

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council meeting was held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mr Wheeler - unwell.

Present: Mr Barnes, Mr Buchanan, Mrs Sole, Mr Wenman, Ms Newland, Mr Sole, County Councillor Kindersley, one member of public and the Clerk. In Mr Wheeler's absence, Mr Barnes (Vice Chair) acted as Chairman for the meeting.

Minutes: of the February meeting were agreed and signed.

Declarations of Interest: None

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Community Reports:

Village Litter Pick: A report sent from one of the organisers:- "Ten people in total turned out on the sunny, though chilly, Saturday morning. The initial gathering was as usual in front of Clopton Close where the necessary equipment was made available. A list of potential tasks had been drawn up in advance and this provided an opportunity for volunteers to sign against selected tasks which helped to provide guidance and avoided duplication. Key tasks accomplished were litter picking along the length of the High Street and part way up Church Lane, also from close to Croydon Hill Farm down almost to the junction between Larkins Road and Lower Road. A separate effort was also made to clear along a stretch of Lower Road.

In addition to litter picking, some overhanging brambles and branches were cut back from the footpath running alongside the High Street. Work was also done to clear the path where it narrows due to grass encroachment from between Orchard Lodge towards Church Farm Heights, though more work is required. The considerable build-up of earth at the eastern ends of the parking areas at both Clopton Close and by the water control cabinet were dug out and cleared away. It was a surprise to later learn that this activity at one of the locations did not appear to be as enthusiastically supported as might have been expected, particularly by residents to whom this clearing would be of most benefit. In terms of equipment, this was the first outing of the extra long pickers and they proved invaluable for reaching inside wide roadside hedgerows and ditches, so well worth their purchase, thank you. The four litter picking warning signs were used and proved essential for protecting volunteers, though sadly not 100% effective in slowing all speeding vehicles. Very much on the plus side, were the thanks and encouragements received from some passing motorists and cyclists. Four additional warning signs for those volunteering themselves to work along Lower Road it is felt must be an essential addition. A potential custodian for these has already come forward.

In total, twenty black bags of litter etc were collected together with a large road warning sign, plus various plastic car body parts. As on previous occasions all bags and material were speedily collected by SCDC operatives. One significant and most unwelcome change was the large number (around twenty) large "re-filled"(!) plastic bottles discarded along the roadside, sometimes in groups of perhaps six at a time. These posed a particular difficulty due to their high filled weight which pickers were unable to handle, and more importantly they required emptying as they became too heavy for the black bags. Quite apart from the distasteful task of needing to empty these, clearly, this poses something of a health hazard for volunteers, some of whom may be put off from future clearing. There was general agreement that this new hazard be brought to the attention of this Parish Council, also to District and County Councillors. It was felt that a communication should be sent to Environmental Health teams to consider what steps might be taken to discourage this now prevalent discarding through, for example, advertising campaigns, SCDC literature etc. Disposal when back home has got to be the clear message. Other than this latest issue, another successful effort.

Finally, thanks to councillors for your support to date and help with the supply of equipment.

Malcolm pp Croydon Clear-up Team"

Footpath map/Footpaths/officer:

Mr Wheeler has not had a chance to obtain an A3 copy of the map. The County Council's Footpaths Officer Oliver Ayto has been in touch with the Clerk, reporting that he has attended the overgrown sign and cleared the vegetation from it, sending pictures of the completed work. He asked if there would be a group in the village willing to walk the footpaths and keep the paths clear of overgrown foliage, and

possibly a footpaths officer who would co-ordinate the work locally. Any large works i.e. replacing a bridge, clearing a ditch etc., would still need to be undertaken by the County Council. Mr Buchanan has volunteered to look into arranging a group of local residents to walk the paths with a view to keeping them open for all.

Website: The issue of the carousels and colouring is still ongoing. Is this something Council should attempt or would Sanders and Jay amend this for us? Mr Buchanan will look at the best way to repurpose the carousels for partially sighted/blind access.

High Street sign: The new High Street sign has been put in place. There is an issue of a broken speed limit sign, which has been reported by the residents several times, and nothing has been done. Council asked the Clerk to contact the appropriate department to see if this can be reinstated.

