

Melbourn Parish Council April 2024 – District and County Councillors’ Report

LOCAL

Anglian Water meeting follow-up

We are still waiting to hear back from Anglian Water on some of our agreed actions, including ways of improving communications with the public.

As your district and county councillors, following we met with South Cambs planning and building control officers subsequently, to keep them informed and to consider any new points of action that the planning authority might be able to undertake in relation to foul and surface water systems. We’ll report more in due course.

Riparian ownership template letter for parishes:

A template letter has been provided by the Flood Risk team at County Council and is attached to this report, for parish councils.

Cambridge South Station: direct link from our stations?

While one might think that it could not be otherwise, a direct link from Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Stations to the upcoming new Cambridge South Station at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (serving Addenbrooke’s etc), was not assumed. Due to the complexity of pressures on the overall Network Rail timetable, adding the time for this direct link was in doubt – in which case passengers from our three village stations would need to travel to Cambridge and then back-track to Cambridge South. We’re delighted to report now that a direct link from the stations to Cambridge South has been confirmed. This will be a transformative public transport link for our area. The new station is due to open in 2025.

East West Rail public engagement events

EWR has advertised the following – all to take place between 2-7PM

- May 22, Comberton Village Hall, : Green Ed CB23 7DY
- May 21, St Philips Church Centre Mill Road Cambridge CB1 3AN
- May 10, South Cambs District Council offices Cambourne

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Zero Carbon Communities Grant

This grant aims to empower community groups and parish councils to take local action on climate change. Applications are once again invited for projects under two themes: reducing carbon emissions or locking up carbon, and community engagement around climate change. Grants of between £2,000 and £15,000 are available to parish councils and community groups in South Cambridgeshire, with a total pot of £125,000 available.

Projects funded previously have included community building retrofits, food waste and climate-friendly cooking education, and e-bike rental schemes. You can find more past projects, case studies

and the application form on our website: [Zero Carbon Communities Grant - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/zero-carbon-communities-grant)

All applicants should review the updated application guidance and information documents (attached). Please note especially, all solar PV projects are now asked to have received 3 quotes.

We also encourage those wishing to apply to attend our grant application workshop (24 April 2024, 7-8:30pm, [sign up via Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/zero-carbon-communities-grant-workshop)). You can also email zcc@scambs.gov.uk for support.

Applications close Sunday 2 June at 5pm.

Funding for councils to introduce weekly food waste collections

On 25 March, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced that councils in England will be supported with up to £295 million in government funding to introduce weekly food waste collections by 31 March 2026.

The funding will cover new food waste containers for homes and specialist collection vehicles, targeted at councils that have yet to fully put food waste service in place.

We are waiting to hear details for South Cambs.

How new properties are valued for Council Tax

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has recently published [a blog explaining how it values properties built after the Council Tax valuation date](#). The blog sets out what evidence the VOA uses when making banding decisions. Councils are encouraged to share the blog as appropriate. Any questions, please contact voamediaenquiries@voa.gov.uk.

Development Corporation to decide future of Cambridge

The Government has set out more details of its plans for a huge expansion of Cambridge and the areas around it. Originally called Cambridge 2050, then Cambridge 2040, it has now been set out in a document called The Case for Cambridge with plans for 150,000 more houses in and around Cambridge.

The Government's spring budget included £10.2M for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and transport to it (the Cambridge South East Transport or CSET project). A major obstacle to growth in and around Cambridge is water scarcity, to which the Government's answer is to pilot a new system of 'water credits' where 'developers can offset their development through the purchase and sale of water credits to ensure they have a neutral impact on water scarcity within Cambridge'.

Last year, the Government appointed head of Homes England Peter Freeman to lead a new Development Corporation called the Cambridge Delivery Group to deliver the Government's vision

for Cambridge. Some locally elected representatives will be on an advisory board, but it appears that decisions will be taken elsewhere.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Cost of living

The County Council's Communities Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee has approved an additional £150,000 to Cambridge Housing Society to deliver the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme, which supports Cambridgeshire residents facing unexpected financial difficulties.

The council has also allocated £400,000 to Citizens Advice to deliver income maximisation across Cambridgeshire. By the end of the third quarter of 2023/2024, Citizens Advice had supported 2,251 people, against an annual target of 2,400.

Dear Sir or Madam,

IMPORTANT THIS LETTER AFFECTS YOUR PROPERTY

Section 25 Land Drainage Act 1991

Address/location of ditch/watercourse affected/requiring maintenance

I write in respect of land at [location] that may well be under your control. [It has been brought to our attention the lack of maintenance of the land for drainage purposes and how this has presented a risk of flooding to both neighbouring properties as well as the highway maintainable at the public expense.

