

Melbourn Parish Council January 2024 – District and County Councillors’ report

Apologies for the long report, owing to the December gap. Most is for information only.

LOCAL

Footway slurry treatment

Cambridge Road and Royston Road pavements are on the list for slurry treatment this year – awaiting more details.

Permits for Royston and Thriplow Recycling Centres in reciprocal county agreement

Following work to arrive at an arrangement for out-of-county residents to use Royston and Thriplow Recycling Centres, a permit system has been initiated for Herts residents to use Thriplow and Cambs residents to use Royston. This is a simple on-line form:

[Change to access at Royston and Thriplow Recycling Centres - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

‘Street care and cleaning’ - special requests

[Street care and cleaning - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/street-care-and-cleaning)

This website provides information on the next visit to our area by the street care team, which works on a ten-week cyclical basis and is managed by South Cambridgeshire District Council Environmental Health (not County Highways). You can use the contact information provided to request special clearance of a hot spot area.

Path upgrade to Meldreth Station

Preparatory work for the upgraded Meldreth-Melbourn path, connecting to Meldreth Station, is going well with construction work expected this spring. More details to come via Meldreth and Melbourn parish clerks.

Next Police On-line community meeting – 28 Feb:

Information on how to sign up for this meeting can be found here. Please note also the encouragement to fill out the community survey to help inform Police priorities.

[South Cambridgeshire | Cambridgeshire Constabulary \(cambs.police.uk\)](https://www.cambs.police.uk)

Parking Enforcement in South Cambs

New Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers in South Cambridgeshire will be given to Cambridgeshire County Council following Parliamentary approval.

Earlier this year an application was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) to enable Council Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to issue Penalty Charge Notices for the majority of on-street offences such as parking on double or single yellow lines. Previously only the Police could do this.

Benefits are expected to include increased compliance with parking restrictions which in turn would improve traffic flow, road safety and lead to a reduction in obstructive and dangerous parking. It will also support economic growth in the district.

Following the decision by Government, the CPE scheme in South Cambridgeshire came into effect on 19 December. To give people notice and a chance to find a more suitable parking place, information

has now begun to be placed on vehicles that are parked in some areas where parking is in the greatest demand, such as commuting and shopping areas.

A Warning Notice will be issued to people who continue to park where there are restrictions throughout January – this looks like a parking ticket but there is no fine attached. Penalty Charge Notices will be issued from 1 February which will mean a fine of between £50 and £70, depending on the severity of the offence.

DISTRICT AND COUNTY GENERAL

New County Council volunteer driving scheme for helping children and young people get to education:

A new community transport type scheme has been initiated and will hopefully be able to make a difference to families struggling with transport to school. It's a particular issue for post-16s as there is no statutory requirement for councils to provide post-16 education and training transport assistance.

[Volunteer for the Passenger Transport Service - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Streetlights switchover on the way

A project to switch its streetlights to newer, more efficient LED lights is expected to begin in 2024 and will involve replacing 47,500 streetlights with LED lanterns. This will take two years to complete. The works should cause minimal disruption to residents, with no impact on roads or footpaths. Each unit should take about one hour to replace. The Council will share the proposed installation dates for each area before the start of the works and will publish this information on its web site. The Council's street lighting service provider, Balfour Beatty Living Places, will also provide information on its own web site. Questions can be addressed to Street.Lighting@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

New Highways maintenance way of working

From April, highways maintenance jobs will be signed off and coordinated by specialist teams rather than Local Highways Officers, though our LHOs will act as intermediaries to keep specialist teams informed of local needs and priorities. Specialist teams will deal with signs, lines, road surface treatment, path treatment and gullies. Teams have formed in anticipation, and we are all getting familiar with new ways of working - we will do our best to help make the transition. Please note that logging jobs on the Highways reporting site is still the right first step. [Report a highways fault - Cambridgeshire County Council](#) Any questions please let us know.

Regularizing gully clearing:

As previously reported, prior to the 2021 County Council Joint Administration, there was no systematic recording and care of gully maintenance. As part of a massive overhaul of Highways maintenance systems, and within a context of managed decline legacy and a visibly deteriorating network, highways maintenance is transitioning to a more accountable system, though resource remains very stretched and need very high. Indeed the upcoming budget requires significant additional expenditure to simply stand still.

