

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

## **Report for Parish Councils – Feb 2023.**

### **South Cambs District Council**

#### **Budgeting & Council Tax**

The proposal is to approve an increase in the District element of the Council Tax of £5 per annum, giving an average Band D Council Tax of £165.31, plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of the Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority. The £5 is part of the 3 yr business plan.

<https://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s130235/General%20Fund%20Revenue%20Budget%202023-2024%20V2%20-%20Report%20For%20Cabinet.pdf>

#### **Key Amnesty for Council Houses**

Anyone misusing Council properties is being offered a one-off opportunity to return their keys without facing criminal proceedings during a month-long crackdown by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

A Key Amnesty campaign called #DoTheRightThing is taking place across the district during February to give tenants the opportunity to voluntarily hand in their keys, for a limited time, with the promise of no further action being taken.

The campaign is targeting people who:

- Have provided false information on application forms for housing.
- Anyone illegally subletting, where the tenant moves out then rents the property to someone else, usually at a higher rent.
- Right To Buy fraud, where people do not meet the criteria to buy their property but make false applications to benefit from a discount.
- Tenants who fail to use the property as the only or principal home as well as those who abandon homes without following the proper process.

It is hoped the campaign will also provide an opportunity to raise awareness among people who moved out of Council properties to create a family bubble during the Covid pandemic, who wish to remain living with relatives. They may now realise they no longer require their Council home and wish to hand in their keys, enabling another family to come out of temporary accommodation or off the housing waiting list.

Additionally, the campaign is encouraging anyone who suspects housing fraud to report it to the District Council using the online form or emailing [fraud@scams.gov.uk](mailto:fraud@scams.gov.uk).

#DoTheRightThing runs across South Cambridgeshire District from 1 to 28 February. Keys should be handed in to South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne CB23 6EA, in an envelope containing the property address. No more questions will be asked.

#### **Good news on Funding for Housing**

The Council has been awarded £4.5 million as part of the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund. The funding, which will run over this financial year and into 2023-24 is to help the Council to acquire 30 additional homes. These will initially be used to accommodate refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan, but when they are no longer needed for this purpose the homes will be available through the housing waiting list (as council houses)

#### **More frequent battery recycling collections**

Contact Details: E mail: [cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk) or [peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Telephone 07912 669092

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

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire households can now conveniently recycle used, small batteries weekly, thanks to changes to waste collections. Adjustments to bin lorries mean that small plastic bags containing used batteries can now simply be left on top of green, black or blue bins for collection by crews on their usual rounds.

Previously, residents of both areas were asked to tie a small bag containing used batteries onto the handles of their blue bin. Now, they can simply put used batteries inside a small plastic bag, tie it up, and leave that bag on top of any of their three bins when they put it out for collection.

Residents of flats with shared bins should not leave batteries on these but can take them to one of the many public battery collection points at corner shop chains, supermarkets, chemists and petrol stations as well as those at recycling points and Household Recycling Centres. Visit Recycle Now to see all locations.

Most small common household portable batteries can be placed out for collection at the kerbside, including:

- AA and AAA
- C and D
- Button cells

Please do not include mobile phone, laptop batteries or those that are attached to a device. Search online for 'recycle small electrical items' instead.

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste collects recycling and rubbish from around 128,000 households across the city of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

### **New funding for defibrillators**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced £1 million of funding to increase the number of automated external defibrillators in communities – providing an estimated 1,000 new defibrillators in community spaces in England. DHSC will invest the funding through an independent partner who will manage grant applications from bidding organisations. Those selected will be asked to match the funding they receive fully or partially, potentially doubling the number of new defibrillators created by the fund.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/number-of-defibrillators-to-be-increased-with-newfunding>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/every-school-will-have-a-life-saving-defibrillator-by-2223>

### **Homes for Ukraine: Hosts still needed for guests already in South Cambridgeshire**

Hosts are still desperately needed across South Cambridgeshire to support families who have already arrived from Ukraine, with hosts eligible to receive up to £500 a month as a thank you payment. Around 770 people from Ukraine have already arrived in South Cambridgeshire and with the war continuing - and it not being safe for many families to return - there is an ongoing demand to provide them with a safe place to stay. Under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, hosts sign up to provide a home to guests for a minimum of six months. However, around 20% of current hosts are not able to continue past that initial six-month point. It means that guests who have been staying with them would benefit from alternative accommodation locally, so they can continue to build on the relationships and community connections they have already been able to make. Hosts receive comprehensive support from the District Council, along with a £350 monthly Government 'Thank you' payment. The District Council also offers an additional opt-in monthly payment

Contact Details: E mail: [cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk) or [peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Telephone 07912 669092

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

to hosts of £150. This takes the total host payment to £500 per month. Anyone who can offer a spare room and warm welcome is being asked to text ROOM to 88802 so the Council can support them through the process and match hosts to guests who have already started to settle in the local area.

