

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council meeting was held on Wednesday 20th November 2024 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mrs Sole - away, Mr Wenman - working, Cllr Williams - family issue.

Present: Mr Barnes, Mr Wheeler, Mr Buchanan, Mr Sole, Ms Newland, one member of public and the Clerk.

Minutes: of the October meeting were amended, agreed and signed.

Declarations of Interest: None

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Community reports:

Car Show: As most here this evening will know, another successful Croydon Cambs Classic Vehicle Show was held on Sunday 8th September. Much has changed since the first of these Croydon shows in 2010 when advertising was the biggest challenge, whereas today, because of social media, we face almost the opposite problem of needing to control potentially high numbers. This year considerable extra efforts went towards ensuring that we had capacity for significantly larger numbers. However, in the event, early morning heavy rain and a very showery forecast meant that these extra efforts were largely wasted - nothing like early heavy rain to put off classic vehicle owners!

The last show in 2022 drew a record total of around 220 display vehicles. This year, a record almost 200 display vehicles had pre-booked, and from past experience we knew that a considerable additional number of vehicles would simply turn up on the day. However, the unsettled weather resulted in a significantly lower 165 display vehicles actually attending, and these were comfortably accommodated in the main field. In actual fact, the rain held off for the whole of the afternoon so the show was blessed with dry weather despite some very dark clouds and thunder close by. It was later reported that places as near as Dunton and Biggleswade were awash, so we were very lucky!

To finances: 2022 broke all records in terms of the numbers of display vehicles, show visitors, and earnings. Yet this year, despite the reduced vehicle numbers, in fact takings set a new record. However, once the higher outgoings were taken into account the net profit was a little lower than the 2022 record, though still with over £5,600 being earned to share between the Reading Room and Church. The table below provides the high level breakdown.

	2022	2024
Takings on the day	£7150	£7817
Takings plus donations / sponsors	£7691	£8427
Net totals dispensed to RR & Church	£6171	£5607

NOTE: a full set of 2024 Show accounts can be made available on request

The show was again successful in bringing our community together. A good proportion of village residents were either directly involved on the day, or with preparation and planning. Thanks are extended to all involved, including non-Croydon family and friends who helped out, and a special mention also to the organising committee without whom the show would not be possible. Huge thanks as ever to Danny Hopkins (Practical Classics) who once again turned out to host the arena sessions and prize giving; Croydon really has been most fortunate to have Danny's loyal support over the years. Many thanks also to the many local businesses which sponsored the event or donated prizes, and Mantles deserve a special mention here, as do local scout groups who helped with marquees, and running the public parking. Thank you again to Croydon Parish Council for financial support which paid for the all important toilets, also for the acquisition of the community PA whose first outing this was. This support helped greatly to keep ever rising costs under some control. And last but by no means least, to the Sole family for once again generously making their fields available, without which such an event would not be possible. Thank you for your time this evening.

Malcolm Ralph, 2024 Co-Chair.

Sheila Dunn Memorial Quiz/ Harvest Supper: The event was held on Saturday 19th October. There were fewer teams than there have been in previous years both due to illnesses and people being away, but the hall was still fairly full and a total of 40 people took part. Amanda Tuck was our question caller and took the role single-handedly as Felicity had to withdraw due to illness. The evening started with a meal and it was a lively and

enjoyable evening. The quiz was won by The Wooden Spoons (a reference I believe to this team having gained last place several times previously) headed up by Nicky from the village. The evening made a total of £430-00.

Poppies: Received from one of the Poppy organising ladies:

With Remembrance Sunday now behind us the Poppy displays have now been taken down. The support for this project, started last February, has been marvellous and our thanks must go to all those who have been knitting away furiously over the last few months. The knitters were not only from Croydon but also included knitters from Arrington, (our own Parish Clerk!) Orwell and Barrington; Angela Fane also contributed and also an old friend of mine in Essex. One of our knitters was Ruth Randall who sadly passed away recently. Vreni made Ruth's poppies into a most beautiful Altar frontal for the church and this was actually in place for Ruth's Memorial Service. Those who could not knit also contributed wool and donations towards wool. And there was also the fixing and putting up. All in all a magnificent response. So thank you one and all!

