

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Comprising Barton, Coton, Comberton, Grantchester, Harlton,
Harston, Haslingfield, Hauxton, and South Trumpington

District Councillors' Monthly Report – October 2023

District Councillor Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the details below.

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Planning

Statement of Community Involvement

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire residents will shortly be encouraged to have their say on an important document that outlines how they are involved in the planning process. Greater Cambridge Shared Planning will be consulting on a new 'Statement of Community Involvement' from 18 October to 29 November 2023.

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the councils will involve communities on a wide range of planning matters throughout the planning process. Planning affects the lives of everyone who lives, works, and visits Greater Cambridge. Councillors therefore say it is essential that people have an opportunity to engage in the decisions the councils make on new housing, workplaces, open spaces, and the measures being taken locally to tackle climate and biodiversity issues.

The Statement of Community Involvement will cover areas such as planning for the future of Greater Cambridge, neighbourhood planning, planning new development and dealing with development that is not authorised. Besides inviting online comments, GCSP is attending two events where members of the public are welcome find out more and to give their views.

These are at:

- Northstowe Market: 9.30am to 12.30pm on Sunday 22 October 2023 at Northstowe Hub, The Community Centre, 1 The Green, Pathfinder Way, Northstowe CB24 1FD
- Café Drop in: The Meadows Community Centre, Arbury, Cambridge: 11am to 2pm on Friday 27 October at The Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Rd, Cambridge CB4 2JL

You can find out more information about the Statement of Community Involvement on [the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website](#) which, when the consultation opens on 18 October, will also be where residents can add their comments.

New social media accounts launched for Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

The GCSP Communications team has now established dedicated social media accounts for the planning service. The latest addition to our online presence: the launch of our official Facebook page.

The accounts will serve a wide variety of purposes including promotion of:

- recruitment
- application guidance
- customer feedback
- Local Plan information
- consultations
- youth engagement
- and more

Please follow us from your parish council page:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [X \(Twitter\)](#)

Local Heritage Assets

There is still time to register a local building or structure to be added to a list of Local Heritage Assets that is being compiled for Cambridgeshire.

This county-wide project has seen 527 nominations so far in the South Cambridgeshire district for buildings or structures to be added on a local list of valued heritage assets. The majority of nominations are of buildings such as houses and chapels, but also include a cemetery (Melbourn), a village sign (Six Mile Bottom), a water pump (Waterbeach), and a bridge/set of railings (Little Shelford).

Jessica Johnston, former Local Heritage List Project Officer, has moved on following the end of the sponsored year of the project but [the website remains open](#) and it is still possible to add nominations with supporting information.

The next steps are to inform owners of the proposed additions to a Local List; and for the District Council to take into account owner's responses in subsequently confirming the List. For further information please contact Sarah Cheng at Greater Cambridge Shared Planning via Historicenvironment@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Cultural Infrastructure Strategy – Let us have your views and experiences

On behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, Genecon are currently developing a Cultural Infrastructure Strategy for the whole of Greater Cambridge. The strategy will map where cultural activity happens in South Cambridgeshire at the moment, and consider where there are opportunities, where there are gaps, and where investment could be targeted in the future to make sure it has the most impact for local people, businesses and communities.

‘Cultural infrastructure’ means the buildings, structures and places where people produce or experience culture.

‘Culture’ has a wide-ranging definition. For the purposes of this strategy, it is focused on the creative, community, literary, artistic and social events and activity that bring people together and shape the way they think, feel and experience a place.

If you own or operate a place or a space where cultural activity takes place, or if you own or manage land or buildings where cultural activity could take place in the future, we want to hear from you. This includes theatres, music venues (including pubs), community centres and hubs, village halls, outdoor events spaces, cinemas, historic buildings and sites, creative workspaces, art schools (visual and performing arts), libraries, museums, galleries, shopping centres, community cafes, school halls, rehearsal spaces recording studios - anywhere where people gather to experience culture.

Please note this strategy focuses on **cultural infrastructure** (the physical places and spaces where cultural activity takes place) and is not the same thing as a cultural strategy – this is a separate piece of work.

More information is provided in the PDF attached to the email, titled ‘Attachment 1 - Cultural Infrastructure Strategy Summary Sheet’. To learn more about the Cultural Infrastructure Strategy, and be part of shaping the cultural infrastructure priorities for South Cambridgeshire in the future, please email Lauren Gee on laureng@genecon.co.uk or the Planning team via localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Climate and Environment

South Cambridgeshire District Council formally supports the Local Electricity Bill, which should enable growth in community-run renewable energy schemes.

