

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Comprising Barton, Coton, Comberton, Grantchester, Harlton,
Harston, Haslingfield, Hauxton, and South Trumpington

District Councillors' Monthly Report – December 2022

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the details below.

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Cost of living and priority services information

There is information on cost-of-living support on the SCDC website at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/>. This includes: where to turn for advice; benefits, money and debt advice; help with energy and water bills; help for parents and families; help with food and health costs; help with phone bills; help with making your home warmer; Age UK handyperson service and; support if you are in distress.

Community Chest cost-of-living support

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Community Chest fund provides grants to voluntary and community sector groups, charities and public sector bodies wishing to further improve quality of life locally. Criteria have been expanded to allow bids that include contributions for any project that has a positive impact for communities related to the cost-of-living crisis. Parish councils of any size can also place grant bids.

Visit www.scambs.gov.uk/communitychest, or email Community.Chest@scambs.gov.uk.

GoFundMe page launched to help residents struggling in the cost-of-living crisis

The District Council are inviting residents to donate to a new emergency Go Fund Me campaign, which will be used to support people just about managing in South Cambridgeshire. SCDC has kick started the initiative to help provide more vulnerable residents hit hardest by the cost-of-living crisis with lower cost options to keep warm and cook. The funding from SCDC could see around 400 people supported with free electric blankets and slow cookers, but even more can be done if donations are received. Donations can be made at www.gofundme.com/SCDCcostofliving.

Comberton and Grantchester Warm Hubs

Cambridgeshire ACRE and South Cambs are working with communities all across the district to open Warm Hubs to help people struggling with fuel cost or just wanting an opportunity to get together. There are two open Warm Hubs in this ward:

Comberton Baptist Church, Green End, Comberton, Cambridge, CB23 7DY.

Opening times: Monday, 3.30pm - 6.30pm, Thursday, 10.30am - 1.30pm

Grantchester Communal Hall, Tabrum Close, Grantchester, Cambridge, CB3 9NW

Opening time: Friday, 10am - 12pm

Information on other Warm Hub venues can be found at Cambridgeshire ACRE and libraries across Cambridgeshire are also offering a "Warm Space " for anyone who needs it during the winter months.

Holiday and Food schemes for the Christmas festive break

Cambridgeshire County Council will be running a Christmas Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme which is being funded by the Department for Education. Families in receipt of income-related free school meals can access a holiday scheme for up to 16 hours per child and will receive enriching experiences, a meal and snacks daily.

Booking information is available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/haf-provider-directory>

Help for Households Campaign – Social tariffs

The government has worked with a range of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Mobile Network Operators (NMOs) to deliver low-cost broadband and phone service packages, called social tariffs, for those on low incomes. Social tariffs are available for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits, with some providers offering deals from £15 a month.

Warm Home Discount scheme reopened

The Warm Home Discount scheme will provide a discount of £150 off electricity bills for three million low-income households this winter. Most households will receive the discount automatically. The government has launched a new online tool, to make it easier for the public to check if they are eligible for the discount. The online tool will guide customers through the eligibility criteria in England and Wales, asking questions about electricity supply, the benefits they receive and characteristics of their property. All customers will receive a letter between this month (November) and mid-January 2023 confirming their eligibility and the payment will be made automatically through energy suppliers by March 2023. The government is also writing to customers who may be eligible, advising them to use the tool linked below to check eligibility, as well as to use the helpline for particularly complex cases. <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

UK Power Networks Priority Services Register

This register is for the elderly and those with health issues affected by losing electricity. Those on the register are contacted with information about large power cuts in the local area and provided with hot meals if the electricity has been off for 4 hours, especially over meal times. You can find out how to register online at <https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/power-cut/priority-services> or call 0800 169 9970.

Help on mould and other housing issues

If you rent a home in the private sector, we would urge you to seek help from the Council if mould or associated issues are not resolved by your landlord. In South Cambridgeshire, the District Council has a role in ensuring that homes in the private sector and the Council's own properties do not contain health hazards. Most properties within the private rented sector in the district are in good condition, but the Council's Environmental Health team investigate any complaints. Private Sector and Housing Association tenants can make a complaint about the condition of their home by emailing env.health@scambs.gov.uk. The Council has the power to take the appropriate enforcement action if there are issues that need to be resolved. This action could include writing to the landlord to ensure the issue is resolved, but the Council can also serve a legal notice to instruct works to be carried out.