You may not be aware that riparian owners are responsible for maintaining and clearing debris (even if this is not from their land) from the watercourse or ditch as well as vegetation on the banks in order to keep them clear and prevent flooding. You are a riparian owner of any watercourse within or adjacent to the boundaries of your land. This could be an open watercourse (river or stream), a ditch or a culvert for example.

The person who owns the land on or adjacent to which a watercourse flows through is commonly known as the "riparian owner" of the watercourse. The expression "riparian rights" refers to those common law powers and duties relating to the use of water associated with the ownership of the bank or bed of a watercourse. The deeds to a property may indicate who the riparian owner is but this is not always the case. The law therefore presumes, in the absence of "contrary evidence" that land adjoining a watercourse includes the watercourse. If there is nothing specific in the property deeds and unless there is something to establish "contrary intention", the riparian owner is responsible for the watercourse. For example, a ditch alongside a road is normally owned by the adjacent landowner.

As such you are required to carry out necessary works to ensure that the proper flow of water is not impeded on your land.

I am grateful for your cooperation and assistance in respect of this matter.

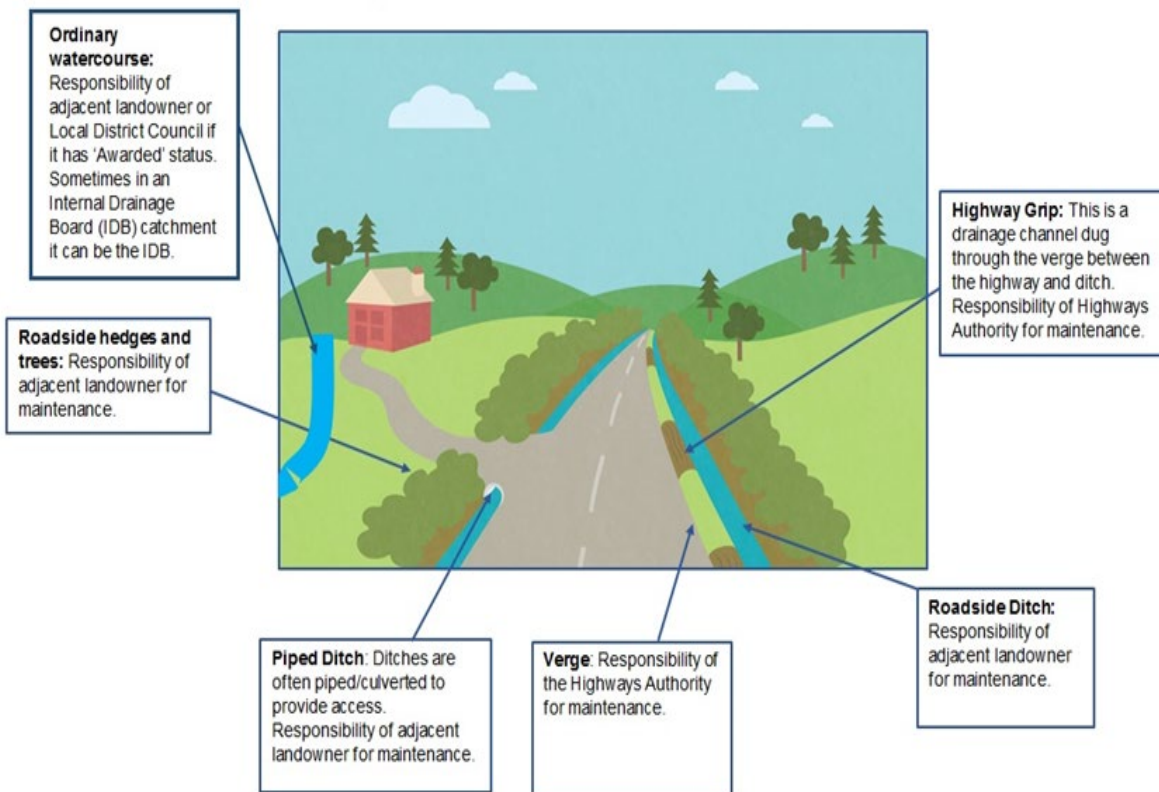
Watercourse maintenance includes, but is not limited to, removal of the following obstructions from the cross section of the watercourse:

- Brambles and other dense vegetation
- Self-seeded trees
- Any litter or fly tipping
- Fallen trees, trunks, branches etc.
- Unconsented structures (eg. decking, bridges, fences (wooden and wire) and boarding etc)
- Unconsented culverting/pipes
- Clearance of obstruction from any consented culverts

Where consented/unconsented refers to Ordinary Watercourse Consent under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. Works within a watercourse in the UK require permission by law, see www.cambridgshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water.

The diagram below outlines responsibilities in respect of rural drainage

Responsibilities for Rural Drainage



Yours sincerely,