

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caldecote Ward

(comprises the Parishes of Caldecote, Childerley, Kingston, Bourn, Longstowe & Little Gransden)

Councillor's Monthly Report – April 2022

This report of previous month events is for all the Ward, so please be aware that some of the content may not be relevant to your particular Parish.

General

Please contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. These are housing need, housing repairs for council tenants, planning, benefits, council tax, bin collection, environmental health issues etc. Don't fight on your own. I am available to help you to get the best outcome possible for your situation.

Check out articles on my facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/itsCouncillorTumi> and my blog <http://www.TumiHawkins.org.uk>. What I post on there is my view and not LibDem or South Cambs official policy unless I state that it is.

Covid19 UPDATE

The South Cambs District Council offices are now open, but via appointment only. You can visit on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 10am and 3pm. Book an appointment in advance from <https://www.scams.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/contact-us/book-an-appointment/>. You must wear a face-covering during your visit and social distance too. Council staff will also wear protective equipment.

The Government has removed all requirements for testing, social distancing and face mask wearing. However, the rate of infection of the current Covid Omicron B2 variant is very high, so much so, the country has higher infection rates now than at the height of the pandemic in 2020. Many people are having to self-isolate, which means organisations, schools and businesses are affected by staff shortages. So be considerate. Do what you can to reduce the infection spread.

District and Parish Council Elections 2022

This is the year when both District and Parish council elections will be held on 5th May 2022. Nominations close on 5th April 2022. I can confirm that I will be standing again as the Liberal Democrat candidate for the election for District Councillor for Caldecote Ward. It is a 4-year term and if successful, will be my fourth term. I am however stepping down from Caldecote Parish Council, having been back on there for the second time in September 2017, my first time being from May 2006 to May 2010.

I encourage young people who are now just over 18 years and able to vote to register to vote on or before 14th April 2022. It only takes 5 minutes at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. If you are already registered but want a postal vote, then you can apply by 19th April 2022 on <https://www.scams.gov.uk/elections/voting-by-post-or-proxy/>

Green To Our Core

In 2018 when the LibDems took over administration of South Cambs DC, "Green to our core" was set as one of the major objectives. That objective led the council to create and adopt the Doubling Nature and Zero Carbon Strategies.

Some of the other activities on getting to net zero include (1) Greening South Cambridgeshire Hall an energy-efficient retrofit of the Council office building, (2) Acquiring a fully electric bin lorry in 2020, one of the first Councils in the UK and 2 more lorries arriving soon (3) Upgrading 1,800 street lights with low energy bulbs (4) Introducing Tree planting where the "Three Free Trees"

scheme in 2020 saw 54 parishes in the district plant a total of 162 trees and the “Six Free Trees” scheme in 2021 saw a further 227 trees planted. (5) Creating **Zero Carbon Communities Grant** in 2019, and allocating £314,415 so far to 51 different community groups to support carbon reduction projects (6) Carbon Reduction Planning Strategies introduced in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which is proposing to have all new homes be net zero, locate new homes close to transport corridors to reduce carbon footprint, and other such policies, (7) using £1.5 mil to make SCDC Council houses energy efficient.

iESE Silver Award

SCDC has now been recognised for all this by receiving a **Silver Award in Green Public Service category** at the 2022 annual Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) Public Sector Transformation Awards on 9th March 2022. This award recognises, rewards and promotes environmental best practice across the public sector in the UK. So the Council got this award because it shows how SCDC have helped the environment and improved sustainability not only in the Council, but in the wider community too. You can read more about this award win at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/council-s-being-green-to-our-core-strategy-receives-national-accolade/>.

You can also read more details about all the green projects and work at

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/what-are-we-doing-to-tackle-climate-change-in-south-cambridgeshire>

Adoption of Biodiversity SPD

The Council has created and formally adopted the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It is an easy-to-read guidance to assist developers in meeting obligations to meeting the green to our core strategy in new developments. The SPD will help support the Council’s Doubling Nature Strategy, and ensure that every new development plays its part in increasing biodiversity in our area into the future. I encourage all Ward parish councils to use the adopted SPD to develop their own nature recovery strategies – don’t re-invent the wheel.

