

## District Councillor's Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC

January 2023

May I start by wishing all a happy new year. I am aware of continued email issues and have therefore put together a combined report that covers topics over the last few months, my apologies if this provides repeats for some but I hope it will still be of use. May I stress that if residents or yourself need to get in touch and are struggling to get emails through please do give me a call.

### **4 day week**

The Trial has begun, initially for 3 months (January to March), this will then be reviewed, and a decision will be taken whether to extend the trial based on evaluating the KPIs. This trial is for office-based workers only at present and does not currently include waste collection operatives.

### **Missed bins and food waste caddies**

There has been an increase of residents getting in touch about their bins being missed. Please do encourage people to report missed bins on the link below. A key issue has been for assisted collections, these residents are often vulnerable and potentially find it difficult to report any missed collections to the council. If you are aware of anyone that may be struggling to get their bins collected please do get in touch.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/portal-eform-landing-pages/?u=https://forms.scambs.gov.uk/MISSEDBIN/launch>

Some villages within the ward are currently on a separate food waste trial. This is not an option for the missed bin form. If this has been missed, please email [refuse@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:refuse@scambs.gov.uk).

### **Changes to battery collections**

The council have adjusted collection vehicles so that we are now able to collect household batteries for recycling every bin day meaning residents can leave out their batteries weekly on top of their green, black or blue bins. But to help make collections more efficient residents are asked to place a small tied plastic bag containing the batteries loosely on top of their bin, rather than tying it to the bin handle.

### **Money Helper – government website**

Just a reminder of the support available via the Money Helper website. Below are some of the topics where information is available:

- Benefits
- Family and care
- Money troubles
- Savings
- Everyday money
- Homes

- Pensions and Retirement
- Work

[Free and impartial help with money, backed by the government | MoneyHelper](#)

### **Warm Hubs**

The District council has opened a series of Warm Hubs to support residents, below are some of the closest Hubs to the ward:

- Gamlingay Warm Hub  
Venue: Gamlingay Eco Hub Community Centre, Stocks Lane, Gamlingay, SG19 3JR  
Opening Times: Monday, 2pm - 4pm; Wednesday, 2pm - 4pm; Thursday 10am - 12pm; Friday 10.30am - 12.30pm; and Saturday, 10am - 12pm  
Open From: Monday 24 October 2022

### **Support for Ukrainian families**

The District Council along with Cambridge City Council are running a campaign to recruit extra hosts. Anyone who can offer a spare room and warm welcome is being asked to text ROOM to 88802 so that the councils can support them through the process and match hosts to guests who have already started to settle in the local area.

Hosts receive a £350 monthly Government 'Thank you' payment. Both councils are also offering extra opt-in monthly payments to hosts of £150, in response to feedback about rising costs of housing guests, particularly over the winter months. Further information of what support is available via the link below.

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/support-for-ukraine/>

### **Congestion charging**

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Board have completed their consultation on the introduction of a charging zone in Cambridge City and areas of South Cambridgeshire. During this process many have been asking how and who makes the decision as to whether or not a charge is introduced. It has been clarified that while the Greater Cambridge Partnership that has promoted and performed the consultation the decision will have to ultimately be made by Cambridgeshire County Council.

I brought a motion to full council in November (as is below) trying to get the District Council to respond to the consultation and raise the concerns many have raised with myself. Unfortunately this was not successful. I had hoped that even if the reasons for refusal were not agreed that the Council would still respond to the consultation however the District Council has made no response.

- 18a Standing in the name of Councillor Heather Williams  
This council notes the concerns raised by many residents across South Cambridgeshire about the introduction of a 'Sustainable travel zone' that would charge

people to enter the zone via motor vehicle. This council will formally respond to the Greater Cambridge Partnerships consultation relaying these concerns on behalf of the residents we serve. This council, as part of the consultation, will raise opposition to the introduction of said charge and cite the inclusion of Addenbrooke's and Royal Papworth Hospital as absolutely unacceptable.

**Decision:**

Council **Rejected** this Motion.

### **Community Chest Grants expanded to help with cost of living**

Councillors in October recommended that the Community Chest Grant criteria be expanded to allow bids that include contributions for any project that has a positive impact for communities related to the cost-of-living crisis. If anyone would like to apply for a grant they can do so via the link below.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/communitychest>

### **Grants for electric charging points**

A new grant is now available called The Electric Vehicle (EV) Charge Point Grant. It is to fund the installation of Electric Vehicle Charge Points (EVCPs) for use by the public in the car parks of community buildings and village halls within South Cambridgeshire. Steeple Morden Parish Council has already been successful in being awarded this grant and my congratulations goes to all who have worked on the submission and helped make this successful bid.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/grants-funding-and-community-support/electric-vehicle-charge-point-grant/>

### **Planning enforcement form**

The way in which planning enforcement queries can be made has changed recently. Residents are now asked to submit an online form rather than emailing the compliance team. A link to the form is below.