The Poppies have now been put away and can be used next year as well. Next year is an Anniversary of the end of the war in Europe so we probably ought to do something for next year.... No need to think about that til after Christmas!

Remembrance Sunday: Following a short tribute, the wreaths from the Royal British Legion and the village were laid at the memorial on 10th November. It was pleasing to see so many from the village who had come to pay their respects to the fallen from Croydon. Thank you.

Litter Pick: Plans are afoot to have a village litter pick and clear up this coming Saturday morning 22nd November (the first outing with the long (ditch) pickers!) to take advantage of the Croydon Hill road closure but speaking with Keith this morning we are concerned that the forecast is not good, so the WhatsApp group will be used to post a note if it is decided to delay until Sunday morning. Thanks again.

Footpaths: The footpath map is back on the notice board. Copies of the Footpath Officer's map have been located. The Clerk had A4 copies and these were distributed to Councillors, but does not have an A3 printer. The Chairman is going to see if he can obtain an A3 copy of the map, so that it can be printed more clearly than from an A4. Mr Ralph has an original old footpath map which would be interesting to examine.

Local Highways Improvement Application: This has to be sent in by 10th January 2025. Following discussion at a recent meeting, Arrington was approached to see if they would support a bid to lower the 40mph between Croydon and Arrington to 30mph. The Clerk does not know if it is possible to apply for a cross-parish LHI plan, but has approached Arrington and they are keen to know if this can be done. As the road in question is all Croydon Road it does seem sensible to apply for it in one application, saving two legal notices regarding (if successful) the speed limit. Clerk has asked the question of Highways, but has to attend an on-line meeting to receive an answer!

Churchyard Update: The resident who with others, is leading the churchyard re-wilding project asked Council to minute that this scheme is a collaborative project between the Church, the Wildlife Trust and the PC, who support the project when required. Volunteers from the village can also join in with work in the churchyard, and these will be made on the Community WhatsApp. If anyone would like to see the very detailed report that the ladies leading this project have produced, please contact the Clerk, who will pass on details of how to obtain this.

Six Free Trees: SCDC has again offered free trees for planting and the biodiversity ladies would like them for the proposed foraging hedge in the churchyard. Clerk will obtain the relevant information on the application for these.

Calendar: the 2025 meetings calendar has been finalised, with a meeting in August for 2025 only, and then a decision whether to continue with an August meeting will be made towards the end of that year. The December meeting has been brought forward to the second week as the third week is too near to the Christmas break.

Website: As previously reported and discussed, the website was not working. Mr Buchanan has been extremely helpful with the problem. The Clerk has ascertained from Mrs Grundy who has been paying for the domain name and Mr Buchanan has liaised with all parties involved, involving Sanders and Jay, with a view to obtaining a more suitable contract that will keep the website working. The Clerk would like to thank Mr Buchanan for the amount of work he has done on this - it is something only someone in the computer world would be able to understand. At the time of writing, the website seems to be up and running. Mr Buchanan suggested that Council should reimburse the gentleman who has (possibly unknowingly) been funding the domain name for several years. This was agreed and there just remains the amount to ratify at the December meeting.

Verge Maintenance: CCC asked for a review of grass verge maintenance in the parish.

Which grass verges does your parish maintain on behalf of CCC?

When did your parish began maintaining these areas?

How frequently do you maintain CCC verges within your parish?

Which contractor do you use for these services?

Council does not use any outside grass cutting business, to do a job which it felt Highways should be doing.

SCDC Corporate Management Consultation: SCDC Corporate Plan: Residents and businesses are being asked to help shape Council's plans for the years ahead, to help SCDC make South Cambs a better place for everyone. **The consultation only ran from 15th until 29th October 2024**

The five priority headings are:

- **Healthy and flourishing communities**
- **Sustainable homes and vibrant places -**
- **Being green to our**
- **Helping businesses to thrive in South**
- **Financially secure and fit for the future**

This review only ran for around two weeks, which Council felt was insufficient to answer such important questions, with not a mention of whether the Four-Day Week should continue. It was agreed by Councillors that the Clerk should write to Cllr Bridget Smith, asking why the time in which to respond was only two weeks from the date of her letter, which was emailed to the Clerk on 16th October. Items as important as those being discussed surely need more time than that to consider them fully.

