

# DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

MAY 2022

## CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON, CLLR ALEX MALYON – DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

We are extremely pleased and honoured to have been re-elected in May as District Councillors for Longstanton, Oakington and Westwick and Northstowe. The Liberal Democrats retained overall control of South Cambridgeshire District Council, increasing our number of councillors to thirty-seven out of forty-five.

The full results were:

Sarah Cheung Johnson (LibDem) – 1326  
Alex Malyon (LibDem) – 1183  
Harry Challands (Conservative) – 425  
Khadijeh Zargar (Conservative) – 340  
Clare Wilson (Labour) - 252

It has been a privilege to serve these communities for the last four years and we are delighted to have another four years to continue with our work as councillors. Our priorities for the next four years include fighting for action to address the issues caused by dewatering in Longstanton, working with Oakington to try and secure flood mitigation for the village and pushing for faster delivery of community facilities in Northstowe that will be of benefit for the whole local community. We will of course continue to work very closely with our County Councillor Firouz Thompson on these and other local issues.

A full set of the District results can be found here: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/our-district-election-results-2022/>

## UPDATE ON SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

We are really pleased to hear of Ukrainians who have arrived in our communities. South Cambs has had one of the highest numbers of visas granted of any council area in the country and this demonstrates the generosity and openness of our communities. A huge thank you to all those locally who have opened their homes to Ukrainians guests.

- A total of 695 DBS checks have been completed on sponsors and guests, along with 612 accommodation checks carried out for safety
- Teams have also carried out 178 welfare checks ‘in person’ with refugees.
- A total of 169 school places have been allocated and last week saw the largest increase in allocations so far.
- Forty families have received contact from CCC’s Easy Help Service for other support.
- Most families tell us they are in the process of registering with a GP, although a small number report that they are struggling to register with dentists.

Meanwhile, the relevant Home Office database indicates that the number of visas nationally issued through the Ukraine Family Scheme continues to increase (45,700 applications, 37,500 visas issued, 19,500 arrivals) although the rate of applications appears to have slowed.

Across Cambridgeshire we have seen 781 arrivals through the Homes for Ukraine scheme with highest numbers in South Cambridgeshire and the lowest in Fenland. In total there have been 1,720 visas issued in relation to Cambridgeshire. However, this should not be considered an 'expected' number of arrivals, as the actual numbers will depend on the changing situation on the ground in various parts of Ukraine and an unknown proportion of those issued with visas may choose not to travel to the UK.

The nature of the Family Scheme means that we do not have access to the numbers arriving through this route. Using visa and census data, the CCC research group estimates that between 343 and 848 guests will arrive through the Family Scheme, although these numbers should be treated with caution. Applying national arrival data to the Cambridgeshire population, we think that around 265 individuals may have arrived in Cambridgeshire so far.

In further news, the Ukraine Refugee Response Group for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has continued to meet. This group coordinates our response at pace and a number of working groups have been established so that the district/city councils can work together.

As a reminder, people or organisations wanting to be sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme can still register an interest here <https://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine>

Those who already know a Ukrainian national (or immediate family member) who they want to sponsor can find information here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme>

People who do not already know a Ukrainian national (or immediate family member) will have to link with a voluntary sector/charitable organisation who are working to match the offer of homes in the UK with people in Ukraine who need accommodation. There are a number of organisations on a local and national level who are involved in matching. The organisation that the Home Office is recommending is Reset Communities and Refugees. People can apply <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMtbSPU5BAR3OY9Z5EIAge2uYQEYOTEcoa2lxXSbcb70qJHw/viewform>

SCDC has mobilised to provide support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, including arranging payments for guests and hosts, DBS checks and in-person visits to confirm properties are suitable, and guests are settling in well. Our business team has been working with the local Job Centre Plus to coordinate offers of employment for Ukrainians looking for work.

### **Increased Payments for Guests from Ukraine**

As you are likely aware, the Government scheme provides £200 per guest as a one-off payment to help with essential costs as guests arrive. However, Government guidance gives flexibility to local authorities to decide what additional support may be needed. Hosts and guests in our district have fed back that guests are running out of money in their first month while longer-term arrangements are being established (whether that is applying for Universal Credit or finding work, both of which can have a lead-in time of a number of weeks before an initial payment is made).

In response to this feedback, SCDC is adding a further £150 payment to each guest – totalling £350 per guest.

Hosts whose guests have received the previous £200 payment are being emailed with information about how guests can access a £150 top-up. Guests who have not yet received the historical £200 payment will receive the new amount of £350 in one payment. Guests or hosts with any urgent questions about guest payments can contact the team on [ukrainepayments@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:ukrainepayments@scambs.gov.uk).