Additional Litter Picking signs: Council was a little surprised that the Litter Picking report mentioned four new signs when a formal request for only two has been made. Council agreed to continue with the purchase of two cone signs and the clerk will ask for a pro-forma invoice from Safety Signs Warehouse for the signs. The signs will be 600 x 450 as previously and made of 3mm DiBond, Investigations are being made into the most economical company from which to purchase the cones. Screwfix offer two cones of different sizes, 460mm at a cost of £8-99 and 750mm at a cost of £15-99 - both VAT included in the prices. A maximum price of £120-00 was agreed.

Notice Board: The Clerk discovered a letter to Council dated 2018, stating that it was time the notice board was replaced, with the reasons why this should happen. It is now 2025 and the board has been "saved" several times by the Clerk's husband, and who now both agree the board (originally erected in 1983) is long past its useful life. There was a plaque in the board, which the Clerk circulated to councillors, asking who remembered or knew the gentleman in question. Only one Councillor remembered the gentleman but not as a parish councillor. The plaque can be placed in a new board if councillors feel it should be. Clerk had found a very reasonably priced board, although not in recycled plastic, which would probably be suitable. Councillors agreed that the board should be replaced and will see what can be found on the internet before deciding which board to purchase. Recycled plastic is the most environmentally friendly, but also appears to be the most expensive. Measurements would need to be taken and whether the existing fixings are suitable, before a purchase is made.

Possible Village Playgroup: Council received the following request from a resident:-

Would Croydon Parish Council consider supporting a Fledgling Play group for Pre School-Children and Grandchildren in Croydon Village? We had a meeting today and there seems to be support for it! It would be three Wednesdays a month for 2 hours in The Reading Room. We plan to add in a Croydon 'Shop' if we have enough support ! Parents or Grand Parents would need to attend & I am CRB checked and fully trained in Safeguarding. We have a Villager who would like to Read Stories and lots of Ideas & plans! We have very little in Croydon to Support Children & Families and it would be amazing if you could help us make a start! We only want to charge £1 which would cover refreshments. The hire of the Reading Room would be £ 48 per Month. Many thanks for your consideration.

Council considered the request and decided to fund 6 months from April to September this year. A further decision would be made pending the popularity of the venture. Any funding for this would come from Section 137 funds. Clerk will inform the applicant.

County Councillor Kindersley's report to the meeting.

Councillor Kindersley will not be standing for the election on 1st May. HE will continue as Chair of the County Council until 20th May.

Local Government reorganisation: This will be an unmitigated disaster for the taxpayers and service users. It appears to be impossible to find a split in the area that will meet the requirements of 50,000 residents without crossing any county boundaries, which is not allowed. Would it be possible to have two unitary authorities? There would need to be agreement on how to allocate various debts and finances. There would have to be redundancies as two heads of departments would not be required if the change happens. So far, projected costs are up to £18.3 million, all from Council Tax.

Council Kindersley asked if there was anything further he could help Council with. As there wasn't, he was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

The meeting continued with:-

Public Speaking/Disruptive Behaviour at meetings: The Clerk had downloaded some very comprehensive information about this. Council had a brief discussion on this and felt it was too involved for a council of Croydon's size. Legislation states that "Meetings of the Parish Council are not public meetings but members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the council as observers. Members of the public have no legal right to speak unless the Council Chairman authorises them to do so - it is the prerogative of the Chair to allow public participation."

The Vice Chair felt that allowing members of the public to speak on the agenda item they wish to, as has happened previously, is still the best way forward. Clerk will search for less involved guidelines, and share them with councillors..

Croydon Café: The Café ladies are organising a speaker to come along, at the suggestion of Leneva Nwachukwu - Commissioner in Adults, Health & Commissioning for Cambridgeshire County Council Leneva states:-

Yesterday I met Robert Colbert in a meeting of colleagues working across South Cambridgeshire. Robert works with the Alzheimer's society and is operating in the South Cambs area. I am hoping that Robert could visit your coffee afternoon to briefly present some information about his work.

Please let me know if this is okay, copying Robert into your response so that he can act accordingly.

This is with the ladies, who will liaise directly with Leneva and Robert.

Defibrillator: The Clerk has received a letter from the defibrillator supplier regarding the defibrillator that Council purchased.

The note below and the attachments refers to any Cardiac Science 'Powerheart' G5 Defibrillators which I have supplied to you - and to any other G5s that you may own.

A small number of devices have been affected, predominantly in very high humidity Countries.