CCC Capitably funded Highway Maintenance Schemes: *How you can help us: We are writing to you to ask if you wish to highlight any roads or footpaths where you think capital investment is needed. You should bear in mind that this request is for larger scale capital investment, which may include the following:*

- *Major resurfacing or reconstruction of a significant length of road or footway/cycleway.*
- *Installation of a new drainage system or replacement of a failed existing highway drainage system where there is severe flooding on the road.*
- *Major maintenance of a Public Right of Way which may be unpassable or difficult to use.*

What to do if you'd like to highlight a reactive issue instead which needs attention:

Please note that this process is not for reporting any reactive work requests such as fixing a pothole, repairing a gully etc. and these more minor defects should be reported via [Cambridgeshire County Council - ReportIt](#) instead. Most of the roadworks which Council would have highlighted appear to be in Highways' pipeline, including Lower Road.

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. It was decided that these two items would be deferred until such time as they become relevant.

Follow up information: The final gmail address has been created, and hopefully the Councillor is receiving the circulated paperwork.

District Councillor's November 2024 Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC

Four-day week update - Best Value Notice dropped

At the beginning of November, the government decided to drop the council's Best Value Notice, which had been in place since November 2023 over concerns that residents were not getting value for money under the four-day week.

It is disappointing that the government has opened the door to four-day working weeks because we have seen worrying trends at the council. Over 160 staff are having to work more than four days a week to prop up the council - and 16% do another paid job on their day off each week, throwing into doubt the supposed staff wellbeing benefits of the four-day week.

It is my understanding that a public consultation on the four-day week will happen at a postponed date of January 2025 - two years after the four-day week trial first began. When this consultation is live, I would encourage all residents to make your voices heard on this significant issue. Are you happy to pay for your council to have an extra day off each week?

I believe that, in these uncertain times, we require more support from our local councils - not less. I am continuing to scrutinise council performance to ensure the four-day week does not jeopardise further services for residents.

Supporting family farms

I am proud to back British farmers – strongly opposing the government’s family farm tax. It was encouraging to see over 20,000 farmers and their families protesting against the tax in London on 19 November. Our farmers put food on our table and care for our natural environment. We depend on them for our survival, so it is concerning that the farm tax threatens Britain’s oldest farming families who have fed our nation for centuries.

We encourage you to share our video supporting British

Fraud awareness - #DoTheRightThing

I am encouraging residents to #DoTheRightThing to prevent fraudulently claiming Council Tax discounts or exemptions.

Since July 2023, over £800,000 in lost Council Tax has been identified – placing an unfair burden on others and reducing the funds available for essential public services. We are therefore urging residents to check if they are eligible for Council Tax discounts, and to report suspected fraud online.

Pension Credit

I am encouraging pensioners to check if they are eligible for Pension Credit this winter to receive help with Winter Fuel Payments.

You must apply by 21 December 2024, and backdate your application to at least 22 September 2024, in order to be eligible. Please visit the council’s webpage for more information.

White Ribbon Accreditation

I support the council’s White Ribbon Accreditation, working with White Ribbon UK to prevent harassment, abuse, and violence against women and girls. It is vital to make our workplace and communities safe for everybody. I continue to support the council’s work to raise awareness for this important campaign and support the efforts of council

staff to advocate positive attitudes within South Cambridgeshire.

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.

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County Councillor Kindersley's written report to Council:

Gamlingay Division Councillors Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council - November 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!

Full Council: Cambridgeshire County Council met On October 22nd. The council debated four motions proposed by councillors, and agreed them all unanimously. 1. A call for fairer police funding and awareness of domestic abuse. Cambridgeshire is the fourth lowest funded police force in the country, and local taxpayers fund around half of Cambridgeshire’s policing budget. 2. A proposal seeking changes to planning processes in cases where schemes are delivered over many years yet planning designs and decisions are not able to be changed to accommodate new situations. 3. A proposal about safety risks from lithium-ion batteries in items such as e-bikes and e-scooters,

for householders and for waste collection and disposal crews. It endorses the work being done by Lord Foster and the charity Electrical Safety First to seek to ensure third party independent approval testing for these items entering the UK market, regulations for safe disposal of used lithium-ion batteries, and controls to address specific fire concerns such as charging points. 4. A proposal for a review of the aftermath of National Highways' project on the A14 so that issues are clear and documented, and calling for National Highways to be more responsive and to resolve outstanding matters.