All gullies have, for the first time, been mapped and recorded on a system called KaarbonTech. An initial program has been put in place to ensure all gullies are cleared every two years. Data on the state of each gully is now being recorded with each of those cleans. The next step is to put that together and adopt a smarter gully cleaning regime. Not all gullies need to be emptied every two

years, but some will need much more frequent routine work. The aim is to build up the data picture and be smart about where scarce resource is deployed. Parish clerks should now be receiving cyclical gulley clearance notices. Any hot spots should be logged on the Highways reporting site: [Report a highways fault - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Teenage fostering appeal In Cambridgeshire

There are currently more than 400 young people in the 12-18 age range who, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to continue living with their birth families. These young people would benefit hugely from the invaluable experience of people who have raised teenagers and supported them on their journey to independence. When you foster with the Cambridgeshire Fostering Service, you will receive:

- generous allowances and carer perks
- an individualised training programme tailored to your needs
- round-the-clock support
- a dedicated, skilled and experienced Supervising Social Worker

If you are over 21 years of age, have a spare bedroom, and believe you have the qualities and skills to become a compassionate, resilient foster carer, please get in touch. Facebook at @CCCFosteringService Online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-andfamilies/fostering-and-adoption Phone 0800 052 0078

Childminding careers

From the County Council: Are you interested in working in a profession which would enable you to work in your own home and continue to care for your own children, whilst providing quality care for children of working parents? If so Registered Childminding may be the profession for you. To help with starting your childminding business the Government are currently offering a grant of £600 towards your set up costs. We hold regular information evenings about childminding which are free to attend. If you are interested in finding out more please e-mail childminding@cambridgeshire.gov.uk for more information or call 01223 714657.

Chancellor's autumn statement

Cambridgeshire County Council leaders have expressed disappointment about the lack of any additional funding for local government in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's autumn statement.

Councils like Cambridgeshire have been underfunded for many years by central government, and central government are again asking for more growth without recognising the costs that brings: the need to provide more schools and more care for our growing older population.

A previously announced £2.3million over the next two years for highways improvements in Cambridgeshire is helpful, but it's a drop in the ocean of the need for investment in our highways network. Soaring inflation in highway maintenance costs, alongside the impact of climate change on our 4500 miles of roads, 37% of which are affected by peat damage due to extreme weather events, have left us with a huge challenge to simply stand still on keeping our roads safe. Like the Local Government Association said over the weekend, we need highways funding to be over a minimum of five years—as has been offered to National Highways.

We've already seen applications to our household support fund reach their highest ever levels this summer, compared to the same time last year.

Consultation on county budget proposals

Consultation is underway on the County Council's proposals for its 2024/5 budget, in what is being called 'the toughest year to set a balanced council budget'. The Government's one-year Local Government Financial Settlement announced last month does not compensate for the levels of demand and inflation that the council is faced with, particularly in areas such as children's social care, home to school transport and provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. A fair funding review for local councils promised by the Government has never materialised. The council is looking to support vulnerable people and improve highways maintenance, while still seeking to bridge a remaining £2M gap—even with a proposed council tax rise of 4.99% (2% for adult social care services, and 2.99% for general services). The Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee received and considered draft budget proposals at its meeting on Tuesday 19 December. The council's service committees will consider these at their various meetings in January. An online public survey has been launched and is open until 16 January: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/budget-consultation-2024-5>

The Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee will make a final budget recommendation at its meeting on 30 January for Full Council to debate on 13 February. The draft proposals have been shaped by views gathered in the council's first Quality of Life Survey conducted over the summer. They focus on sustaining social services, continuing to provide free school meal vouchers for eligible children during holidays, progressing the council's commitment to pay the real living wage to people providing adult social care, and prioritising highways and cycleways maintenance across the county.

