

## **LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT JANUARY 2025**

### **LONGSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL ( 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025)**

### **OAKINGTON & WESTWICK PARISH COUNCIL (13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025)**

### **NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025)**

#### **CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN**

I would like to wish you all a very happy new year and continued productivity and progress in all you do for your residents. 2024 was a very successful year for our Longstanton Ward Parish and Town Councils with many initiatives and cases managed for residents. Thank you for your constant support and collaboration with me, which I really appreciate, as well as the chasers and steer on priorities from your clerks when times have got very busy! Teamwork has been excellent across our respective roles, thank you, and I look forward to working with you all in 2025.

To start the year this report primarily covers information about organisational changes to come in local government, the impact of which will start to become clearer in the next few months, plus a planned COVID-19 Day of Reflection 2025, environmental initiatives, and practical information about flooding management.

#### **Local Government Organisation - Devolution White Paper**

The government published the devolution white paper on 16 December.

There are many proposals for Combined Authorities and Mayors. One of the most significant proposals is the creation of unitary authorities where there are currently two-tier council such as in our region. It is expected that newly created unitary authorities would have populations exceeding 500,000 but there may be exceptions.

The rationale for creating unitary authorities is expected efficiency savings and service improvements. The paper cites a PWC County Councils Network commissioned report. It emphasises maintaining community-level engagement despite the larger size of unitary authorities compared with our local district and city councils. A phased implementation approach is proposed.

The paper also discusses changes to the way that councils are funded including a review of the business rates retention system.

#### **Campaign – Support for Young Carers**

The Digital Poverty Alliance wants to make more people aware of the support on offer to equip young carers with digital access and skills. The Alliance is not reaching everyone who could benefit so we are sharing this information and asking parish councillors to reach out to people you're your communities who you think could be supported. More information is available on the [Digital Poverty Alliance website](#).

#### **COVID-19 Day of Reflection 2025**

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport has announced that a COVID-19 Day of Reflection 2025 will take place on Sunday 9 March 2025. For more information, please go to: [gov.uk/dayofreflection](http://gov.uk/dayofreflection). For any queries, please contact [covid.commemoration@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:covid.commemoration@dcms.gov.uk)

This is a UK-wide Day of Reflection for the COVID-19 pandemic will take place on Sunday 9 March 2025. The COVID-19 Day of Reflection is an opportunity for communities across the UK to come together in reflection and commemoration for those who lost their lives and for everyone impacted by the pandemic. On the day itself and in the week before, the public will be able to mark the day in ways that feel most appropriate and fitting to them, both in person and online. 2025 will mark the fifth year anniversary since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and represents a significant milestone as we continue to remember all those affected. There will be lots of ways to take part in the Day of Reflection. More information can be found on a dedicated COVID-19 Day of Reflection 2025 website: [gov.uk/dayofreflection](https://gov.uk/dayofreflection).

## **Flooding**

SCDC's Scrutiny and Overview Committee recently discussed local drainage, flooding and mitigation of water pollution. One of the tasks to come out of that meeting was to provide South Cambridgeshire's parish and town councils with some helpful information and tools to support them – particularly when it comes to flooding. This information has been provided to all parish and town councils in South Cambs via the clerks' e-bulletin. Given the importance of the topic we are also highlighting it to you directly here.

### **Who is responsible for what and who should I contact?**

It can be confusing and time-consuming to work out who is responsible for what when it comes to investigating and regulating flooding. This [handy flowchart](#), produced by Cambridgeshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority, shows a clearly defined list of responsibilities and contact details. The idea of this flowchart is to help you identify an issue relating to flooding and make contact with the appropriate organisation. We hope it will help with more isolated or local emergencies related to sewerage or surface water issues, which can present challenges for residents who don't know who to contact to find help.

### **Watercourse rights and responsibilities**

If there is a watercourse on, next to or under a property you own, then you could be a Riparian Owner. The deeds for your property or land may tell you if this is the case. However, even if your deeds do not say you are responsible for an adjacent watercourse, the law will assume you are. Waiver of responsibility only applies where a title deed states specifically that you are not responsible. This means you are responsible for its maintenance to ensure it flows freely without obstruction, pollution or diversion, and you should also maintain your side of the riverbank. If you are a tenant, responsibilities usually sit with the owner; but it is worth checking your tenancy agreement.

