

## District Councillor's Report May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023 - Cllr Tom Bygott

### Bin collections change due to bank holidays

Following the additional bank holidays this year, occasioned by Easter and His Majesty's Coronation, there are still a couple more changed bin dates before the cycle gets back to normal again. Please check the website or the South Cambs magazine so you know when to put your bin out. Below, I have copied a table with the usual collections and the revised collections:

Oakington collection	Usual collection dates	Revised collection dates
Black bin	Thursday 25 May	Thursday 25 May
Blue and green bins	Thursday 1 June	Friday 2 June
Black bin	Thursday 8 June	Thursday 8 June

From 8th June onwards, the bin collections are back to their normal cycle until at least the end of July.

### His Majesty's Coronation

The Coronation weekend of His Majesty King Charles III has been a great success. The rainy weather couldn't dampen local enthusiasm for the event - it rained for the two most recent previous coronations in 1937 and 1953 also. Thanks to everyone locally who organised coronation lunches, street parties and charity events. The first coronation in 70 years and the first of the twenty-first century was an event well worth waiting for and a chance to see that, despite all the troubles and problems of modern politics and daily life, our ancient constitution is still functioning well and preserving the stability and freedom that we all take for granted.

### Northstowe sports pavilion time capsule

Together with colleagues on the District, County and Northstowe Town Councils and the Northstowe Delivery Group, I attended the burial of a time capsule on Tuesday 18 April to mark the start of construction on the Northstowe Phase One Sports Pavilion. Among items for future generations to discover in the time capsule, buried by Northstowe Secondary College students, were photographs, a running medal from Northstowe's first running festival in 2021, the first issue of Northstowe News from winter 2018 and a ball with all the college sport leaders' initials on it. We also signed the building's steel frame.

The time capsule will sit under the car park in front of the building for a future generation to eventually dig up. Some time capsules have a specific time of opening set when they are buried, I have been present for the burial of two 100 year capsules at other places, whereas I am told that this one doesn't have a set date for opening. To prevent the capsule from being forgotten about, we are registering it with the International Time Capsule Society, a voluntary organisation based at Oglethorpe University in Georgia, which aims to keep a record of all such capsules: [www.itcsoc.org](http://www.itcsoc.org).

### Zero Carbon Communities grant

This grant, now in its fifth year, aims to encourage exciting community projects that reduce carbon emissions and engage local people about climate change. Until the closing date of Friday June 2 community groups in the district are invited to bid for a share of £125,000. Previous projects have included cooking classes that reduce food waste, tree planting, a community e-bike rental scheme, solar panels for village halls and a men's mental health and wellbeing project that runs a mobile library for gardening equipment and tool hire.

This year, groups in South Cambridgeshire can apply for between £1,000 to £15,000 from the District Council's total pot of £125,000. The process has been simplified to aid applicants, with applications invited under two categories.

- The first category is for projects which reduce carbon emissions or lock up carbon in a measurable way such as low carbon, energy saving improvements to community buildings, or tree-planting initiatives.

- The second category is for community engagement projects which support and encourage lower carbon living. Full eligibility criteria and ideas for projects are available at [scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant](https://scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant).

## Housing disrepair online signposting tool

The UK Ministry of Justice has developed a housing disrepair online signposting tool for private rented sector tenants with housing disrepair issues. The tool was developed in collaboration with other government ministries and third sector organisations such as Shelter to give users the information and guidance they need to resolve their housing disrepair issues before they worsen. The tool asks users a series of targeted questions before providing tailored information, guidance, and signposting to relevant advice and support. This helps users understand their rights and responsibilities and identify an appropriate next step when trying to resolve their housing disrepair issues.

The tool has been placed on the [gov.uk](https://gov.uk) website and can be found at:

<https://check-how-to-get-repairs-done-in-your-rented-home.form.service.justice.gov.uk/>

## Four day working week trial

On 15th May, the District Council Cabinet agreed to extend the trial of a four-day week for staff at the Council on full pay for a further twelve months. An initial three month trial had commenced in January 2023. Separately, the Cabinet will decide whether to introduce a four 4DW trial for non-desk based staff, which will include waste collection crews.

The Council has published some data on council performance in key areas during the first three months of the 4DW trial. The data and reports are available here (item 4):

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=413&MIId=9590&Ver=4>

The data from the trial is mixed. There have been falls in Council performance in some Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) during the trial (in some cases falling below target), though an increase in staff well-being is also reported. However, there must be some impact on morale for staff in non-desk based roles who must work currently work a five day week while their office based colleagues only have to work for four days.

The trial of a 4DW for waste collection services is being planned alongside changes to optimise the collection network. The extra cost to Council Tax payers of introducing a 4DW for waste collections is estimated at £132,000 in the first year, rising to £207,000 in the second year. The extra cost arises from the need for extra lorries and crews to complete collections in four days rather than five.

If the trial of the 4DW for waste collection is approved, it will start in July or August this year. The plan is for collections to run Tuesday to Friday with no collections scheduled for Mondays. This will require fewer changes for bank holidays as these mostly fall on a Monday, however there will still be some changes each year on Good Friday and in various years Christmas and New Year's Day will fall on other days of the week. For a capital intensive operations which use a large amount of expensive equipment such as bin lorries, it is inefficient to have that equipment sitting idle for nearly half the week.

This experiment has attracted negative coverage from several media outlets, including national ones:

[www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/local-news/south-cambs-council-chief-secret-26829996](http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/local-news/south-cambs-council-chief-secret-26829996)

[www.gbnews.com/politics/south-cambridgeshire-council-four-day-working-week](http://www.gbnews.com/politics/south-cambridgeshire-council-four-day-working-week)

[www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12090049/Locals-slam-four-day-week-local-authority-hiked-council-tax.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12090049/Locals-slam-four-day-week-local-authority-hiked-council-tax.html)

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