

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 County Report Sep 2024

South Cambs District Council

Zero Carbon Grants

The sixth round of South Cambridgeshire's Zero Carbon Community (ZCC) grants have been announced, distributing £125,000 across 11 innovative projects.

The grant scheme supports projects which help reduce carbon emissions, lock up carbon, and foster community engagement on climate change.

This year's ZCC grant initiatives include solar panels for community buildings, a strengthened repair café network to encourage waste reduction and a group aiming to help people adopt climate-friendly gardening practices at home.

Launched in 2019, ZCC grants have funded 82 projects with around £625,000 to date. Funding ranges from £2,000 to £15,000 per project.

The ZCC grants are open to parish councils and community groups across the district and provide financial support for schemes that demonstrate a sustainable and lasting impact. Projects receiving funding this time are:

- **Solar Power for Community Buildings:** Five grants were awarded to install solar panels on community buildings at Balsham Village Hall, Caxton Village Hall, Kingston Village Hall, Over Day Centre, and the Spicers Pavilion in Sawston. These installations will significantly reduce energy costs and carbon footprints, allowing these facilities to reinvest savings into community services. For example, Over Day Centre, which supports elderly residents, will benefit from reduced energy costs, enabling it to focus more resources on providing essential care.
- **Energy Efficiency Improvements:** Cambridge and District Citizens Advice received a grant to replace their lighting with energy-efficient LEDs, and Cottenham Community Centre will renovate and repurpose an underused space into an energy-efficient activities hall with enhanced insulation and heating controls.
- **Community Engagement Initiatives:** Four grants were awarded to projects aimed at increasing community engagement around climate change. Cambridge Carbon Footprint will expand their repair café network, promoting a culture of waste reduction and repair. Let's Cook Project will continue their work in educating communities on reducing avoidable food waste, while Climate Change Gardening will establish a kit for events to encourage gardeners to adopt climate-friendly practices.

The ZCC grant scheme is funded through the Council's renewables reserve (business rates from renewable energy projects) and builds on a long-standing commitment to supporting community-level action on sustainable energy.

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The program will continue through 2025/26 and 2026/27, with two more rounds of funding planned before its conclusion.

- For more information on the Zero Carbon Community grant scheme, including how your community can get involved in future rounds, visit the South Cambridgeshire District Council [ZCC webpage](#), or email zcc@scambs.gov.uk.

Funding:

Kingston Village Hall	Carbon Reduction	£9,300
Cottenham Community Centre	Carbon Reduction	£15,000
Cambridge & District Citizens Advice Bureau	Carbon Reduction	£4,920
Sawston Parish Council	Carbon Reduction	£15,000
Caxton Parish Council	Carbon Reduction	£15,000
Balsham Church Institute	Carbon Reduction	£15,000
Over Day Centre	Carbon Reduction	£10,000
Cambridge Carbon Footprint (Repair cafés)	Community Engagement	£11,690
Cambridge Carbon Footprint	Community Engagement	£11,690
(Open Eco Homes)		
Let's Cook Project	Community Engagement	
		£15,000
Climate Change Gardening	Community Engagement	£2,400
Total		£125,000

Planning Super Squad

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has been allocated up to £650,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to help make the whole planning process even more efficient.

This funding is part of the accelerator project aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of planning services locally, colloquially named the 'Planning Supersquad'. Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP), a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils, is also contributing money to the project.

The planning service already performs at above target for the speed in which it determines planning applications. This funding is intended to support the service to develop new approaches that will enable performance to be improved further, to help raise standards and benefit planning authorities across the country.

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One objective of this Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funding is to implement a virtual ‘development team’ approach in a partnership between GCSP and key partners. This initiative is designed to create additional capacity to speed-up the determination and issuing of planning decisions even further. By streamlining processes and using digital tools, the planning service aims to set a new standard in efficient service delivery.

As part of several new projects, the funds will go towards a comprehensive evaluation of all areas within the planning service to look at where processes can be faster or more efficient. The culmination of this effort will be the development of an accelerator model, which will be reported back to central government as a blueprint for potential wider implementation.

One area of focus for the accelerated implementation includes two existing projects: Northstowe and the Wellcome Genome Campus expansion. These projects will serve as focal points for testing and refining the accelerated process delivery model.

GCSP will work closely with development partners, namely Homes England for the Northstowe project and Urban&Civic for the Wellcome Genome Campus expansion.

