

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Monthly Report – September 2023

District Councillor Contact Details

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

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Updates from DLUHC

Community Automated External Defibrillators fund and expression of interest form – reminder

Organisations in England are being invited to bid for a share of £1 million of government funding to buy defibrillators for community spaces like town halls, local parks or post offices. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is [inviting interested organisations to register expressions of interest for its Community Automated External Defibrillators \(AED\) Fund](#), aimed at increasing the number of AEDs in public places. An estimated 1,000 new defibrillators are to be provided by the fund. As part of the grant award, applicants will be asked to demonstrate that defibrillators will be placed in areas where they are most needed. Examples could include town halls, community centres, local shops, post offices and local parks, to ensure that defibrillators are evenly spread throughout communities.

[Organisations are encouraged to submit an expression of interest form](#)

Analysis of Ukrainian nationals entering employment in the UK

On 24 August, the government published [data about Ukrainian nationals in employment by age, gender and region in UK, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland](#). Tables include data relating to Ukrainian nationals who had registered for a National Insurance number on or after 4 March 2022 and were subsequently paid through PAYE. This predominantly captures those entering the UK through humanitarian visa schemes (Homes for Ukraine, Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Extension Scheme). This is an ad-hoc release of management information and does not constitute an Official Statistics or National Statistics release.

Government announces plan to deliver more homes

The DLUHC recently announced [an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to facilitate the delivery of new homes](#). The current regulations have required Natural England to issue guidance to 62 council areas that new development must be 'nutrient neutral' in their area which has caused delays. The amendment will remove this requirement, allowing Natural England more freedom to develop specific solutions to the causes of nutrient pollution. Alongside this, the government has announced new environmental measures, including increasing funding for the Nutrient Mitigation Scheme run by Natural England. Natural England will work with councils, the private sector and others to tackle nutrient pollution. The government intends to work with the house building industry to ensure that larger developers make an appropriate contribution to the Nutrient Mitigation Scheme. The government will then accelerate work on new Protected Site Strategies, which Natural England will draw up in partnership with local communities to support protected sites in the most affected catchments with the highest housing demand.

Government announces application dates for Sustainable Farming Incentive 2023

On 26 August the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced that [farmers can sign up for the Sustainable Farming Incentive \(SFI\) from 18 September and will be invited to register their interest by the Rural Payments Agency from tomorrow, 30 August](#). The SFI pays farmers for taking actions that support food production, farm productivity and resilience, whilst protecting and enhancing environment. Pre-registration will ensure farmers are supported to have all necessary information in place, so they are ready for when the scheme starts to accept applications from 18 September. Councils are encouraged to share this information with farmers in their area.

Location data can support councils to decide where to install electric vehicle chargepoints

[The Geospatial Commission has recently published a report to support councils to make decisions about where to install electric vehicle \(EV\) chargepoints in their areas](#). By 2030, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be phased out and by 2035 all new cars and vans will be zero emission. The transition to EVs will be enabled by a dependable, well-located public charging network that councils are crucial to help deliver. Location data can help give councils evidence to support location decisions.

Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/location-data-can-help-build-the-ev-chargepoint-network-of-tomorrow>

Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC): management information

On the 6th September, the Department for Education published [data as of 30 August on the education settings confirmed to contain reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete \(RAAC\) and mitigations in place](#). The data refers to state-funded schools, maintained nursery schools and further education (FE) colleges in England. This management information is a snapshot of data and is subject to frequent changes as the results of surveys and mitigations are confirmed. [The 'Background on RAAC management information' document contains more details on this data](#).

Announcement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/list-of-education-settings-with-confirmed-raac-published>

Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service – leaflet published

On 1 August, the government [launched the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service \(HLPAS\), which offers government-funded legal advice and representation \(legal aid\) to individuals facing possession proceedings which could result in the loss of their homes. As of 1 August, individuals who receive a written notice for possession \(e.g. an email from a landlord or a letter from a creditor\) are eligible to receive free legal assistance. Individuals can find their nearest Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service provider by typing in their postcode and ticking the box 'Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service' on GOV.UK.](#) To ensure people facing the loss of their home are aware of the support they are entitled to, councils are encouraged to share this information, including the [leaflet published on the 30th August on the free help available](#), and the website with stakeholders and on their guidance pages.