### **New “Energy Bills Discount Scheme” for businesses announced**

On 9 January the government announced a new energy scheme for businesses, charities, and the public sector, ahead of the current scheme ending in March. The scheme will mean that all eligible UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024.

Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-unveils-new-energy-bills-discountscheme-for-businesses>

Factsheet:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b7FEXiILaj4oG5pGOw4QqeFvFwIb3o18/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b7FEXiILaj4oG5pGOw4QqeFvFwIb3o18/view?usp=share_link)

Correspondence:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1128068/CX\\_Letter\\_to\\_Jonathan\\_Brearley\\_0901.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1128068/CX_Letter_to_Jonathan_Brearley_0901.pdf)

## **Cambridgeshire County Report**

### **Budgeting & Council Tax 2023**

The proposed budget which will now be put to all Members to consider at Full Council on February 7th, seeks to bridge a potential funding gap for the coming year of £21.4m, even after finding more than £10m of additional savings or income, in the face of levels of inflation not seen for 40 years plus rising costs for energy and essential services. The budget includes:

- £1m to continue free school meal vouchers for eligible children,
- £1m into highways schemes including rural roads drainage,
- £1m investment into flood mitigation,
- more than £1.3m into libraries,
- £380k investment in community services.

The proposal which will be put to Full Council is to set a balanced budget for 2023/24 through a mix of savings, use of one-off reserves, and the generation of additional income including a council tax rise for the coming year to 4.99% comprising 2.99% C Tax and 2% Adults social care. This would see band D properties in the county paying an additional £73 per year, although more than half (64%) of county lives in homes rated band C or below and would see rises of between £49 and £65 per year.

In total this would raise £17.8m towards setting a legally balanced budget for 2023/4 – and would help to mitigate the additional costs of demand for, and inflation related to, adult social care costs forecast by the council in the year ahead.

Over the next five years, additional improvements the business plan looks to deliver include.

Contact Details: E mail: [cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk) or [peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Telephone 07912 669092

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

- £122m for new primary school places
- £164m for new secondary school places
- £13.3m investment into converting streetlights to LED, delivering both environmental and financial benefits
- £2.5m into a new highways materials recycling operation
- A £7.2m upgrade to the March and Milton Household recycling

The business plan can be found here [A4 Portrait-black & white \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com)

### **Bus Services & Precept**

At the Combined Authority Board meeting on 25 January the Board approved the Mayor's draft budget for 2023/24 incorporating a Mayoral General Precept to support buses across our region. The Mayoral General Precept, will be an annual charge of £12 for a band D property and, based on forecasts from collection authorities would raise £3.6m in 2023-24. The precept is in response to the financial pressure facing the Combined Authority across its supported bus services. Stagecoach withdrew from 18 bus routes and reduced a further 5 citing that declining bus travel compounded by the pandemic made these routes financially unsustainable.

The cost of the services is considerably higher than they were previously, reflecting the substantial increase in fuel, energy, and driver costs that are facing the public transport industry at large. The cost of the services is considerably higher than they were previously, reflecting the substantial increase in fuel, energy, and driver costs that are facing the public transport industry at large. This pressure is expected to continue, and the forecast costs of sustaining the currently supported service are £7m in 2022-23, compared to an existing budget of only £3.5m.

### **Households to get new cost-of-living payments from spring 2023**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has announced more detail on the payment schedule for the next round of cost-of-living support unveiled in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 17 November. The £900 payment for over eight million eligible means-tested benefits claimants (including those on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and tax credits) starts in spring. Payments will go directly to bank accounts in three payments over the course of the financial year. There will also be a separate £150 for over six million disabled people and £300 for over eight million pensioners on top of their winter fuel payment. Payments will be made automatically if individuals are eligible and there will be no need to apply. Claimants who are eligible for any of the cost-of-living payments and receive tax credits, and no other means-tested benefits, will receive payment from HM Revenue and Customs shortly after DWP payments are issued.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-of-low-income-households-to-get-new-cost-of-living-payments-from-spring-2023>

### **Great Chesterford Hardcore Site : ESS/109/22/UTT**

This was refused. Planning Appeal:

<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseID=3306988&CoID=0>

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

Peter McDonald

Feb 5th 2023