

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council meeting was held on Wednesday 18th September 2024 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

**Apologies:** Mr Wenman - unwell, Mrs Sole - appointment.

**Present:** Mr Barnes, Mr Sole, Mr Buchanan, Ms Newland, Mr Sole, Cllr Williams (arrived later), one member of public and the Clerk.

**Minutes:** of the July meeting were agreed and signed.

**Declarations of Interest:** None

### **Matters Arising and Village Issues:**

**Community reports:** The Classic Car Show was held on Sunday 8th September from 12.00 - 4.30pm. It was well attended and over £8000 gross was raised to be divided between the Church and Reading Room. The final total after the payment of expenses will be available shortly. Thanks to all who organised, set up, staffed, took down, donated, attended and helped in any other way - a splendid result!

**Bus Franchising Consultation:** The Combined Authority is asking for views on the future of the region's buses with the launch of its bus franchising consultation from Wednesday 14 August 2024.

The 14-week consultation will be open until 20 November 2024 for everyone to take part, either online, via a series of face-to-face events, or by post. It will inform a decision by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on how to reform buses across the area. Anyone can take part in the consultation. Families, students and older people who either rely on the bus, or who could benefit from the bus in the future, are being encouraged to participate, as well as statutory consultees, employers and other stakeholders.

The consultation web page: <https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/> is live and will host all the relevant consultation documents, together with a questionnaire. There are two versions of the questionnaire – a short version comprising 10 questions and a long version comprising 31 questions- and people can choose which one they want to complete, in line with practice elsewhere in the country on this consultation.

**Footpaths:** Unfortunately, the Clerk has been unable to locate a copy of the ex- Footpath Warden's map over the summer. Mr Buchanan suggested taking a photograph of the map from the notice board which may be able to be reproduced, and he has undertaken to attempt this. So currently, there is not a map on the village notice board, but it will be returned as soon as possible. If not there is a comprehensive map available to view at:-

[Definitive Map and Statement footpath | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

**EVP and Parking:** Extensive enquiries have been made regarding the provision of Electric Vehicle Points in the village. The preferred option is on Clopton Close, but apparently this cannot be achieved for several reasons, the main one is that the grant to fund it would have to come from SCDC and the parking places belong to SCDC, and they cannot be seen to grant themselves funding. There has been agreement from SCDC to add white lines to Clopton Close to mark separate parking bays. This will provide 15 separate bays.

**State of the War Memorial:** It is a shame that the seeds planted around the memorial failed to germinate, as the display would have been lovely. The weeds, however, had a field day and the memorial was surrounded by tall weeds which looked lovely when in flower, but dreadful when dying back and several adverse comments were received. The resident who instigated the scheme sent an email to Council, and an extract is below.

*I am very aware that the Wild Flowers did not grow well around the War Memorial and have been very disappointing. I have contacted Ashes to Blooms on several occasions & [REDACTED] weeded, dug, rotovated, and re seeded with a mixture of grass & short wild flowers, leaving a selection of plants that are doing well. Please give us a little longer as these things take time. If you are not happy this time next year, I will personally pay to re turf the area with grass & continue to cut it free of charge.*

Council has agreed to leave it for a year and see if the remedial work has been successful.

**Churchyard Update:** The resident who with others, is leading the churchyard re-wilding project, attended the meeting to report on its success. Since Covid and in the last six months there has been a lot of improvement. The recent inspection for the Silver Award managed a Highly Commended but unfortunately not the Silver they were hoping for. Council was asked if they would support the Management Plan which has been formulated, in respect of the PCC using the funds the PC provides, in accordance with the Plan. The Chairman explained that Council

cannot get involved in church business, but a decision would be made when the Management Plan has been received and discussed by Council.

**Car Show toilets:** The Council funds the toilets for the Car Show, but the Car Show committee said that the expected footfall for this year would be much higher, so a request was made for an additional toilet cubicle. Councillors agreed to this and the toilet was ordered and delivered. The additional cost was £78-00, which council agreed to, and cheque for this amount was raised. Proposed by Ms Newland and seconded by Mr Sole. All were in favour.

**Councillor Williams** arrived at this point and was invited to give her report.

**Council Planning Reform:** Expect big changes and there will be mandatory housing targets set by the Government. This makes it difficult to control developers easily. It is likely that Councils will have to over approve to meet these targets, and hope that not all the houses are built.

**Green Belt:** There is a possibility that to meet the targets, this land could be built on. The green belt was originally designed to control city boundaries and prevent urban sprawl

**Self-Build homes:** The District Council is not meeting its self build targets.

**5 Year Land Supply:** SCDC currently has a 5 year land supply and the District and City Councils work together to meet the requirements. In this area the problem is insufficient water supply for all the additional houses. Nothing has happened with the water resources, although Anglian Water has a statutory duty to supply water to them.

**4 Day Week:** According to the Council, every aspect has improved with the four day week, except for housing rents and turnaround of Council properties. Staff are apparently happier, some taking an additional job on their "day off" and others still working 5 days to get through their workload, whilst difficult to fill positions have been filled.

