

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

Report for Parish Councils – October 2023.

South Cambs District Council

Bin collection changes

The adjustment to the new bin collection cycle appears to have gone smoothly with the new rounds being completed during the first few weeks even more quickly than anticipated. Some bins may now be collected at a different time of day under the new arrangements, but hopefully the only difference you will notice is reduced disruption at Bank Holidays, with the collection day now only changing at Christmas and Easter.

Carbon Literate certification

South Cambridgeshire District Council has been accredited as a Carbon Literate Organisation by the national charity, The Carbon Literacy Trust. The District Council has achieved Bronze accreditation as part of its continuing efforts to tackle the climate emergency in South Cambridgeshire. The Council has a target for a 45% reduction in carbon emissions from 2019 to 2025 and a 75% reduction by 2030.

Free electric blanket initiative

More than 500 residents are being offered a free electric blanket in a scheme to provide further help for people in need as we anticipate another winter of high heating bills. Residents have been selected if they claim Council Tax Support and one of a set of additional allowances. This initiative is targeted at those who experience mobility issues and are experiencing some financial hardship. Residents selected to qualify will be those who are (as of 1 July 2023) claiming Council Tax Support and at least one of the following:

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

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

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

Analysis has shown that running an electric blanket costs just 5p per hour, compared to an average central heating cost of £2.03 per hour (Ideal Home, 2023).

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

Four-day week trial

We are now half-way through the extended trial of the four-day working week at South Cambs, which began as a 3-month trial in January and was extended for a year in March after the initial trial proved successful. This is a trial of working practice that has demonstrated greater productivity in the private sector, with the aim of bringing similar gains in productivity to South Cambs, to save money for taxpayers and improve services. The main driver for the trial was to allow the Council to compete more successfully with our strong local private sector in the jobs market.

Contact Details: E mail: cllr.mcdonald@scambs.gov.uk or peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
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We had previously been over-reliant on expensive short-term agency staff, which were costing the Council £2million a year. The results so far are very positive, with 9 full-time posts now filled that it had not been possible to fill previously. This has led to direct savings for taxpayers of more than £550,000 annually, and will bring service improvements from the benefits of having fulltime staff.

I have been watching the trial carefully and scrutinising the Council's performance in committee to make that there have been genuine improvements and no adverse effects for residents. So far the results are very promising, but it is important to allow the trial to finish and to assess its results objectively. My focus is on making sure that any new arrangements genuinely offer better value for money for taxpayers. Here is the latest performance report:

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s132788/Appendix%20A%20-%20Key%20Performance%20Indicator%20Report.pdf>

Planning Delegations

Latest planning delegation meetings:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/planning-applications/step-by-step-guide-to-permissions/delegated-planning-decisions/#A2>

GCP decision on Sustainable Travel Zone

At a Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Executive Board meeting on 28 September it was decided not to progress plans for a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) in Cambridge, which included the much-discussed congestion charge. Proposals for congestion charging, developed under the previous Conservative administration at the County Council, were included in a GCP public consultation called Making Connections a year ago. In the responses to this consultation it was clear that residents strongly supported much greater availability of bus services across the district, but most of those responding did not support the use of congestion charging to achieve this. There is widespread agreement across local government in the Cambridge area on the need to create a fit-for-purpose public transport network, and to tackle traffic congestion.

Cambridgeshire County Council

A short report this month but hopefully relevant.

Streetlighting

There will be a programme to replace the 47,000 streetlights owned by County with LED's. The programme will cost £13m over 2 years but will save £2.4m per year. The report is here:

[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

20 mph schemes

I've already updated on the outcome of the current year programme. Here is a summary of the overall situation:

[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Civil Parking Enforcement

As we move towards implementation the County has published the detailed policy:

[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

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Requests for enforcement can be made to the councils Parking Control Team by email at:
parkingcontrol@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or by calling 01223 727915 between 9am and 5pm,
Monday to Thursday and Friday 9am to 4.30pm.

Peter McDonald

Oct 2nd 2023