<https://forms.scambs.gov.uk/REPORTABREACHOFPLANNINGCONTROL/launch>

Planning Enforcement action has been a matter of debate at both planning committee and full council. There is real frustration from councillors like myself that not enough resource and priority is given to enforcing planning consents. Council officers can only act within the parameters that councillors set for them. This is why I was happy to support the motion below, that regrettably was unsuccessful. I believe that enforcement is important as a deterrent to stop people who deliberately seek to over step the mark of what they can and cannot do but also to give residents confidence in the system as a whole.

18b Standing in the name of Councillor Tom Bygott

This council notes the lack of planning enforcement actually taken in the last 2 years and raises its concerns. We as a council wish to make clear that we will take enforcement action when breaches are made. We will instruct officers that it is this council's view that enforcement should be taken unless good grounds not to as opposed to the apparent current reverse ethos.

**Decision:**

Council **Rejected** this Motion.

### **Emerging Local Plan update**

There has been an announcement by the District Council that the next local plan will be planning for even more houses than previously thought. This means that with a buffer in place around 57,000 houses will be allocated for development in the next local plan. I have provided a link to the documents that went before the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. I have challenged the wisdom of increasing housing figures given the pressures that our local services that already exists.

Around 8,000 of the houses within this new number are unallocated. I have raised concerns that villages will become under more pressure of development. While assurances have been given that the current spatial strategy is being continued that does allow for further development in villages. I tried to get information as to what sites have been promoted and publish the works which hasn't been updated since the Summer, I await a decision as to when the Council will update t Below is an extract of Appendix D of the Scrutiny papers:

"This option would deliver a substantial amount of housing development within Cambridge city, particularly at North East Cambridge and densification of consented development at North West Cambridge and the Cambridge urban area. It also includes a substantial amount of housing development at Cambridge Airport and around Cambourne, with additional development within the 'southern cluster' and villages. This option also includes faster delivery rates at Northstowe and Waterbeach.

This option focuses employment development at North East Cambridge, Cambridge Airport, Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Cambourne, although the majority of this is expected to come forward beyond the plan period. Additional rural employment locations are identified at Babraham and on the A14 corridor in vicinity of Swavesey Junction, as well as in the southern cluster and villages."

<https://scams.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=417&Mid=9693&Ver=4>

## Accounts

The Councils 2019/2020 accounts are still in the process of being audited. It has been a continuing concern raised by the Audit and Corporate Governance committee. It has been incredibly frustrating and while communication between the council and the External Auditors has improved I do feel that if this could be fully addressed then the audit process could really speed up.

The 2019 external audit fees are still being negotiated but below are the latest figures that have been made available. Given the District Council is also paying for interim officers to help catch up with previous years accounts has led me to question at times the value for money that the council is providing residents in regards to this matter.

	Planned fee 2019/20 (€)	Final Fee 2018/19 (€)
Scale Fee - Code work	40,021	40,021
<b>Additional risks and areas of focus (Note 1)</b>		
Additional audit overruns & delays (Note 2)	0	106,500
Risk - Group accounts	4,000 - 5,000	5,000
Risk - Presentation and disclosure of accounting items and Impact of 50% performance materiality & higher risk factors	10,000 - 20,000	20,000
Risk - Data migration relating to new Fixed Asset Register (FAR)	0	152,000
Risk - New financial management system	0	7,500
Risk - Going concern	1,500 - 3,500	3,500
Risk - New accounting standards	0	1,250
Risk - Capital Accounting Entries	5,000 - 20,000	0
Risk - Valuation of Investment Properties	3,000 - 6,000	0
Risk - Non-domestic rate (NDR) appeals provision - change in management expert	2,000 - 5,000	0
VFM - qualification in relation to Council's weaknesses in meeting financial reporting duties for publishing draft and audited accounts	0 - 3,500	3,500
<b>Total audit</b>	<b>65,521 - 103,021</b>	<b>339,271</b>
<b>Non-audit services:</b>		
Housing Benefits (Note 3)	14,995	14,815
<b>Total other non-audit services</b>	<b>14,995</b>	<b>14,815</b>
<b>Total fees</b>	<b>80,516 - 118,016</b>	<b>354,086</b>

**Cllr Heather Williams**

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