Cllr Williams has questioned the Administration and cannot get an answer from them on her questions. She has been accused of bullying.

**Winter Fuel Allowance:** Following the removal of the winter fuel allowance by Government, if anyone is in need then please contact Cllr Williams for help.

**Road Payments:** Apparently Cambridge City is awarded nearly twice the amount per Km than the District gets for each Km of its road network.

Cllr Williams asked if there was anything she could help with. The Chairman thanked her for attending and she left the meeting.

### **District Councillor's written report for The Mordens Ward SCDC - September 2024**

#### **eVisas and Ukrainian Guests**

The Home Office and UKVI are launching a new online platform for managing refugee visas. Under this new system, all physical visas will be transitioned to an eVisa format. This update will play a key role in the forthcoming Ukraine Permission Extension scheme (UPE). The Homes for Ukraine team is reaching out to all guests and hosts to inform them of this change, ensuring a smooth transition to the UPE. If parish councillors encounter residents facing any issues with this process, please reach out to me, and I will request assistance from the SCDC team.

#### **Small Business Support**

Please could residents and Parish Councillors share this information, it would be lovely to see a small business within the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn ward receive this grant.

Small businesses in South Cambridgeshire are encouraged to apply for funding of up to £5,000 in a new grant programme which has been launched. This financial assistance is available for businesses that are already operational and seek to expand, offering grants, guidance, and support to existing enterprises with up to nine employees. These new support grants are part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) acting as the lead authority for the Fund's implementation, while the District Council oversees the delivery and distribution of the grant scheme.

For those aiming to start a business and take their first steps, free advice is available, including guidance on developing a viable business plan. This startup assistance will be provided by the Business and Intellectual Property Centre in collaboration with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Growth Hub. Applications are open until 31 October 2024. Businesses may only make one application. The District Council reserves the right to close the application window earlier should the level of demand exceed the maximum funding available. More information can be found on the SCDC website or you can email:

[businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk)

## **Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) bus franchising consultation**

This is a friendly reminder that the ongoing consultation is still open, and both parish councillors and residents are welcome to participate in the survey. The consultation on bus franchising will last for 14 weeks and will include a combination of online and in-person events. This isn't the first time the public has been asked about bus franchising, and we hope that this time, we can achieve progress beyond just the consultation phase. Please follow the link below to join the consultation.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/bus-franchising-consultation-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-goes-live/>

## **Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital**

I will be supporting efforts underway in Cambridgeshire to support the plans for a new Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital, which is designed to be a leading facility in cancer research and treatment. Concerns have arisen regarding potential funding changes from the current government.

The Cancer Hospital is one of two proposed new facilities in Cambridge, alongside the Cambridge Children's Hospital. This new hospital aims to enhance groundbreaking research and emphasise early intervention, laying the groundwork for improved cancer care, as cancer impacts a significant portion of the population. There is uncertainty surrounding the future of the hospital's construction, as recent discussions indicate that funding may be reconsidered in the coming months.

I firmly believe that the Cancer Research Hospital is absolutely vital for the East of England. Addenbrooke's stands out as a remarkable site, merging the efforts of the private sector, charitable organisations, and the NHS to provide groundbreaking treatments that will save lives and enhance the quality of life for cancer patients facing challenging conditions. I have witnessed firsthand the incredible dedication and hard work that has already gone into this project. It has secured planning permission, and considerable time and resources have been invested to bring it to this point. To see this ambitious project put on hold would be nothing short of devastating. For those seeking more information about the Cancer Research Hospital, please visit the following website:

<https://www.cambridgecancer.org.uk>

## **Four-day week update**

A four-day week means staff work 80% of their usual hours while receiving full pay. South Cambridgeshire District Council conducted a trial of a four-day working week for its employees from January 2023 to March 2024. After the trial, the Council has continued the four-day work schedule.

The Council has released results from the trial and here are some key questions I have:

### **Has it saved money?**

One of the expected advantages of the four-day week was cost savings for the Council. In November 2023, the council projected potential savings of £776,000 from this initiative, but actual savings amounted to £371,500 - less than half of the forecasted amount. Additionally, this figure does not account for necessary expenses such as £430,000 for purchasing additional bin lorries if the four-day week becomes permanent, nor does it include an estimated £40,000 for a public consultation.

After considering these expenses, the council is facing a deficit of approximately £100,000, indicating that the four-day work week has resulted in higher costs rather than savings, alongside sporadic service delivery. These calculations do not also cost lost working hours which would be huge.

### **Has performance improved?**

Determining whether performance has improved due to the four-day week is challenging, as various factors can influence results. The planning phase for the four-day week started in October 2022. During the trial, the council also aimed to enhance operational efficiency through service reviews and moving more services online. However, the improvements in efficiency are not directly linked to the four-day week policy. According to an analysis from the University of Salford, 33% of performance indicators showed a decline during the trial, raising concerns about essential services. How has recruitment been affected?