There are further details of the support that is available for both hosts and guests on the council website <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/support-for-ukraine/>


### Free Bicycles for Guest from Ukraine

Guests can complete a short online form to [request a free, good quality second-hand bicycle](#) as part of [a collaboration](#) between the District Council and local charities OWL Bikes and Camtrust. Helmets and locks will also be supplied free of charge and the Council will also provide guests with details of a free Bikeability cycle training course, which will include a translator.

[OWL Bikes](#), part of the Papworth Trust, offers quality refurbished bikes for sale - while offering work and training opportunities for local disabled people. Impington-based [Camtrust](#) specialises in life and work skills for adults with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. The charity also runs a bicycle refurbishment programme where donated bikes are refurbished by a small team of staff and clients and sold at affordable prices. Camtrust also offers bike servicing.

Once a guest applies for a bike and the Council has confirmed they are eligible, they will be put in touch with the supplier nearest to them so that they can arrange to collect their bicycle. Where no transport is immediately available for hosts to collect bikes, such as if the host family has no car, a community group may be able to assist. The Council can help link hosts and guests through to their local community group and District Councillors if needed. Guests or hosts can ask for this support, and raise any further queries or concerns around bicycle collection, by emailing [duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk)

Can you help by donating a bike?

 Good quality bikes in good working condition required for the bikes for the scheme. If you can help, please contact Kevin on 01223 839580 or email [OWLBikes@papworthtrust.org.uk](mailto:OWLBikes@papworthtrust.org.uk)

### HCV TRAFFIC- OAKINGTON

We contacted the site agent for the Tilia Homes site on Rampton Road regarding their planned routing of construction traffic. We shared with them the traffic management plan for the Cottenham Grove site, which requires that traffic is routed via the B1049 to the A14 and does not route via Westwick and Oakington. We have received the following response:

*I have passed this information onto the construction team and requested that this be highlighted to the contractors. We currently haven't started on site so any vehicle movements at the moment will not be ours. I am proposing to retain a significant amount of arisings from the site in our open space areas to avoid the need for lorries to be taking muck off site which should significantly cut down vehicle movements. In letting the contracts, the parties will be advised of your concerns, and we should be able to avoid using these routes (through Oakington and Westwick) as they do seem impractical.*

### UPDATE ON BIN COLLECTIONS

Our Greater Cambridge Shared Waste crews are facing a challenging period due to staff absences/shortages. As outlined on the bin collection service announcement website page, we were unable to complete some bins over the Jubilee period in Longstanton and Oakington. The advice that we have given to residents whose bins were not collected is that they should be left at the kerbside until we have returned to collect them. Residents of villages mentioned in the text on the bin collection service announcement page do not need to report their bins as missed; we are already planning to return to collect their waste. Any resident whose bin has been missed, who lives in a village not mentioned on the bin collection service announcement page, should report a missed bin in the usual way.

There are two primary reasons for these staff shortages, which are also being reported by other local Councils. At Greater Cambridge Shared Waste, despite our sustained and long-term recruitment campaign, we still have vacancies for eight drivers and 14 loaders. Usually, these vacancies would be covered by agency staff. However, there is clearly a shortage of agency staff in our area which means there are fewer relief staff able to support us. Incidentally, we are also hearing anecdotally that the cost of transport to reach our depot at Waterbeach is a factor for staff interested in applying for jobs. Our annual leave levels remain within their usual levels and sickness-related leave is within expected levels too. Our Greater Cambridge Shared Waste colleagues continue to work with HR to see how our positions can be made even more attractive to potential applicants.

Crews continue to do their very best every day to empty as many bins as possible. They also face the challenge of increased recycling loads following local Platinum Jubilee celebrations and the associated increase in packaging for recycling. We are finding that some of our crews are having to return to the Amey Materials Recovery Facility site to tip-off their recycling twice during their shift, which is unusual.

Thank you for bearing with us. We continue to post updates on the Council's website and social media feeds to advise of any disruption.

#### UPDATE ON INVESTIGATIONS INTO WATER ISSUES IN LONGSTANTON

This is the last update we received from the Director of Planning. We invited him to attend last month's Longstanton Annual Parish Meeting and understand Oakington PC also plan to extend an invitation to him to discuss these issues further at their meeting.

We have separately met with representative of NTC on site to further understand their hypothesis (detailed below) regarding the reduction in groundwater levels in Longstanton and Northstowe. We are chasing up on further data on groundwater monitoring from Homes England and L&Q and chasing up to find out if progress has been made with L&Qs investigations and the proposed CCTV survey.