The council also agreed: to apply to Government for a Transport & Works Act Order to progress the Cambridge South East Transport project for a busway between a new travel hub near the A1307 / A11 and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, connecting with Granta Park, and the villages in between.

Budget: The council's current position forecasts an overspend of £9.6M for the current financial year—that's 2 per cent of its budget. The county council's estimated budget gap for next year (2025/26) has increased from £23.5M to more than £39M, largely due to a combination of increasing demand for services, inflationary pressures, and uncertainty over future funding from Government. Over the last ten years, the council's core government funding has reduced by 70 per cent in real terms. Combined with more steep rises in inflation and a surge in demand for services supporting some of our most vulnerable residents, this has added further cost pressures to the council.

National Highways - Call for new applications: Do you have an initiative that could benefit from our legacy funds? All non-for-profit groups or organisations in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire can apply, including but not limited to local schools, charities, community groups, and environment groups. Grants for the Social Value Fund are from £15,000 to £200,000, for smaller scale projects, the Community Fund offers grants of up to £15,000. We have three more applications windows for the two funds - November 2024 to January 2025, May 2025 to July 2025 and November 2025 to January 2026.

For details on funding criteria and how to apply, visit our [Social Value Fund and Community Fund](#) page.

Electric scooters as Christmas presents? Please be aware: Please be aware, as it may not be common knowledge, that while privately purchased e-scooters can be used on private property, they are not legal to use on the 'public highway' - our roads and pavements. The exception, which makes things confusing, is the County Council run E-scooter rental scheme in Cambridge city.

We do get a fair share of complaints and concerns about e-scooters, mainly because of concerns about the safety of riders and those who may come into contact with them. We're aware that Cambs Police will be doing a publicity campaign about this issue as Christmas approaches.

East West Rail: East West Rail (EWR) have announced that their Non-Statutory Consultation will begin on 14 November 2024, closing on 24 January 2025. More information, including details of consultation events, can be found at <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>

Recycling Cables: Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service is working with Recycle Your Electricals to encourage Cambridgeshire residents to participate in The Great Cable Challenge – a nationwide campaign aimed at tackling the millions of cables sitting idle across UK households. The initiative is part of this year's International E-Waste Day.

The challenge aims to give a second life to the valuable materials contained in cables, such as copper. Copper can be recycled into new items such as wind turbines and new tech such as mobile phones, laptops, tablets or smart watches.

With millions of cables cluttering up UK homes, Recycle Your Electricals have published a handy Cable Guide. With 35 of the most used cables, the guide provides easy to use visuals to match cables to their original electricals. If the electricals or the cables are no longer working or they aren't needed anymore, simply bag up your cables and recycle them!

Rights of Way support: Our new Rights of Way Officer is Oliver Ayto, whose job includes maintenance of footpaths and bridleways. Work is prioritized according to public safety, clear daily use access, and convenience. He's already been out to inspect a number of local issues.

Green Infrastructure Team: who cuts which verges?: The new County 'Green Infrastructure Team' is working across all parishes to clarify any ambiguity relating to County versus Parish responsibilities on grass cutting, and improving the 'Maps' function on the County Council website (home page at the top) - which provides public access to detailed maps which help to identify public property ownership and responsibilities. Thanks to questions from residents about specific locations which have helped prompt getting things clarified.

20MPH schemes – nearby villages: In this year's round, 91 schemes were submitted for consideration. Limited funding meant that only eight schemes could be approved for this coming year.

South Cambs Connect.: Regional businesses, entrepreneurs, community groups and charities are being invited to Cambourne to try a new collaborative working space - free of charge until the new year! SCDC has redesigned its head office ground floor with a vibrant, collaborative workspace for use by business professionals. Called South Cambs Connect the space has comfortable workstations, high-speed Wi-Fi, meeting pods and bookable meeting rooms which offer a productive spot to work, a meeting venue, and a chance to network with other local professionals. There is plenty of free car parking available including EV charging. For more details email: southcambsconnect@scambs.gov.uk

Impact Assessment Supplementary Planning Document: SCDC will be making decisions soon on whether to adopt planning guidance that embeds Health and Wellbeing into all new developments. New town and new housing developments can, if well designed, really make a positive difference to people's health and wellbeing. Northstowe New Town, for example, includes outdoor fitness equipment, lots of cycle and walks ways and really beautifully designed green and blue spaces.