For further information or if you have any questions, please

contact: Chris.bone@justice.gov.uk

Community Ownership Fund opens again for applications

On 1 September, DLUHC announced that [the Community Ownership Fund is open again for applications](#). The funding will help community groups take ownership of local institutions that have fallen into disrepair or are under threat of closure and give them a new lease of life. Recent changes to the fund have made it easier for voluntary and community groups to apply for funding to acquire assets and run them for the benefit of the local community. [DLUHC has published an overview of these changes in Community Ownership Fund round 3: webinar slides and recording](#). The government is providing funding over four years to support community groups in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to take ownership of assets and amenities at risk of being lost such as community centres, parks, pubs and post office buildings. [For further information and guidance on how to apply, the Community Ownership Fund: prospectus can be found online](#).

Simplified approach to qualifying for a heat pump grant announced – consultation

On 31 August the government has set out [new proposals to make it cheaper and easier for homeowners and small businesses to install heat pumps](#). Proposed measures could mean varying the levels of grants that are made available, depending on the customer's property type or existing fuel source. This would make heat pump installations more affordable for more households and small businesses. Another proposed measure would be a simplified approach to qualifying for a heat pump grant by removing the need to install loft or cavity wall insulation first. This week's new proposals also provide an additional option to help consumers install new biomass boilers that also work as an oven. The government's £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme was recently extended until 2028 and offers grants of £5,000 towards the installation of an air source heat pump; £6,000 off a ground source heat pump; and £5,000 off a biomass boiler. Consumers can also receive a zero VAT rate on installations. [Heat pump installers, manufactures, suppliers, and the wider industry are now being invited to offer their views on the government's proposed changes to the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, with the consultation open on GOV.UK until 12 October](#). Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate.

Flu and COVID autumn vaccine programmes brought forward

On 30 August the government [announced that this year's autumn flu and COVID-19 vaccine programmes will start earlier than planned in England as a precautionary measure following the identification of a new COVID-19 variant](#). The precautionary measure is being taken as scientists from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) examine the variant BA.2.86, which was first detected in the UK on 18 August. According to the latest risk assessment by UKHSA, BA.2.86 has a high number of mutations and has appeared in several countries in individuals without travel history. While BA.2.86 is not currently classified as a variant of concern, advice from UKHSA suggests that speeding up the autumn COVID-19 vaccine programme will deliver greater protection, supporting those at greatest risk of severe illness and reducing the potential impact on the NHS. The decision means those most at risk from winter illness – including people in care homes for older people, the clinically vulnerable, those aged 65 and over, health and social care staff, and carers – will be able to access a COVID-19 vaccine in September. The annual flu vaccine will also be made available to these groups at the same time wherever possible, to ensure they are protected ahead of winter. Vaccinations are now set to start on 11 September, with adult care home residents and those most at risk to receive vaccines first. [The Department for Health and Social Care wrote to council chief executives yesterday including information on plans to vaccinate the adult social care sector](#). NHS England will announce full details of the accelerated roll-out soon, and those who fall into higher-risk groups are being encouraged to take up the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they're invited. There is no change to the wider public health advice at this time.

Installing chess tables in parks and public spaces: prospectus published

DLUHC published [a prospectus inviting councils which received funding under the Levelling Up Parks Fund \(LUPF\)](#) to submit [an expression of interest \(EOI\) to receive additional funding for the purchase and installation of one chess table and accompanying seats or benches in their local parks and/or green spaces](#). On the 22nd August, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced [a package of measures, backed by almost £1 million of government funding, to support primary school children attending schools in disadvantaged areas in England to learn and play chess](#), improve the visibility and availability of chess in communities, and fund professional playing. DCMS will invest £500,000 in the English Chess Federation over two years, to help develop the next generation of chess players. Funds will support expert coaching, training camps and computer analysis.