The Council manages around 5,500 Council homes and takes report of mould in any of them seriously. Please contact us if you have any unresolved issues in your Council house.

Energy prices – Potential help for Parish Councils

Parish Councils experiencing increases in energy costs may be interested in exploring potential ways to reduce energy costs, for example joint purchasing. Eastern Shire Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) work with a number of parishes across the East of England as part of their energy framework portfolio.

If a Parish wishes to explore this option, please contact:

Rowena Reid

Customer Relationship Manager - Energy

Mobile – 07747 868021 | Email – r.reid@espo.org

ESPO, Barnsdale Way, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester, LE19 1ES

Six free trees

For the third year running South Cambs is offering free trees to parish councils across the district to help provide homes and food for wildlife and combat climate change. The Six Free Trees campaign has seen 390 trees planted across South Cambs since it was launched in 2019. Parish Councils have until 21 December 2022 to apply at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/grants-funding-and-community-support/six-free-trees>.

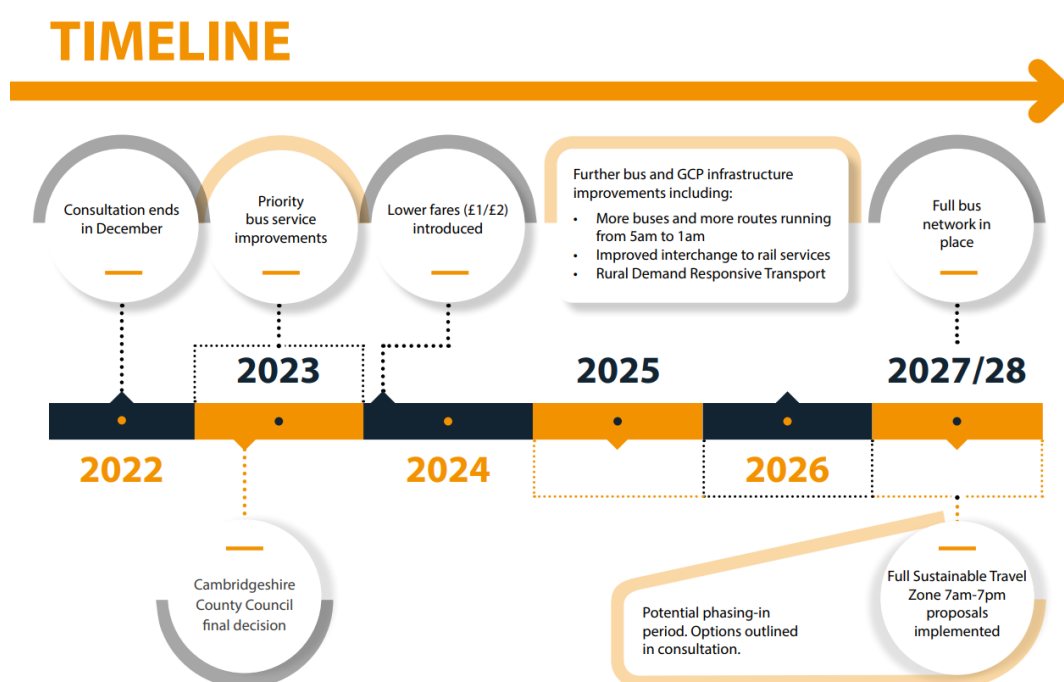
GCP Making Connections Consultation: Have your say on plans to improve bus services, walking and cycling, and introduce a charge to drive in the city

We ask everyone to engage with the consultation on the Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP) proposal which aims to improve public transport, make walking and cycling safer and more attractive, reduce congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

The core proposal is for the GCP to forward fund improvements to the bus network. This would include regular services to villages 7 days a week, extending running times from 5 am – 1 am, and introducing £1 single bus fares within the city and £2 single bus fares outside the city. You can compare the proposed and current service levels/ fares for each village using this [interactive planner](#).

