

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 November 2025

South Cambs Council

Postal Voters

If you have had a postal vote in the past, you will have to reregister if you still want one for future elections starting next May. This can be done on the South Cambs District Council website, or you can ring up for an application form. It is a very simple process. 01954 713000

Cabinet and Town / Parish Council Liaison Meeting 11 Nov.

A reminder to elected members that we are holding the above meeting for all parish and town councils in the South Cambs District Council Chamber at 6.30 8.30pm on Tuesday 11th November 2025. Please take advantage of this opportunity to hear about the Emerging Local Plan, Local Government Reorganisation and New Climate & Nature Strategy 2026-30.

4-Day Week in the news

South Cambridgeshire District Council seems to be back in the press over its move to a 4-day working week, since a minister in the 'new' government decided to write to us. Just to be clear, the council is open 5 days a week and many services are available 24/7. The contact centre is actually open longer hours than before the change. The Minister focused on council housing performance but had not looked at the data in any detail which shows that the council is in the top 25% of councils nationally for performance on reletting vacant council houses, for doing repairs (despite that being outsourced to a company working 5 days a week) and for council rent collection. 100% of emergency repairs are carried out in 24 hours. On top of this we are saving just under £400,000 per year as a direct result of the 4-day week due to significant improvements in staff recruitment and less reliance on agency staff; planning applications are approved on average 3 weeks quicker and people's benefit claims are sorted 3 days earlier.

Local Government Reorganisation

The County Council has now agreed to submit Option A (2 unitary councils, with South Cambs combining with Cambridge City and East Cambridgeshire) to Government for its consideration later this month. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire will vote on what option to submit later this month.

Anglian Water (AW) Fen Reservoir Consultation

The third phase of AW's non-statutory consultation for a new Fens Reservoir DCO commenced on 15 October and will run for 8 weeks until 10 December 2025. It can be accessed here: <https://fensreservoir.co.uk/documents/>

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In summary: The pipeline runs south of Bluntisham, via Swavesey, to the proposed service reservoir site at Madingley. The pipeline corridor (the area within which the pipeline could be located) is up to 500 metres wide. The proposed site for the new service reservoir is to the south of Madingley (on the existing Cambridge Water site). It will have an approximate capacity of 30 megalitres (Ml) on a land area of approximately 13 hectares.

Draft Local Plan – “The most important document you’ve never heard of”

The draft Local Plan and supporting evidence has just been published ahead of a public consultation which will run between 1 Dec 2025 – 30 Jan 2026. Cambridge City Council and South Cambs are working together to create this joint Local Plan for the Greater Cambridge area. The plan sets out the future land use and planning policies for the area for the period 2024-2045.

The Local Plan identifies the need for new homes and jobs, the services and infrastructure to support them, and guides where this development should happen. It has been informed by several stages of public engagement and working with stakeholders. There is a useful little video to help people understand what the Local Plan is and its importance: What is a Local Plan for Greater Cambridge?

If you have any questions about the Draft Local Plan, please contact the Planning Policy Team: localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

‘How are we doing?’ survey

SCDC has recently launched a new ‘How Are We Doing’ Survey to give residents, businesses and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on the Council’s services – both positive and negative – to ensure that we are delivering the best services possible. The feedback received will be reported to the Leadership Team and the appropriate teams. If you wish to comment, please use the QR code below or follow this link: www.scambs.gov.uk/leave-feedback Official complaints or service requests should still go through the usual channels.



OxCam Growth Corridor and Cambridge Growth Company

We have cautiously welcomed the Government's announcement that they will invest up to £400 million to help solve some of the challenges that hamper inclusive and sustainable growth in the area.

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The Government has announced its intention to consult on setting up a centrally led Development Corporation to help plan, manage, and deliver large-scale development projects in Greater Cambridge (South Cambs and Cambridge City).

The Government's announcement included:

- Up to £400 million of initial government funding to kickstart development
- A pledge to increase the supply of affordable homes
- Investment in infrastructure
- Business expansion – with £15 million for the University of Cambridge for a proposed Innovation Hub to create lab space for science start-ups to grow and compete on the global stage.

Bringing empty homes back into use

A major milestone has been reached in tackling long-term empty homes in South Cambridgeshire, with 75 properties brought back into use in the last three years. Success stems from the District Council's strategic decision to appoint an Empty Homes Officer in 2022 - an initiative that has transformed neglected properties into vibrant homes for new families, eased housing pressures, and revitalised communities across the district. To find out more about our work bringing empty homes back into use visit our webpage.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/empty-homes>

Street Trading

Proposed changes to street trading in South Cambridgeshire aim to help small local businesses work in more places whilst giving local communities more of a say. The District Council has just launched a public consultation into changes that could be made to its Street Trading Policy. The consultation runs until to Monday 24 November 2025. South Cambridgeshire's local traders in particular are being asked to share their views – although anyone is welcome to have their say. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/have-your-say-consultation-on-proposed-changes-to-street-trading-in-south-cambs>

South Cambs supports communities with more grants

Local sports clubs, a community centre and village events are set to benefit from more than £7,000 in the latest round of South Cambridgeshire District Council Community Chest grants.