*Firstly, we are aware of a number of meetings convened by the Local MP and third parties to discuss the matter of groundwater. Unfortunately, these meetings have been convened at very short notice and during the pre-election period which has prevented officers' participation. The LPA has nevertheless met with the Environment Agency officers to understand both the role and interest of the agency in this matter, and to seek guidance on the likelihood of being able to identify the source of the ground conditions – based upon their view of practice/investigation elsewhere. Their view is that*

*isolating the cause of the groundwater condition will be very difficult – and may be impossible to determine definitively. However, see below – we continue to work on this.*

*We have also met with Anglian Water officers to understand the process for considering the future of Uttons Drove – in the forthcoming Water resource Management Plans capital programme round.*

*Northstowe Town Council have meanwhile submitted proposals to me that they believe suggests some "leakage" from the groundwater aquifer under phase 1 in the vicinity of H9. In April, the Director, Pat Matthews, and Luke Mills met with NTC on site to lift manholes and seek to consider this matter. We lifted a manhole adjacent to site H9 and observed unexpected flows in the surface water drain that we agreed the LPA would explore further. We have subsequently approached both the developer and L&Q to determine the cause of this observed water flow. The developer has confirmed that their construction activities at that time would not have led to such a flow. L&Q have responded to the LPA and have indicated that they are currently investigating the reasons behind the observed flow (we have suggested a CCTV survey to them to help determine this). We will update NTC with their feedback as soon as we receive it.*

*LPC have also written to the LPA seeking confirmation that the groundwater aquifer under phase 1, has no direct relationship with Northstowe Phase 3a. We are finalising a response to this letter.*

*I have also recently met with the Keith Wilderspin from the Swavesey IDB following his concerns expressed at the planning committee for phase 3. Following that meeting, I have agreed to convene a meeting with the Swavesey and related IDB's to support their collective participation in the forthcoming Water Resource Management Planning process with AW and the Environment Agency – focusing on recognising the needs of the IDB and the cumulative impacts of developments on those management and land drainage concerns. This reflects the concerns articulated by Keith that there was limited coordination between IDB's and the water resource planning process (and a concern at their current exclusion).*

## URBAN SPLASH

You may have seen the news that the consortium delivering the Inholm development in the first parcel of Northstowe Phase 2 (the area closest to Rampton Drift), Urban Splash, has gone into administration. At the time of writing neither we as councillors nor the SCDC have any further details on what will happen next with this part of the Northstowe development. We have been contacted by concerned residents and will be holding a meeting with those already living in Urban Splash homes. We will ensure the wider community is updated as well as asking for this to be on the agenda at the next Northstowe Forum.

The next Northstowe Forum is being held on 26th July. We would encourage residents to attend these forums as the issues discussed are often of interest to residents of the surrounding villages as well as Northstowe. More information, including notes from previous meetings can be found via <https://www.scamb.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/community-forums/northstowe-community-forum/>

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR NORTHSTOWE

Following the elections, we thought it would be a good time to update you on where we are and where we are headed, with getting some of the key community facilities for Northstowe.

### **Funding Community Facilities - Section 106**

The developers have an obligation to provide funding for facilities in a new development like Northstowe through Section 106 contributions. Many of the problems we are now seeing with delivering facilities stem from issues with the funding that was originally agreed. Unfortunately, the agreement for Northstowe Phase 1, signed back in 2014 under the previous administration at the District Council, was particularly poor for today's residents: the money assigned for community buildings contained serious cost under-estimates – these sums have not increased with inflation and so there is now a very significant shortfall in what we need to deliver the community facilities the community needs. The District and County Council will need to make up this shortfall.

### **Phase 1 Community Building**

The lack of a permanent community building is one consequence of the poor Section 106 agreement. Technically it should have been delivered by now, but the plans submitted by the developer were for an extremely basic building that simply would not have met the needs of the community. We think that residents deserve better! Since SCDC purchased the land for the community building and enterprise zone, which will be at the heart of Phase 1, we have been working with the community, Town Council, and local businesses on a masterplan for this area which will include a community building, that really meets the needs of residents.

### **Interim Community Facilities**

This does mean that we need some interim facilities, to bridge the gap from when the Community Wing is handed back to Pathfinder school. The District Council has stepped up here and agreed to purchase the two show homes and the Sales Information Centre from Taylor Wimpey on Pathfinder Way. Work will be carried out to adapt these for use as a temporary community space. The District Council has been working with Northstowe's community groups that currently hold events and classes in the Wing to put plans in place which will see them temporarily operate from other rooms and spaces at the Pathfinder Primary School and Northstowe Secondary College until the interim community space becomes available.