As a result of bringing over half the House of Commons on board in support, the Government has responded by announcing a new fund to help rural and urban communities across England set up or expand local renewable energy schemes.

This new fund is expected to be launched in the autumn and will be for £10 million over two years. It is the first of its kind for many years and is very welcome – often small grants for things like feasibility studies lead to much more investment and, ultimately, new schemes being built.

In addition to the fund, the Government also announced a consultation on removing the barriers that block community energy growth and a commitment to report annually to Parliament on progress.

Community energy projects, which the new fund will enable, create new local jobs and boost local economic activity whilst the community energy groups that run them alleviate local energy bills and fuel poverty. They can help South Cambridgeshire District Council deliver emissions reductions whilst boosting local infrastructure.

The Director of Power for People, Steve Shaw, has also reached out; together with Community Energy England, Power for People will soon be organising a webinar for Councillors with more information. In the meantime, he has provided some helpful resources:

- A [map](#) of all current community energy projects across England, made by Community Energy England
- A remarkable [Community Energy Potential Map for London](#) that shows the scale for potential new generation schemes in the form of sites across London, made by Community Energy London
- The [Pathways project](#), a programme set up by Community Energy South that helps Councils work collaboratively with local projects.
- A video of a recent [webinar](#) for Councillors and Officers on collaborating with community energy projects, organised by Community Energy England.

Bin collection changes

[Bin days have changed for many residents](#). You can add bin collection dates to online calendars on Android or Apple devices. If residents have previously used South Cambridgeshire District Council's website to add bin collection dates to their phone's calendar, they just need to delete the old dates from that calendar and re-add their new dates. [Find out how to do this and check your bin collection days](#).

Updates from the Communications and Communities Team

Exercise4Fun active lifestyle programme

Our Exercise4Fun initiative has recently launched a 12-week free active lifestyle programme, taking place at Sawston, Melbourn and Linton leisure centres, and soon to be announced at Cambourne Leisure Centre. The programme has three formats:

- Adult (age 18 and over) programmes at all leisure centres.
- One adult (age 18 and over) disability programme at Sawston only.
- One family programme for children aged 11 to 16 and accompanying parent or guardian, at Sawston only.

The Linton adult programme, and both the family programme and the adult disability programme at Sawston, are still open for registrations and would especially like to fill up these spaces. Information and how to sign-up can be [found on our website](#). Contact our Physical Activity Locality Coordinator Ben Truett on Ben.Truett@scambs.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Assets of Community Value (ACV)

The Community Right to Bid allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by the local authority as an asset of community value. This could be community centres, green spaces, libraries, pubs and more. An approved nomination gives the local community a six-month window of opportunity to bid to purchase the asset should it come up for sale.

This [YouTube clip](#) provides information on how to nominate a building or land as an Asset of Community Value. If you have any further questions, please refer to our [ACV webpage](#) or email partnerships@scambs.gov.uk

Our Grants

If you are looking to apply for grant funding, it's worth looking on our [Grants webpage](#) to see if you are eligible to apply for any of our grants. The Community Chest is one such grant to consider and provides up to £2,000 in funding throughout the year for both parish councils and community groups. Please check eligibility criteria before applying and forward this information on to any community groups who you think may be interested.

Mobile Food Hub

The Mobile Food Hub that launched this summer is now visiting six locations. The Mobile Food Hub is run by Hope CIC, in partnership with us, and aims to tackle both food poverty and climate change by redistributing food that would otherwise be going to waste. Anyone can access this Food Hub; all you need to do is turn up on the day – no referral is needed. Please see below for all current locations and keep an eye on [our website](#) for when more are announced.