Please have a look at the attachments.

If you have been checking your G5 Defibrillators regularly (using the attached Checklist - which was supplied at the time of your purchase) and the 'Rescue Ready' button continues to show Green, then your Defibrillator is fine.

IF, in the unlikely event, that Error Code (EC) 501 EVER shows on your G5, it should be taken out of commission and Zoll Technical Services (techservice-uk@zoll.com or 01928 241700) should be contacted.

I would appreciate it if you would Visit [Medical Device Correction | Zoll Medical](#) to confirm your receipt of this customer notification.

Many thanks for your cooperation.

I have tried to complete the form supplied on the link in the email. Unfortunately, I cannot as the form only allows addresses from the USA. There is no option for anywhere else in the world. I have contacted our supplier to ask his advice and he suggested it should be ignored, as it is unlikely that anywhere in the UK will have high humidity so no danger to Croydon's defibrillator.

Clerk: The Clerk has given her notice after 39 years of service to the Council. She will be retiring at the end of July this year, after the financial regulations have been met. If you are interested in becoming the next Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the council, please let the clerk or a councillor know.

County Councillor Kindersley's written report to Council:

Gamlingay Division Councillors Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council - March 2025

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!

Council Budgets: Cambridgeshire County Council met to agree the Budget for the County Council for 2025/26 in February and after a somewhat protracted meeting did agree the Budget; prioritizing investment in highways maintenance as well as in children who become looked-after and building new schools.

The county council had to close a gap of £35.1m with 73% of the Council's net spend now being funded from Council Tax and - based on resident feedback - prioritised key areas, which are aligned to our vision to make Cambridgeshire greener, fairer and more caring. These included investment of more than £56m in highways maintenance to tackle the significant backlog of repairs, day-to-day management of the highway and £20m in planned maintenance including roads, pavements, drainage, bridges, safety barriers, traffic lights, public rights of way and cycleways.

Turning to adults and children's social care £3m was added to cover inflation for local care providers and an extra £8m for the 5% increase in the Real Living Wage. An additional £9m for children who become looked-after, £4.7m to support home to school transport services and £920,000 investment in capacity in SEND services. The council continues to support vulnerable communities, with an estimated £6m of Household Support Fund that will be delivered to support those most in need alongside investment in further improvements in our libraries through £1.3m already committed to the Libraries Plus programme.

It was agreed to increase Council Tax by 4.99% (2% of which is for Adult Social Services) – raising £20m of local income to help maintain and protect critical services for the most vulnerable communities. For most of our residents in Band A-D properties that will mean between an extra £1.04 pence to £1.55 a week. The meeting is available to watch on YouTube (not recommended).

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority also met to agree the 2025/26 Budget which was a significantly nicer meeting where we agreed an increase of £4.95 for the next financial year. For a Band D household, this increase will make the annual contribution to the fire service of £87.21. This works out to be a monthly cost of roughly £7.27, or around £1.68 a week. Part of the funding gap we face comes from the decision by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service to end the very successful, 14 year-long partnership of delivering a combined fire control function, taking 999 calls and mobilising fire engines and other resources across both counties. The collaboration was established to save each fire service money, which it has with more than £12 million saved in the time it has been operating. We will now have to find an additional £1million per year, just to break even.

And lastly South Cambridgeshire agreed its Budget for 2025/26 which see the Council continue as one of the lowest taxing authorities in the country, with a below inflation increase of 2.99% or less than 10p a week for a band D home, bringing the charge for this band to £175.40 for the SCDC part of your Council Tax bill. The total cost of running the council in 2025/26 is £84 million, the net cost of providing services is £28 million and we will need £33.5 million from taxation; these figures are broadly the same as this financial year despite the increase in costs. This neutral position has been accomplished by productivity improvements including the use of AI, while improving or maintaining service delivery.

Council Tax will bring in £12 million – the other sources being £18 million from Business Rates and £3 million in Government grants. In addition, the council is expecting to receive nearly £8 million in commercial rent and interest from loans in addition to fees and charges mainly from large scale planning applications. Surplus income from taxation enables a transfer of £3.5 million into reserves to meet a predicted deficit in coming years. SCDC has £31.5 million earmarked for various projects ranging from a fund to support renewable projects to support our net zero communities grants schemes to providing support for homelessness.

