

Whaddon Parish Council - District and County Councillor Report October 2024

This report:

Local

- Anglian Water
- Meldreth 20MPH application and wider interest in 20MPH schemes
- Accident date beyond Cambs Police

District and County:

- Cambs Quality of Life Survey
- Volunteers south
- Cost of Living Support
- Childrens social services
- Adults social services
- Cambridgeshire Climate Change Report
- Bus franchising consultation reminder
- Further afield: Mill Road bridge 'bus gate', Foxton Level Crossing holiday closure.

Anglian Water meeting

Last month Susan attended a County-wide meeting with Anglian Water to raise local concerns, and asked what information on investment we can expect to see in our area according to company spending rounds – something already promised but with no follow-up. They promised to provide this for all county divisions though response is still awaited.

We have pressed Anglian Water again for action on surveying promised in Whaddon and Meldreth and are asking our MP Pippa Heylings for support.

The very wet weather this autumn has not helped get things on track.

Meldreth 20MPH application

Meldreth's application for a 20MPH speed limit will be decided on October 23.

20MPH schemes – bigger picture county-wide

Local 20MPH schemes still prove hugely popular, with 91 schemes submitted by local communities for consideration, and a further eleven withdrawn for consideration under other proposals.

Only eight of the 91 schemes are recommended to the Highways & Transport Committee on Tuesday 1 October for implementation this coming year, again for lack of funding:

- Waterbeach (village-wide)
- Stow cum Quy (village-wide) • Elm (village-wide)
- Bottisham (village-wide) • Little Paxton (village-wide)
- Earith (majority of village)
- Swavesey (majority of village)
- Steeple Morden (central area of village)

Accident data

We asked Cambs Police how to glean more information on minor accidents to help inform future LHI and other local scheme consideration. Their reports are confined to deaths and serious injury.

[CrashMap - UK Road Safety Map](#) is a free to use open-source and independent website that will summarise historic RTCs, but only those that involved injury (it won't cover non injury, damage only, near misses etc.) and can be searched for free.

CCC Quality of Life Survey

This is the second year of the Quality of Life Survey, which gathers data from a cross-section of the population and plays a role in priorities for the business planning process.

Most Cambridgeshire residents continue to feel happy and safe in the county, well connected to their local communities, and still believe it's a great place to raise children – according to the County Council's second annual Quality of Life survey involving more than 5,500 residents.

However, cost of living remains the issue of most concern in Cambridgeshire amongst residents, with almost half of residents using less heating, and a quarter cutting back on nutritious food in the past 12 months. Residents continue to feel positively about their local community; 85% feel safe and 75% feel they belong. Significant numbers of young people (43% of 25–34-year-olds and 40% of 18–24-year-olds) continue to be more likely to report mental health struggles. The proportion of residents reporting that they often feel lonely remains higher than national data, at 31% of residents.

Younger residents are again more likely to report loneliness (53% of 18–24-year-olds).

Support when struggling to make ends meet

Please do contact the SCDC Welfare and Benefits Team (01954 713000) or Citizens Advice (see below) if you need help accessing financial support to which you may be entitled. It is estimated that 25% of benefits go unclaimed.

'If you are struggling to pay your energy bills or can't afford to heat your home' please contact the Energy Partnership: support@applyforleap.org.uk, Tel 0800 0607567

Some energy suppliers provide support to the wider population. Citizens Advice provide the necessary reference letter. North Herts Citizens Advice:

- 0800 1448848 or 01462 689801
- Royston Town Hall, Monday and Wednesday, 9.30am – 12pm. Appointments: 01462 689801
- Melbourn Hub: Wednesdays 9.30am - 11.30am. Appointments: 07469 517912.

School place appeal panel volunteers

Volunteers are urgently needed to hear appeals when children are not offered a place at their preferred school. All parents or carers have the right to make an appeal to an independent appeal panel if their child is not offered a place at their preferred school. The role of the panel is to decide whether a child who has been refused a place by Cambridgeshire County Council should be given a place. All parties involved must be given an appeal hearing that is transparent, accessible, independent and impartial. The appeal panel is independent of the local authority and its decisions are binding on all parties, unless overturned by the courts. Volunteers will sit on the independent

admission appeal panels and ensure that parents feel they have had a fair and independent hearing and have been given every opportunity to put their case and have been taken seriously.

The time commitment depends on how much time volunteers are willing to give. While appeals are held throughout the year, the peak months are between April and July. The appeals are arranged either for half a day or a full day, and hearings are currently held online using Microsoft Teams. Anyone interested in applying or who would like an informal chat about the role should contact clare.cronk@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

New homes for children with complex needs

Cambridgeshire County Council's Assets & Procurement Committee has selected two former farmhouses close to each other in Soham as a pilot project to increase the number of local places available for children and young people with complex needs.

