

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caldecote Ward

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

Councillor's Monthly Report – February 2021

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.

If you have time to spare – check out articles on 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.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

These are items in my previous reports that require action due to time limitations.

1. Green Homes Grant scheme

Government funding to make homes more energy efficient to help you saving money on household bills. **The scheme closes on 31 March 2021.** It could up to two thirds to full cost of improvements, from £5000 to £10,000 depending on your circumstances. Find out more if you are eligible at <https://greenhomesgrant.campaign.gov.uk/?> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>.

2. Broadband Voucher Scheme

Those that are suffering from low broadband speeds (less than 30 Mbps) can still take advantage of the Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme

<https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/funding-schemes/rural-gigabit-voucher-scheme/>.

The Voucher is worth up to £3500 for small businesses and £1500 for residential premises. It remains **open till 31 March 2021** or until the funds run out. The funds can then be used to commission service from suppliers such a BT or others.

Also Connecting Cambridgeshire has secured £500,000 extra **“top-up” funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority** to provide an additional “top-up” of £1,500 per premise.

Check out my comments here <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/broadband-for-rural-communities/>

3. Business Grants for Lockdown

South Cambs continues deliver the Government grants available for local businesses. For this National Lockdown #3, which started on January 5, three new schemes are available.

The grants are (1) Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSB), Closed Business Lockdown Payment (CBLP) and the Additional Restrictions Support Grant (ARSB).

Businesses can find information on how to apply, along with eligibility criteria, via the Council's website <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/businessgrant>

The Closing date for the new grant schemes is 31 March 2021 and final payments expected to be made by 30 April 2021.

4. Other Grants for Lockdown

The charity Cambridge Online is running a grant scheme on behalf of South Cambs to provide computer devices and data for those in need of it. Contact them by email using help@cambridgeonline.org.uk or call the Cambridge Online helpline on 01223 300407, quoting 'South Cambs Winter Support Grant'. Their website is at <http://cambridgeonline.org.uk/>

5. Wellbeing - Community Warden Scheme

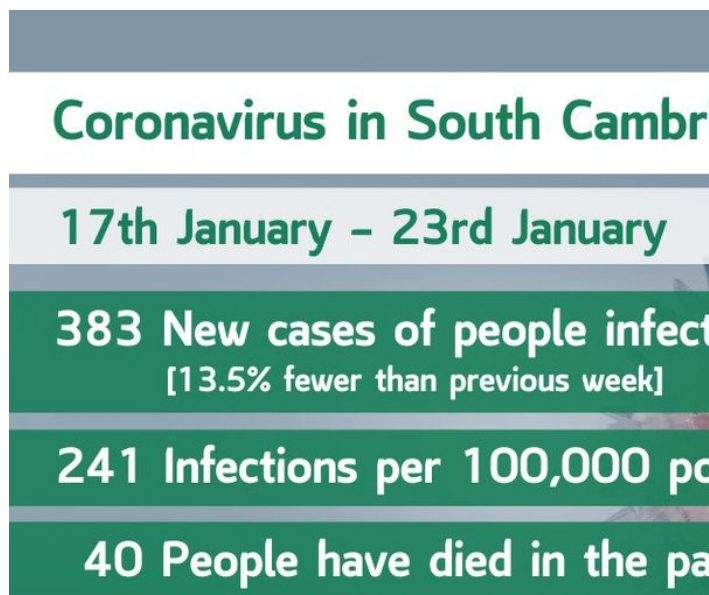
One of the new Community Warden Schemes (CWS) the Council launched recently (with an investment of £200,000) covers the villages of **Bourn, Caldecote** in the Ward. The scheme helps those above 60 to live independently, happily and safely in their own homes. Read more about it at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/seven-new-warden-schemes-launch-as-funding-for-2021-2024-announced/> If you are interested in the service, please call the new Community Warden Paula Rowley on **07812495997**.

COVID19 UPDATE

Good news: Vaccination program is making good progress and remains on track to offer Covid-19 vaccines to the most vulnerable patients by the middle of February. New instruction from NHS Cambridge and Peterborough CCG is that any patients who are clinically extremely vulnerable and have been shielding or who are aged 70 and above, and live in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough who **have not** had their first COVID-19 vaccination to now get in touch with their GP practice to book their vaccination appointment.

Patients may have also received a letter from the National Booking Service inviting them to attend one of the Mass Vaccination Centres. If so, patients can choose to book an appointment at one of these centres or contact their GP to book in at their local GP-led sites.