Duxford Mobile Food Hub

Duxford Community Centre
Hunts Road, Duxford, CB22 4RE
Open Thursdays, 11am to 12pm

Fulbourn Mobile Food Hub

Fulbourn Health Centre Car Park
Haggis Gap, CB21 5HD
Open Tuesdays, 10:30am to 11:30am

Linton Mobile Food Hub

Linton Village Hall
Coles Lane, CB21 4JS
Open Tuesdays, 1pm to 2pm

Orchard Park Mobile Food Hub

Unwin Square, Cambridge, CB4 2AD
Open Wednesdays, 12:30pm to 1:30pm

Papworth Mobile Food Hub

Papworth Car Park (behind the Co-op), CB23 3UY
Open Mondays, 1pm to 2pm

Shepreth Mobile Food Hub

Shepreth Village Hall Car Park, 2 Station Road, SG8 6PZ
Open Thursdays, 1pm to 2pm

Community forums autumn 2023 dates

Please see the dates for our upcoming autumn 2023 forums below. Once the details for each forum have been confirmed, they will be updated on [our website](#), as well as creating [Facebook events](#) and social media posts for each forum that can be shared with your community.

- Wednesday 4 October - Northstowe
- Wednesday 11 October - Cambridge East
- Wednesday 18 October - Bourn Airfield and Cambourne Community Forum
- Wednesday 1 November - Waterbeach
- Thursday 2 November - North West and West Cambridge
- Wednesday 15 November- North East Cambridge

Please note, these dates are subject to change based on local conditions. Always check individual forum webpages for confirmation of dates, agendas, and format. For more information, please see our [forums webpage](#). You can register for updates by visiting a forum's webpage and completing the registration form. If you would like to get in touch with any feedback or suggestions, please duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk

Update on four-day week trial

Please see the second attachment titled 'Attachment 2 - 4 day week trial infographic' for a snapshot of some factual information relating to our four-day week trial. The Council thought it would be helpful for parishes to have this little infographic. You can also [read our latest news release](#) about this topic or [ask us a question](#).

Take Charge and Be Safe – A community safety message from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue

Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service are running a new media campaign “[Take Charge & Be Safe](#)”. The campaign is to educate about charging e-bikes and e-scooters safely. Their [Facebook](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) accounts have recent posts that can be shared on your own social media. For further information, there is also the [National Fire Chiefs Council Safety Guidance document](#). The main points are:

- Only charge during waking hours (not when you are asleep).
- Do not charge in exit routes.
- Only use batteries and chargers from reputable dealers.
- Make sure the charger is the correct power rating for the battery – preferably buy from dealer or manufacturer.
- Do not overcharge your battery.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are working.

Over the coming weeks more information, including key advice for residents [to Take Charge and Be Safe](#) will be released on the fire service's social media channels.

Lithium-Ion batteries can be found in many electronic devices that are used every day. This includes things like mobile phones, laptops, and tablets, vape cigarettes and games console controllers, as well as e-scooters and e-bikes.

Reporting to police – building a picture of your area

Thank you for your help in spreading the message about the importance of reporting relevant issues to Police. From the police engagement event in August, it is clear that we need to continue to have this message in mind when we are in conversation with residents. Residents continue to express frustration that they can't see a response from Police when they have made a report. It remains the case that there are many reasons why a response may not be visible, or fed back to the resident who made a report. It is nonetheless important that reports continue to be made to police both so they can build a picture of trends in different areas, and for safeguarding of vulnerable people. More information can be found [here](#), and you can again share [this social media post](#) to further raise awareness of this need to report.

Policing in South Cambs – have your say

The next police engagement event is Tuesday 7 November 7pm to 8pm, and you can [obtain your free ticket](#).

Each quarter you can complete an online [Community Policing Survey](#) so police can build up a picture of what is happening in your area and what is concerning you most. The engagement event will involve a report from the officers policing your area about recent activity and the results of the survey. Police promise to listen to your concerns and allow you to shape future activity.

More details of both the engagement event, and survey, [can be found here](#). We continue to appreciate your help advertising these opportunities to residents.

Police focus on Rural Crime

Monday 18 September was the beginning of Rural Crime Action Week. Please see the [Policing South Cambs Facebook posts](#) from 18 to 24 September for more information on activities during this week. Extra information is contained within posts [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), and also in [this video](#). If anyone would like hard copies of leaflets or signposting to further information, please email communitysafety@scambs.gov.uk

Updates from the Business Support/Economic Development Team

Seasonal events

Have you seen [Visit South Cambs](#), our website dedicated to helping people find local attractions to explore, places to eat and meet up, walks through the countryside, and more? If you are aware of upcoming events taking place in your Parish such as Half Term activities, firework displays, Christmas fairs and markets, or indeed any events, please do let us know or forward on our contact details to the relevant organisers Visit@scambs.gov.uk.