The council hired 134 new staff members during the trial, but this number does not consider the employees who left. Only 9 of the new hires were in senior planning roles categorised as hard-to-fill positions, comprising just 6% of the new recruits.

### **Is the data reliable?**

In September 2023, a report from the University of Cambridge was revised at the council's request prior to release. The current report from the University of Salford has raised questions about the reliability of the data and whether it has been influenced in a similar manner.

### **What do staff experiences reveal?**

While many employees report having more positive workdays, underlying issues affect overall staff wellbeing. In 2024, 37% of council staff indicated they needed to work more than four days each week to manage their workload, an increase from 28% in 2023. Additionally, 30% of staff reported heightened stress levels in 2024, with many indicating that stress negatively impacted them. This situation raises questions about the sustainability of the four-day work week, as a significant number of employees are exceeding the intended schedule. New employees have reported challenges in acclimating to the council's practices, suggesting the trial may complicate the onboarding process for newcomers.

#### **What do residents think?**

Residents, who financially support the council's operations, showed limited support for the four-day week. In an online survey, 75% of respondents opposed the initiative. Moreover, more than 80% of council members have not had an opportunity to vote on this arrangement, indicating a lack of representative input from the community. I will continue to raise my concerns regarding the effectiveness of the four-day work week trial, including questions about cost, staff performance, and recruitment. The experiences reported by staff indicate challenges that may undermine the intended benefits of the shorter working week.

#### **Grants for community groups and parish councils**

If you are from a local community group or parish council, I am encouraging you to make the most of the council's available grant schemes. The GrantGrabber service helps you search for available grants – all in one place. For further information on receiving a grant for a community project from the council, please visit the grants webpage.

Thank you for reading my report. If I can be of any assistance, please do get in touch.

Cllr Heather Williams

SCDC The Mordens Ward

Tel: 07885 774 775

Email: [cllr.williamsh@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.williamsh@scambs.gov.uk)

Twitter: @Cllr\_H\_Williams

Facebook Page: Cllr Heather Williams

Website: [www.cllrheatherwilliams.co.uk](http://www.cllrheatherwilliams.co.uk)

#### **Matters Arising and Village Issues continued with:-**

**Lower Road Death:** An email was received regarding this, extracts are below:-

*I am [REDACTED] and I have my horse at the Flying Cat livery yard, Lower Road, Croydon (B142).*

*Recently one of the horses was killed by collision with a car while crossing the road from the grazing fields to the yard and I contacted the British Horse Society and the Cambridgeshire County Council to report this and to ask for any measures possible to prevent such incidents in future.*

*You will be aware of a fatal collision on this road in 2022 plus around six years ago another horse ran into a car and was severely (but not fatally) injured although the car in question was a write-off.*

*It has been suggested that the 'beware horse riders' signs are improved e.g. yellow background with exclamation marks and 'horses crossing'. This will help so I would particularly like to enlist your PC's help in supporting improved signage - or anything else. Please do let me know if you would like any more information or if any of your Councillors would like to visit the livery yard.*

Council discussed this and has agreed to support any initiative that is raised with Highways for better signage. Clerk will contact the person concerned with Council's decision.

**Local Highway Improvement Plan:** Council made an application several months ago for speed restrictions at either end of the village. The decision on this (and others) has now been put back to the October meeting of the Highways Panel. So Council still does not know if the application was successful.

**Planning Compliance Cases:** According to the weekly Planning Report sent to the Clerk by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, there are two outstanding items. The Councillors have been made aware of this, but information cannot be reported as per the Disclaimer on the paperwork.

**Luton Airport information:** "The LADACAN AGM will be on Thursday 3rd October at 7pm in Breachwood Green Village Hall. Please save the date and make every effort to be there - we have some important things to discuss. We've invited Alistair Strathern, the new MP for Hitchin, offering him a chance to tell us his views on Luton Airport and listen to the feedback from constituents - let's see if he responds positively. Also Cllr Joe Graziano of NHDC, who sits on the Environment Panel. The decision on further massive expansion of the Airport is expected

soon. Comments in response to Luton Rising's rejection of DfT's request to consider scaling back the noise impact and making the controls more rigid have been sent and can be accessed here: [LADACAN feedback to DfT](#)"

**ACRE - Staying Connected:** There is an ACRE AGM on Wednesday 9 October 2024 from 2.00-3.00pm via Zoon. Please contact the Clerk for details of the link if you are interested in attending.

**Cambridgeshire ACRE** is hosting a special 'Staying Connected' session, delivered in collaboration with the Communities team at South Cambridgeshire District Council, to explore what can collectively be done to offer to help create vibrant communities, promote community action and support community growth in the district. The session is taking place on **Thursday 17 October 2024 at 5pm online via Zoom**. We hope you or another representative from your organisation will come along to join us. Please contact the Clerk for details of the link if you are interested in attending.

**Any updates** on a community group, vehicle or trust investigating land purchase within the village for community benefit. Nothing to report, and will be raised at the next meeting.

**Discussion** on how the PC could assist a community group, for instance supporting or contributing to a pre-planning application for housing for community benefit. Nothing to report, and will be raised at the next meeting.