Both properties, currently vacant, are owned by the Council. They will be fully refurbished and a provider will be offered a contract for up to ten years to provide care services to best meet the needs of the children.

Locally and nationally there is a growing need for placements, with children having to be placed out of the county due to a lack of local places and a limited number of registered settings being available. This project offers an opportunity for local and more stable placements, as well as avoiding over £635,000 of costs each year on private placements.

Mobile Warden Schemes

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 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. There are currently 16 active Mobile Warden schemes in 49 Parishes funded by South Cambridgeshire District Council. AGE UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough run 11 of them, while five are run by local groups.

Technology Enabled Care

A flat which uses everyday technology to help people become more independent at home was recently launched in Godmanchester to showcase ways in which new and existing technology can be used to help prevent, delay and reduce the need for formal community or acute care.

The equipment available ranges from simple pill reminders to sophisticated detectors, sensors, smart devices and trackers. To arrange a viewing, please contact our TEC team, either by phone, on 01480 378 160, or email: TECS@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (pre-arranged viewings only).

South Cambridgeshire District Council housing adaptations

Funds are available to carry out adaptations for residents of South Cambs whether they are homeowners, private renters or live in social or council homes. This means that people are able to

remain living independently in their own homes for longer. Bids for the funds can be made on line:
Search South Cambs Disabled Facilities Grants:

[Disabled adaptations and home improvement grants - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)

Climate change progress report and carbon footprint

For Cambridgeshire as a whole, in 2022—the most recent available data—total greenhouse gas emissions were 6.45 million tonnes CO₂e, a 3% fall from 2021. Transport (27 per cent) remains the highest emitting sector in the county, followed by land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) (23 per cent), agriculture (15 per cent) and domestic energy use (13 per cent). The risk of not reaching the Council’s carbon targets has reduced but remains considerable. Delivery of these targets relies on collaborating with our partner organisations.

Winter gritting

Preparations are under way for the 2024 winter, which starts on Friday 1 November, with salt barns being replenished and servicing of gritting vehicles.

Bus Franchise Consultation closes 20 November

A reminder that the Combined Authority’s consultation on bus franchising continues until 20 November. Short and long questionnaires can be found at ‘Combined Authority Bus Franchising Consultation.’

Mill Road Bridge Closure - Cambridge

Someway off, geographically, but important for some residents to know. The Highways and Transport committee voted to approve the modal filter on Mill Road bridge so it will be closed to all motor vehicles, except buses, pedestrians, cyclists, emergency services, taxis and blue badge holders’ registered vehicles.

A five-week Traffic Regulation Order notice period from 9 August to 13 September was advertised following the publication of the proposed Traffic Regulation Order. The council received 1,894 objections (46.5%) and 2,155 comments supporting (52.9%) the proposals. The special Highways and Transport Committee following a majority vote agreed to proceed with the scheme.

The closure will be implemented as a bus gate and blue badge holders will need to register up to two vehicles for exemption via an application form online (search Mill Road Bus Gate - Blue Badge Application exemption).

Work on the bus gate is expected to be completed in December and will be enforced by Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras (ANPR). Once installed, there will be a month where non-exempt vehicles will receive warning notices only and if they are exempt, would be encouraged to register online.

Advance Warning: Foxton Level Crossing closure

Network Rail have informed the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership that:

‘We will be doing engineering work at Foxton level crossing over the Christmas period. As a result of this, the level crossing will be completely closed to vehicles and pedestrians continuously between

Wednesday 25 December 2024 until Wednesday 1 January 2025, with further night-time closures over the following days.

The work will include renewal (replacement) of

- *Rails, sleepers and ballast in the area*
- *Railway points west of and at the level crossing*
- *The road crossing*
- *The pedestrian foot crossing*

Amongst other things, we will be replacing the physical rail through the crossing and at the junction just west, as well as the rubber-like crossing 'deck' over which vehicles pass through the crossing.

In total, we will replace over a mile of track, along with other works as above.

There will also be an engineering train located on the crossing itself for some of the works, which is why we cannot do the works whilst keeping the crossing open even for pedestrians.'

In response, we have indicated that the intensely local nature of walking and cycling over the Foxton Level Crossing, which sits in the middle of a residential community (both Foxton itself and surrounding villages), should somehow be protected during the period of works.

This movement includes people using the A10 path to cycle to work in Cambridge, and in particular at the Addenbrooke's Hospital/Biomedical Campus site. With no trains running during this period the active travel commuting option will be even more important.