Alternatively, details can be uploaded completely free of charge, directly via [this online form](#).

South Cambridgeshire Markets

Our [South Cambridgeshire Markets](#) programme continues to grow and support parishes across the district, assisting markets and events by lending hands-on support, but also successfully creating exciting new opportunities in our villages and promoting new market growth.

Markets across the district are listed on our [directory](#), but parishes should also be aware of the abundance of skilled businesspeople in the region through our [stallholder directory](#). These imaginative businesses feature across many of the district's markets and are terrific examples of entrepreneurial excellence.

The stallholder directory is free to [sign-up](#), and the Council would kindly ask that parishes share this widely to help small businesses become more widely involved with markets and also to promote their brands.

For more information, please contact businesskeyprojects@scambs.gov.uk

Apprenticeship webinar

We are hosting a free webinar on **5 October**, from 10am to 11am, to help South Cambridgeshire employers understand the facts behind how apprenticeships work.

Howard Cordingley, Skills and Business Relationship Manager for [Growth Works](#), and Richard Stittle, Head of Apprenticeships at [North Cambridge Training Centre](#), will explain how apprenticeships can benefit your business, improve recruitment and retention, what the apprenticeship levy is and how it works, and identify apprenticeship opportunities.

[Register now](#) for a free place. Please pass this on to any local businesses you feel may find this useful.

Business support newsletter

Our monthly Business Support Newsletter is a useful round up of local networking events, grants and other sources of funding, regional and national campaigns and guidance for businesses and advice on reducing carbon, increasing inclusivity in the workplace and supporting employees' physical and mental health. Please encourage your local businesses to [sign up to this free resource](#).

Updates from DLUHC

Adventures Away From Home Fund and next phase of the Million Hours Fund launched

On the 26th September, the government launched [the £1.5 million Adventures Away From Home Fund, to help more children and teenagers take part in activities to give them new experiences and expand their horizons](#). Participants such as young people with special educational needs and disabilities and young carers will be given the opportunity to try exciting new activities such as zip-lining, kayaking and cooking, supporting the development of skills like teamwork and problem solving. The government is today also announcing the next phase of the [Million Hours Fund, which is open for applications](#), in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund. The £19 million fund will pay for additional youth workers, volunteers, venue hire and activity resources for youth clubs. Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-boost-for-young-people-with-plans-to-transform-youth-centres>

Consultation on directions to the Regulator of Social Housing: tenant rights and complaints

DLUHC has, on the 27th September, launched [a consultation seeking views on Directions from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to the Regulator of Social Housing in relation to the provision of information on tenants' rights and complaints](#). The consultation seeks views on a proposal to use powers in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 to direct the Regulator to set standards relating to the provision of information to tenants on making complaints, tenants' rights, and relevant regulatory requirements. For any questions, please contact: socialhousingdirectioninfo@levellingup.gov.uk.

[The consultation closes on 22 November and can be completed here.](#)

Handling online abuse and intimidation - webinar

As part of the Local Government Association's (LGA's) Civility in Public Life Programme, they are hosting [a webinar on handling online abuse and intimidation](#). The programme, funded by the government, has been devised for councillors who are keen to learn strategies on how to manage posts which are potentially defamatory, inappropriate or threatening. The LGA is hosting a webinar from 2:00 – 3:30pm on 12 October. The session will offer practical advice on the steps that can be taken to manage trolls and cyber-bullies, including a gentle introduction to the legal framework around social media posts. There will be guidance on how to be safe online generally, as well as tips on how to create a positive online presence.

Consultation on Disability Action Plan – reminder

On 18 July, the government launched [a consultation seeking views on the proposed Disability Action Plan and the new areas for action it includes](#). The consultation is aimed at anyone with an interest in the action the government will take during 2023 and 2024 to improve the lives of disabled people. Disabled people and disabled people's organisations may be particularly interested but anyone, including any organisations or individuals, may respond. The consultation closes on 6 October. If you have any questions, please contact: disabilityactionplan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Councils are encouraged to respond to and share the consultation as appropriate.
Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-reveals-plans-to-improve-disabled-people-s-lives>

Funding for projects using nature to increase flood resilience

On 22 September, [the government announced £25 million to support projects that use nature to increase the nation's flood resilience](#). The funding will support natural flood management schemes in England that use techniques such as planting trees and creating wetlands to slow and store water to reduce the risk of flooding. Successful projects will be those that cover a large enough area to provide demonstrable flood risk benefits. Expressions of interest opened on 22 September and will close on 10 November. Projects will be delivered during 2024-27. Please follow these links for [guidance on submitting expressions of interest](#) and for the [programme prospectus](#). If you have any questions, please contact NFM_Programme@environment-agency.gov.uk

Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate.