**Follow up information:** Gmail address - Mr Buchanan will investigate the provision of the final gmail address.

### **County Councillor Kindersley's written report to Council:**

Gamlingay Division Councillors Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council – September 2024

The Gamlingay Division comprises the Parishes of Abington Pigotts, Arrington, Barrington, Croydon, Gamlingay, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Hatley, Orwell, Shingay-cum-Wendy, Steeple Morden, Tadlow & Wimpole. This report is for all Division Parish Councils but please be aware that it will include items that may have little or no relevance to your particular Parish. Apologies in advance!

**New Government:** Not entirely unexpectedly with the change of government there are lots of changes on the way - quite a few of which affect us in local government.

**Winter Fuel Payments:** The new rules now mean that only those in receipt of Pension Tax Credits can receive the extra annual payment. We are aware that there are probably quite a few people who are eligible to receive pension tax credits but are not claiming. South Cambs is therefore doing some work to identify those who are missing out on both sources of income. If you think you might be one of these people please do contact your councillor or the council.

**East West Rail:** Bridget has written to the new Transport Minister to ask what the government's plans are with EWR. She has had a holding response to say they are working with EWR and are considering it. Meanwhile, the new government is undertaking an internal review of the Department for Transport's capital spend portfolio and will be making recommendations about current and future schemes. This could have implications for schemes in or around Cambridgeshire, including the A10 from Ely to Cambridge, East West Rail, and the Ely Area Capacity Enhancements around Ely railway junction.

**Cambridge 2050:** You may recall Michael Gove's plans for a large scale development of Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire). Having written to the Deputy Prime minister to ask what the new governments plans are Council leaders and the Mayor have now been invited to meet with ministers in the near future. Our sense is that there will be a focus on boosting the economy of this region because this is where the greatest opportunities are but we have to ensure that it enhances rather than detracts for existing residents' quality of life.

**Planning Reform:** There are going to be quite a few changes to building rules some of which are being consulted on now. Planning fees are going to be going up substantially but be aware that councils will still be subsidising your application to a large degree even with the increase. The new government are looking at the Green Belt to identify what areas are low grade 'grey belt' and therefore can be released for development. Their focus, like the last government, is on brown field sites but in economically successful areas like ours there will always be pressure to release farm land for employment and housing use.

**New Towns:** The government has made it clear that part of their plan to build over 350,000 new homes will include new towns. A recent report has highlighted the strategic benefits of a major (50,000 house) new town at Tempsford because of its exceptional transport links (A1, A14, A428, M11, M10, Rail) - especially when it includes an East West Rail station. However, it is not in the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and Milton Keynes took 60 years to build - so nothing is going to be happening any time soon.

We probably have more new towns in South Cambs than any comparable sized region and they are very successful. Cambourne got off to a slow start but you are hard pressed to find a house to buy there now and the

excellent educational and sports facilities make it very popular. Northstowe has just completed its first phase and permission to start building at Bourn airfield has just been granted now that we have sufficient assurance there will be enough water to meet its needs. The plans for the new Waterbeach Town are looking exciting with high quality transport links and a strong focus away from cars. One other benefit of a focus on new towns is that it relieves pressure to build in and around villages which is often unpopular with residents.

Most recently Government has advised further work will get underway to accelerate sites including Biggleswade Garden Community in Central Bedfordshire which has the potential to unlock more than 10,000 new homes when completed - obviously this would have a significant impact on Gamlingay and the wider area.

**Highways:** Croydon Hill resurfacing - The latest update from Highways is that this will start on 18th November and last two weeks. The working times will be 0800 - 1800 Monday - Friday and outside those times the road will be open. Updates can be found at <https://one.network/?GB139760295>

The diversion route for Croydon Hill goes to Potton although there will also be a short time the junction of High Street may be closed and the diversion route will go through Arrington. As always there may be further changes depending on weather, material supply etc.

Gamlingay Church Street/Church End resurfacing - Project Update: the latest update from Highways is that the works are currently planned for October 28th - November 1st. The maintenance activities within the closure will be carried out between 20:00 and 06:00 each day, facilitated by a night time closure. Highways has chosen these hours to minimise the impact on local traffic and community activities. There will also be some works during the daytime with two-way traffic lights in order to reduce night-time disruptions where possible. A temporary road closure will be in place during the work. Given the nature of the works, Highways ask that residents do not park within the closure at night, and find alternative parking on a temporary basis. As always, weather conditions and other aspects out of Highways control may cause changes to the schedule but they will keep us updated.

Foxton Rail Crossing Closure: Network Rail has been in touch to say it will be doing engineering work at Foxton level crossing over the Christmas period. As a result of this, the level crossing will be completely closed to vehicles and pedestrians continuously between Wednesday 25 December 2024 until Monday 1 January 2025, with further night-time closures over the following days. Network Rail will be hosting a drop-in session on Thursday 19 September at Foxton Village Hall. This will allow residents and others affected by the works to ask the works team any questions they might have. The team will also be giving a presentation of the works at 12 noon and 6pm on the day.