Zero Carbon Events

SCDC is continuing to build on its zero carbon work following on from the Zero Carbon events that took place in February and March 2022. This time, it is holding a webinar specifically to talk about community buildings and energy consumption or reduction. So if you want to cut down on the carbon emissions coming from your community building, and at the same time minimise your energy costs, then make a booking to go to the next Green Connect session at 7pm on Tuesday 19 April 2022. Tickets are free and available here at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-events/>. You will also find the recording of previous webinars there.

Planning Policy & Delivery and Building Control

5-Year Housing Land Supply 2022-2027

Big piece of news is that the 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. This means that this important policy position is improving under this administration and is protecting our villages from unsustainable developments.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), first published in 2012, requires each Local Authority to routinely monitor and record its pipeline of housing land, to maintain at least a five-year supply of **deliverable sites (5YHLS)**. When councils are unable to demonstrate such a pipeline, the NPPF’s “presumption in favour of sustainable development” applies, which renders the housing policies in their local plan out of date, making them more vulnerable to speculative applications.

This is what happened from 2012 to 2018 when the previous Conservative administration did not have a 5YHLS, and the district ended up with speculative applications resulting in 4000 homes achieving permission. Caldecote Ward villages escaped this problem, except Caldecote itself where the Linden site for 140 homes and Balfour Beatty site for 58 homes got outline permission on appeal in 2017. I attended both appeals each lasting 3 days for the case to be heard and together with some key residents who helped, presented views on behalf of Caldecote residents.

The new 5YHLS figure is really good news coming immediately after the Annual Monitoring Report that stated that the GCSP has delivered 1752 net additional homes, exceeding the target (1675) for 2020-21. Of the 1,335 in South Cambridgeshire, 311 of these homes were ‘Affordable Homes’. The Planning Service is working really hard on behalf of the residents of South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City through the Shared Planning service.

Parish Councils Planning Meetings/Trainings

In recognition of the importance of local community knowledge, over the year, SCDC has arranged planning training sessions for Parish Councils, and quarterly Area Team Meetings to update and discuss important issues with Parish Councils who are statutory consultees in the Planning process. The Caldecote Ward villages are in Area 3 Team, with the most recent quarterly team meeting taking place last month. I hope that was useful for you.

The community engagement forums for the A428 Bourn Airfield and A428 Cambourne clusters also took place in March. The Forums webpage is at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/community-forums/> where you can find updates and recordings of online events.

Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan

The Planning Policy team are continuing the task of evaluating all the feedback and comments received during the First Proposals consultation. As you know, the Greater Cambridge area is the area of South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City combined, and both Councils now work together on creating policies across the area.

The First Proposals is the proposed planning policy and strategy for the joint area. It is noteworthy that the emerging local plan identifies the need across the area up to 2041, what is in the pipeline in the current adopted local plans (created for up to 2031) to go towards meeting those needs, and how it will meet the rest of the need

Location	Current pipeline (adopted allocations, existing permissions and windfall allowance)	Proposed increased delivery rates/densification on existing allocated sites	New proposed allocations	Total
City (urban area)	5,791 (16%)		3,912 (43%)	9,703 (20%)
Edge of Cambridge	8,003 (22%)	1,000 (40%)	2,850 (31%)	11,853 (24%)
New settlements	15,225 (41%)	1,500 (60%)	1,950 (21%)	18,675 (38%)
Rural area	8,179 (22%)		384 (4%)	8,563 (18%)
Total	37,198 (100%)	2,500 (100%)	9,096 (100%)	48,794 (100%)
Proportion of housing supply	76% of total delivery	5% of total delivery	19% of total delivery	

The existing new settlements are Northstowe, Waterbeach, Cambourne West, Bourn Airfield, Eddington, Darwin Green, Marleigh, North of Cherry Hinton, Trumpington Meadows. These and other sites with permission already provide 76% of the identified need up to 2041.

The emerging plan is proposing new 11,596 homes, some on existing settlements of Northstowe and Waterbeach to be by delivery existing numbers faster. New proposed settlements at North East Cambridge and Cambridge East are earmarked for most of the new homes. Cambourne (somewhere not specific yet) is included because of the EWR proposal-it can only be finalised when EWR route is finalised. Only 384 are in villages that are larger like Melbourn and Duxford, or close to good transport links like Oakington and Great Shelford or like in Caldecote where the Linden Phase 2 site is included because it previously had planning permission. We are focussing on keeping South Cambs rural and protecting the character of villages.

We have also adopted 9 Village Design Guides and 5 Neighbourhood Plans and set up 19 Liaison forums and 9 Community forums to discuss new growth and community issues.

3C Building Control – Gold Award

Our 3CBC team yet again won two awards this year, the most recent last month is the **iESE Gold Award for Efficiency and Effectiveness**.

3CBC is the Shared Building Control Service of South Cambs, Cambs City and Huntingdonshire DC. The award recognised 3CBC as an organisation that has harnessed their real potential, delivering elevated performance, creating efficiencies, and delivering outstanding customer service with improved value to their residents. Above all, this organisation has shown its ability to adapt a virus-fuelled environment and achieve fantastic results in doing so.

I know that during lockdown, 3CBC helped the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service to continue to put out statutory planning notices on sites that had planning applications submitted to enable them move to next stage of public consultation. The lockdown rules worked against Planners but not Building Control officials. So the two teams that are my Portfolio responsibility worked together. Read more about the award and the Service at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/local-building-control-team-wins-gold-at-national-awards-ceremony/>

Council Finance and Business Support

Council Tax

Now that district residents have received their Council Tax bills, and in light of the cost of living crisis, there are comments and discussions across the board. As I previously reported, at the February Full Council meeting, SCDC approved its budget for next year and set its Council Tax charge from April 2022. The SCDC element is one of 5, and is still one of the lowest Council Tax charges in the country. It was raised by 10 pence a week or £5 a year for a Band D property to enable the Council to continue to transform council services and deliver £230,000 of savings every year. The Council tax is not sufficient to run the services, which is why it has to find additional sources of income. SCDC has made £5mil per year from investments and saved £200,000 per year.

The tables below shows the council tax components for the villages in our Ward.

	£ Band A	£ Band B	£ Band C	£ Band D	£ Band E	£ Band F	£ Band G	£ Band H		Band D avg
County Council	979.74	1143.03	1306.32	1469.61	1796.19	2122.77	2449.35	2939.22		72.06%
Police & Crime Commissioner	171.72	200.34	228.96	257.58	314.82	372.06	429.3	515.16		12.63%
District Council	106.87	124.59	142.5	160.31	195.93	231.56	267.18	320.62		7.86%
Fire Authority	49.98	58.31	66.64	74.97	91.63	108.29	124.25	149.94		3.68%
Parish Councils	51.35	59.91	68.47	77.03	94.15	111.27	128.38	154.06		3.78%
Total	1359.66	1586.18	1812.89	2039.5	2492.72	2945.95	3398.46	4079.00		

Each of these authorities needs money to run the services it is responsible for, which is why they need to set council tax. The District Council is responsible for collecting and forwarding their elements to them. If you want to compare the parish council precepts in the ward, use the table below

Parishes	£ Band A	£ Band B	£ Band C	£ Band D	£ Band E	£ Band F	£ Band G	£ Band H
Bourn	50.51	58.92	67.34	75.76	92.6	109.43	126.27	151.52
Caldecote	71.38	83.28	95.17	107.07	130.86	154.66	178.45	214.14
Childerley	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Little Gransden	38.63	45.07	51.51	57.95	70.83	83.71	96.58	115.90
Kingston	53.04	61.88	70.72	79.56	97.24	114.92	132.60	159.12
Longstowe	43.21	50.41	57.61	64.81	79.21	93.61	108.02	129.62
Average/5	51.35	59.91	68.47	77.03	94.15	111.27	128.38	154.06

We are one of a few councils in the country to have set a balanced budget for the coming financial year with a small surplus going into reserves to off-set possibly deficits in the future.