Training spaces available to support the green jobs sector

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero [announced a series of discounted training spaces on low-carbon heating and insulation installation to help support the green jobs sector](#). From 21 September, up to 8,000 people – including current installers and those who are new to the industry – will be able to develop the skills and knowledge needed to retrofit homes and install insulation through a host of training providers through the [Home Decarbonisation Skills Training scheme](#).

A further 4,000 people will also be able to get £500 towards training to install and maintain heat networks through the [Heat Training Grant. The Low Carbon Heating Technician Apprenticeship](#), will provide people with the chance to learn how to install low-carbon heating systems on the job. This supports the delivery of the expanded Boiler Upgrade Scheme which gives people the opportunity to make the switch away from fossil fuel heating.

Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate.

Other Updates

Free electric blankets distributed by South Cambridgeshire District Council to help residents most in need this winter

South Cambridgeshire District Council will shortly be offering 532 residents the opportunity to claim a free electric blanket (also known as a heated throw) as a cost-effective alternative to central heating. Residents selected to qualify will be those who are (as of 1 July 2023) claiming Council Tax Support and at least one of the following:

- Attendance Allowance.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) mobility element at the enhanced rate.
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component at the higher rate.

These people have been selected because they experience mobility issues so are more susceptible to cold weather pressures and are experiencing at least some financial hardships, so are less able to afford their heating bills this winter.

Cllr Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Communities at South Cambridgeshire District Council, said: “The cost-of-living crisis continues and is especially impacting people with mobility needs who are experiencing financial hardship. We hope that as many people as possible who qualify will take up this free electric blanket offer. Data from Cambridge and Rural Citizens Advice has shown that, in 2023, they have made 637 referrals to foodbanks for people with disabilities or long-term health conditions. This is compared to 359 referrals for those without a disability or health condition, further highlighting the disproportionate effect the cost-of-living crisis continues to have on people with disabilities.”

Qualifying residents will receive a letter in the coming weeks from the Council telling them they are eligible and how to claim their free blanket. Only people who receive a letter will be able to claim a free blanket.

Analysis has shown that running an electric blanket costs just 5p per hour, compared to an average central heating cost of £2.03 per hour ([Ideal Home, 2023](#)). The accumulation of these savings over the winter months has the potential to provide financial relief to those residents.

Funding for the electric blankets comes from Council reserves at a cost of around £30,000 and was agreed at South Cambridgeshire District Council's [Cabinet meeting](#) in March.

Additional notes on new information which has come to light after the submission of the report, which is time-sensitive:

With the continued interest in our four-day week trial, we have updated [this website page](#) with further factual information.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is [reminding councils about the ban and restrictions on some single-use plastic items that is coming into effect from 1 October](#). Defra is highlighting these changes to ensure that all council and industry stakeholders – retailers, suppliers and manufacturers – are aware of the changes coming into effect, when they will be required to make changes and why the ban is coming into force. The ban includes:

- single use plastic cutlery
- single use balloon sticks
- extruded and expanded polystyrene cups and food containers
- a restriction to the supply of single-use plastic trays and bowls to members of the public (although businesses can continue to supply these items if they are used as packaging in shelf-ready pre-packaged food items)

The [new ban on certain single use items](#) compliments the existing restrictions on other single-use plastic items including [plastic straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers](#) and the [carrier bag charge](#).

Defra has produced [a toolkit that contains useful resources for councils to share on social media channels, websites, newsletters and other communication channels](#). The toolkit contains [a poster which can be downloaded to share with local businesses and services](#). If you have any questions, please contact Plastics.Consultation@defra.gov.uk

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Executive Board at its meeting on 28th September approved the recommendation to pause work on the Harston off-road path. In addition, the Executive Board agreed that the GCP would seek to deliver a walking and cycling bridge over the A505 between Cambridgeshire and Royston as part of the Melbourn Greenway.

The decision by the Executive Board was taken after a cost review of projects demonstrated the pressure that inflation is having on the affordability of schemes, and the value for money impact that each scheme is offering.