The pavements in Blythe Way Gamlingay are also scheduled to be slurry-sealed this year. We are delighted that a new Highway Supervisor has been recruited covering Gamlingay division Parishes and the wider area (36 Parishes!) and she is currently undergoing the induction process.

**Bus Franchising:** In 2023 the Mayor's Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority launched 'The Road to Better Buses' strategy, which sets out five key ambitions for buses in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough: Add more buses to the network; Provide bus users with better information; More reliability across the network; Nicer, better-quality buses and better value for money for users. The Combined Authority has committed more than £13.5million and agreed to three major initiatives to progress our journey on the Road to Better Buses including 30 new routes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; a £1 fare for young people under the age of 25 and a consultation on how buses are run across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The majority of buses across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are currently run on a purely commercial basis. CPCA believes our ambitions will only be realised if we change this to have greater influence and control over how buses are run. 81% of respondents to our last survey agreed.

Independent transport consultants, ITP, to undertake a detailed assessment of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's transport needs and assess bus reform. Two approaches have been outlined in the assessment: a Franchising solution and an Enhanced Partnership (EP).

Under a franchised network, the Combined Authority would contract bus operators to run services on its behalf but have control over the routes, frequency, fares and overall standards of the region's buses. An alternative Enhanced Partnership solution, while producing benefits over the current bus service provides less control over the routes, frequency and overall delivery of the services. This means, as a result, while both an Enhanced Partnership and Franchising can provide enhanced networks, franchising offers the region more control to specify the desired network, levels of service and integrated fares and ticketing, ensuring a more unified and accessible network.

Franchising also allows CPCA to deliver its strategic objectives; to have full influence over outcomes and the efficient delivery of bus service improvements to passengers and bus network changes. The EP is less likely to

deliver the strategic outcomes as it leaves key decisions around the network in the hands of bus operators (as per the status quo) with any outcomes subject to negotiations with operators.

Before a final decision is made (due to be on 22nd January 2025), we are required by law to seek views. We are now consulting and would welcome your feedback. You can participate online by visiting: <https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/> If you would prefer a paper copy of the consultation documents or large print versions, please contact: [consultations@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk) or call us on: 01480 277180.

The consultation ends on 20 November 2024.

**School Governors:** Cambridgeshire County Council is appealing to residents to consider becoming a school governors with about 50 vacancies across Cambridgeshire currently. Governors are crucial to help schools navigate all aspects of school life, while maintaining a focus on learning, and the provision of a high-quality education. The aim is to create a waiting list of applicants, so that as vacancies come up, they can be easily filled.

School governors hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school. They are there to evaluate staff decisions, challenging, asking questions where necessary, and supporting and encouraging where possible. Each school differs slightly, but there are usually between six and eight two-hour meetings a year, with reading and preparation required in advance. There are around two school visits a year, lasting approximately half a day. There may also be some committees and working groups. In total, governance can take between five and eight hours per month.

There is no one type of person suited to school governance, and governing boards are better when they reflect the diverse communities they serve. A range of relevant training is provided. For more please visit: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/school-governors>

**A-Road litter picking:** South Cambs District Council is responsible for litter picking on local A-roads and has been very responsive to representations on the need for additional sessions, for example along the A603 and A1198 which is frequently reported on. A litter pick there was done in June, and another has been slotted in. Please do let us know of particularly bad patches.

**My Smile:** All of the County Council's Child & Family Centres and Family Hubs are now 'My Smile' accredited. The 'My Smile' programme is aimed at reducing oral health inequalities for the most deprived and disadvantaged children in early years. The programme offers training to Child & Family Centre and Family Hub staff by the Oral Health team from Dental Health Care, part of Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust.

There are four steps to the programme, consisting of

- Training in good oral health
- How to share information to families around toothbrushing
- Tooth friendly diets
- Dental visits.

Acquiring a 'My Smile' accreditation shows that the staff at these centres have received the most the up-to-date, evidence-based oral health training. It also shows that their centres promote a 'tooth friendly' environment for children and can confidently promote and advise visiting families on how to support good oral health at home.

**New Director of Education:** Sarah Callaghan has joined Cambridgeshire County Council's as its new Service Director for Education. She has come from a similar position in Islington and started on 5 August.

**Sunnica:** After the decision by the Government to permit the development of the Sunnica solar farm between Burwell and Red Lodge, the four 'host authorities' (Suffolk and Cambridgeshire counties, West Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire districts) submitted a 'pre-action protocol letter'. This asked the Government to correct an error in the permission, which loaded considerable costs onto the councils for all the work they will need to do on the detail of the permission. The councils expected the Government to correct this, but the response from Government was that this was not an error, and the councils were indeed expected to shoulder the financial burden.

This was the only ground on which the four councils were seeking to challenge the decision, and would not have affected whether the development itself went ahead or not. Two of the councils-West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire-decided not to proceed any further with the challenge, based on their judgement of the legal advice all four councils had seen, their view that the likelihood of success was low, and the consequent financial risk to local taxpayers.