Turning to capital expenditure, the council expects to spend some £29 million in 2025/26 including the building of the Northstowe Phase One Community Centre - named the "Unity Centre" by the local community - expected to open in early 2026 - featuring a spacious multi-use hall, a playful messy room, meeting rooms, provision for a cafe and a landscape courtyard. We will also be buying an extra vehicle and employing another member of staff to support the Council's Enviro-Crime team as it tackles fly-tipping. There will also be additional resource to combat and raise awareness of fraud, plus further support to strengthen ties with parish and town councils.

Housing at SCDC: Part of the Budget process at SCDC includes the Housing Revenue Account. The cost of repairing, improving, and building new council homes cannot by law be subsidised by Council Tax or Business Rates. So, the cost of this (apart from Right to Buy receipts, S106 funding from housing developers and Government grants) is shouldered by our council tenants through their rents or others renting other housing assets such as council garages.

SCDC has over 2,000 families on the housing waiting list so building more council homes for rent is a priority and we have a target of delivering at least 75 new homes a year. We have 5,815 council homes, up from 5,705 last year. We also want to improve the standard of our existing homes, particularly their energy efficiency. In 2025/26 we also have a £205 million loan to repay on top of the £12 million borrowing to build more homes: taken out in 2012 to pay the then Government to keep all council house rents for the council. This loan has to be repaid by council tenants. So we have had to increase council rents by 2.7% bringing the average rent to £129.98 a week bringing an income of £38 million. Some 40% of our tenants receive Housing Benefit.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION: All principal local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough need to respond to the Government no later than Friday 21 March to outline what they are

considering for new, larger, unitary councils for our area. The criteria continue to include an expectation that the new councils will cover populations of at least 500,000 unless there are special circumstances; and that existing district council boundaries will be the building blocks, again unless a strong argument can be made against this. A further submission will need to be made to the Government in the autumn. There will be advantages to moving to a unitary council system, not least more clarity and accountability over who is responsible for services such as street lights or waste. But it's clear that the Government is wanting a 'quick and dirty' solution, rather than taking the time—and consultation—to do it properly. North Lane Gamlingay: Bunds have now been placed to prevent vehicles using the end of North Lane. Residents who continue to use heavy machinery to break through should be reminded that if they live in North or East Lane they are SCDC tenants and by these actions would be in breach of the tenancy agreement.

Hare Coursing: The Police have advised that following the dreadful hare coursing events on January 25th there have been 20 arrests so far - residents of Spalding, Slough and other far-flung places - but nobody from Cambridgeshire yet. They have all been bailed with very strict conditions relating to dogs, cars, the countryside etc and anyone with any information and footage that could assist in identifying those involved is asked to email OpCalluna@cambs.police.uk or contact Crimestoppers, anonymously, by calling 0800 555111 or [online](#).

Surviving Domestic Violence: Cambridgeshire County Council has renewed the Target hardening project – sometimes known as a 'sanctuary scheme' – which enables survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes by providing additional security measures which can delay or prevent a perpetrator from entering a property. Between April 2023 and March 2024, 525 survivors across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough received target hardening measures. Measures offered depend on the level of risk, and may include window alarms, additional bolts, lock changes, security advice, video doorbells, dummy cameras and response lights. The service is available for all types of housing, whether owned, privately rented or social housing. The service is key to the delivery of Cambridgeshire's Safe Accommodation Strategy, and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, and is provided in conjunction with working with a domestic abuse specialist. The survivor is given a bespoke safety and support plan focused on their individual needs.

Failure of gas supply: Gamlingay residents were understandably extremely concerned to find the gas supply from Cadent was weak or failing over several weeks in February. Cadent advise work continues to restore full gas pressure in the Gamlingay area caused by an issue with a pipe on the outskirts of Gamlingay that they believe caused the significant drop in pressure at peak usage time. The PC and Cadent have been keeping residents up to date and the EcoHub has been made available to those who needed a warm space. Cadent advise, however, that if you smell gas, do not assume it is related to this work. Act immediately and call the national gas emergency service on 0800 111 999, day or night.