Delivery of the permanent, long-term community buildings in the early phases of the town –the sports pavilion, community centre and Civic Hub – will be unaffected by these proposals. Once appropriate permanent community space is available the Council will return the interim community space to housing and develop the adjacent piece of land that has planning permission for flats.

More information on these plans can be found here <https://www.scambbs.gov.uk/council-invests-in-northstowe-to-provide-community-facilities/>

### **The Sports Pavilion**

The delivery of the Phase 1 Sports Pavilion has been delayed, again due to issues with the section 106 agreement and the need to find additional funding. The transfer of the land from L&Q and the pandemic also added further delay. We now have planning permission, and the Council are in the

final stages of agreeing a construction partner to start work. We are confident that the building design and the space will be a welcome addition to Northstowe facilities. We are particularly pleased that we were able to amend the building design to make it more sustainable, adding solar panels and an air source heat pump. We also secured the addition of a changing places toilet.

### **GP Provision**

The Northstowe health centre, including GP services, will be housed in the Civic Hub – part of Phase 2 – so it is vital we don't see long delays in the delivery of this building. During the pandemic, the local NHS was understandably struggling to engage fully in the planning process for this building, but progress is now being made again, and we look forward to soon seeing a design for this building which really meets the needs of the new town.

We've long raised concerns about the difficulty residents have in getting GP appointments and this has been raised with the local NHS. They have told us there is still capacity for new patients to register locally. We know this will be frustrating for residents struggling to get GP appointments, but we know that this is not just a problem related to Northstowe and people across South Cambs have this same issues. We have asked for contingency planning in case local GPs reach capacity before the new health centre opens and escalated this to senior levels.

Over a decade of Conservative underfunding and failure to tackle the national shortage of GPs is a large factor in this and we will be pushing our MP for action.

### **A Shop for Northstowe**

We are also continuing to push for a temporary solution to the lack of a shop at Northstowe. We have spoken with many residents who agree that even a small shop stocked with basics would be useful. While we are really pleased to see the efforts of Sustainable Northstowe, Co-op and the community in providing a community larder, getting a shop for the town is one of our top priorities.

## **FORMATION OF NORTHSTOWE MANAGEMENT GROUP**

We have long been demanding a group to oversee all aspects of Northstowe rather than it be handled in different areas at the Council. We are pleased that a newly formed Northstowe Delivery Group will be convened which Alex and Sarah will sit on and the senior responsible officer will be Anne Ainsworth, the Council's COO. We are hoping with such senior representation and a focus we can see some real progress on items we have all found frustrating.

### **Luton Airport Flight Path and Holding Area change**

We have received a few reports of an increased level of aircraft noise locally and think that the reason is that in February this year, London Luton Airport (LLA) changed its arrival paths and holding area for flights into Luton.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) approved the airspace change in November 2021 following an extensive public consultation that took place from October 2020 to February 2021. The consultation had shown that flights would be above 8,000 ft in most and 9,000ft. Unfortunately, that is not what is happening now.

One of colleagues Cllr Tumi Hawkins, is working with a group of concerned residents across, collating noise data and Parish Councils so they can raise a formal objection to the CAA and LLA. A public meeting is being held on Tuesday 5th July 7.30pm at Little Gransden Village Hall.

## DISTRICT WIDE NEWS

### SUPPORT FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

One of the roles of the District Council is to support community development. One way we are now doing this is through offering tailored advice to residents and community groups who want to set up new initiatives in their community. The guidance can include information about different grants that a particular project might be eligible for, the most appropriate toolkits to use, and introductions to community contacts who have been successful with similar projects locally.

If you are thinking about setting up a new group, encouraging others to take an interest in issues that matter to you, or addressing a local concern but aren't sure where to start, you can complete an online form here <https://www.scambsgov.uk/community-action>

### GREEN TO OUR CORE – ZERO CARBON COMMUNITIES GRANT

Deadline for applications for this has now extended to 5pm on Friday 17 June 2022.

Green issues were raised a lot during the past month, we are pleased to be able to share with more people some of the good things that we have done on this. including creating and adopting the Doubling Nature and Zero Carbon Strategies. For more practical steps, we created the Zero Carbon Communities Grant in 2019, and so far, allocated £314,415 to 51 different community groups to support carbon reduction projects. This grant is open for the fourth round of funding from a pot of £120,000! Community groups can apply for funding up to £15,000 for projects which reduce carbon emissions and engage communities on Climate change. To learn more and find out how to apply, please visit this webpage on SCDC website.

