

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Monthly Report – May 2023

Contact details

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

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Cost of living information

Visit <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/> for information on: 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 handy person service and; support if you are in distress.

Further cost of living support confirmed by SCDC

The plans include:

- A roadshow of cost-of-living talks, organised in partnership with parish councils, to highlight the support available to the most vulnerable and increase its uptake
- Support to transform some Warm Hubs into Community Wellbeing Hubs, which will offer more services. £224,000 of funding has been secured from the Integrated Care System (ICS) for this project.
- A large scale Council Tax communications campaign to increase the number of eligible people who are aware of, and subsequently claim, [financial help towards their Council Tax bill](#)
- Expanding the scheme to provide free energy saving appliances to those residents who are only just about managing into next winter. A [charitable giving fund](#), to which residents who are able to can donate as part of this scheme, has raised nearly £2,000 and remains open.
- Helping to create a South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Food Network by creating links between existing foodbanks in the district, creating links between foodbanks and local farmers, encouraging communities to grow fresh vegetables, and promoting healthy eating and more plant-based diets.

More information is available at: [Further Support for Cost-of-Living Crisis for South Cambridgeshire Residents - Report for Cabinet.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Comberton and Grantchester Warm Hubs – Comberton time updated

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. 25 Warm Hubs have been running across South Cambridgeshire this winter, with over 3,000 visits up to the start of March.

There are two Warm Hubs in this ward:

Comberton Baptist Church, Green End, Comberton, Cambridge, CB23 7DY.
Opening times: Monday, 3pm – 5 pm

Grantchester Communal Hall, Tabrum Close, Grantchester, Cambridge, CB3 9NW
Opening time: Friday, 10am - 12pm

Information on other venues can be found at [Cambridgeshire ACRE](#).

SCDC grants for community groups

11 voluntary sector groups have received funding for the coming financial year as part of the Council's Grants to the Voluntary Sector scheme. This year's grant process awarded more than £117,000 and has prioritised projects that support those people most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Information on the groups receiving grants is available here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/funding-boost-for-voluntary-groups-in-south-cambridgeshire/>.

Zero Carbon Communities Grant scheme

Applications open until Friday 2nd June 2023 for the fifth round of this popular scheme. Grant awards from £1,000 to £15,000 are available to reduce carbon emissions or engage the community with the issue. Previous projects include a village e-bike rental scheme, cooking classes that reduce food waste, tree planting, village hall solar panels and a men's mental health and wellbeing project that runs a mobile library for gardening equipment and tool hire.

Please visit the website for more details and how to apply:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/encouraging-communities-to-go-green-with-a-grant-fund-project-celebrating-its-fifth-year/>

East West Rail

The Leader of the Council, Bridget Smith, recently wrote to the rail minister to invite him to come to the district to see for himself the impact the new railway would have on some villages. A number of Parish Councils co-signed the letter and were disappointed when the minister declined the invitation because he had already quietly visited South Cambs without engaging local representatives. Since then, we have had the announcement in the budget that the government is progressing the scheme. Cllr Smith has therefore written again to ask him to reconsider his refusal to visit in the near future or alternatively for her to speak to him in London. We expect an announcement on the route in May.

GCP "Making Connections" consultation

Councillors voted against a motion calling for the Leader of the Council to write to the Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council to support a referendum on the introduction of a Sustainable Travel Zone (otherwise known as the Cambridge Congestion Charge). Members were reminded that the GCP's consultation document deliberately included a range of open and closed questions to ask each respondent whether or not they supported the scheme, which elements they did or did not support, what they might like to see done differently, and what alternatives they would propose. This was intended to provide richer and more nuanced feedback than a yes/no referendum could give and would allow decision makers to balance the wide range of perspectives. We therefore continue to await the results of the consultation, which are expected in June. If you have any concerns in the meantime, please get in touch.

Funding to decarbonise council homes

The Council has been successful in a bid for £1.7 million to decarbonise and improve the fabric of the district's council homes, through improved insulation, new doors and windows, solar panels, and heat pumps. These measures could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills. More information is available at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/new-government-funding-to-continue-work-to-decarbonise-south-cambs-council-homes/>.

Fly tipping prosecution

Officers from SCDC's Environmental Health team supported an investigation into a fly tip in Cottenham that led to a successful prosecution. More information is available at:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/landlord-is-fined-for-fly-tipping-waste-from-renovation-work-on-his-rented-property/>.

New money for Planning Service

Government has given Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) £290,000 of funding to improve feedback processes for its emerging Local Plan. GCSP is a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils.

This funding seeks to build upon the earlier work in producing a “digital” Local Plan by speeding up the processing and the review of the thousands of comments made by communities and developers through the process. This will shorten the time between people making comments and Councillors and communities being able to see who has said what about the emerging plan.

Taxis in South Cambs

Taxis registered in South Cambs will be required to have CCTV installed in the cabs. This is for the safety of the drivers and their passengers.

SCDC Support for Ukraine

Ukraine – New hosts for guests needed

Hosts are still 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 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.

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.

Free bikes available for guests

Guests who would like a free bike can apply for one via one of the Council’s three partner charities [Owl Bikes](#), [Camtrust](#) and [Tag Bikes](#). To learn more about the Free Bikes for Ukrainians scheme, see Local Travel Support on our [Ukrainian Guest Information Hub](#).

Donations of bicycles, helmets, spare tyres and parts will be gratefully received by all three charities.