A [map of all watercourses in Cambridgeshire](#) is available on the County Council website. You can also read more about rights and responsibilities as a riparian owner.

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council's Awarded Watercourse team**

I spent a day with the District Council's Awarded Watercourses team seeing them in action to fully understand the SCDC role. The team is responsible for carrying out mechanical / machinery based, and hand works tasks, on approximately 275 km of open watercourses, culverts, pipes and associated structures within South Cambridgeshire.

The District Council often works with Cambridgeshire County Council (who are the Lead Local Flood Authority) on riparian interventions. It can often be the case that the County Council will take action on riparian owners and ask the District Council to carry out work, with costs recovered through the County Council's enforcement actions.

The District Council's Awarded Watercourse team also works collaboratively with Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways teams to provide support to resolve issues quickly - using District Council

equipment and local technical network knowledge. Often issues are not the responsibility of the District Council, but it is able to address an issue which would otherwise take a lot longer to resolve.

The District Council's Awarded Watercourse team also support parish groups, councillors, and representatives by taking a view on drainage matters generally and providing advice on the cause and resolution process. This includes enhancement and support for nature and ecology projects where the service can assist with resources.

### **Sewer Drainage**

Any parishes that are experiencing any sewer drainage issues should email Anglian Water at their Public Affairs mailbox on [public.affairs@anglianwater.co.uk](mailto:public.affairs@anglianwater.co.uk)

### **Campaign – Climate and Nature Bill**

South Cambridgeshire District Council has signalled its support for the Climate and Nature bill which is soon to be debated in Parliament.

A motion passed in the December 2024 Full Council meeting agreed that the Council would endorse the bill, which is being introduced by MP for South Cotswolds, Dr Roz Savage. The bill also has support from all three MPs covering South Cambridgeshire.

If agreed by the House of Commons and House of Lords, the new bill would lead to several climate and nature goals being enshrined in law, including:

- Requiring the United Kingdom to achieve climate and nature targets.
- Giving the Secretary of State a duty to implement a strategy to achieve those targets.
- The establishment of a Climate and Nature Assembly to advise the Secretary of State in creating that strategy.
- Giving duties to the Committee on Climate Change and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee regarding the strategy and targets.

The motion agreed by South Cambridgeshire District Councillors means the authority joins a list of councils from across the country who have agreed to support the bill as part of the Zero Hour campaign.

### **Simpler Recycling: communications toolkit for councils**

From 31 March 2025, workplaces (businesses and non-domestic premises) in England with 10 or more full-time equivalent employees will need to recycle the following waste streams: plastic, metal, glass, paper and card, and food waste. Workplaces with less than 10 full-time equivalent employees will need to comply from 31 March 2027. The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published guidance to outline how this affects workplaces (businesses and non-domestic premises) and waste collectors collecting from these premises. This includes guidance on how the dry recyclables can be co-collected in the same container. Defra has produced a communications toolkit to help councils and private waste collectors inform their business and non-domestic customers about the required changes. Feedback on helpful resources for implementing Simpler Recycling is encouraged through the survey on the toolkit's landing page. Policy statement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update>

### **Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025: Waste charges consultation – to be shared as appropriate**

On 11 November, the Environment Agency (EA) launched a consultation on proposals to introduce new regulatory charges for specific waste activities as well as updating existing charging regimes from April 2025. The Environment Agency is consulting on four key proposals:

- A waste levy which will enable EA to increase waste enforcement activity by around 30%
- New and updated hourly rates to ensure EA can continue to recover the costs of regulatory activities
- A waste fee for intervention to recover the cost of regulation where operators lack authorisation
- Registration and compliance charges for waste exemptions. For farmers, EA is proposing a reduced compliance charge for a set of 15 common on-farm waste exemptions

Proposals in this consultation will fund more regulatory work to target waste crime and the revenue generated through charges will support stronger enforcement, better customer support, improved digital systems and clearer guidance. **EA is encouraging the waste, water, and farming sectors to share their views** on charges associated with waste activities. The consultation closes on 20 January 2025. Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate. Press release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-launches-waste-charges-consultation>