Council Audited Accounts

Since taking over administration, LibDems have been modernising the council on many fronts. Following a complex transfer of the council's asset register South Camb's external auditors EY have now signed off the accounts for the year 2018/19. The Council and the auditors have also agreed a schedule for completion of the audit of the 2019/20 accounts within 20 weeks.

The auditors and council staff have worked incredibly hard to get this set of accounts signed off. The issue with the asset register had held back accounts audits and highlighted by Auditors historically from 2016. This also held up the 2017/18 accounts audit which finally got signed off in 2020. The transfer of the asset register from spread sheets to a database threw up a number of historic issues to be resolved, but we now have a robust modern system in place that is fit for the future.

It is also very welcome that a timeline for making swift progress on the audit of the following set of accounts for 2019/20 has been agreed. At this rate, we will be back on track by this time next year. It is important that the audit process is undertaken with complete thoroughness even though that has resulted in a longer timescale than we had hoped for. As expected, the audit opinion is unqualified.

Covid Business Support Grants

South Cambridgeshire District Council is now welcoming applications for its discretionary COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF). The Government funding is to provide additional business rates relief to support rate-paying businesses affected by the pandemic between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. It is for businesses which weren't eligible for previous support linked to business rates, who can prove they have been adversely affected by the pandemic and have been unable to adequately adapt to that impact. Apply at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/additional-financial-support-for-south-cambridgeshire-businesses-impacted-by-covid-1/>

SCDC is one of the third of UK councils that is up to date in helping businesses as it has given out £43.9 of government Covid grants.

Business Support

Furthermore the business team has organized visits to 2000 businesses by our High Street Teams, and these businesses are also receiving the "Open for Business Newsletter". The Business Team

have helped set up local markets, assisted 4 startups to find premises to operate from, and created the “On Your Doorstep” #shoplocal campaign that helps local shops to recover from Covid19. The council has also given £1.4 mil to 102 businesses and start-ups to help them grow.

We have also set up a Visit South Cambs website at <https://visitsouthcambs.co.uk/>. I strongly recommend you check it out to find out what you can do for leisure in the district and small businesses in the Ward that provide services to the leisure market to get themselves a spot on there!

South Cambs Grants – Zero Carbon open

South Cambridgeshire’s community groups can now bid for a share of more than £120,000 from the District Council’s popular Zero Carbon Communities Grant scheme.

Zero Carbon grants from the business rates of solar farms etc. has so far provided £310,000 to 51 grass roots green projects that work to tackle climate change in South Cambridgeshire villages. This year, groups in our district can apply for between £1,000 and to £15,000 from the Council’s available pot of £120,544.

Applications are invited under two categories. The first category is for projects aimed at or such as low carbon, energy saving improvements to community buildings, or tree-planting initiatives. The second category is for community engagement projects which support and encourage lower carbon living. Read about it and apply at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/bid-now-for-grants-to-tackle-climate-change/>. The **deadline is Wednesday 1 June 2022**.

Community Chest Grant

SCDC is supporting communities to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee with one off grants of £700. It is still open for applications till 12th April 2022. For this and other projects, apply at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/grants/community-chest-grants/>

The SCDC Community Chest continues to be popular as it grants £58,000 a year to local projects. The Council has given further grants of £164,000 to voluntary groups and £78,000 to support work with young people.

Health and Wellbeing

The Action for Happiness theme for this month is **Active April**. The calendar is at <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendar>. This month’s focus is “Let's find ways to get moving and stay active and healthy”.

The Council is helping residents to deal with their wellbeing issues, especially over the last 2 years of Covid19. There is giving the opportunity for instructors to apply for up to £300 to lead fitness and wellbeing activities in their communities Providers running multiple groups can also apply to fund multiple programmes. Activities could range from walking, football, rugby, netball, to chair-based exercise classes, diabetes walking groups, yoga for the over 60s, baby yoga classes or more.

