briefings for town and parish councils, about local government reorganisation. Part of the sessions – the short presentation – was recorded, covering the latest on the LGR timeline which went through the upcoming public engagement work which is due to begin now. There will be a specific survey for parish and town councils, so this is important to us all. If you didn't make it to the briefings, you can [watch the presentation here](#).

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HOLIDAY SCHEMES

Our County Councillor Report will also likely cover this, but I decided to include it as it is such useful information to share to families as the summer holidays approach.

Children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals can access a fully funded place at participating holiday schemes for up to 64 hours in Cambridgeshire. The Summer HAF Programme will run from 24 July to 29 August 2025. Recently arrived refugee families as families struggling financially are also eligible. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

Eligibility criteria

- Families receiving income-related free school meals
- Families where FSM eligible and non-eligible children live in the same household
- Siblings of eligible children, aged 4, starting school in September 2025
- Families just managing financially (subject to referral from a professional)
- Recently arrived refugee families

CPCA LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

I attended a CPCA Growth Committee meeting this month at which the **Draft** Local Nature Recovery Strategy was approved. There will be a **period of 8 weeks public consultation commencing 18 July**. CPCA will be informing Parish and Town Councils of the consultation and publicising it to the public in July. Since the consultation runs through August when Parish and Town Councils are less active, I thought I would give you this information now as you may like to share it with your communities and especially your environmental groups. The link to the draft strategy is:

<https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=1575>

At SCDC we will be discussing the strategy at the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, [CEAC](#), at 2pm on 8th July 2025.

POSTAL VOTE EXPIRY – 15,000 VOTERS AFFECTED IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Expiry of postal votes – important message to parish and town councils

SCDC CEO is keen that all Parish and Town councils are aware of this change to share with residents please. Following a change to the law as part of the Elections Act, **postal votes no longer apply indefinitely**. They now expire after a period of three years. Due to the timing of the reapplication legislation, around **15,000 South Cambridgeshire postal votes are due to expire** at the end of January 2026. The South Cambs Elections Team has just started the process of contacting those residents whose postal vote will be expiring. We will explain to those voters that in order to keep their postal vote in place they will need to make a fresh application. We may contact affected electors via email, post or text message (or via a combination of means) to raise awareness of the changes and to ensure they have sufficient time to make a new application if they want to before next year's elections. We also plan to include an article in South Cambs Magazine in Autumn 2025. Affected electors who do not make a fresh application will have their postal votes removed when they expire at the end of January 2026. We appreciate your support to residents with this process. If you have any questions, you can email the elections team at elections@scambs.gov.uk.

UPDATES FROM MHCLG (HOUSING, COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT)

FAIR FUNDING REVIEW 2.0 AND COUNCIL TAX MODERNISATION CONSULTATIONS

Funding, and Council Tax bands including the setting of these, is a common theme of questions I receive from residents, and I expect this review and consultation will be of interest across Longstanton Ward. **As you can see the consultations close on 15th August (Reform) and 12th Sept (Council Tax).**

MHCLG has published its second consultation on local government funding reform, the [Fair Funding Review 2.0](#). The publication of this consultation is a crucial step in the government's mission to deliver significant reform through the first multi-year Settlement in a decade, with updated funding formulae, simpler funding streams and a reset of the Business Rates Retention System. MHCLG has also launched [a consultation to modernise the administration of council tax](#). The consultation will explore options to improve support and the council tax collection, and enforcement processes to deliver a fairer and more efficient system for taxpayers and councils. The funding reform consultation will close on 15 August and the council tax consultation on 12 September. MHCLG is encouraging all with an interest in the sector to respond to the consultation and provide feedback. Correspondence:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-information-letter-42025-consultation-on-council-tax-administration/council-tax-information-letter-42025-consultation-on-council-tax-administration>

Press notice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/council-tax-shake-up-to-deliver-fairer-billing-and-support>

HSE GUIDANCE ON RUNNING AN EVENT SAFELY

There are lots of events happening all the time across Longstanton Ward and I realise that organisers are largely familiar with event safety, although there are new faces appearing in the organising teams too so you may like to share this with your community groups as a reminder:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is reminding organisers to protect event workers and the public by using their event safety webpages. Whether you're organising a small gathering or large-scale event, HSE guidance provides practical advice to help you meet your health and safety obligations. HSE's guidance helps to plan, manage and monitor events effectively with three key sections:

- [Getting started with event planning](#) – ensure planning is proportionate to your event's scale and risk level

- [Managing an event](#) – understand legal duties as an event organiser
- [Planning for incidents and emergencies](#) – develop effective response plans appropriate to potential risks

INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY PUBLISHED

As Cambridge continues to develop and thinking is starting to go into the types of business Northstowe may house in its Enterprise Zone too, the focus of the government on 8 sectors and the link to plans might be of interest to residents and companies in the area:

The Government has published 'The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy', a 10-year plan to increase business investment and grow the industries of the future in the UK. The Strategy will make it quicker and easier for business to invest and will provide the certainty and stability needed for long-term investment decisions. The Industrial Strategy sets out how the Government are backing eight sectors with the highest growth potential: Advanced Manufacturing, Professional and Business Services, Clean Energy, Creative Industries, Digital and Technologies, Defence, Financial Services and Life Sciences. The Sector Plans for the first five of these sectors have been published alongside the Industrial Strategy, with others to follow. The industrial strategy and Sector Plans are available [here](#)

FASTER PLANNING APPEAL PROCEDURES

Today (25 June), the government announced [new regulations to streamline the planning appeals process](#). These changes aim to make planning processes faster and more efficient, benefitting councils, communities and developers. The new regulations will speed up planning appeal decisions, reducing delays and uncertainty over planning applications. The new process of written applications will only accept evidence put before the local planning authority during the application. This will help reduce additional bureaucracy, speeding up decision-making while keeping decisions locally based. The new regulations are expected to be implemented by the end of 2025. More details will be provided in updated guidance once the final draft of the regulations is received.

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.

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| <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> |

'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 July 14th 2025 - Cllr Tom Bygott

Local Government Reorganisation consultation

The Local Government Reorganisation currently underway across England is the biggest change to local government since 1974. Rather than separate county, city and district councils, services like bin collections, roads, education and social care will all be under the umbrella of one unitary council.

Although it appears that it is possible to streamline services to save money - false efficiencies, short-termism and the "race to the bottom" are the guiding principles of our civilisation in decline - many of us are concerned that the government's proposed size for these unitary councils (with populations of at least 500,000 people) threaten to lose the local democratic representation that we hold so dear. Also, apart from its traditional counties, many of which date to Saxon times, England has no stable, historically enduring internal borders, so any reorganisation will only be temporary. Local authorities have no long term incentive to manage their affairs properly, because any that succeed in doing so will eventually be wiped away by the tide of central government tinkering.

My group is continuing to meet with officers to ensure we have the information we need to get the best outcome for residents, with the best possible services and the best possible representation by your local councillors.

Whatever your views on Local Government Reorganisation, it's really important that you have your say in the consultation, which can be accessed online via the council's webpage or by collecting a hard copy from the council office or libraries. While Local Government Reorganisation may seem distant from day to day life, council services that are performed in the background – such as collecting your bins, allocating school places and maintaining the roads – affect us all.

All seven of the councils in the ceremonial county of Cambridgeshire, including Peterborough, have been working together to discuss potential options for a new arrangement of councils. Three options based on existing Council boundaries are currently on the table. More information can be found at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/three-options-announced-for-council-reorganisation-plans>

Proposal A - A North-West/South-East Option

Unitary 1: Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils - along with County Council functions.

Unitary 2: Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils - along with County Council functions.

Proposal B - A North/South Option

Unitary 1: Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Councils - along with County Council functions.

Unitary 2: Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District - along with County Council functions

Proposal C - An East/West Option

Unitary 1: Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils - along with County Council functions.

Unitary 2: Cambridge City Council, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils - along with County Council functions.

Before these proposals for potential new structures are submitted to Government in November, they would like to hear what local people think. You can complete a public survey that runs until the end of the day on Sunday 20 July 2025, at: <https://can-campaigns.co.uk/local-councils-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-are-changing>

Ultimately, it will be for central government to decide on any new local council structures. Britain has one of the most centralised national governments in the world, with little if any powers in England residing outside London.

National Emergency Alert test to be held on 7 September

On 7 July, the government announced that mobile phones in the UK will be sent a test Emergency Alert at around 3:00pm on Sunday 7 September 2025, as part of plans to strengthen the country's preparedness. The Emergency Alerts system is used to warn if there's a danger to life nearby, including extreme weather. It allows vital information and advice to be sent to people rapidly in an emergency.