<https://www.scambsgov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant/> . If you have any questions, please contact [zcc@scambsgov.uk](mailto:zcc@scambsgov.uk).

### PLANNING POLICY & DELIVERY AND BUILDING CONTROL

#### 5-YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY 2022-2027

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service published on 1st April the latest situation with the 5 Year Housing Land Supply. The published figure is 6.5 years for the period 2022 to 2027. Please take note this is valid for the next 12 months, protecting our villages from speculative developments using current planning policies.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

South Cambs have also adopted 9 Village Design Guides and 5 Neighbourhood Plans over the past 4 years. We have just heard that "Government is extending support for neighbourhood planning groups, increasing funding by over £8m to £40m in total. This new funding will support the government's plan to level up the country by empowering communities to make decisions on future development in their area." according to the tweet by Housing Minister Stuart Andrew. For more



info see our Planning Cabinet Member Tumi Hawkins's Planning Resource blog at [http://tumihawkins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/220413-Neighbourhood-Watch\\_-Last-minute-extension-for-neighbourhood-plan-grant-programme\\_-\\_Planning-Resource.pdf](http://tumihawkins.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/220413-Neighbourhood-Watch_-Last-minute-extension-for-neighbourhood-plan-grant-programme_-_Planning-Resource.pdf).

#### LAUNCH OF MARKETS TOOLKIT

As part of our commitment to grow the local economy, support businesses and ensure a rich and diverse choice of products is widely available to our residents, our Business Support Team has launched an online Markets Toolkit with two directories to encourage and support local communities in setting up their own markets. Markets are often community cornerstones, enabling social experiences and sitting at the heart of local commerce, helping emerging businesses whilst feeding money back into our communities. We already have a number of successful local markets, but we believe there is scope for many more. The online toolkit gives lots of useful information on how to go about setting up a market, while the directories detail local markets and local stallholders. We hope both directories will grow quickly.

More information is available here Council launches online toolkit to help local villages and towns set up markets - South Cambs District Council ([scambs.gov.uk](http://scambs.gov.uk))

#### UPDATE ON ENERGY REBATE

Most people who paid their Council Tax by Direct Debit on 8 or 23 April should have received their £150 Energy Rebate payment by bank transfer. BUT, eligible residents in Council Tax bands A-D who have NOT received an automatic payment need to complete a short form so that the council can make your payment. Please visit the South Cambs website to complete the form: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/council-tax/150-energy-rebate/>

#### CABINET PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING

The first liaison meeting of the Cabinet with Parish Councils for the new municipal year is to take place on Monday 27th June 2022. This is the opportunity for Parish Councils to hear from Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet and to ask questions about any issues that is of interest or direct concern to communities. Please watch out for the invitation and do respond – I encourage all Parish Councils to select someone to attend.

#### THE QUEEN'S BATON RELAY IS COMING TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY

Queen's Baton Relay for Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is coming to South Cambridgeshire this summer, before going on to the game's destination. During its time in South Cambridgeshire, the Baton will first pass through the Wellcome Genome Campus in Hinxton, where an event will be held to bring together local communities to celebrate the Baton relay, science, and sport. The ticketed event is free, will bring together local communities, school children and Campus staff, and will have a range of entertainment, locally sourced food vendors, plus science and sporting activities. There will be a range of activities for children and families to explore areas of the genetic research that takes place on the Campus. As well as this, there will be a variety of sports

games, a family fun run, and local talent providing entertainment, including performances from nearby sports groups.

Read more about it at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/birmingham-2022-queen-s-baton-relay-to-visit-welcome-genome-campus-as-full-england-route-revealed/> and watch out for further details.

## MONKEY POX

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has announced that monkeypox is to be listed as a notifiable disease. Legislation has been laid which will make monkeypox a notifiable infectious disease under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010 from 8 June. This means all doctors in England are required to notify their local council or local Health Protection Team (HPT) if they suspect a patient has monkeypox. To date, the UKHSA announced that it has detected 73 additional cases of monkeypox in England, two additional cases in Scotland and two in Wales. This brings the total number confirmed in the UK to 302 as of 5 June. There are currently 287 confirmed cases in England, 10 in Scotland, 2 in Northern Ireland and 3 in Wales.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/monkeypox-cases-confirmed-in-england-latest-updates>

## CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about these, or any other matters.

Alex Malyon and Sarah Cheung Johnson

District Councillors for Longstanton, Oakington & Westwick and Northstowe

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