A Rapid Testing Centre opened on Wednesday 3rd February 2021 at The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, CB23 6GW, 8am-8pm, Mon-Sat. It is for key workers and people who are unable to work from home who are showing no symptoms to get tested if they are worried. All the more important as 1 in 3 people carrying the virus have no symptoms. You can book test at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting>



Bad news is that Lockdown 3 may not end till after Easter. A South African mutant strain has been found in parts of London, the South East, West Midlands, East of England and the North West. Enhanced testing is being deployed to these areas including door-to-door visits.

In the meantime, we must all continue to **stay at home** and observe lockdown guidelines found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#summary-what-you-can-and-cannot-do-during-the-national-lockdown> .

Please make use of the various support groups that are available within your communities for shopping, collecting medicine, etc., and continue to Shop Local.

PLANNING and Housebuilding

Residents of South Cambs would have received a survey leaflet from Anthony Browne MP asking for views on the level of house building in the district. He is making claims based on his ignorance of how local plan making works in reality. He is asking the council to commit to a minimum number of houses based on a government algorithm only. It is contrary to his government's directive of that being a minimum and councils must take account of their local economies and needs.

The Council Leader, Cllr Bridget Smith wrote to Mr Browne back in July 2020 to try to explain to him how the local planning system works. Also to explain that we are simply not allowed to commit at this stage to greatly restricted housing numbers, especially as his own government has identified Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire for growth to drive the national economy. The OxCam arc project and East West Rail is evidence of this Government Plan. In addition, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson has adopted the "Build Build Build" mantra, and his government expects councils to build 300,000 houses per year in the country. The Conservative Mayor has also committed to doubling GVA and to building 100,000 new homes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority area as part of the devolution deal that the Conservative Government imposed on us in 2016. The Mayoral authority was created to facilitate Infrastructure building, especially for transport, to make up for years of accumulated deficit. That has unfortunately not worked out so far.

The house building on major sites (greater than 10 houses) that is going on now is a result of the sites that the previous Conservative administration selected in 2012-2013 and put in the current local plan when they submitted it for inspection in 2014. It also includes sites that gained planning permission from 2016-2018 because the Council at the time did not have a 5-year housing land supply according to Conservative government set criteria. So it is rather brazen of the MP to try to blame major house building on the new Liberal Democrat administration – shows how much politics he is prepared to play! The survey is for his own political use only. We will not act illegally and pre-determine what that Local plan will be which is what Mr Browne is asking us to do.

Local Plan Update

In the first step to creating our new local plan, we had a call for sites in 2019 to ask for potential sites that could be made available. We also held a First Conversation in January 2020 to ask residents for their views on how the issues of today such as Climate change, Wellbeing, Biodiversity and Great places could influence the jobs of the future, where homes are built and what infrastructure is needed to make it all work. That was a first in the history of this council, as I previously reported. Read more on it at <https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/first-conversation-consultation-and-call-for-sites/> We want to build homes we desperately need in the right places with the right infrastructure so residents can live healthily and happily.

We have also asked experts in their fields to gather and analyse evidence for us on these issues, and we published 17 interim reports in November 2020. This detailed evidence and more still to come will be the basis on which we make the decisions to create a plan that the Planning Inspectors will find sound. Please look at those documents at <https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/document-library/>.

The council is now examining all the information to work out a draft spatial strategy and assessing the sites submitted to find out which might be selected. Thank you to the communities that have

responded to giving us additional local information on the submitted sites in their areas. We will be consulting for your views later this year after this work is done.

Water Study: We know there are issues with water provision in Greater Cambridge. South Cambs has been playing a very active part in the collective effort to help our chalk streams. We have been working with groups such as the Cam Valley Forum, the River Cam Conservancy and Water Resources East. As part of our work on the Local Plan, we recently published a ground-breaking Water Study that highlighted how unsustainable the current level of abstraction from the chalk aquifer is. We need significant investment in water infrastructure in order to provide long term solutions. You can find the report at <https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1391/gclp-strategic-spatial-options-assessment-integrated-water-management-study-nov2020.pdf> . This is one of 18 reports of the evidence gathering projects that we initiated.