Empty Properties: SCDC will soon agree a new policy on Council Tax Changes for empty properties. This is to encourage owners to get empty homes back into use. Homes empty up to 2 years will pay 100% Council Tax; empty up to 5 years it result in a 200% levy and up to and over 10 years it will be 300%. One year's notice will be given of an increase. SCDC currently has about 300 empty properties; 84 of which have been empty for over 10 years.

Adult Social Care Front Door telephone number: Any questions, including if you're not sure what to ask! Please ring Cambridgeshire County Council on 0345 0455202

Care Microenterprise Directory: Cambridgeshire County Council has been supporting small new care businesses to take root. Services tend to be less costly than those provided by big care agencies. The directory is growing - please take look if you or someone you know might benefit: [The Care Micro-Enterprise directory \(CME\) | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

The same website has information on how to set up a care microenterprise - including for people new to caring professions.

Climate and Environment Discussions in Schools: Young people were encouraged to find solutions for local climate and environment action when SCDC held a meeting in a school for the first time. Comberton Village College hosted the event with around 40 students taking part in morning workshops on five themes of water resources, circular economy and fast fashion, sustainable food, biodiversity, nature and green spaces, and air quality.

Peer Review of South Cambs District Council: A follow-up report by the Local Government Association has praised South Cambridgeshire District Council's 'strong ambition', 'good leadership' and 'innovative approaches' following a recent visit.

The return visit comes after a Corporate Peer Challenge Review by the LGA last year described the Council as being in a positive financial position – with a comprehensive and innovative response to the cost-of-living crisis. Typically, all councils have one of these reviews every five years and they always contain recommendations to help councils improve.

A total of 12 recommendations were made by the peer team last year. A return visit last month and update report, a usual part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process, shows how 10 of those recommendations are completed or well underway and two are progressing.

In Finance, peers had recommended the Council accelerates the closure of its outstanding accounts. Since their visit in late 2023, the draft accounts for each and every year up to 2023/24 have been published - meaning they are as up to date as possible. Meanwhile, a scheme to uncover further savings by close working between members of the Council's Leadership Team and service areas has identified a further £1.5 million to help meet a £3 million savings target over the next five years.

Peers had also suggested the need to better convey a vision for South Cambridgeshire. To address this, the Council is now part-way through a consultation to develop a new Corporate Plan, outlining that vision, priorities, and long-term goals for South Cambridgeshire in the years ahead. The Council's business team have visited local businesses to discuss matters impacting them - obtaining 100 completed surveys that are feeding into the consultation.

Peers have highlighted how communications have improved to parish and town councils following discussions with parish clerks, whilst the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service with Cambridge City Council

hosted an event titled 'Unlocking the Potential of Your Parish'. This was aimed at equipping Parish and Town Clerks with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to navigate planning processes and effectively support their communities. The feedback report also notes that an informal reference group has been established for parishes along the proposed East West Rail route, to ensure their concerns are identified and incorporated into the planning consultation process.

Royal Mail deliveries: We're aware that postal deliveries have been somewhat sporadic in parts of the Division such as Litlington. Thanks to those who written to us to make us aware that they have outlined their concerns to customer.service@royalmail.com and to our MP, Pippa Heylings.

Advance Warning: Foxton Level Crossing closure: Network Rail will be doing engineering work at Foxton level crossing from 25 December -1 January. The level crossing will be completely closed to vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

The Community Rail Partnership and Barrington PC are amongst those who raised concerns that this will be problematic for cyclists using the A10 path for commuting purposes, especially to the Addenbrooke's site, during this period when train services will not be running either and in particular causing significant rat-running through Barrington. A free shuttle bus will take pedestrians round to the other side; that journey will be 15 minutes.

New Mobile Warden Scheme Funding: A total of £345,000 has been pledged to Mobile Warden Schemes in South Cambridgeshire for the next three years to help more elderly people stay living in their own homes for longer. The pledge comes after the District Council partnered with Rose Regeneration to undertake an in-depth review of local schemes to understand more about how much it costs to run them and help them become more sustainable in the future.