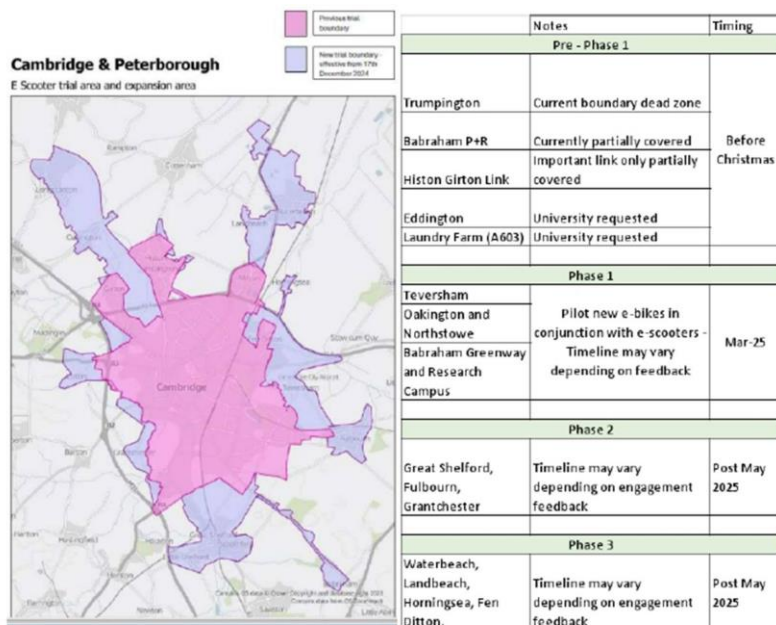
### Planning policy for traveller sites updated

MHCLG has updated the planning policy for traveller sites. The new planning policy for traveller sites should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>

### Transport – Expansion of Voi Scooter Scheme

Earlier this year Combined Authority’s Transport and Infrastructure Committee put an application to the Department for Transport (DfT) to expand the trial area of e-scooters, which currently operate in Cambridge. DfT has approved the proposal for the boundary changes to the existing e-scooter trial area as well as an increase in the fleet size. The Combined Authority’s Transport and Infrastructure Committee advised that this will be a phased approach, the table below shows the proposed phasing order. Oakington and Northstowe are scheduled for **Phase 1**. Parishes will still have the option not to participate within the scheme if they have reservations.



### Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders

The SCDC annual report to tenants and leaseholders for 2023 to 2024 has been published and is being sent to all tenants and leaseholders. You can find it on our website. It is largely focussed on the

new tenant satisfaction measures that have been brought in by the Regulator of Social Housing that we must report on annually. The Regulator of Social Housing has created these measures to look at how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. There are 22 tenant satisfaction measures, covering five themes, with some being measured by landlords directly and others measured by landlords carrying out tenant satisfaction surveys. You can find the full tenant satisfaction measures on our website. The report also includes a breakdown of how an average weekly rent is spent as well as how we compare with other housing organisations.

### **WorkWell launches in South Cambs**

WorkWell – a free programme that helps people who may be struggling to find or keep a job due to a health problem, has launched in South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire and Royston. CPSL Mind will be delivering support across these areas to people in the community. We are one of the District Councils involved as partners and spreading the word to raise awareness. The initiative can support people who have a health challenge that is preventing them from working or are at risk of being out of work due to a health challenge. The attached PDF document explains more.

To find out more, visit <https://www.growthworkswithskills.com/employer-hub/workwell/>

### **Contact information for MP Ian Sollom**

I am including this again this month as a few people have been asking for this: [Ian.Sollom.MP@parliament.uk](mailto:Ian.Sollom.MP@parliament.uk) Ian is already very active across the constituency and his office staff answer emails as soon as practically possible. He welcomes correspondence from residents requiring his assistance.

## **COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND 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.

<p><b>County Council</b></p> <p>Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.</p> <p>Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.</p>
<p><b>District Council</b></p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p><b>Parish/ Town Council</b></p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p><b>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</b></p> <p>'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.'</p> <p>Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.</p>
<p><b>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</b></p>

'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](mailto: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