Doubling Nature Strategy, We have also recently published our new Doubling Nature strategy which sets out how we can enhance our natural assets, our approach to increasing wildlife-rich habitats, increasing tree canopies (we have the lowest in the country) and improving access to green spaces. The Council will work with communities and businesses as well as taking action on its own estate. You can find the Doubling nature report at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/council-lays-out-strategy-to-double-the-nature-on-its-doorstep-for-the-benefit-of-all/>

The Council will be marking Climate and Environment fortnight 2021 starting on Monday 22 February, with a series of free online webinars featuring guest speakers, activities and information to help people think about how to live more sustainably, reduce carbon emissions and in turn help tackle climate change. For example, the topic on Friday 26 February; is Greening your older home, tips and inspiration. Make plans to attend.

PAS Review report on Planning Committee

As part of the restructuring of the Shared Planning Service, PAS independent planning body carried out a review of the planning committee processes. We have published the report of that review on our website at <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s120312/Appendix%20A%20-%20Peer%20Review%20Final%20Report%202020.pdf>

The report commended the council for getting the Planning committee to meet online very quickly after the pandemic hit. It praises the procedures and accessibility, acknowledging that access is relatively easy for those taking part live and via webcasting. It recognises the skills and experience being of the right balance, that councillors have a ‘good focus on public engagement’ and have ‘good accountability for their decisions’. It also found that the current process for deciding which planning applications go to planning committee is ‘a much more transparent model’ than the previous one which we inherited from the Conservatives. That process will be reviewed later this year, as suggested by the report. A Planning Development group of councillors and officers have formed to take forward the recommendations from that report on issues such as building trust between officers and councillors, improving committee reports, designing expert led training for members and parish councils.

Waterbeach New Town

The Planning Committee at its meeting of Friday 29th January 2021 granted Outline Planning Permission for up to 4,500 homes on the RLW Estates part of the site.

The development will also deliver a wide range of community facilities including a new secondary school, primary schools, community centres and playing fields. Parks, play areas, allotments and community orchards are also planned, along with natural wildlife habitats and sports pitches. A network of safe, direct walking and cycling routes will be provided from the start of the

development, linking homes with public transport and the town centre, schools, and employment areas as they are constructed.

The plans are associated with significant improvements to public transport, including a relocated, safer Waterbeach Railway Station. Proposals to move the station onto the site were approved by the District Council's Planning Committee in 2018. They will see a two-platform station with platforms long-enough for at least eight carriage trains, with the potential for expansion to accommodate 12 carriages in future. Access to the development will be via the A10.

FINANCE – Council Tax

The Cabinet approved the increase of £5 to £155.30 or 10p/week for a Band D property. This decision will go to full Council in February for approval.

LOCAL ISSUES

Drainage and Flooding

The last few weeks has seen a lot of rain and some local flooding. The Environment Agency say they are dealing with the third largest accumulative rainfall event from October – January since their records began in 1850. Similarly, Anglian Water declared that their resources are running at maximum capacity, with 11,000 calls to their helplines, brought in extra resources to keep systems going but still not responding as quickly as they normally would.

So we can all do our bit to help, it is important to understand which authority is responsible for how the water is dealt with. Below is a table showing the responsibilities and attached is a diagram showing the same.

Ground Water and Surface water caused by rain	Everywhere	Cambridgeshire County Council
Blocked or broken highway/road drain	Local Road	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Major road or Motorway	Highways England
Sewer	Anglian Water	Anglian Water
Drainage Ditch or River	Large river	Environmental Agency
	Small river or ditch	Internal Drainage Boards (IDB)
	Small river or ditch not in IDB	Cambridgeshire County Council, OR
	Small river or ditch not in IDB but awarded	District Councils (South Cambs or Cambs City)
	Small ditch or river through or adjacent to private/homeowners land	Riparian Owner

I would recommend that Parish Councils map out the watercourses in their parishes and identify ownership. Riparian owners more often than not do not know they own the watercourse and it may be necessary to write to them with a copy of the attached Riparian Owners leaflet.

Homeowners should make their own preparations to prevent flooding. Please check out more advice on our website at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-development/crime-anti-social-behaviour-and-community-safety/emergency-planning/flooding/>

Bourn Airfield New Village S/3440/18/OL

This application is going to be determined by the South Cambridgeshire District Council planning committee on Friday 19th February 2021.

Caldecote Liaison Group Meeting

This meeting took place on Wednesday 20th January 2021, attended by all parties except Linden Homes. Balfour Beatty got a good grilling as most of the issues raised had to do with their development. I am awaiting the meeting minutes being drawn up by the South Cambs community officer. Meantime, my notes are attached under separate cover

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.

Please remember - The maxim **Hands – Face – Space** still very much the rule.

Tumi

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3 February 2021

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