During the test, mobile phones will vibrate and make a loud siren sound for roughly ten seconds, even if they are set to silent. A message will also appear on phone screens, making it clear the alert is only a test. There are approximately 87 million mobile phones in the UK. The test will be the second of its kind and follows a government commitment to test the system regularly to make sure it works optimally and familiarise the public with the alerts. Ahead of the national test, the government will be running a public information campaign to notify people that the test is taking place, including communications targeted at vulnerable groups, such as victims of domestic abuse. The campaign will also feature products in British Sign Language.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster unveiled a new Resilience Action Plan in early July to improve the way the government prepares for and responds to emergencies. The Resilience Action Plan sets out: The government will raise awareness of <https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk> which gives information on simple and effective steps people can take to be more prepared for an emergency. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology is investing £370 million to better secure the UK's telecommunications networks through research and investment in new technology and infrastructure. The National Situation Centre and the Devolved Governments are going to sign a data sharing memorandum of understanding (MOU) to ensure that every nation in the UK has the best available data to prepare and respond to crises.

More information can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/news/national-emergency-alert-test-to-be-held-on-7th-september

The Cabinet Office has produced a frequently asked questions document about the upcoming test, which can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/news/emergency-alert-test-frequently-asked-questions.

Trial version of GOV.UK App launched

The first version of the [GOV.UK App](#) has been launched and is available to download on smartphones: www.gov.uk/guidance/download-the-govuk-app

Launching first in "public beta", meaning the technology is still being worked on extensively, the release will allow the public to build the app around their personal circumstances, life events and services. People will be able to choose which topics to prioritise on their home page, based on which government services are most important to them, whether it's 'care', 'travel' or 'business'. A home page will then let people access these services right away, rather than having to scour the internet each time, so they can get information, request support or change their details with the right government service with ease. Today's launch follows the digital blueprint for government which includes a number of tools to make it much easier for people and businesses to interact with the government. Later this year, the UK government will also launch GOV.UK Wallet which will include a pilot digital driving licence, which individuals will be able to easily use from their phone to prove their age when buying age restricted items online and in person. More information is available at: www.gov.uk/government/news/public-services-put-in-your-pocket-with-trial-govuk-app-launched-today

Period poverty campaign returns

It's really encouraging to see that the council is re-running its period poverty campaign, which first began last year after my group submitted a motion to council calling for action. Last year, the council helped distribute 407 packs of free, sustainable period products including reusable pads, period pants and menstrual cups to help those in need.

Four-day week update

South Cambridgeshire District Council will decide this Thursday at its Full Council meeting whether to become a permanent, 32-hour per week, four-day week employer (subject to support from Cambridge City Council at its Full Council meeting on Thursday 24 July 2025). The papers are available on the council's website at: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=410&MIId=10238&Ver=4>

My group has led the opposition to a four day week, ever since the trial began in January 2023. The council's ruling group says that the main reason for their introducing a four day week is to make it easier to recruit and retain staff. Despite being England's only four-day week council, it was reported in February that SCDC only ranks 28th out of 77 participating councils when it comes to sickness absences for staff. My view is that salaries should be raised for those roles, such as planning officers, where there has been a shortage of staff. After all it is the high cost of housing in the Cambridge area that makes it worthwhile for staff to move to cheaper parts of the country. It is extra income that our staff need rather than more leisure time.

My group has been asking for several years for a full council vote on the four day week, but sadly it is a foregone conclusion that the ruling group will vote to make this happen, regardless of what is said at the debate. The papers have only just become available and my colleagues pushed strongly for these documents to be reviewed by the council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee, but this will only be done on July 14th, a few days before the council meeting, which is an inadequate amount of time before councillors will be required to make a decision.

It had been promised that if there were a deterioration in the council's services, the trial would be stopped. Results have just been published of two public surveys, a Public Consultation that anyone could participate in, and a Representative Survey where about 1,000 individuals and 400 businesses in the District were invited to take part. These are available as Appendices C and D to the report for July 14th's Scrutiny meeting: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=102305#mgDocuments>

In the first of these, nine of the 13 services - including Bin collection, Council Tax collection, the Contact Centre, Environmental Health, Licensing and Town Planning, registered a 'statistically significant decrease' and the others showed 'no statistically significant difference'. Not a single one registered an increase in performance. In the residents' section of the second survey, three services - Bin collection, Council Tax collection, the Contact Centre, registered a 'statistically significant decrease' and the others showed 'no statistically significant difference' plus one that had too low a sample size to perform the statistical test on. Not a single service registered an improvement. In every service that showed 'no statistically significant difference', there was a downward trend and, given that the statisticians' report was filled with warnings about low samples sizes and insufficient data, I have concluded that the most likely reason for not registering a 'statistically significant decrease' for every single service was that the Council neglected to collect enough survey responses. In the public consultation that means that it should have advertised the survey more or kept it open longer. In the Representative Survey, it was the Council that decided on the number of people to contact.

Despite the survey data collected being inadequate to support a final decision on making the trial permanent, the Council's ruling group is determined to vote through the change against all opposition.

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