**Community energy consultation:** The County Council is currently consulting on its proposed Action Plan to support community energy. The draft Action Plan and survey seeking your views on the proposals have been

published, and the survey will remain open until Monday 16 September.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/community-energy-project>

**Waste partnership awards new recycling contract:** Local council waste partnership RECAP has awarded its contract for mixed dry recyclables (blue bin waste) to Biffa and Re-Gen after a procurement exercise. The contract was previously held by Thalia who run the waste facility at Waterbeach. The handover will take place on 1 September.

**Active travel hierarchy consultation:** A consultation on the development of an 'Active Travel Hierarchy' was launched on 22 July. This seeks feedback on which routes and public rights of way are considered most important to users, as well as asking residents about their preferences for prioritised maintenance activities. Some of the feedback, including from me, was that the consultation was difficult to use and understand. In response, the council has revised the online material to make it easier and extended the consultation to 30 September.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/active-travel-hierarchy>

**20MPH schemes:** Scoring of the new and updated applications took place in May and June in preparation for presentation to the Highways & Transport Committee in October. These remain popular, with 65 applications received this year, many of which were re-submissions from the previous year. Some of the 2023/2024 have been delayed as applicants undertake further informal consultation following feedback from residents, or due to changes to guidance from the Department for Transport, and the amount of time the formal consultation phase is taking to conclude.

**Weeds:** The first round of weed treatment, for those communities wishing to have this, is now coming to an end, and the second round will begin in October.

**Winter gritting:** Preparations are under way for the 2024 winter, which starts on Friday 1 November, with salt barns being replenished and servicing of gritting vehicles.

**Small Business Support:** Small businesses in South Cambridgeshire are being invited to apply for funding of up to £5,000 each in a new grant programme available to those already trading with ambitions to grow and will provide grants, advice and support for existing businesses with up to nine employees. The new support grants are available as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

For those looking to start a business and get their foot on the ladder, there is free advice on offer, including how to create a viable business plan. The startup advice will be delivered by the Business and Intellectual Property Centre and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Growth Hub. Applications are open until 31 October 2024. Businesses may only make one application. More information can be found online or please email [businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk) quoting Small Business Grant.

**More broadband:** Openreach's broadband upgrade plans for Cambridgeshire were announced at the end of May, meaning full fibre broadband is heading to a further 16 Cambridgeshire towns and villages, as part of a huge upgrade including Steeple Morden.

**Household Support Fund:** Very good to be able to report that the government has just announced an extension to the Household Support Fund for the next six months to support struggling households with bills and essential costs. The £421 million extension gives certainty to councils in England over the winter months – up until April 2025 - as they work to help those struggling with the cost of energy, food, and water. Many councils also use the funding beyond emergency support, including working with local charities and community groups to provide residents with key appliances, school uniforms, cookery classes, and items to improve energy efficiency in the home. Pensioners and others struggling to heat their homes or afford other essential items over the colder months should contact their council to see what support may be available to them. Details on the latest scheme will be communicated in the coming weeks.

**Pension Credit:** Pension Credit is worth, on average, £3,900 per year and unlocks additional support including the Winter Fuel Payment, help with Council Tax, NHS dental care and a free TV licence for those over 75. Pension Credit backdating rules mean it is possible for individuals to apply for Pension Credit and have the claim backdated by up to three months if they were entitled to claim in that time. This means that the latest date to apply and still qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment is 21 December. The Department for Work and Pensions has produced [a toolkit to support councils to ensure older people understand how they can get Pension Credit](#).

Your Councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley on 01767 651982 or [skindersley@hotmail.com](mailto:skindersley@hotmail.com) or write to the Manor Barn, East Hatley, SG19 3JA District Councillor Bridget Smith (Gamlingay Ward, SCDC) is on 07729 836449 or [Cllr.BridgetSmith@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.BridgetSmith@scambs.gov.uk). We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can!



## Correspondence

**Electoral Register:** Circulated to Councillors to read. Any amendments will be added to the main Electoral Register.

**Safety of Lithium Ion batteries:** Council has been asked to support a Bill to make provisions regarding the safety of electric-powered micro-mobility vehicles and of lithium batteries; to give duties to the Secretary of State regarding those matters; and for connected purposes. Councillors discussed this and some of the recent fires and accidents with these batteries locally, and decided the Bill should be supported. Proposed Mr Buchanan and seconded by Mr Sole - all in favour. Clerk will inform the gentleman concerned of the decision.

**Biodiversity Policy:** Clerk discovered that Council must have its own Biodiversity Policy, and prepared one based on the model available. Councillors were sent both the model and the suggested policy for Croydon before the meeting and it was agreed unanimously to approve the Policy for Croydon. This will be added to the website when possible.

**Greater Cambridge Planning - Unlock the Potential of your Council:** "This event is designed to provide you with essential tools and information to navigate the intricacies of planning requirements effectively, thereby enhancing your ability to serve your community.

