

South Cambridgeshire District Councillor's Monthly Report

Month of April 2012

1. South Cambridgeshire Youth Council

The Council has opened up nominations for the Youth Council, starting from 1st April. Members of the Youth council will represent young people in all the Council's work, highlight the issues of concern to the young people, and have a real say in things that happen in South Cambridgeshire.

There are 20 places up for grabs and these are open to all young people between the ages of 13 and 18 who live in South Cambridgeshire. Nominations close on August 1st and, if there are enough candidates, an election will be held in September.

For more information, call Tracy Mann on 01954 713342 or email tracy.mann@Scambs.gov.uk. Follow <http://www.facebook.com/SCYouthCouncil>

2. New Housing Repairs Contractor

Mears, the new housing repairs contractor started the 5-year contract on 2nd April.

Mears was selected following a bidding process in which the DLO, the Councils on in-house repairs team was forced to re-apply for their own jobs even though they met their key performance targets and had good feedback from council tenants. They lost to Mears, a national company by a mere 2.5%. However, some have been absorbed into Mears and some of them have left.

A letter went out to all tenants informing them of the changes. We wish Mears well and hope that the level of service does not drop. The telephone number for repairs is now 0800 085 1313.

3. Superfast Broadband – for Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) together with Peterborough City Council (PCC) have started the Connecting Cambridgeshire project, which aims to provide at least 90% of homes and businesses in Cambridgeshire with access to superfast broadband with speeds of at least 25 Mbps, with the remaining having "better" connectivity, all by 2012. This is being made possible through £6.75M government funding via the BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) and £20M of funding from CCC and £3M from PCC.

The public subsidy can only be used in the areas designated as "white" which means there is no broadband provider. South Cambs has the greatest number of white areas. The success of the project relies on the interest for and take up of broadband services, so communities need to register their demand. CCC is working with the Districts to try and this project going.

To register your interest and demand, please go to www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk. Pass on the message to family, friends and neighbours, to gather as many registrations as possible. The County is hoping that "Digital Champions" will emerge from within communities, to encourage local residents and businesses to demonstrate their demand for broadband.

4. Finance and Housing

On 26th March 2012, SCDC took on a loan of £205.123 million into the Housing Revenue Account, and paid it out to the Government a few days later, as the price for keeping all the rents that come from the council housing stock. The loan is for a term of 30 years.

The council is planning on spending some of that money on new house building in the future, and announced it would build 1000 throughout the district. It expects to deliver half of them in the next 15 years. Money will also be made available to upgrade existing stock.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing has said that the Council are determined to work with parish councils to make sure the homes are built where the local communities want them. All I can say is “lets wait and see”.

5. Land on St Neots Road, Caldecote – Planning application S/1383/11 Change of use to Touring Caravan site

The SCDC Planning Committee gave consent for change of use of the land to Touring Caravan Site. This is the plot of land on the old A428 next to the white Spanish style bungalow. The planning permission allows the land to be used for holiday caravanning, and nothing else.

However, it is well known that the owner of the land has threatened to use it for other purposes, and SCDC has for the last two years known about this. I had put in place an escalation procedure in the event that the threat to illegally occupy the site was implemented. This was not considered material planning consideration, nor was the fact that the land had been gradually degraded to the point where the protected great crested newts were no longer on the site. Caldecote Parish Council also objected quite strongly. You can read more about this issue on my blog.

The Planning Office is now putting together the planning conditions to be attached to the licence to operate the caravan site. Caldecote Parish Council is also taking an active part in this process.

6. Casework

Your Councillor is here to help you. Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints. I can be contacted by phone, email or via my website. I hope I can help but even if I can't, then it's highly likely that I know someone who can!

7. Dates for your diary

4 th June 2012		Jubilee celebrations
1 st August 2012		Close of Nominations for Youth Council

Tumi

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14-May-12

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