

Whaddon Parish Council March 2025 - District and County Councillors' Report

Cam Vale Bus User Group March 12

All welcome, 2-3PM Bassingbourn Old School Community Centre.

Anglian Water response, little and late

As reported in our reports in recent months, multiple representations were made to AW in September and October, via County and District Council channels, in an effort to get a response to issues we discussed a year ago in relation to persistent household foul water back-up and flooding. This update was recently sent to Susan:

"By way of an update, these surveys are still on the list to be completed and will be prioritised across the Anglian Water region based on risk.

We will also be sealing a manhole in Whaddon, which we hope will help Meldreth as our network pumps from Whaddon to Meldreth.

I will be back in touch once I have a further update."

To which Susan responded asking for more detail. We have also asked AW for a repeat of the annual meeting.

Swimathon 27 April for Home-Start

Once again, the South Cambs Turtles team is swimming at Royston Leisure Centre of April 27 evening, to help raise funds for Home-Start. All funds to Home-Start. Thanks to all parish councillors and anyone else for their support.

Duke of Edinburgh volunteering, Meldreth Station

A reminder that the Community Rail Partnership sponsors Duke of Edinburgh and other volunteering opportunities at Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Stations – please feel free to share with anyone interested.

Local Plan update

Development of the emerging Local Plan for the 2030s has been on hold for over a year due to uncertainties over water supply and transport provision. However, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has just announced that sufficient progress has been made to allow a draft Local Plan to be produced this year, for review by the council and for public consultation.

New South Cambs website to be launched 25 March

The new website will have lots of new features including localisation; residents and users can put their postcode in and find information purely relevant to the area they live, such as their local councillors and the bin schedule, planning applications close by and the local events happening in their area.

20mph application window closing on 28 March

The window for 20 mile an hour zone funding applications closes at 5pm on 28 March.

[20mph Funding - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

The County Council have reviewed some of the information included on those pages to reflect the feedback they received from last year's process. Should you have any questions or comments please send these to Local.Projects@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Message from Highways England – closure of M11 for five nights

“I'm writing to tell you that we plan to carry out essential resurfacing on the M11 between junctions 8 and 10 on the northbound carriageway. Once complete, drivers will benefit from a safer, smoother and better-defined road surface.

We plan to complete this work over five nights between Monday 10 March and Saturday 15 March. We will work between 9pm and 5am on weeknights only, weather permitting.

Closures and diversions

To carry out the work safely, we will need to close the M11 northbound carriageway between junctions 8 and 10, and divert traffic as follows:

- Exit the M11 at junction 8.
- Travel west on the A120.
- Join the A10 northbound towards Royston.
- Continue on the A505 towards Duxford.
- Rejoin the M11 at junction 10.

For the latest information, please visit our dedicated webpage

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/east/east-road-maintenance-work/>”

Security support for domestic abuse survivors

The council has renewed a scheme which helps survivors of domestic abuse to feel safer and more secure in their own homes.

The scheme provides additional security measures which can delay or prevent a perpetrator from entering a property. It supported 525 people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough between April 2023 and March 2024. 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 contract will be funded by a Safe Accommodation grant from the Ministry for

Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), enabling the council to carry out its statutory duty.

Council Budgets

Cambridgeshire County Council met to agree the Budget for 2025/26 in February, prioritizing investment in highways maintenance as well as in children who become looked-after and building new schools.

The 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. 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).

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.

South Cambs 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 Revenue Account, 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. It is not yet understood how parish councils could be affected in the reorganisation.

Additional information on last month's item waste recycling contract re-tendering:

In response to a question from a member of the public:

All authorities undertaking procurement activities have to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/102/contents>), which set out how public bodies have to procure contracts. Cambridgeshire County Council undertook the procurement exercise for these services on behalf of the waste authorities in Cambridgeshire and they complied with these regulations.

As part of these regulations any bidder that puts forward an uncompliant bid has to be rejected. This is not at the discretion of the authority but is a requirement of the regulations. A failure to comply with the regulations results in a breach by the authority, which will leave the authority open to legal challenge. The regulations do not allow a re-submission or a further submission to correct defective bids, they have to be rejected.

With regards to providing the reasons for rejection, we would not be able to provide this information, as it is a confidential matter between the authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) and the unsuccessful bidder.