Ukraine 3 year anniversary: Bridget was invited to speak at a demonstration in Cambridge to mark the 3rd anniversary of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine as Leader of SCDC: "We are proud in South Cambs to have welcomed more guests from Ukraine into than any other District in the Country. 953 guests in total hosted by a total of 545 of our residents. I am also very proud of the enormous efforts of our officer teams at South Cambs who I know have at times worked day and night to support all of our guests and their hosts and I thank those people who have taken the trouble to write to me to say how well supported they have been. It has been an especial privilege to get to know the guests living in my own village of Gamlingay and to experience their generous hospitality.

I hope that we have made you all very welcome and cared for you very well. I hope that when you return to your country that you will remember your years in South Cambridgeshire positively. We will certainly remember all of you and thank you for what you have given to us."

Dog Poo: It was very disappointing a few Saturdays ago to see the organisers of the football club having to scoop up huge piles of dog poo from the playing field before it was fit to be played on. This is just disgusting and the people letting their dogs foul the recreation area should think about how they would feel if it was their children risking their health. It was also disappointing to see parents taking their dogs into the playground despite the very clear signage not to do so. Dog poo is a serious health hazard to children and in the most extreme cases can cause blindness.

Update from Cambridgeshire County Council on Household Support Fund: The Household Support Fund Scheme is running until the end of March and thousands of households can claim cost of living support potentially worth hundreds of pounds. Over the next few weeks, Cambridgeshire County Council are raising awareness to those who may be eligible for this support but have either never claimed, or

have not put in an application this round with a "Are you struggling to pay for food or bills?" headline - see CCC website for more.

Grant Funding Opportunity - Increased grant Funding for Electric Vehicle chargers: Funding available from the Council's Electric Vehicle charging grant has increased from £5,000, to up to £12,000 per project. This grant is open to parish councils, community groups and charities for public EV chargers in car parks associated with community buildings and village halls. Funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis and is open for the remainder of the 2024/25 financial year. We cannot guarantee the funding will be available into next financial year, so encourage those interested in applying to get in touch soon. For more information about this grant, please visit the website. If you would like to know about community EV charging more generally, please visit Electric vehicle charging - South Cambs District Council, where you can find a video by Steeple Morden Parish Council which explains how they installed their EVCP. You can also contact the Council on evcp.grant@scambs.gov.uk

Waste Service Update - Blue bin recycling contract: Following a thorough public sector procurement process, Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service (GCSWS) is finalising a new contract for blue bin recycling processing. From March 3rd, a new provider - Re-Gen Waste Management Ltd - will take over the processing of our recyclable materials.

Importantly, residents will experience no changes to their recycling service. The same items can continue to be placed in blue bins, and collections will remain unchanged. While the materials will now be processed at Re-Gen's facility in Northern Ireland rather than locally at Waterbeach, this decision was made after careful evaluation of all options, with Re-Gen offering the best combination of cost-effectiveness, processing quality, and environmental compliance. The new arrangement includes several positive features. Re-Gen's state-of-the-art facility uses advanced robotics technology that can achieve a 99% recycling rate - higher than current levels. The company has committed to sustainable practices, including plans to use more environmentally friendly fuels and establish a new facility in the Midlands during the contract term. To minimise environmental impact, they will coordinate transport with their existing operations, using return journeys of vehicles already delivering materials across the UK.

Most recyclable materials will continue to be processed within the UK - currently 82% overall and 100% for plastics - maintaining our commitment to domestic recycling. Materials will initially be consolidated at a Waterbeach transfer station before transport to Northern Ireland, where they will be sorted and sold to established UK-based processors and manufacturers.

In the course of the Procurement process it became clear the incumbent (Thalia) had submitted a non-compliant bid and so was eliminated from the process. This means that continuing to send materials to the Waterbeach site would not be possible without breaking public procurement rules. The successful bidder, ReGen Waste, is appropriately licenced, authorised and regulated by the relevant UK authorities, to undertake the operations and activities required by the RECAP contract.

COUNCIL SHORTLISTED FOR FOUR NATIONAL AWARDS: Cambridgeshire County Council has been shortlisted as a finalist in four categories of the Local Government Chronicle Awards.

- Community involvement: two projects from the Fenland Youth Work Network supporting young people aged 11-18 who are at risk of serious violence, exploitation, and involvement in county lines.
- Health and social care: Cambridgeshire Shared Lives Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Project, working with survivors of domestic abuse with learning disabilities and/or autism.
- Future places: innovative connectivity projects including a private 5G Open Radio Access Network (RAN), development of an augmented reality experience, and enhanced mobile coverage analysis.
- Innovation: Cambridgeshire's 'Dig Once' policy, integrating fibre ducting into new transport infrastructure projects, resulting in a large CO2 reduction and significantly less disruption to road users.