Senior planners have said that these collaborations are essential in ensuring that the accelerated planning processes meet the needs of everyone involved and deliver tangible benefits.

The idea is that the projects will showcase the successful delivery of accelerated schemes through the planning process, providing valuable insights and lessons that can be applied to future projects elsewhere.

Lithium Battery Disposal

Residents are being encouraged to never bin batteries or electrical gadgets in a new advertising poster campaign on the side of refuse collection lorries.

Bin lorry and recycling centre blazes are becoming increasingly common across the UK as we buy and throw away more electronic items containing batteries, including vapes, e-cigarettes, mobile phones and e-bike battery packs.

Already, seven fires have occurred in the Greater Cambridge area in 2024.

Hidden batteries inside electricals can spark dangerous fires when crushed in bin lorries and recycling centres. Lithium-ion battery fires are particularly challenging to tackle, endangering bin crews, firefighters and local residents. Smoke and fumes can affect neighbouring areas and communities for up to a week.

Now, Greater Cambridge Shared Waste, a service shared by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, is using a national waste campaign cartoon character - called Hypnocat – on posters on the side of bin lorries to remind residents to safely dispose of batteries and electrical goods.

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Research from Recycle Your Electricals found that over 1.1bn electricals and 449.9m loose batteries were binned in the last year. UK adults admitted that on average they'd binned at least 24 batteries, including fifteen electricals containing batteries and 9 loose batteries.

Research from Recycle Your Electricals shows that:

- Battery fires in bin lorries and at waste sites in the UK have reached an all-time high – over 1,200 in the last year, an increase of 71% from 700 in 2022
- 6bn batteries were thrown away in the last year, over 3,000 a minute – including over 1.1bn electricals containing hidden lithium-ion batteries
- National Fire Chiefs Council says “fires involving lithium-ion batteries are a disaster waiting to happen”
- Battery fires cause air pollution levels to spike in local areas, breaking WHO limits, affecting the health of local communities
- Cost impact of battery waste fires could also be significant – Zurich UK has seen some insurance claims range up to £20 million

County Council Report

Combined Authority Bus Franchising Consultation started August 14th

Bus services in our area are poor and have been declining over many years. The Transport Act 1985 removed the public sector's role in fare-setting, routes, and bus frequencies. Bus services are run by commercial provider; where a commercial provider does not come forward the local transport authority may step in with a publicly subsidized ‘contracted service’ – and this is the case for all of our local bus services.

The Mayoral Combined Authority (which is our Local Transport Authority) launched a consultation on August 14 proposing a new framework of public control permitted in the mayoral local government framework. The consultation will run for 14 weeks and will compare a franchising solution with an Enhanced Partnership approach.

‘Under a franchised network, the Combined Authority would contract bus operators to run services on its behalf but have control over the routes, frequency, fares and overall standards of the region’s buses. An alternative Enhanced Partnership solution, while producing benefits over the current bus service, provides less control over the routes, frequency and overall delivery of the services.’ Combined Authority announces launch date for bus franchising consultation - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

This is part of a continuing search for means of improving local public transport. Last year’s Making Connections public consultation saw an unprecedented response; the Cambridge city road charge would have generated very significant income to fund a publicly controlled and augmented bus network. Lack of political support meant the discontinuation of that scheme.

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Civil Parking Enforcement

A total of 1757 town patrols covering 6687 street visits in South Cambridgeshire have been completed by the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) since 1st February 2024 through to the end of June. Patrols have predominantly focussed on areas where parking is in the greatest demand, such as commuting and shopping areas.

Summary of the status of Penalty Charge Notices issued. February to June 2024

Total PCNs issued	Number of PCNs paid to date	Recovery Rate %	Number of PCNs outstanding	%	PCNs cancelled	Cancellations as a %
555	439	79%	56	10%	60	11%

The Penalty Charge Notices issued have predominantly been to vehicles parked on single or double yellow lines, this is a higher contravention at £70.00. A discount of 50% is applied if payment is made within 14 days of the PCN being issued. A total of 79% of PCNs issued had been paid within this period. If payment or representations are not received from the remaining cases, the Council will contact the DVLA, and a Statutory Notice called a 'Notice to Owner' will be sent to the registered keeper of vehicle providing details how to either pay or appeal the PCN. If neither is received, the case will process as per the Statutory process defined in the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Summary of cancellations

Cancellation Reason	Number of PCNs cancelled
Valid Blue Badge provided on appeal	6
Lines and signs	5
*Spoiled after issue	10
** Vehicle Drive Away (VDA)	9

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CEO Error	6
Permitted vehicle	2
Processing error	3
Representations accepted	13
Test Ticket	1
Vehicle broken down	2
Written-off due to insufficient DVLA records	3

* Spoiled after issue – this is when the CEO has issued PCN but noted there is an error, this can be the vehicle registration number, location, street, observation code, make, etc. The PCN is ‘spoiled’ and a revised PCN with the correct details may be issued.

