

Councillor Peter McDonald Duxford Division & Ward:
District Councillor for Parishes of Duxford, Hinxton, Ickleton, Babraham, Pampisford.
County Councillor also for Foxton, Fowlmere, Shepreth, Thriplow, Heathfield, Heydon, Chishills,
Whittlesford

Report for Parish Councils – April 2023.

South Cambs District Council

Bank Holiday bin collection changes

The addition of the Coronation to the usual schedule of Bank Holidays for Easter and the two May holidays means that over half the bin collections in April and May will be delayed by one or two days. Bin collection dates can be checked for any postcode in the district at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/binday>, which also provides links to add bin calendars to your mobile phone.

The cardboard, plastic and aluminium foil from Easter eggs can all be placed in the blue bin. The council is also reminding residents that in the UK, around £140 million worth of used but still wearable clothing goes to landfill every year. Please try to keep your unwanted items out of landfill by passing them on to someone who needs them. This can be done through neighbourhood Facebook groups, Gumtree ads, charity shops – some of which offer collections for large items – and even phone apps, like Olio.

New Government funding to decarbonise Council homes

South Cambridgeshire District Council has successfully bid for £1.7 million Government funding, to continue work to decarbonise Council homes. This will be added to the projects the Council has already started to improve the fabric of its Council homes. It will also support other measures being put in place to help the Council achieve its own and the Government's Net Zero targets.

The money is coming from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The Fund is designed to upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock across the country, that is currently below Energy Performance Certificate C, up to that standard. The District Council owns and maintains around 5,600 Council homes in South Cambridgeshire. The new funding will go towards energy efficiency upgrades within these homes.

Energy saving measures such as exterior wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, new windows and doors, draft proofing measures, as well as heat pumps and solar panel installation can be provided with the funding. These measures could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills.

More than £2 million had already been allocated to continue work to retrofit the Council's existing housing stock over the next two years, as part of ongoing carbon reduction efforts. Solar panels have already been installed on almost 2,200 South Cambs Council homes to help tenants generate their own electricity. Nearly 870 solid wall homes have been fitted with external wall insulation.

English classes for Ukrainians

More than 100 Ukrainian guests have learned English to help them settle into life in a new country thanks to classes funded by South Cambridgeshire District Council. The classes have transformed life for the children and adults of all ages and are part of a wider package of support from the Council since families began arriving from war-torn Ukraine

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almost a year ago. Guests have received free lessons as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and have praised the Council for helping them find the confidence to settle into their new communities.

Public encouraged to add Coronation events to digital map

Members of the public and community organisations across the UK have been invited by the government to share how they will celebrate the Coronation on a digital map launched on 4 March. The map can be found on the Coronation website, linked below. The map is designed to encourage people to add their own Coronation Big Lunches, street parties, Big Help Out plans and other Coronation activities so others in the local community can find out about events near them and get involved. The Coronation website also includes information for getting involved, a toolkit including templates, a playlist, recipes, and designs. The Coronation will take place on the morning of 6 May at Westminster Abbey. Throughout the UK, Coronation Big Lunches will bring communities together on 7 May. The weekend of celebrations will end with the Big Help Out on 8 May, which will highlight the impact of volunteering. This will encourage people to get involved with activities run by local community groups, organisations and charities. Digital map to add events:

<https://coronation.gov.uk/events/>

Cambridgeshire County Report

A further £7.1 million will be spent over the next year to support Cambridgeshire households with their cost of living.

The money delivered through the Household Support Fund (HSF) is part of a wider support offer from Cambridgeshire County Council which links families and households with different offers of support, some of which they may not previously have been aware of. The HSF is a government-funded scheme with the latest award to be spent from April until the end of March next year.

More than half of the new round of funding (£4 million) will continue to be spent delivering food vouchers for thousands of families during school holidays through the new Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme. The rest will be used to offer a range of support for households in need, including through 80 ‘trusted partner’ organisations who can make applications directly to the council.

Over the next 12 months, this model will be expanded to prevent people entering poverty, or to help those already struggling financially. This includes working with the NHS to identify more potential recipients.

People eligible for support includes single adults with no children earning less than £20,383 a year, or couples earning less than £27,340 a year. Those figures increase for families with

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children. Further information on the HSF, including how to apply, can be found on the council's website.

Cambourne to Cambridge

The recent County Council meeting on March 21st received a good deal of press coverage for the decision to create a public transport link connecting existing and planned settlements at Cambourne, West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield to Cambridge. These settlements are the best alternatives to development in the green belt, and this clustered development protects the vast majority of South Cambs villages from unsustainable growth. Public infrastructure including good transport links are necessary – and indeed this is a requirement of the local plan and without it the legal planning framework collapses.

The current Cambourne situation, with no decent public transport, is now urgent and critical for young people seeking access to post-16 education and training opportunities in the Cambridge area. The same is true for all those seeking access to jobs, including health and care staff where recruitment is hampered by lack of affordable housing with reliable public transport connections.

A key point of contention for the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Busway is at Madingley and Coton where different options have been debated. The eight years of consideration included a detailed independent audit in 2021.

Officers have given a clear steer that the proposed on-road route was not good enough to meet the needs of Cambourne and further planned growth, and risks disturbing Madingley Wood, an ancient and hugely biodiverse site. The preferred route involving the loss of trees at Coton Orchard, a private site without public access, is regrettable. The final route will be aligned to reduce to a minimum the number of lost trees, almost or potentially all of which will be commercial fruit trees around 30 years old, currently estimated at one-fifth of the total current area of the orchard. It is very likely that large replacement sites with a wilder mix of native species will be able to more than replace the lost biodiversity, along with other benefits such as public access to wilderness.

The next stage will almost certainly be a public inquiry at which the integrity of the scheme and objections to it will be tested.

After careful consideration of representations, papers and arguments made in the debate, Susan voted in favour of the proposal. You can watch the debate, including my contribution, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwbAi8Q9e5Q>.

The independent audit and other documentation is published at <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/public-transport-schemes/cambourne-to-cambridge/cambourne-to-cambridge-independent-audit>

Great Chesterford Hardcore Site : ESS/109/22/UTT

Planning Appeal:

<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseID=3306988&CoID=0>

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Peter McDonald

April 2nd 2023