

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

Parish Council Report May 2024

South Cambs District Council

Housing trajectory and five year land supply

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has just published a report on the housing trajectory and land supply for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This includes an evaluation of the 5-year land supply for this area, which is now at 6.5 years. The land supply is being kept safely above 5 years to ensure that the local authorities retain control over planning issues, something the previous administration had failed to do, leading to a flurry of speculative development. Further information on the housing trajectory and land use can be found on the council's web site.

Planning department shortlisted for award

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has been shortlisted for the Planning Awards 2024 Local authority planning team of the year. The Planning Awards celebrate outstanding achievements within the planning industry.

Vape recycling introduced at recycling centres

Vape recycling has just been introduced at all of the county's recycling centres, including our local centre at Thriplow. The new vape recycling bins offer a safe and environmentally friendly way for residents to dispose of single-use and reusable vapes. Disposable vapes contain lithium-ion batteries which can catch fire if damaged. Please help to publicise this within our villages to keep them free of litter.

Zero Carbon Communities Grant

The 2024 application window for Zero Carbon Communities Grants is open until 2 June. Grants of between £2,000 and £15,000 are available to parish councils and community groups to help take local action on climate change and biodiversity. More information on the scheme and previous successful applications can be found on the web site. I encourage parish councils and community groups within the ward to apply, as this is a substantial funding stream that can help improve our village facilities and natural spaces.

Shared Prosperity Fund green space improvement funding

The council has secured funding of around £100,000 from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to help improve up to six green spaces in South Cambridgeshire during the current financial year. The first phase of the project covered improvements in Great Shelford, Little Wilbraham, Coton and Orwell. Parish Councils can bid for funding in the second phase if they have land available that they would like to improve to benefit the community. This will be announced formally in mid May. In the meantime, please send any questions and expressions of interest to james.croft@scambs.gov.uk.

Rural England Prosperity Fund grants available

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Almost £900,000 in funding is available for business and community projects in South Cambridgeshire thanks to a grant launched in the District this week, funded by central government. The Rural England Prosperity Fund is designed to support local businesses for things like diversifying or creating jobs, plus a range of community initiatives such as rural travel, volunteering opportunities, digital projects or schemes that create a sense of local pride. The first application window for the fund will open from 9 April 2024 and will run each quarter until all the grant funds have been successfully allocated.

Community growing project grants Grants of up to £500 have been launched by South Cambridgeshire District Council to support communities to grow their own food sustainably and help with the cost-of-living crisis.

These grants can be used by Parish Councils, schools or community groups to buy equipment and tools, or build raised beds for growing vegetables. The scheme will run until the end of March 2025, or until the funds are exhausted

County Council Report

No Mow May

Cambridgeshire County Council has noted Plantlife's call for organisations to take part in "No Mow May", an initiative to promote biodiversity, allowing a wider range of plants and insects to thrive.

The council is keen to support the initiative and will be taking part in areas where it doesn't cause safety concerns for residents or motorists.

The cutting of grass areas will be paused in some areas to allow plants like daisies, dandelions and clovers to flower, providing important food for caterpillars from some of our best loved butterflies and moths. Letting wildflowers and plants grow freely will provide much needed nectar for pollinators and allow other plants and wildlife to grow and flourish.

However, great care will be taken to ensure cutting continues in places where road safety would be in any way impacted by poor visibility or where pavements and cycle paths would have reduced width making them less safe. Residents are encouraged to contact the council if there are places where they become concerned about safety issues for drivers, pedestrians or cyclists.

The council is also encouraging their farm tenants to take part and county council owned buildings, including New Shire Hall, will see green space managers lock up their lawnmower and liberate the lawns for the month.

More than 700 species of wildflowers grow on road verges in the UK according to Plantlife – this is almost 45% of the total wildflower species found across the country.

Music Education Hub

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Cambridgeshire County Council has been appointed by the Arts Council of England to lead the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Music Education Hub from September as part of a consortium with Peterborough City Council.

The award is part of a nationwide programme to provide access to high-quality music education for all children and young people.

As the new Hub Lead Organisation for the region, the council will receive funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to co-ordinate music education strategy in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through collaborations with providers and consortium member music teams.

It will also mean extra money to invest in new musical instruments, equipment and technology tailored to the needs of children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

The new Hub will work with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Music teams to deliver high quality music education accessible to all children and young people in the area through diverse partnerships between educational, creative and community organisations within their local communities.

The appointment is part of a major investment in a new generation of the nationwide network of Music Hubs. This investment will support the delivery the Government's National Plan for Music Education alongside the provision by schools and give children and young people the opportunity to develop their musical interests, including helping them to begin careers in the music industry.

May 10th 2024.