* For some offenses, a minimum observation period must be observed by a CEO to issue a PCN which is either attached to the windscreen or handed to the driver of the vehicle. If a driver returns prior to a PCN being issued, this becomes void and the PCN is cancelled.

Requests for parking enforcement can be made via:

E-mail parkingcontrol@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

On line [South Cambridgeshire Civil Parking Enforcement - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

20 Mph in Cambridge City

Cambridgeshire County Council is seeking residents' and stakeholders' views on the proposed extension to the Cambridge 20mph zones.

Safer transport through 20mph schemes is one of the council's most critical priorities. Cambridgeshire County Council want to encourage active travel, reduce congestion and improve safety for vulnerable road users. More information can be found here: [20mph scheme roll out | Cambridgeshire County Council\(External link\)](#).

In December 2022, Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways and Transport Committee approved proposals for funding from the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Transforming Cities Fund \(TCF\)\(External link\)](#) towards county-wide speed reduction measures.

This has enabled Cambridgeshire County Council to explore the possibility of extending the number of roads that have a 20mph speed limit within Cambridge city centre.

The County Council would like to hear your views on the proposal. Please click on the survey below.

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An Easy Read version of this survey can be found on the right hand side of this page. You can call 0345 045 5200 to ask for a printed copy of the survey if you need it.

GDPR: This engagement survey is to share the details of the proposed extension of 20mph zone in Cambridge with the wider public and gauge their support and feedback for each option. We may share your information with our consultants, our partners in this engagement survey and with the council analysis team.

You do not have to give us any personal information. We will not publish any personal details you do give us, but may publish your response, and include it in public reports, with personal details removed. Personal data will be held securely, in accordance with data protection legislation. We will only store it for 12 months after the engagement survey results have been analysed and the engagement survey report published.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/cambridge20mph/surveys/cambridge-20mph>

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/cambridge20mph/widgets/102884/photos/16170>

Appeal launched to address shortage of school governors in Cambridgeshire

An exciting appeal has been launched by Cambridgeshire County Council to recruit more school governors. There are around 50 vacancies that need to be filled in Cambridgeshire.

Figures suggest that a shortage of school governors is a national issue, and this scheme will aim to attract a diverse range of people to help support schools across Cambridgeshire.

Governors are crucial to help schools navigate all aspects of school life, while maintaining a focus on learning, and the provision of a high-quality education.

The campaign by Cambridgeshire County Council will combat the shortage by raising the profile of school governance and appealing to parents, carers and all members of local communities to consider becoming a school governor.

The appeal's purpose is to increase the number of school governors, from both inside and outside the educational sector. The aim is to create a waiting list of applicants, so that as vacancies come up, they can be easily filled.

School governors hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school. They are there to evaluate staff decisions, challenging, asking questions where necessary, and supporting and encouraging where possible.

Each school differs slightly, but there are usually between six and eight two-hour meetings a year, with reading and preparation required in advance. There are around two school visits a year, lasting approximately half a day. There may also be some committees and working groups. In total, governance can take between five and eight hours per month.

Communities rely on the quality of their local schools for the education available to their children. When schools are functioning well, children can access the skills they need to gain

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qualifications, opening up opportunities for their adult lives, which in turn, benefits communities.

There is no one type of person suited to school governance, and governing boards are better when they reflect the diverse communities they serve. A range of relevant training is provided to support governors in their role and make the most of everyone's commitment, so no prior experience is needed. While the staff remain the educational experts, governors ask questions about the impact of leaders' decisions and policies, scrutinise budgets and school data, and help support the school through the challenges of the education landscape.

In return for governors' time and commitment, they become part of a thriving school community. There are rewarding opportunities to develop skills and gain experience, such as strategic planning, chairing, financial planning, and team working, all of which are valued by employers. Governance can help people's career development and add to a sense of achievement and lifelong learning.

Sep 1st 2024.