The District Council has traditionally had an annual budget of £21,000 to support schemes but invested around £300,000 to try and increase the coverage of the service in South Cambridgeshire communities by supporting new schemes to develop.

The review is important as it has taken into consideration predicted high growth in over 65-year-olds over the next 20 years and recognises that with age comes increased risk of deteriorating health, loneliness, and feelings of isolation.

Councillors have backed a new three-year funding scheme that starts from April 2025. The funding was approved in the District Council's recent Cabinet meeting.

It ensures funding is in place for existing schemes as well as providing funding for new or expanding schemes so that more residents can be reached. The review and ongoing work has also set out a longer term 10-year plan so schemes will not need to rely so heavily on District Council funding.

Improving the High Street: A new £200,000 grant scheme is available to support projects that boost the heart of communities across South Cambridgeshire. The Improving the High Street Grants of between £5,000 to £20,000 per project are available to rural businesses, community groups and Parish Councils and the scheme aims to improve the look of local high streets, promote rejuvenation, encourage residents to shop locally and attract more local businesses to the area. The grant can cover a wide range of projects such as renovating shop fronts, street art, new benches, hanging baskets, interactive family fun trails, street cleaning, local maps or new signs.

Ending Period Poverty: SCDC is joining the fight to end period poverty by providing free menstrual products for up to 700 residents. Councillors have agreed to champion the cause, to ensure dignity for all, by offering free sanitary products which are also kind to the environment. A funding pot of £12,000 has been agreed for the year-long innovative project, which will offer residents a choice of one of three period product packs - either washable pads, period pants or reusable period cups. Hey Girls, a UK-wide social enterprise, will be distributing the packs. Residents can apply using this link. The scheme will run on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Business Support Grants: Seven community and business projects are set to share grants of more than £360,000 to help boost rural life in South Cambridgeshire. The projects include creating activity space at a community centre, improved accessibility at an arts centre and refurbishment of local tennis courts. The latest round of grants takes it to a total of 26 projects in the district to receive money from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), aimed at supporting rural communities and businesses in building long-term resilience.

AI to Improve Planning Performance: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, a shared service between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils, is pioneering the development of a new AI tool to improve how public feedback on planning policies is reviewed and analysed. Funded through the Government's PropTech Innovation Fund, this project aims to use AI to transform the way communities engage in the planning system. Developed in partnership with the University of Liverpool, the AI tool - known as a Large Language Model (LLM) -

is being specifically designed to process and summarise the thousands of comments that residents, community groups and other stakeholders submit during consultations.

Old Shire Hall: Taking on board feedback and lessons learned from an earlier bid, an exclusivity period was set for early October. We have been working with the preferred bidder, as we complete our due diligence on their bid. This exclusivity period has now passed. We are aware of the strong continued interest in this prime Cambridge location and we are committed to achieving the best possible outcome for the building, local residents and Cambridgeshire taxpayers. Rather than extend the exclusivity period we have chosen to discuss our next steps with all the previously shortlisted bidders as we look to achieve, what is known as 'best consideration'. We remain optimistic that a sale will be agreed soon.

YEARNING FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS ON ZOOM AGAIN?: The Government has just launched a consultation on whether or not to allow councillors (county, district, or parish) to attend and vote remotely at council meetings. The consultation opened yesterday for eight weeks, and can be found here <https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fconsultations%2Fenabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings&data=05%7C02%7C%7C30b7f1761ace4f2db8f008dcf5018a30%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638654634156146969%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IklhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=11Qth9ofhSZJEswzLfvTufkz6t96WvljtpEe7prMokQ%3D&reserved=0>

By Election: Congratulations to LibDem James Rixon who retained the Histon and Impington seat on the District Council winning with a 325-vote majority. The by-election was called following Pippa Heyling's resignation as a district councillor, in order for her to focus on her work as an MP.

South Cambs Climate Conference: Creating a cleaner district for South Cambridgeshire residents is on the agenda at a climate conference in Cambourne celebrating net zero action locally. The District Council is holding its second Local Climate Action Conference in November to tie in with the global COP29 event - 12 days of worldwide talks to determine ambition and responsibilities in addressing climate issues.