The grant, which is funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, is to help deliver physical activity programmes provided by the District Council in partnership with Living Sport. It is designed to cover costs such as venue hire for up to six weeks, with new participants being entitled to four free sessions. Once the free sessions are complete, participants would be expected to begin paying a small fee to continue participation, meaning that the initiative should become a sustainable source of income for the instructor

This particular grant is in addition to some of the work it has done in the past and is continuing to do. It gave 70 grants to covid support groups, helped set up covid groups in all the villages within the first 3 weeks of the pandemic lockdown, and gave 900 hot meals over the covid Christmas

period. Furthermore it ran 7 Wild Minds schemes to support young people with mental health issues, and this is still running as it became popular. It also ran 9 webinars for businesses during the pandemic including on mental health so that business owners could assist their employees keep well

Better Connected Communities

The Council is urging residents and community groups to use a new personalised advice service which will identify free tools and funding to tackle local problems and create safer communities in South Cambridgeshire. Residents and community groups can complete a short online form outlining the initiative they want to set up or the problem they want to solve, and Council staff will offer tailored solutions. Check out what's available at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-action>

Housing and Affordable Homes

As I reported last month and earlier in this report, South Cambs exceeded the target set in the adopted Local Plan 2018. Of the homes delivered, 311 were 'Affordable Homes'.

Good news is that the Council now has another 15 new energy efficient apartments delivered by its development partner Hill, in Sawston. It means more homes that are genuinely affordable for local people to live in and run. 11 had already been provided on this site, and a further 37 when the development is completed.

The LibDems proposed in 2019/20 budget to double the number of new council houses being built by 2024. Baseline in 2019 was 36 homes, increasing to 64 in 2020/21 and 89 council houses in 2021/22 totalling **189 Council houses** in our villages. That target has been achieved, and exceeded, with plans for more, up to 350 by 2025. I am pleased that Caldecote village now has some of these new council homes and will work with other parishes in our Ward to see how they can benefit.

Support for Homeless

SCDC has given Emmaus Cambridge, based in Landbeach, a one-off grant of £30,000 which will allow it to employ an additional support worker to continue supporting single homeless people that the Council refer to the charity. Emmaus have worked with SCDC for several years.

The funding comes from the Council's Homeless Prevention Grant which district councils are allocated from the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The purpose of the Homelessness Prevention Grant is to give local authorities more assistance in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness and reduce rough sleeping. The Charity also has a shop giving work opportunities to those it is helping so they can rebuild their lives. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing-charity-receives-helping-hand-from-council/>

Support for Refugees

South Cambs continues to support not just local people suffering homelessness, but also refugees who have come to the UK. It has helped 3 Syrian refugee families and 8 Afghan families to find and settle into homes in this area.

Ukraine

The support guidance for Ukrainian refugees is on the webpage at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/support-for-ukraine/>

The Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, which asks people to offer space in their homes for those fleeing the war, has been launched (<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>). This will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety – including those with no family ties to the country.

Phase One of the scheme will allow sponsors to invite an individual or family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property. There will be no impact on their benefits as a result of doing so – for example, they would not lose their single person council tax discount. The Government will also be providing a full support pack for families hosting arrivals and a welcome pack for all new arrivals. Anyone who is interested in participating is asked to offer accommodation for at least six months and will be eligible for a ‘thank you’ payment of £350 a month.

FAQs are available here on the Homes for Ukraine scheme - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions>.

We have a kind Caldecote resident who has offered a family a home in the village.

Local Issues

Caldecote – Ukrainian Family Support

A Ukrainian family of 10 from 10 years to 90 years have recently settled in Highfields, thanks to the offer of a house from a kind-hearted Caldecote resident. Whilst he was sorting out the house also with help from Emmaus for large furniture, I helped them to coordinate offers of help from Caldecote residents to provide the family with household items they needed to settle into their new homes. From beddings, to kitchen and bathroom items, to kids books, toys to pets stuff and financial donations too. My estate car has come in very useful delivering these items to them. I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this family and continues to support them. What a fabulous community we have.

Casework

Irrespective of the current Covid19 lockdown, please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. I will help as best I can at least till 4th of May 2022, and hopefully after that.

You will find the current and past reports at <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/2021-22-monthly-reports/>. Feel free to read, share and/or download.

Please stay safe. Keep the **Hands – Face – Space - Fresh Air** maxim as much as you can.

Tumi

Tumi Hawkins
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