

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT SEPTEMBER 2023

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (26TH SEPTEMBER 2023)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

I hope you all enjoyed August and had a good break. It has been a pleasure to work with Northstowe residents as required and with the market volunteer team over the Summer to keep it going. In September, I took part in the Running Festival and am very grateful to the volunteers who made the event such a success for us runners. The focus on activating the Interim Community Centre has been good to see too with the café now running and the market being integral to the building. It's also good news that the planning for the Permanent Community Building has gone in.

General council information to share this month:

New Bin Collection Dates from Mid-September:

Bin collections are going to change for approximately 80% of households in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire from week/commencing 18th September.

Longstanton Ward residents ought not to be disrupted, the most that is likely to happen is that residents will have two weeks in a row of one type of bin before it adjusts back to different bins on alternate weeks, but do please feel free to contact me with concerns.

Residents throughout South Cambridgeshire can check their bin collection dates at:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/updates/2023/08/22/changes-to-bin-collections-from-monday-18-september>

Council tax collection rates:

Government figures show South Cambridgeshire District Council collected 99.2% of the Council Tax funds it was due to in the 2022/23 financial year, compared to the England average rate of 96.8%.

As a result, South Cambridgeshire District Council is the joint top performing District Council out of almost 320 tax-collecting authorities in England. South Cambridgeshire District Council collects Council Tax on behalf of the Police, Fire Service, County Council, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Parish and Town Councils.

District Councils are responsible for council tax collection for all local authorities; their piece of the pie is about 9%. For the average band D house, South Cambridgeshire District Council only retains £165 a year from the whole Council Tax bill.

The Government figures also show that South Cambridgeshire District Council collected 98.2% of the Business Rates that it was due to collect from local companies during the 2022/23 financial year – a total of £92,053,000.

Support is available if residents are struggling to meet Council Tax payments. Visit the South Cambridgeshire District Council website for details.

This year the Council sent out over 63,000 Council Tax letters by post at a cost of nearly £33,500. Registering for an online account would help the Council spend more on vital services rather than paying for postage. South Cambridgeshire residents can also sign-up to receive their Council Tax bill online.

Grant for EV chargers at community buildings

A reminder that South Cambridgeshire District Council offers an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Grant. Up to £5,000 per project is available, towards the capital costs of purchasing and installing public EV chargers at community buildings and village halls. Applications will be appraised for their deliverability and positive impact with funding allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. To be eligible for funding, EV chargers must be publicly accessible, and projects should demonstrate that there is likely demand for an EV charger at the chosen location.

Autumn Covid booster announcement:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has announced its advice on who will be eligible for a COVID-19 booster vaccine in autumn 2023. The following groups be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine this autumn:

- residents in a care home for older adults
- all adults aged 65 years and over
- persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- frontline health and social care workers
- persons aged 12 to 64 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression

Government announcement on a massive expansion of Cambridge

It would be remiss of me not to mention the extraordinary announcement by Michael Gove of the expansion of the Cambridge area on a completely unprecedented scale.

Plans by the Government for a major expansion of dwellings, along with scientific research space, in and around Cambridge were leaked to the national press in mid-July. None of the local authorities affected had been informed or consulted about these plans. A formal announcement was made by Mr Gove on the morning of Monday 24 July:

"Proposals will see Cambridge supercharged as Europe's science capital, addressing constraints that have left the city with some of the most expensive property markets outside London, and companies fighting over extremely limited lab space and commercial property with prices that rival London, Paris and Amsterdam..."

This is extremely significant news for our area, already struggling with water stress and huge transport deficits, as well as an acute shortage of affordable housing. The original leak referred to 250,000 additional homes in Cambridge. The announcement by Mr Gove neither repeats these numbers, nor offers any others. It is not specific about the geographical extent of the plans.

To our already five tiers of local government (parish, district, Greater Cambridge Partnership, county, Mayoral combined authority) the announcement adds a sixth layer, to which it is unclear how the others will relate. Large amounts of work have already gone into development planning for Greater Cambridge (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire) by the respective local councils, with a robust evidence base and following local consultation.

Given the situations we are already managing with building in Northstowe and across the Ward, I will keep a close watch on this situation and keep you informed.

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

County Council

Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.

Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.

District Council

Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.

Parish/ Town Council

Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'

Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.

The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor

'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'

What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough

To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the above, or any other matters.

Cllr Natalie Warren-Green for Longstanton Ward including Longstanton, Northstowe, and Oakington & Westwick

Email: cllr.warrengreen@scambs.gov.uk

For those on social media we have a highly active Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/> - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe