

## Melbourn Parish Council September 2025 – County and District Councillors’ Report

### Flags

Most (or all) of the flags have now been removed from the High Street.

In response to numerous emails received from members of the public, expressing concern and asking questions about what is permitted and how the situation would be managed, we have posted the following on Facebook. It is worth repeating that *“While some have found the flags a source of pride, others have strongly complained to us that they find them intimidating.”*

The County Council has stated in the press: *“Our highways team follow a standard process when things are placed on our highways. They are considered as damage or could be a safety issue so will be removed. We’ll continue to monitor the situation along with our partners.”*

Flags attached to lamp posts contravene S. 132 of the Highways Act 1980, but the police are leaving enforcement to the county council. Anyone interested in the dos and don’ts of flag flying should consult the government’s *Flying Flags: A Plain English Guide*.

*‘All flag flying is subject to some standard conditions’ according to the UK government Flying Flags: A Plain English Guide. This includes how and where flags may be displayed – invariably on fixed flag poles, and then with various specifications. Local Planning and Highways Authorities are the local bodies responsible for compliance.*

*Displaying flags on Highways property is not permitted on grounds of safety and must be removed by the Local Authority.*

*The Cambridgeshire Report It website is the place to log any concerns about unauthorized signs, flags or other items attached to Highways land or street furniture.*

*The Guide describes the emotive power of flags and their potential to strengthen community cohesion.*

*The widespread display of national flags in recent weeks, including in Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth, has certainly been emotive; but from the correspondence we’ve received it cannot be described as cohesive. While some have found the flags a source of pride, others have strongly complained to us that they find them intimidating.*

*Thanks to those who have been in touch with suggestions for creative new means of expressing patriotism and pride in the community. This debate is an integral part of our democratic society – how lucky we are to live in a free and open society.*

*The most powerful force in our community is the desire to make it a good place to live, and the multitude of social groups and clubs providing practical support and friendship, learning or enjoyment, are testament to this. Local government exists to support our communities, whether helping to solve problems or to support new ventures that will make life better.*

## **Cam Vale Bus User Group meeting**

Many thanks to all who attended or supported this meeting on 2 September, which was attended by the Combined Authority Public Transport assistant director, and which garnered a lot of feedback on the experience of using the 17 and 26 services. The meeting also heard about the future of bus franchising and was promised more information early in the new year, when we hope to convene the meeting again. We will continue to forward all feedback to the Combined Authority and look forward to continuing the conversation about improvements.

## **Highways**

The reorganisation of Highways has now taken effect, with a Highways Maintenance Manager and Officer now responsible for highways in Melbourn. Aurora, the new highways asset management system with improved public interface, has also be launched.

We've had an introduction to the new system, and we hope that this will improve highways management and maintenance as well as communication with those who report highway faults.

We are able to request reports of outstanding issues for each Parish. We would like to support officers by decluttering Aurora so they can focus where it matters most. Clerk and councillors, please drop us a line by email if you notice faults that can be cleared from the system, and please continue to use Report It to report new issues:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults>

## **A505/New Road**

Further to the recent tragic fatal accident at the A505 New Road junction, we have received questions whether permanent traffic lights to facilitate right turning could be installed, as well as how many accidents there have been and if there could be better signage/ lighting/ lower speed to protect drivers trying to turn right. If residents and the Parish Council wish, this is something we can pursue, also with the support of Pippa Heylings, MP.

## **Local Government Reorganisation**

### **What is it?**

The government wants to reorganise local government and has set out the rules for the process, such as the desired size of the new unitary authorities that will replace district and county councils. One element of the rules is that the new unitary authorities should follow the boundaries of existing districts.

### **Why are there three options?**

That creates a few options of “reshuffling” the existing district and city councils into new unitary authorities. Different administrations within Cambridgeshire have different views of what will work best, and therefore several business cases are being prepared to be put forward to the government.

From the perspective of someone living in South Cambridgeshire, the options are:

Option A: Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire form the new unitary authority.

Option B: Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

Option C: Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

The County Council is working on Option A, while South Cambs District Council is working on Option B.

### **What is happening now?**

A new engagement survey focused on Option A has now been launched for residents and parish councils. And, a new survey focused on Option B has now been launched.

### **Why should I take part?**

Importantly, the different options have different strengths and weaknesses, and in the end, it'll be for government to decide which option will be implemented. However, for a chance of a good decision, it is important that all business cases are as well-founded as possible. For that reason, it's important that residents consider sharing their views with those who are preparing the business cases via this link to the survey:

CCC survey: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/county-council-launches-second-phase-of-engagement-into-local-government-reorganisation-asking-residents-to-share-their-views>

SCDC survey: <https://engage.scambs.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/future-councils>

Between 19 June and 20 July 2025, a total of 3,406 people, including residents, stakeholders and staff, took part in the previous countywide engagement survey to share their views on the biggest shake-up of local government since the 1970s.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/council-leaders-thank-communities-for-helping-shape-the-future-of-local-government>

## **Swifts**

There's an initiative to establish a "swift corridor" in South Cambridgeshire, with Bassingbourn having had particular success with the installation of swift boxes to boost the local population. Environmental groups in Whaddon and Shepreth, and some initial homes in Meldreth, have taken an interest. Are you interested in taking part?

## **Cambridge South Station**

Cambridge South station is due to open on the early side of 2026. This will transform sustainable public transport connections from local rail stations to Addenbrooke's and neighbouring new hospitals, to sixth form colleges, and to nearby employers on the biomedical campus. The new station will connect to over 60 other stations and will be included in the December 2025 timetable change, albeit trains will not stop until the station opens. An on-line public information session is being organized by Cam Valley Community Rail Partnership in December.

## **A bit further afield: Ivy Farm Bridge**

We have launched a letter writing campaign to bring life into an initiative to open Ivy Farm bridge over the A505 between Bassingbourn and Royston by creating a new public right of way. This may be of interest for keen walkers and cyclists. Please keep an eye out on Social Media and talk to us if you want to support this by writing a letter to the landowner who needs to consent to the creation of a public right of way over some farmland. This would be transformational for "active travel" from and to Bassingbourn, especially for young people and those who can't drive.

## **OTHER NEWS FROM CCC AND SCDC**

### **Council launches new campaign highlighting the impact of its services on residents and communities**

"*Working for You*" is a new campaign launched today, celebrating the work of the teams at Cambridgeshire County Council and the positive difference they make to lives and communities across the county.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/council-launches-new-campaign-highlighting-the-impact-of-its-services-on-residents-and-communities>

### **New Community 'Service Support Grant' funding**

Please note this significant new funding opportunity, for which applications are due on 31 October. Any voluntary, community or social enterprise organization delivering services for South Cambs residents can apply. All information at [www.scambs.gov.uk/grants-and-funding](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/grants-and-funding).

### **Litlington: new affordable housing**

All outstanding matters around 22 new affordable homes at Sheen Farm Litlington are now resolved, with an update provided by the housing association.

- The s73 and Deed of Variation that were submitted last year have both been approved now which has enabled the housing association to move forward on site.
- All contributions have been paid as part of the s106 agreement.
- Handover of all 22 properties is currently estimated for November 2025.
- All properties will be affordable housing as opposed to a mixed site. Nine will be for rent with 13 shared ownership. People with a local connection will have priority for ten of these homes.
- For any queries about the Shared Ownership homes, more information at [Litlington Edge, Royston, Cambridgeshire - 2, 3 & 4 bedroom Shared Ownership homes](#)
- For the rented plots, applicants will need to be registered with Homelink to be considered for a property when allocations commence.

### **Council House news**

An £8.2 million government grant has been secured to retrofit social housing in South Cambridgeshire, cutting carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty by making homes warmer and cheaper to heat. Overall funding stands at £19 million to support energy efficiency upgrades for 610 homes across South Cambridgeshire. The remaining funding is being provided through the Council's Housing Revenue Account, which is supported by rental income from tenants.

58 new council homes for affordable rent were delivered this past year, including 10 for shared ownership, and 11 for temporary accommodation. In addition, the Housing Team achieved a 62% success rate in interventions that prevented homelessness for 278 individuals and families in 2024/25.

Key achievements in the last year include:

- Publication of the [Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024–2029](#) which sets a clear vision for the future.