Old Shire Hall: The sale of (old) Shire Hall in Cambridge is on the agenda of the Assets & Procurement Committee. The premises was put back on the market for disposal in February 2024, and attracted fifteen bids. Following evaluation this number was reduced to a shortlist of four. An exclusivity period with Bidder A ended in October 2024 without a sale being completed. Subsequent discussions took place with the other bidders on the shortlist. An unconditional long leasehold bid from Bidder E has been recommended for acceptance, together with draft Heads of Terms. Pending Committee approval, the Heads of Terms will be agreed, and an exclusivity period will be entered with Bidder E, with a view to exchange contracts within this three-month period.

Highways procurement: The current highways contract in place with Milestone Infrastructure is set to expire on 30 June 2027, with an option for up to five years extension dependent on performance. The contract has not delivered the efficiencies and service levels expected or required by the Council. The current model of sub-contracting under the contract does not enable value for money to be easily

demonstrated and there is a lack of contract options and investment in skills, processes and systems. CDM [Construction (Design & Management)] and health and safety compliance has been poor in the past but is improving. Response times and quality of work are continued concerns. Based on an assessment of options for the future post-2027 council officers have recommended a mixed economy model which would include:

- In-house delivery for Asset Management, Design, Commercial Management, Client Management, routine maintenance works
- Contract(s) for reactive/cyclical works, emergencies, winter maintenance
- A Professional Services Contract
- Use of Frameworks to deliver planned maintenance and major schemes.

Your Councillors are always ready to help. Please do not hesitate to contact 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

District Councillor's Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC - March 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

On 19 March, the Council held an Extraordinary Full Council meeting to discuss the Council's response to the government's Local Government Reorganisation plans, which look to replace the current council system with larger unitary authorities.

In Cabinet's response to the government's plans, I requested that the following considerations be made:

- The workload that will be required for councillors in larger authorities representing significantly more residents, and how this may become a barrier for full-time workers looking to become councillors alongside their job.
- That the impact of reorganisation on our parishes is considered to preserve the most local levels of government.
- That all options are considered when it comes to dividing areas into unitaries.
- To formulate a plan for engagement with residents and parish councils to encourage well-informed cooperative working, achieving the best outcome for our residents.

I feel uncomfortable and dissatisfied that the government is doing this to us when there was no mandate for these changes in their general election manifesto. Similarly, I raised concerns over the 'London feel' of the proposed model, which may not suit our rural district where parish councils and localised government ensures representation at all levels.

The joint response given by council leaders in Cambridgeshire can be found here:-

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s138677/Appendix2-ProposedResponsetoGovernment.pdf>

I am continuing to fight for the best way forward possible for parish councils and residents in South Cambridgeshire, in order to ensure local representation is not compromised in any way by these changes enforced from above. If you or your parish council has concerns about Local Government Reorganisation, please do get in touch and I will help in any way I can.

Free Healthy Start vouchers

I am encouraging parents of children under 4 years old to claim free Healthy Start vouchers offered by the NHS to buy food and milk.

If eligible, you will receive a card in the post that can be used in most UK supermarkets and can be used to buy essentials including fruit and vegetables, pulses, milk and formula milk.

To qualify for the vouchers, a household must be claiming one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit with earned income of less than £408 per month from employment
- Child Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (not contributory benefits) and have a household income below a specified amount.

Please do take a look at the council's webpage for more information and details on how to apply online or by telephone.

#DoTheRightThing campaign

I am pleased to see that fraud officers have got back £360,000 in false claims for Council Tax discounts. My alternative budget proposals included more support for the council's fraud team,

and these successes only reinforce the importance of ensuring everyone is paying their way and not taking undue advantage of support they are not entitled to. I am encouraging all residents to ensure they are filling in forms correctly to ensure council resources can be used to support essential public services in South Cambridgeshire. Equally, I would encourage anyone with information about suspected fraud to report online via this link.

Having said all this, if you are entitled to support, please do make sure you get it as it is a great help in these difficult times. You can check your eligibility for discounts and support on the council's webpage. Please do reach out if you have any queries or concerns.