The improvements would be rolled out over the next few years, and then be sustained by a charge for driving vehicles into the Sustainable Travel Zone between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday. While driving would get more expensive, the proposal aims to make bus travel cheaper and more accessible, and improve the experience for those walking and cycling.

Find out more at: <https://consultcambs.uk/engagementhq.com/making-connections-2022>



Following the recent bus cancellations by Stagecoach, it seems like a critical time to consider how we can ensure public transport is available and affordable for everyone, but particularly for those with no other way of travelling. These proposals are likely to require new ways of running the buses, such as franchising (used in London and Manchester), that give local authorities more control and protect users from operators prioritising profit.

This proposal has generated a lot of media and political attention and will be of interest to most residents. There are many points of local detail and personal concern which are essential to flush out and bring to attention. So, we strongly urge everyone to take part in the public consultation which **ends on 23rd December 2022**. The Chair of the GCP has said that they want to hear people's views on these proposals and answer people's questions, and that they haven't made up their minds on whether the scheme should go ahead.

Lastly, we'd like to highlight a few issues where there is some misinformation going around:

- The improvements in the bus services would be brought in over several years *before* the introduction of the Sustainable Transport Zone charge
- Park & Ride sites are outside of the proposed Sustainable Transport Zone charge area, so they would remain an option, and they would be cheaper due to the plan to reduce bus fares
- The inclusion of the Addenbrookes site will be subject to further discussion. It is worth noting that staff are already heavily discouraged from driving and parking (unless working shifts, which would be outside the congestion charge times). Patients too ill to use public transport would be exempt.

SCDC Support for Ukraine

Ukraine – New hosts for guests needed

Cambridge and South Cambs have between them about 500 hosts for Ukraine guests. With the war in Ukraine continuing, the six-month hosting arrangements have needed to be renewed, though not all hosts are in a position to do so. Anyone who might be able to provide a spare room for a guest from Ukraine is asked to get in touch with SCDC. We need new rooms for about 200 people. For this reason we have launched the GOT A SPARE ROOM campaign. If you are interested all you have to do is text ROOM to 88802.

Find out more, and watch video stories from current hosts and guests, at

www.scambs.gov.uk/support-for-ukraine-it-all-starts-with-a-spare-room

Reminder: Holiday and Food schemes for the Christmas festive break

Ukrainian and other refugee families can attend the Cambridgeshire County Council Christmas Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. Families in receipt of income-related free school meals can access a holiday scheme for up to 16 hours per child and will receive enriching experiences, a meal and snacks daily.

Booking information is available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/haf-provider-directory> - click on 'South Cambridgeshire Schemes'.

Learn to cycle safely on winter roads

Dark evenings and wet or icy surfaces require greater caution from cyclists using local roads. Bikeability is the Government's national cycle training programme helping cyclists to learn practical skills and understand how to cycle on today's roads.

There are new Bikeability sessions available for Ukrainian guests at Lower Cambourne Cricket Pavilion, Woodfield Lane CB23 6FY, on December 17, running from 9am to 12pm or 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Book at <https://outspokenbookings.co.uk/PublicBooking/Index>.

Join in by helping out

Volunteering is a great way to make new friends and to get to know your local community. It can change lives, fight isolation and improve wellbeing, confidence and skills, while making our communities better places to live. The experience of volunteering can even sometimes lead to or help with acquiring paid work.

Ukrainian guests who are interested in joining in community activities by helping out as volunteers can find useful information on the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services website <https://www.cambridgecvsvs.org.uk/>.

Reminder: Private Facebook page for young guests to 'meet' in a safe environment

A private Facebook group especially for young Ukrainian guests aged 13 to 19 is available for them to connect, chat and support each other.

Administered by SCDC and with an adult moderator ensuring it's a safe and secure environment, it is designed for young guests who have arrived in South Cambs as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Please note, this is a group for young Ukrainians, not adults or parents. See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1424735478018690>