- Completion of the Gypsy and Traveller and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment, with a cross-departmental action plan now in place.
- Approval of an updated disabled adaptations and repairs policy, resulting in 66 mandatory and 36 discretionary grants for non-council tenants and owners.
- Construction has started on the Northstowe Unity Centre, a flagship community hub set to serve one of the district's fastest-growing areas.
- Supporting the delivery of 525 affordable homes in the District in partnership with housing providers and developers.
- Introduction of a formal inspection programme for flat blocks and 100% safety compliance across communal areas.
- Support for 364 clients via the Visiting Support Service and 729 applicants housed through the Housing Register and Direct Lets.
- Installed 115 disabled adaptations, 397 heating systems, and 220 kitchens in our council homes.
- Returned 300 empty properties to a lettable standard.
- Completed £1 million in fire safety works and conducted 3,500 gas safety inspections.
- The first year of Tenant Satisfaction Measures was completed, with targets agreed for 2025/26 to ensure continued improvement.
- Delivered £4 million in home improvement measures to reduce energy costs.

### **Further consultation on Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document**

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) is reconsulting on the draft [Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#). This follows updates to the draft SPD being made in response to feedback from an initial consultation held between November 2024 and January 2025.

The SPD provides detailed guidance on how planning obligations, also known as Section 106 contributions, will be used to mitigate the impact of new developments across Greater Cambridge. The SPD outlines when developers might need to make these contributions and what they could involve. Examples of this may include affordable homes, better transport options like cycle paths or bus improvements, and protecting nature by improving habitats and planting more greenery.

The feedback gathered from during the consultation will play a crucial role in shaping the final version of the Supplementary Planning Document. Once adopted, the SPD will

replace existing planning obligations guidance currently used by Cambridge City Council and will also help to guide development in South Cambridgeshire.

- Comments can be made on the SPD between 9am on Friday 22 August and 5pm on Friday 17 October 2025.
- To read the updated draft SPD and to find out how to submit your comments, visit: <https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/spd>
- The councils are also holding in-person and online consultation events during the consultation period. These events are an opportunity to connect with Planning Officers, share your thoughts, and find out more about the SPD out for consultation.

### **Applying for a memorial grant**

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has [updated the guidance on how to apply for a grant towards VAT on the construction, repair and maintenance of public memorials](#). The Memorial Grant Scheme is a UK-wide grant, available for memorials in any part of the UK (or overseas memorials in some circumstances). The grant scheme is managed by East Midlands Business Ltd on behalf of DCMS.

If you have questions about the grant scheme or whether your memorial is eligible, please contact [grants@memorialgrant.org.uk](mailto:grants@memorialgrant.org.uk) for advice.

### **Improvements in support for care leavers**

The County Council has improved the support and stability it provides for care leavers in Cambridgeshire, according to a recent Ofsted report.

Ofsted carried out a focused visit in July, looking at the council's arrangements for care leavers. They concluded that arrangements have strengthened since their last visit in 2024, though there is still work to be done.

Inspectors commented that:

- 'Leaders are ambitious to support care leavers into employment, further education and training opportunities [...] The local authority is trailblazing the use of bursaries for care leavers over 19, supporting care leavers to remain longer in further education or giving care leavers who wish to return to employment, education or training, these opportunities.'

- ‘Care leavers now have stronger and more purposeful relationships with their personal advisors and investment in additional staffing in the service is helping to reduce staff turnover and workloads.’
- ‘Most care leavers live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs and increasing numbers are supported to remain living with their current carers through effective Staying Put arrangements.’
- ‘Political and corporate leaders and care leavers have co-produced a convincing and aspirational pledge which sets out their commitment to help care leavers fulfil their full potential.’

The summary also identifies four areas for improvement:

- The quality and impact of front-line manager’s supervision to promote and provide reflective practice for personal advisors
- The quality and impact of front-line managers oversight to ensure purposeful and considered case direction
- The quality and consistency of pathway planning
- The range and accessibility of suitable accommodation to meet care leavers needs.