The funding backs grassroots initiatives which improve facilities, bring people together, promote wellbeing and deliver long-term benefits for towns and villages across the district.

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Almost £80,000 has been set aside for Community Chest grants in 2025-2026 and in this latest round, £7,160 is being distributed to five local organisations.

Cambs County Council

Statement by Myself as Chair of the Council after Huntingdon Attack

“On behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, I want to pay tribute to the extraordinary bravery shown by Mr Samir Zitouni, known to many as ‘Sam’, a customer experience host for London North Eastern Railway (LNER), during the major incident that unfolded on the east coast main line and at Huntingdon station on Saturday, 1 November 2025. In a moment of great danger, Sam put the safety of others before his own. Thanks to his courage and presence of mind, lives were saved.

“This is definitely a case of ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Sam embodies the very best of our community spirit, and we wish him a full and speedy recovery. Our thoughts are with him and his family at this difficult time.

“I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who responded that evening including: Sam’s LNER colleagues, particularly the driver, Andrew Johnson, Network Rail and station employees, the British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, the East of England Ambulance Service and Cambridgeshire’s NHS hospitals as well as members of our community here in the county, who stepped forward to help. Your swift actions, professionalism and care kept people safe and provided reassurance in the face of fear.

“Cambridgeshire is immensely proud of and grateful to you all. Thank you for your service, your compassion, and your bravery.”

Consultation on County Budget

Cambridgeshire County Council is launching a public engagement survey today (Friday, 24 October), to gather residents’ views on where the council should prioritise spending and savings in the years ahead.

Every year, the council must set a budget which balances spending needs against income from council tax (around one-third of council funding), business rates, government grants, and service fees. These funds support a wide range of services including social care, education, libraries, highways and transport, environmental services, and waste management.

With rising costs, a growing population, and increasing demands – particularly in children’s and adults’ social care – the council faces difficult decisions about how to allocate resources. More than half of its spending currently goes toward social care, while other major areas of spending include SEND, transport, and the environment.

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The council's Business Plan will set out a budget for the 2026-27 to 2028-29 financial years. Our Strategic Framework, which sets out our seven ambitions that will help us create a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire, is one of the guiding principles that informs the business planning and budgeting process.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/Business-Plan-Section-1-Strategic-Framework-2023-to-2028-Refresh-for-2025-26.pdf>

Our annual Quality of Life survey is also used to inform decision making. This year's survey captured the views of 6,796 residents and found that in general happiness was at its highest point (84%) since the survey began. However, 87% of responding residents felt personally concerned about continued cost of living pressures, with loneliness and mental health also areas of concern especially for younger people.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/quality-of-life-survey/quality-of-life-survey-2025>

This new engagement survey, which will close on Monday 24 November, asks residents for their views on how the council should approach budget priorities. Respondents will be asked to consider questions such as whether the council should be looking to increase its income or decrease its spending on some of our services.

Care Leavers Event

A celebration event was held 28th October for young people between the ages of 17-25 from across Cambridgeshire transitioning out of care.

It kick-starts a month of activities planned for National Care Leavers Month during November. Care experienced young people were involved in planning the celebration event, which was held at The Junction in Cambridge. Activities included a henna tattoo artist, gaming area, mocktail competition, hair braiding, raffle, a DJ, music, and refreshments.

Raffle prizes were kindly donated by The Junction, Cambridge United Football Club, Hotel Chocolat, The Lounges Restaurant, Tesco, Costa Coffee, Cafe Nero, Asda, Xtreme 360, Quilts 4 Care Leavers, Franco Manca, Fragrance Shop, Pizza Pilgrims, Brian Kotelo Mbekeni Foundation, The Lancaster Lounge.

Representatives from Inspire2Ignite were also present, to provide music and support guests at trying their hand at using the DJ mixing decks.

The event was attended by Councillor Jonny Edge, Vice Chair of the Council's Children and Young People Committee. Also present was Councillor Simon Bywater who is a mentor for a care leaver. The council's Leaving Care Service works with many local and national organisations.

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Cambridgeshire County Council has in place a Local Offer for care leavers, which provides services and support for those leaving care to ensure they are well looked after. This includes support from the council as well as external organisations.

During National Care Leavers Month in November, the council is organising a series of activities for care experienced young people to recognise their achievements and bring them together socially, including college visits, cooking workshops, community football and group walks.

Peter McDonald Nov 5th 2025