

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council

County Councillor Report – June 2026

Cllr Luis Navarro

Council and Governance Updates

Since the last report, there have been notable changes in the composition of Cambridgeshire County Council. Following the disqualification of Reform councillor Andy Osborn (Roman Bank & Peckover), a by-election has been scheduled, with polling due to take place on **Thursday 25 June 2026**.

In addition, another councillor, James Sidlow (Ramsey & Bury), formerly leader of the Reform group, has resigned. A second by-election is expected in that division shortly afterwards.

The **Annual Council Meeting**, held on **19 May 2026**, saw a relatively light agenda in terms of motions, with only two debated. This is the first meeting operating under revised procedural rules which permit unlimited motions overall, but limit individual councillors to submitting one motion each.

Armed Forces Covenant

One of the key motions agreed at Full Council reaffirmed Cambridgeshire's strong commitment to the **Armed Forces Covenant**. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that serving personnel, veterans, and their families are treated fairly and do not face disadvantages when accessing public services.

With over **22,500 veterans** living across Cambridgeshire and a significant Armed Forces presence in the region, the Council has committed to a strengthened programme of support, including:

- Signing a **refreshed Armed Forces Covenant** in June 2026
- Increasing awareness of available support via council services, libraries, and digital tools such as the Forces Connect app
- Publishing an **annual report** on Covenant delivery across services
- Continuing funding for the **Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Coordinator** role into 2027–28
- Writing to the Minister for Veterans to support the Royal British Legion's *Keep the Covenant Promise* campaign

This renewed focus aims to ensure consistent and measurable delivery of support across the county.

Strategic Freight and Logistics Planning (A14 Corridor)

Residents across Over, Oakington, Westwick and neighbouring villages have increasingly raised concerns regarding the cumulative impact of **large-scale logistics development along the A14 corridor**.

Key issues identified include:

- Increased **HGV traffic** and congestion on local roads
- Pressure on rural infrastructure and road safety
- Impacts on **air quality and public health**
- Risks relating to **flooding and drainage capacity**
- The wider **impact on the rural character** of local communities

In response, I presented a motion calling for a **strategic, area-wide freight study**, to be commissioned by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.

This study will assess the **combined, long-term effects** of logistics growth, including:

- Traffic, congestion, and safety
- Environmental and carbon impacts
- Flood risk and infrastructure resilience
- Community wellbeing

Importantly, it will also consider opportunities to **reduce reliance on road freight**, including potential expansion of rail-based alternatives.

The motion received majority support and reflects a growing consensus that these challenges must be addressed through **coordinated, long-term planning rather than piecemeal development decisions**. Work will continue with parish councils and residents to ensure local concerns are fully represented.

Adults & Health

The Council continues to promote innovation in supporting independent living. A new **‘virtual smart flat’** has been launched, allowing residents to explore how technology can help people remain independent in their own homes.

This includes equipment such as:

- Medication reminders
- Sensors and monitoring systems
- Smart home devices and assistive technology

The virtual experience is accessible online, while a physical demonstration facility is also available in **Huntingdon**.

In addition, the Government's **Timms Review of Personal Independence Payments (PIP)** has now closed to submissions. The review is considering how PIP supports individuals with disabilities and long-term health conditions. Its findings are expected in **autumn 2026** and will be reported to Parliament.

Children & Young People

With the approach of summer, the Council has launched the **“Be Water Smart”** campaign, aimed at reducing preventable accidents involving open water.

The campaign focuses on:

- Raising awareness of risks such as **cold water shock** and hidden hazards
- Promoting the **Water Safety Code** (Stop & Think, Stay Together, Float, Call 999/112)
- Providing practical guidance and resources for families

This initiative is particularly timely given recent national incidents during periods of hot weather.

The Government is also undertaking a campaign to reconnect young people with **unclaimed Child Trust Funds**, with thousands of accounts averaging **£2,200** remaining unclaimed. Eligible individuals are encouraged to check via www.gov.uk/child-trust-funds/find-a-child-trust-fund

Alongside this, there remains a strong need for **local foster carers**. Increasing the number of carers within Cambridgeshire helps ensure children can remain close to their schools, friends, and support networks.

If this is something that might work for you, find out more at 0800 052 0078, email fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or visit the website [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/fostering and-adoption](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/fostering-and-adoption)

Environment & Green Investment

Further updates are expected regarding the **Grunty Fen landfill fires**, with an Environment Agency assessment due in early July. Local representatives will continue to keep residents informed.

The Council has also endorsed the **RECAP Waste Strategy (2025–2031)** and associated planning design guidance, which will shape waste management and recycling infrastructure across the county.

A new **Woodland Creation initiative** has been launched to address Cambridgeshire's relatively low tree cover. The programme is inviting landowners, farmers, and community groups to put forward land (minimum 0.5 hectares) for:

- Tree planting and woodland creation
- Hedgerow restoration
- Wider biodiversity and habitat connectivity projects

Priority will be given to sites that enhance ecological networks. The deadline for expressions of interest for the 2026/27 planting season is **30 June 2026**:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/climate-change-energy-and-environment/woodland-creation>

Highways & Transport

The Council has taken steps to ensure the continuation of **cycle training (Bikeability)** for children across Cambridgeshire, with a new contract planned through to at least **2029**.

Transport connectivity will also be enhanced with the opening of **Cambridge South Station** on **28 June 2026**, serving the Biomedical Campus and offering expanded links to Cambridge city centre, London, Stansted Airport, and beyond.

However, there have been challenges. Approximately **200 traffic light detector units** have been vandalised across the county since early May. These detectors are essential for responsive traffic light operation. Damage has resulted in:

- Increased congestion
- Longer delays
- Potential safety issues at junctions

Repairs are ongoing, but this highlights the importance of protecting critical transport infrastructure.