

# South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caldecote Ward

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

## Councillor's Monthly Report – April 2024

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.

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### General

Please contact me with comments, questions, requests for assistance, 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.

### South Cambridgeshire District Council is 50 years

South Cambs marked the 50th anniversary of the creation of district councils with a civic ceremony at South Cambs Hall in March. That was preceded by the planting of a tree by Deputy Lieutenant for Cambridgeshire Jeremy Newsum. It was created by combining what was then Chesterton Rural District Council and South Cambridgeshire Rural District Council. This half century golden milestone is one of a huge legacy of service and innovation to get us to where we are today. It was an opportunity to pay thanks to the unwavering dedication and commitment of all those who have served on and worked for the council over the years as well as the continued support of our residents and stakeholders. Read more on the history at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/golden-anniversary-for-south-cambridgeshire-district-council/>

### Planning Updates

#### GCSPS wins DLUHC Grant Funding

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service has secured total of £250,000 of funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC). This Government funding is for work on our digital transformation in planning and is made up of £100,000 of funding from Round 2 of Digital Planning Improvement Fund and £150,000 from Round 4 of The PropTech Innovation Fund. The Service will be using the funds to enhance GCSP's digital capabilities and development management software, and to facilitate better integration of planning data. These upgrades will make planning processes faster and more efficient, which will directly benefit residents, communities and developers. <https://dluhcdigital.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/27/allocation-of-funding-for-council-led-initiatives-advancing-innovative-digital-planning-services/>

#### 5 Year Housing Land Supply

The Planning Service recently published the latest Authority Monitoring Report for 2022-2023. It's a report that provides the status of progress of the Councils in meeting the targets in their adopted local plans and local development scheme. The usual factor that many want to know is – what is the level of housing land supply and are we meeting the required 5 years threshold. Oh yes we are. The figure for the next 5 year period of 2024-2029 is 6.5 years! The full report is at [https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/oopaw5ze/amr\\_2023\\_final1\\_accessible.pdf](https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/oopaw5ze/amr_2023_final1_accessible.pdf) and appendixes at [https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1mdltjt5/amr\\_2023\\_app1\\_finalnew2.pdf](https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1mdltjt5/amr_2023_app1_finalnew2.pdf) and [https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/5jym1d1k/amr\\_2023\\_app2\\_final1\\_accessible.pdf](https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/5jym1d1k/amr_2023_app2_final1_accessible.pdf)

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## Housing Updates

### New Development at Cambourne

South Cambs approved the business plan for the development of 256 homes covering 9.4 hectares opposite the Council's offices. This development will be delivered by a Partnership between the SCDC and Hills Group. Of those new dwellings, 40% will be affordable homes, and ones for rent will be built to Passivhaus standards which is much enhanced energy efficiency standards. That amounts to 70 affordable rented and 30 shared equity homes and the Council will be the landlord. We continue to take steps toward acquiring more homes into the Council's housing portfolio to help meet the housing needs of south cambs residents.

### Empty Houses

An awareness campaign has been launched by South Cambs to bring empty properties back into use and help get families living in suitable homes and is urging private property owners to turn empty properties into homes through sale or rental.

How to get an empty property back into use? There are many reasons why a property could be empty. The Council works with Auction Houses, Genealogy and Probate companies to progress probate or trace owners and estate agents - the Council can be a keyholder if property owners live some distance away. The Cambs HIA can arrange low-level building works on a private paid-for basis. They have surveyors, approved builders and contractors who work for them and arrange site meetings, Building Control, Planning and can complete technical drawings and schedules of work.

The 'Doer Upper' option: It is popular for people to take on an empty property in need of TLC to make it their home. If completing building work yourself, maintenance and improvements are usually charged at the standard rate of 20% VAT. If you're thinking about or have recently purchased a property that has sat empty for two plus years, the Council's Empty Homes Officer can provide you with a letter free of charge to pay just 5% VAT on renovation work when using a registered builder. If you are a private homeowner and would like further help and support, please contact Anna Nightingale Empty Homes Officer on: [nightingale@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:nightingale@scambs.gov.uk)

## Finance Updates

### South Cambs Financial Accounts 2022/23

SCDC's 22/23 accounts have now been finalised and are available to view on the website. The government has introduced transitional arrangements for all councils' outstanding audits, and SCDC awaits a final decision from government about how 21/22 and 22/23 accounts will be audited (but it's likely a very 'light touch').

### Zero Carbon Communities Grant

Our popular Zero Carbon Communities grant opened for applications on 2 April 2024. Projects will once again be invited under two themes: reducing carbon emissions or locking up carbon, and community engagement around climate change.

Grants of between £2000 and £15,000 are available to parish councils and community groups in South Cambridgeshire, with a total pot of £125,000 available. Projects funded previously have included community building retrofits, food waste and climate-friendly cooking education, and e-bike rental schemes, to name just a few.

## Community Updates

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## Cambridge Wide Open Day 2024 – 12 June

Save the date and attend! This is the opportunity for everyone to attend events at the various science/business parks to find out more about the life sciences sector and the work that they do and the benefits to us. This is the sector that is at the heart of the increasing economic growth in our district and sub region, that Gove's 2050 plan wants to take advantage off. The event is organised by o2h group and is a follow on from last year's successful event – first of its kind.

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7189161344888160257/>

## Action for Happiness

The Action for Happiness theme for April is at <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendar> - **Active April**. The focus is “*Let's find ways to get moving and stay active and healthy*”. Have a look at the daily calendar which has some really good ideas for action on a daily basis.

## Casework

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

You will find the current and past reports on my blog at <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/caldecote-ward/reports/monthly-reports/2023-24-monthly-reports/>. Feel free to read, share and/or download.

*Tumi*

Tumi Hawkins  
18 April 2024

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