Weekly food waste collections

The council is following national policy change by the previous government. It will become mandatory for councils to collect separate food waste on a weekly basis. I am pleased to see weekly food waste collections being implemented to improve the cleanliness of streets for the residents who live there.

The original grant awarded by the government to cover the costs of weekly food waste collections did not cover our costs at the council. Following conversations with government, this shortfall has now been rectified.

Nevertheless, I am continuing to investigate the additional costs of weekly food waste collections under a 4-day week bin collection scheme, as bin crews in Greater Cambridgeshire are also working 32 hours per week but being paid 37 hours. I believe that more lorries and more staff are required to collect the same number of bins in 4 days rather than a regular 5-day week, and I believe it is important to understand these additional costs.

Five Year Land Supply

I am pleased that, after losing its Five Year Land Supply in December, from April the council will be able to demonstrate a Five Year Land Supply again. This is good news for South Cambridgeshire's residents and green spaces, which have been under threat from uncontrolled development over the past few months. I would still urge caution in responses to planning applications being robust and clearly identifying harm when outlining reasons for refusal. To be clear, it is still the case that there is no land supply for self-builds.

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

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Facebook Page: Cllr Heather Williams

Website: www.cllrheatherwilliams.co.uk

Correspondence:

Electoral Register: None received.

Four Day Week: The consultation link is engage.scambs.gov.uk/en-GB/folders/four-day-week and closes on 23rd March. If you wish to give your views, please do so before then.

CAPALC Affiliation Fee: If Council bought into everything that CAPALC offers, then the cost this year would be £239-24. The Clerk is very happy with SLCC, which costs around £80-00 per year. She has found that if she has a problem, it can be circulated to all other member clerks, as there will be others who have already dealt with it, and are happy to advise.

Parish Forums: These are run by SCDC and council is being asked to gauge the interest from councillors. The clerk has attended one of these, and found it was monopolised by several of the attendees, not leaving time for others to speak. Councillors were not interested in these.

Circulated to Councillors:-

SLCC Establishing a new Local Council

SCDC Parish weekly agendas/e-bulletin

Local Plan update
Cambs ACRE - Staying in Touch
SCDC Clerks' ebulletin
CCC Cambridgeshire Matters
TMC Roadworks
Way 2 Go spring newsletter
CCC HAF Holiday Club programme
ICS March Newsletter

Subsequent receipts:

Roadworks: There will be roadworks in Cambourne, Caxton and Gamlingay this month, with diversions in place where necessary.

ACRE Update: ACRE sent an update of their campaigns to date, and as always, a request for donations.

Roadworks Information: A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order is in place for works on Lower Road in the area of Lower Manor Farm from 20th to 22nd May. This is to allow water main repairs in the verge. These will be advertised locally nearer to time.

Finance:

Bank Statement: The clerk was unable to reach the post office with the cheque for CPRE due to her inability to drive. This was finally banked on 3rd March so there is not bank statement for February.

Invoices: Invoices for £72-00 for hire of the Reading Room for the Café and for £479-04 from Sanders and Jay for the annual maintenance on the website. It was proposed by the Chair that cheques for these should be raised - all in favour. Clerk will distribute these.

Barclays Bank: An update of the Terms and Conditions has been received. There are approximately 8 pages, which Clerk has not had time to read yet, but will do.

Licensing Application:

Name of Premises: Clopton Manor

Address of Premises: Lower Road, Croydon, Cambs, SG8 0EF

General Description of Premises: A Spa area called Sanctum and the bar associated, This will be used for clients and companies to compliment the spa packages that are being provided currently. The premises is completely soundproof inside and the premises is a non-smoking area. The premises will not be open to the general public. This will be invitation/appointment only and all invitations will be checked/verified by licence holder.

The proposed application is to allow the following activities:

Activity: Sale of Alcohol.

The sale by retail of alcohol for consumption on the premises only.

Monday – Sunday: 10:00 – 21:00

Activity: Hours Open to the Public

Monday – Sunday: 10:00 – 21:00

Council discussed this and felt that there was no reason to object to this application. Proposed by Mr Buchanan, seconded by Mrs Sole - all in favour.

Items for next agenda: None put forward.

Date of next meeting: Annual Meeting Wednesday 16 April 2025 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 8.38pm.

Signed

Date