

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT JANUARY 2023

FOR NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

Since the Town Council meeting in December, the Christmas break has meant that much of my December Report is still valid, and I am repeating some of the news from that to keep it current since the initiatives offer valuable help to our communities during the cost of living crisis, especially in the cold winter months. I hope you find these repeats of useful links useful.

New for this month:

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

SCDC has just published an update about the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan for which work is still ongoing and an important draft plan consultation is due to be held in autumn 2023. In the meantime, recent work has shown that the additional projected growth is going to lead to a demand for more houses. The planning authorities have no choice but to plan to meet the demand. The government adopts a notorious 'carrot and stick' approach; local authorities that deliver the number of houses that the government demands continue to have local planning control, whereas those that do not, lose the ability to decide what is built and where. This was what happened prior to 2018, which resulted in hundreds of houses being built outside of agreed village limits.

As we have experienced in the Longstanton Ward, lack of water availability impacts on planning, which means that for the plan consideration is being taken about how best to transfer water across areas and where to build reservoirs in the Fens. These are medium to long-term solutions and the problem needs to be resolved more quickly than that. High-level discussions are therefore currently being held to determine how the current Local Plan house numbers can be delivered in South Cambs, given the potentially serious consequences for water supply.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

We have been asked to post a reminder that the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency (HIA) offer a range of grants to people with disabilities living in South Cambridgeshire, to help adapt homes. These government grants are aimed at people with disabilities and older people on low incomes or low-income benefits, which helps towards the costs of making changes to their home to allow them to continue living there safely and comfortably. More information is here: hia@cambshia.org.

WARM HUBS

There has been an expansion of [Warm Hubs](#) which are free cosy spaces which residents of all ages can visit to socialise, work, catch up with friends. This link lists the current hubs, Northstowe Hub having been launched on 4th January 2023.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL ZONE

'Making Connections' Consultation – Future bus services, more walking and cycling links, and a Cambridge City Access congestion charge

The consultation on the GCP's plans closed just before Christmas. The public response was very high, and it is going to take some months for the data to be analysed but let's hope that this feedback and analysis leads to a scheme that people can accept and the County Council can vote for.

UKRAINE

New hosts continue to be needed for Ukrainian guests

Hosts are still desperately 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.

KEY AMNESTY 2023

#DoTheRightThing

SCDC are running a Key Amnesty campaign throughout February. People who are misusing Council properties are being offered a one-off opportunity to **#DoTheRightThing** and return their keys without facing criminal proceedings during a month-long crackdown. It gives tenants the opportunity to voluntarily hand in their keys, for a limited time, with no further action taken.

#DoTheRightThing is targeting people who:

- Have provided false information on application forms for housing.
- Anyone illegally subletting, where the tenant moves out then rents the property to someone else, usually at a higher rent.
- Right To Buy fraud, where people do not meet the criteria to buy their property but make false applications to benefit from a discount.
- Tenants who fail to use the property as the only or principal home as well as those who abandon homes without following the proper process.
- Moved out of Council properties to create a family bubble during the Covid pandemic, who wish to remain living with relatives.

Additionally, it is urging people who suspect housing fraud to **#DoTheRightThing** and report it using the [online form](#) or emailing fraud@scambs.gov.uk.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON LOCAL SUPPORT ON ONSHORE WIND

Last month (22 December), the government launched a consultation to explore how councils can demonstrate local support and respond to views of their communities when considering onshore wind development in England. Under the proposals, planning permission would be dependent on a project being able to demonstrate local support and satisfactorily address any impacts identified by the local community. Councils would also have to demonstrate their support for certain areas as being suitable for onshore wind, moving away from rigid requirements for sites to be designated in local plans. The government will be inviting views from councils, communities and businesses. For any enquiries about the consultation, please contact: PlanningPolicyConsultation@levellingup.gov.uk

Repeats of relevant initiatives for easy access:

COST OF LIVING

Cost of living help and Go Fund Me appeal

The Council has kick-started a scheme to help people cope, this winter, with the cost of living crisis and escalating fuel costs. It has provided £10,000 to supply free electric blankets and slow cookers to people who need them. This initial funding could see around 400 people supported and eligible people have already been identified and they will receive a letter soon advising them how to apply.

Even more could be done with donations from businesses and the public and SCDC has, this week, launched a fundraising page in order to help boost the fund for cost of living support, aiming to raise a further £10,000. The Go Fund Me page is part of a wide range of support worth almost £400,000 being put in place by SCDC to support residents through the coming winter.

The page can be found by clicking the following link <https://www.gofundme.com/f/scdccostofliving>

Community Chest Cost of Living support

SCDC'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 now place grant bids. A ringfenced total sum of £20,000 has been made available for these new Community Chest grant applications, provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System, to ensure support is co-ordinated effectively and directed at those in need locally this winter.

MY WARD ACTIVITY

I continue to balance my Council time between training sessions at SCDC, council meetings, and getting closer to understanding the concerns of the ward communities so that I can develop actionable insight. I have been to induction briefings about SCDC Financial Management, the Local Plan, Housing, Planning, Waste and Environment. I have joined the Combined Authority Skills Committee, and I have also become better informed about the current position with EWR developments, and what can be done to raise the agenda of Groundwater to resolve issues in the Ward.

To address issues about bin collections across the ward when it snowed in December, I found myself working hard on social media to keep residents updated about when their bins will be collected and the process! The Facebook pages Oaky Folk, Longstanton, Oakington & Northstowe, and Northstowe Life, have been invaluable for the purpose of keeping many people informed.

Longstanton

- Resident case related to planning, situational damage, and noise issues
- Agreeing with SCDC officers and the Chair of LEGG a meeting date of 26 January to address Ground Water concerns
- Enjoying the warmth of community spirit on the Green when the Christmas tree lights were switched on!

Northstowe

- Attendance at the December and January Delivery Group meetings.
- Attendance at the Town Council in December. Confirmation given to SCDC that NTC will not be involved in any potential discussions on EWR if the Minister visits the area as Northstowe is out of scope for a station.
- Enjoying the high energy of the Festival of Lights.
- Volunteering at the Warm Hub (19.01.23)
- Visiting the Northstowe Market Launch (22.01.23)
- Communicating with Sustainable Northstowe about their activity and where District Councillors can support.

Oakington & Westwick

- Attending TAG meeting to hear concerns about EWR in particular and subsequently being informed by the Parish Council that should a visit by the Minister be arranged by SCDC they are willing to partake in a meeting
- Visiting Chess Café, invited to discuss their activities including storytelling, book club and chess!
- Following up on numerous bin concerns and liaising with SCDC to alert officers of issues with collections

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.

<p>County Council</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>District Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p>Parish/ Town Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</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>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</p> <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.'</p> <p>What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.</p>
<p>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough</p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</p> <p>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.</p>

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