Cambridge 2040

The following update is very much based on what we know so far – there are still a lot of unknowns:

The speech by the Secretary of state (link: [Long-term plan for housing: Secretary of State's speech - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)) provides some of the thinking behind the plan and is worth a read. The DLUHC website provides information on Cambridge 2040 here: [Long-term plan for housing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Another useful piece is this one from the FT: [Can King's Cross provide a template for UK regeneration? | Financial Times \(ft.com\)](#), which puts into perspective the scale of these sorts of large projects; after 18 years the local regeneration, with significant local and national govt intervention, will have provided homes for 42k people in a prime central London location off the back of HS2/St Pancras. This really puts 200-250k homes into appropriate perspective (discussions with civil servants also suggest that 250k homes is not a number that they have an evidence base for).

Peter Freeman has been appointed by the Secretary of State to lead this work. [Meet Peter Freeman, head of Homes England – the man charged with delivering Cambridge growth \(cambridgeindependent.co.uk\)](#).

He has spent the last six weeks in 'fact-finding' mode, meeting a huge array of people including many local representatives. A couple of weeks ago, Stephen Kelly took him through the detail of the planning challenges we face in terms of development, primarily water constraints. According to Stephen Kelly and Liz Watts, it appears that apart from Peter's fact-finding, there hasn't been a huge amount of progress (likely due to the fact that since the announcement many people will have been on summer holiday leave). However, the project is expected to ramp up in the next couple of weeks.

Autumn GEM (Going the Extra Mile) awards

We'll be holding our next [GEM Awards](#) on Tuesday 26 September at 1:30pm. This event takes place twice per year and is an opportunity for colleagues, Councillors and residents to nominate our staff for one of our awards. The deadline to nominate someone for an award is Friday 8 September, so make sure to [submit your nominations](#) as soon as possible before the deadline.

A reminder - changes to bin collections

From week beginning 18 September many residents will have a change to either their bin day or the sequence of their bin collections. You can read our [press release](#) about this on our website. Even those that are not affected may be caught out by a change to the time that crews reach their property, so need to know that bins must be ready for collection by 6am. All the information about the changes can be found at www.scambs.gov.uk/binchanges. Letters will be sent to all addresses which will experience a change. Please share social media posts from our South Cambridgeshire or Greater Cambridge Recycles accounts.

Flood Action Conference – Thursday 21st September 2023 – St Ives

Community groups and residents are invited to a [Flood Action Conference](#) on Thursday 21st September 2023 at Burgess Hall in St Ives from 10:15 to 16:30. The conference has been organised by the Community Flood Action Programme team (part of the Flood Risk team) and is open to any residents and community groups with an interest in learning more about flood resilience or establishing their own flood group. This conference includes talks and workshops by Cambridgeshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Internal Drainage Boards and industry leading experts. There will also be the 'Floodmobile' at the event, a vehicle demonstrating over 50 examples of flood resilience measures that householders and businesses can install. Tickets can be booked here [Flood Action Conference 2023 Tickets, Thu 21 Sep 2023 at 10:15 | Eventbrite](#)

For additional information contact the Flood Risk team at CFAP@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund

Is there an organisation in your patch looking to upgrade a community building? If so, the project could receive up to £40,000 from the Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund (CPCF), which has £1,000,000 ear-marked to improve community buildings and assets to better suit their users. The fund is open to community/voluntary organisations, public sector bodies including parish councils and schools, and to businesses whose project would offer clear public benefit.

Funds could be awarded to:

- Improve a community building's carbon footprint, sustainability and accessibility by installing heat source pumps, solar panels etc.
- Amend, convert or upgrade a building to reach a new sector of the community. This could be in the form of a Men's Shed, Food bank, etc.
- Purchase equipment to engage additional members of the community. This capital equipment could make the building more accessible, buying much needed equipment for residents to use.
- Create a community allotment / garden to improve wellbeing and mental health of residents in an area that may lack green space / accessible parks.

Visit the [County Council's website](#) to find out more and submit an expression of interest. Submissions close 24 September 2023.