Potential savings have been identified to help bridge the funding gap. These include:

- Moving to LED streetlights (£1M in energy savings each year)
- Rationalising office accommodation (£1.5M in the next three years)
- Reviewing the highest cost children's placement costs, and home to school transport routes (more than £2M)
- Driving down the amount of bad debt (£0.5M)
- Reviewing income from permits and parking charges (just under £1M)

Supporting sustainable growth in Cambridgeshire

Since the initial announcement in summer 2023 about Government's 'Cambridge 2040' plans for up to 250,000 homes, council leaders and officers have begun to explore the vision for Cambridge 2040 with Government officials.

Following a visit to Cambridge by the Secretary of State in November, leaders from Cambridgeshire County, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, the Greater Cambridge Partnership, and local business wrote to urge Government to commit to supporting sustainable growth in Cambridgeshire. This commitment would involve:

- **Water scarcity:** Resolving the area's water supply challenges – including through a commitment to enhancing new supply options,

significantly better management of demand and investment in resilience of our rivers and the local environment.

- **Cambridge South East Transport (CSET):** Providing £162 million to support a Transport & Works Act application for a scheme that would link the city centre to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the southern cluster including Babraham.
- **Transport infrastructure:** Supporting the Greater Cambridge City Deal and Partnership transport programme which provides a deliverable solution for current growth and a scalable solution to support expanded growth ambitions with future public transport solutions.
- **Local Planning:** Supporting the Local Planning Authorities to become a pilot for a new form of plan making and allowing Greater Cambridge to have an up-to-date long term development strategy in place as soon as possible.
- **More genuinely affordable housing:** Providing support via Homes England for councils to implement a bespoke housing strategy to tackle the affordability crisis for essential key workers and the specific needs for homes in globally significant sciences and deep tech sectors across Greater Cambridge – in addition to local partners’ ongoing work to provide more affordable homes.
- **Match population growth with health and social care investment:** Providing funding for a detailed plan to enhance and improve the facilities at the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CUH), along with further enhancements to primary and community-based care services and wider health and social care integration, to enable a truly preventative approach within Greater Cambridge.
- **Support specific sites to come forward:** Notably the relocation of the Anglian Water sewage treatment works in Northeast Cambridge and the relocation of Marshalls to Cranfield to unlock development at Cambridge East.

Joint Statement by local leaders on Government’s Cambridge 2040 plan (following on from previous item)

The Rt Hon Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on Cambridge 2040, unveiled updated plans for the Government’s ‘Cambridge 2040’ vision on 19 December 2023. The Government’s vision for Cambridge includes proposals for “northwards” of 150,000 new homes around Cambridge as part of a major new expansion of the city.

The leaders of Cambridge City Council, Cllr Mike Davey, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cllr Bridget Smith, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cllr Lucy Nethsingha, and the Combined Authority Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Dr Nik Johnson, said: “Despite working hard to engage constructively with Government officials since the Secretary of State’s initial Cambridge 2040

announcement in the summer, it's deeply disappointing that once again Government plans for Cambridge seem to be being negotiated through the press.

"We note in the latest announcement that the number of new homes put forward by Rt Hon Michael Gove MP has come down from 250,000 to 150,000, but this is still substantially more than the over 50,000 homes we have identified as needed in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan (to 2040) – a number which will already be incredibly challenging to bring forward. We are ambitious for high quality sustainable, green growth but can't stress enough how vital it is that Government supports us to tackle the issues that will otherwise act as roadblocks to sustainable growth.

"We have written to the Secretary of State a number of times over the past month to stress the importance of committing to sustainable growth, and to reiterate the support that is needed to enable us to plan for the homes set out in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

"This includes prioritising sustainable public transport, community infrastructure such as schools and GPs, and water shortages in this region, which are putting our chalk streams under extreme pressure – an issue which the Greater Cambridge Planning Service warned in January 2023 could delay existing plans for housebuilding if not addressed by Government. We are still waiting for responses to these questions which would detail how Government proposes to support us in delivering a proposed 50,000 or so homes responsibly, let alone 150,000.

"Clarity is also needed as to who is involved in the 'Cambridge Delivery Group', what it will do, and how it will be governed. Devolution works best when local politicians are empowered to lead and deliver sustainable development and we will continue to work hard to represent our residents and ensure that Cambridge and its surrounding villages grow in a sustainable and carefully planned way."