- Date: Thursday 14 November 2024
- Venue: South Cambridgeshire Council Chamber
- Time: 11:00 am - 4:30 pm
- Lunch Included

As a Parish Chair, you play a crucial role in the development and prosperity of your parish. Understanding planning regulations and procedures is vital for fulfilling your responsibilities effectively. Our event aims to address this need by providing valuable insights, resources, and support from our planning team.

### Event Objectives:

**Educate:** Gain insights into the latest planning regulations and guidelines

**Empower:** Receive practical tools and strategies to support residents to navigate planning processes efficiently

**Clarify:** Discuss what makes material considerations and the processes of call-in and delegation panel

**Support:** Enhance your capability as a Parish Chair expert in planning matters

**Engage:** Participate in open dialogue and networking "

Having read the invitation, the Chairman decided it was not suitable for Croydon and declined to attend.

**Save our Chalk Streams:** Information received from Cambridge Water:-

*Cambridgeshire's precious chalk streams are as unique as the Great Barrier Reef. But they're under threat – and you can help save them. Make one small change to your everyday water habits and you'll be a crucial part of our county's biggest ever water-saving action.*

- Shower for 2 minutes less than normal - saves 30 litres a shower
- Wash up in a bowl and not under running water - saves 52 litres a day
- Run the washing machine full in eco mode - saves 30 litres a load
- Turn the tap off when brushing your teeth - saves 28 litres a day
- Ditch the hose for watering can - saves 145 litres
- Use one button to flush the toilet - saves 15 litres

**CCC Capital Maintenance Plan:** Councillors were invited to this presentation, which was subsequently cancelled due to lack of interest.

*"CCC receives capital funding for highways maintenance from a number of sources, including Central Government and that this has recently been augmented by an additional £40 million of investment by the County Council over the next 2 years. Council officers formulate programmes of highways maintenance schemes to make best use of this funding and you are invited to attend a workshop on 28th August 2024 5.30pm to 6.30pm to discuss the processes by which schemes are prioritised for inclusion in the programmes"*

Croydon Hill will be closed from 6th - 8th November 2024 for highway works. A notice stating this will be in place 14 days before the event

**Disability Access Forum:** Greater Cambridge Planning is setting up a Forum for this and interested parties may join the Forum at a meeting on 19th November, unfortunately no details of the place for this meeting were given. Councillors discussed this and felt that all the public buildings in the village have disabled access, and it is not necessary to become a member.

**Local Voluntary Organisations Merger:** Earlier in the year, the Trustees of Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) and Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations (Hunts Forum) announced their intention to explore a potential merger of the two organisations. The Trustees confirmed that they will keep everyone updated with the project; and ultimately it will be up to the members of both organisations to make the final decision on the merger. The plan would be for members to make the decision at both AGMs in November 2024 if this is fully agreed and endorsed by Trustees as the best route. Before that stage, the Trustees of both organisations will carry out extensive due diligence and consultation to ensure that merger is the best way forward.

**Electrical Safety Grants:** Fire and rescue services, trading standards authorities, community safety organisations and other not for-profit organisations are able to apply for grants of up to £5,000 to deliver initiatives that help vulnerable people across the UK to improve the electrical safety of their homes. The funding is made available through the Electrical Safety Fund, which aims to keep people safe in their homes by tackling the risks associated with electrical products, increasing the public's awareness of electrical safety, and promoting changes in behaviour. The type of activity that could be funded includes:

- product testing and product replacement events (e.g. amnesty events to replace unsafe electric blankets, portable heaters etc.)
- educational and raising awareness activities
- home safety activities/visits
- data collection projects that would support the fund's national aims to prevent electrical-related injuries, such as collecting data relating to injuries caused by electrical products, and issues with products purchased from online marketplaces.

Funding of up to £10,000 may be considered for joint and/or larger projects. The fund is now open for applications as of the 2nd of September 2024.

[Electrical Safety Fund | Electrical Safety First](#)

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** The NPPF for 2024 introduces reforms to housing delivery, protection from "out of character" residential development, Green Belt alterations, energy-efficient building improvements and allocation of agricultural land for development. The changes also include the introduction of strategic planning, changes to planning fees, and new thresholds for some National Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). The full document may be seen at:-

[National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

**Circulated to Councillors:-**

SCDC Parish weekly agendas/e-bulletin  
Cambridgeshire Matters  
E-W Rail - updates  
ICS newsletter  
Clerks' e-bulletin  
Thriplow and Heathfield Neighbourhood plan  
Cambs ACRE newsletter  
Website accessibility compliance  
CPRE Annual review  
ACRE AGM - 9 October  
Summary of Planning Applications  
CAPALC Conference

**Website Compliance:** The Clerk discovered from an article in the Clerk magazine, that there are alterations to website compliance that need to be made by October. The changes do not appear to be too onerous and it is hoped that the Clerk and her colleague may be able to manage this. The Clerk also reported that she had been unable to upload the September agenda due to a Server Error 500. Her colleague also encountered this message. Sanders and Jay were approached and require Council to accept an invoice for work before they will look at it. Mr Buchanan has agreed to see if he can rectify the situation.