The local event is being held on Tuesday 19 November from 11-3 at The Hub in High Street, Cambourne. Refreshments and a plant-based lunch will be provided. Please complete this form to RSVP for the event, by Tuesday 5 November. It will be followed by a pop-up inspiration evening at the same venue, called the Local Climate Action Fair, running from 5.30-8pm. Various community groups and organisations will be available to chat and share ideas about climate action. All welcome.

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 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. We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can!

Any subsequent receipts:

Christmas Bazaar: The Council has been approached to again fund the Reading Room hire charge for the Village Christmas Bazaar. The amount requested is £48-00 and was proposed by and the Chair that this should be covered. All in favour.

HAF Poster: Children in receipt of income-related free school meals can access a fully funded place at a participating holiday scheme or family experience for up to 16 hours in the HAF programme. Recently arrived refugee families and families struggling financially are also eligible. Further information can be found here [Cambridgeshire Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme | Cambridgeshire County Council](#) and here [HAF Provider Directory | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Please note that national HAF Programme funding currently finishes at the end of 2024. A government announcement is awaited to confirm whether this is being extended further.

East-West Rail: The non-statutory consultation is now live, from 14 November - 24 January 2025.

The in-person events will run from 2pm - 7pm on weekdays and 12pm - 5pm at weekends. The dates can be found below. Further details are available on our [Community Hub](#).

These are the nearest events to Croydon.

Friday 22 November - Shelford Rugby Club, Great Shelford

Tuesday 3 December - Cambridge Belfry Hotel, Cambourne

Monday 9 December - Bedford Swan Hotel and Spa, Bedford

Tuesday 7 January - St Neots Football Club, St Neots

Friday 10 January - Comberton Village Hall, Comberton
Saturday 18 January - The Clayton Hotel, Cambridge
Tuesday 21 January - St Andrews Church, Cherry Hinton

The virtual webinars are as follows:-

Wednesday 20 November - 2.30pm - 4.30pm [Join here](#)
Tuesday 10 December - 6pm - 8pm [Join here](#)
Thursday 9 January - 10am - 12pm [Join here](#)

East-West Electrification: The decision has been made to use green traction power in the form of discontinuous electrification with hybrid battery-electric trains

CCC Draft Business Plan: Cambridgeshire County Council will present their draft business plan and budget 2025-26 – 2029-30 at Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee on Tuesday 17 December 2024.

The Council is inviting you to attend a webinar session on Thursday 12 December at 6.30-7.30 where a member of the corporate leadership team will talk through the proposals.

You will be able to share your view of the proposals via the Business Planning and Budget Consultation which will be open between Monday 9 December 2024 and Wednesday 9 January 2025.

The webinar is on Thursday 12 December 18.30-19.30 ([Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)). **Please use the link to register your attendance at the event.**

High Street sign: Mr Sole reported that the High Street sign outside his house had disappeared, just before he had planned to put a new wooden backboard on it. Councillors suggested that if it was a cast iron sign, which it was, it had probably been stolen for scrap. Mr Sole will photograph the remains and, on receipt of the photo, the Clerk will request a replacement from the correct department in CCC.

Finance:

Bank statement: After the cheques that had been presented had cleared, the current account at the end of October was £6601-55.

Royal British Legion Invoice: An invoice for £20-00 for the wreath laid on Remembrance Sunday was received.

SLCC Membership Renewal: The Clerk asked Council if they would be willing to fund her membership of £80-00 for the Society. Councillors were happy to agree to this, and were thanked by the Clerk.

Village Christmas Tree: For several years the Council has funded a Christmas tree for the village, which is sited at the Reading Room. This was increased to £60-00 last year and Council agreed to continue with this.

Christmas Bazaar: Council was approached to cover the Reading Room rental of £48-00 for the Bazaar, which was agreed.

Proposal: It was proposed by the Chairman that cheques for £20-00, £80-00, £60-00 and £48-00 for the above four items should be signed. All in favour. Clerk will distribute the cheques by hand and post.

Items for the next agenda: None put forward

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11 December 2024 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm, with nibbles and drinks following, to which volunteers from the village will be invited.

As there was no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed

Date