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50285468>

### **Could you be a foster carer?**

Cambridgeshire Fostering Service is looking for compassionate individuals and families across Cambridgeshire to become foster carers. By offering a stable, loving home, you can make a life-changing difference for children and young people who are unable to live with their families. Fostering doesn't have to be a long-term commitment; the council also needs carers for short-term fostering and respite care. Find out more:

- <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/fostering-and-adoption>
- [www.facebook.com/CCCFosteringService/](http://www.facebook.com/CCCFosteringService/)

## **Integrated Care Boards – new cluster for Cambridgeshire to help meet financial challenge**

NHS Integrated care boards (ICBs), which are the local NHS coordinating points for health services, have been left between a rock and a hard place over taking forward redundancy schemes to hit demanding cost reduction targets set by the Government.

In March, the Government announced that it was scrapping NHS England over the coming years and set a target for integrated care boards to reduce running costs by 50% by the end of the third quarter of this year. It later refined this target to keeping running costs within £18.76 per head of population, meaning that ICBs face different cost reduction targets depending on their starting point. Redundancies will be essential to meet this target.

However, it has subsequently become clear that there is an expectation that all redundancy costs should be self-funded. However, this leaves ICBs facing the prospect of launching a redundancy scheme, where the costs have not been included in their financial plan, or putting schemes on hold and missing their target to reduce running costs.

ICBs are without the additional funds needed to pay for their own restructuring. To meet the cost-cutting requirements of the Government, most ICBs have agreed 'clustering' arrangements. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB has clustered with Bedfordshire Luton & Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire, with a population of around 3.3 million people.

### **Annual Healthwatch summit**

Healthwatch is an independent patient champion organisation consisting of a national body, Healthwatch England, and local Healthwatch groups focused on specific geographical areas. The current leadership team at Healthwatch Cambridgeshire have been active supporters of health scrutiny, including submitting reports and attending public scrutiny sessions to share the patient voice.

This year's annual summit is focusing on mental health and making local mental health services accessible to everyone. The event is taking place on Wednesday

8 October 2025 between 9:00AM and 2:50PM at the Delta Marriott Hotel, Kingfisher Way, Huntingdon PE29 6FL. It is free to attend and open to all. Booking required.

<https://www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/form/sign-up-to-join-our-annualsummi>

### **Quality of Life survey reveals how people in Cambridgeshire are feeling**

Cambridgeshire residents continue to feel happy and safe in their communities with a strong sense of belonging, according to the results of Cambridgeshire County Council's third Quality of Life survey.

Headline findings:

- 84% of residents say they feel happy – this figure has remained consistent over three years.
- 85% feel safe in their community.
- 76% feel a sense of belonging to their local community.
- 30% say they often feel lonely, and 28% reported struggling with their mental health – younger age groups were more likely to report these concerns.
- 87% of residents reporting that they personally feel concerned about the cost of living

Key findings about the County Council this year, included:

- Residents continue to be very satisfied with library services (89%), registration services (87%), and waste management (82%).
- 58% of residents trust the council to make decisions about local services - a 6% increase on last year and higher than the national benchmark of 50%.
- 47% believe the council provides value for money – up from 41% last year.
- Satisfaction with roads and pavements has risen to 28%, up from last year's figure of 21%.

While concerns around cost of living, climate change, and access to jobs remain high, many residents also recognised improvements in council services and reported having greater trust in the County Council.

More here: [Quality of Life survey reveals how people in Cambridgeshire are feeling | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

## **Schools in Cambridgeshire help the county get closer to Net Zero, thanks to low carbon heating programme**

Councillors have confirmed their support for the next stage of the Schools Low Carbon Heating Programme, which has already supported more than 70 Cambridgeshire schools since its launch in 2014.

At a meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council's Children and Young People committee today (Tuesday 9 September), councillors heard how the programme has delivered a wide range of energy-saving upgrades, such as ground and air source heat pumps, solar panels, LED lighting, improved energy management systems and better insulation.

To date, the programme has supported both maintained and academy schools across Cambridgeshire to:

- Save an estimated 11,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Approach an estimated £1 million in energy bill savings.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/schools-in-cambridgeshire-help-the-county-get-closer-to-net-zero-thanks-to-low-carbon-heating-programme>

## **Learn about becoming a foster carer in Cambridgeshire**

Cambridgeshire County Council is appealing for residents to come forward to help reduce the numbers of children waiting for foster...

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/learn-about-becoming-a-foster-carer-in-cambridgeshire>