**Any subsequent receipts**

**SCDC Cabinet/Parish Council meeting:** The timings for the agenda are confirmed as below and copies will be available on arrival.

- Cambridge 2050 - Guest Speaker Peter Freeman 6pm - 6:50pm
- Four Day week - Bridget Smith 6:50pm - 7:10pm

- Community Roadshow offering – Kathryn Hawkes 7:10 - 7:30pm
- Communicating with you and how we can improve 7:30 - 7:50pm
- Final Q&A 7:50 - 8pm

The Clerk had intended to go to this but the date was changed and she was unable to attend. The Information from the meeting has been received and circulated for Councillors to look at.

**The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service** would like to invite to you the Cambridge Biomedical Campus Planning Update taking place at 6-7:30pm on Wednesday 23 October. The event will be both in-person on the campus at 1000 Discovery Drive and available to watch online via a Teams link.

During the event, the Shared Planning Service will update on recently consented and live schemes on the campus as well as on the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document we are currently preparing. Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) officers will update on transport projects including the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) busway and Greenway projects. We have also asked CBC landowners to update local communities on their projects and vision for the campus, including their expansion proposals. If you would like to attend please contact:- [localplan@gretercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:localplan@gretercambridgeplanning.org)

**Luton Airspace and Noise Week:** Join us for Airspace and Noise week, from the 14th to the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2024. This is an event open to the public and designed for anyone interested in learning more about London Luton Airport's (LLA) operations. This event will feature a range of topics and expert speakers, including insights into how LLA operates daily, information about the Noise Insulation Scheme, and an overview of the future airspace changes, all presented by the Flight Operations Team.

Additionally, there will be presentations from the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) regarding Air Traffic Control at LLA and you will also hear directly from pilots operating at LLA.

The Airspace and Noise Week offers an opportunity to engage with professionals, ask questions, and deepen the understanding of the operations of one of the UK's busiest airports.

If would like to attend LLA's Airspace and Noise week, please fill in the following form

<https://forms.office.com/e/quGzLRiyuP>.

Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from LLA with details of where to park and attend the sessions. Each session will be a presentation followed by Q&A.

If you intend to go to this event, please try and arrange car-sharing.

**NALC Legal Bulletin:** Several pages of legal advice were brought to Council's attention.

**Croydon Hill:** The road will be closed from 6-8 November for highways work. An information sign will be erected 14 days prior to the closure and diversions will be in place.

**SCDC Help to Shape Priorities:** Residents and businesses are being asked to help shape South Cambridgeshire District Council's plans for the years ahead – to help ensure the area remains one of the best places to live and work in the country. The Council has identified five key priorities to help achieve its goals. Councillors now want to hear the views of local people so they can help influence the production of a full Corporate Plan for 2025 and beyond. This Plan, when finalised, will set out the actions, initiatives and strategies the Council will work through to meet its targets.

You can [view the plans in more detail and have your say](#). Anyone who completes the survey will have the chance to be entered into a prize draw to win one of two £50 One4All vouchers. To complete the survey via an alternative format, such as using a printed copy or in an alternative language, please contact [equality.schemes@scamb.gov.uk](mailto:equality.schemes@scamb.gov.uk) or call 01954 713 000.

#### Information Table

Clerks and Councils Direct

#### Finance

**Bank statement:** The balance in Council's current account at the end of July was £7,156-39 and at the end of August was £7143-89. Council was charged £12-50 to cancel a stopped cheque. This is because a Council now has to hold a business account and not a community account, and is charged as though it were a business.

**Exemption certificate:** A formal confirmation of Council's exempt status has been received.

**Invoices:** Croydon Café presented an invoice for £72-00 for the Reading Room bookings until the end of the year (not December!). The defibrillator pads invoice from Andrew Deptford for £86-34 was presented and also from WC Portables for £78-00 for the additional toilet cubicle for the Car Show. It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Mr Barnes that cheques should be raised for these three invoices. All in favour.

**CAPALC- Membership:** New Model Financial Regulations have been introduced by NALC. The Clerk explained that in order to access these. The Council would have to join the local association of CAPALC at an annual cost of around £150-00. From the NALC website:-

*"Key features of the updated regulations include a user-friendly introduction to aid councils in navigating the document effectively. Additionally, the regulations are designed with flexibility in mind, allowing councils to adapt them to suit their specific requirements seamlessly. This flexibility ensures that councils of all sizes and operational scopes can benefit from the guidelines provided.*

*The Model Financial Regulations are exclusively accessible to local councils that are members of NALC and their respective local county associations. Members interested in accessing the document can download it from the NALC website or obtain it through their local county association. Please get in touch with your local county association if you have any questions about this document or other finance-related issues."*

Councillors discussed this and felt that it unacceptable that all councils did not have access to these regulations and decided not to join CAPALC and to continue with the accounts as they had always been done.

**Items for next agenda:** Consider whether to support the Management Plan for the churchyard.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 16 October 2024 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm

As there was no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.12pm.

Signed ..... Date .....

DRAFT