

County and District Councillor Report: Melbourn Parish Council - June 2026

Melbourn Greenway

The business case for the Melbourn Greenway was recommended for agreement by the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board at the meeting of the GCP Assembly on 18 June. The business case was very favourable for the long-awaited active travel bridge over A505 to complete the route between Cambridge and Royston. A contractor has been appointed to deliver the bridge, with the caveat that the contract is in three phases 1) confirm fit and feasibility of delivering a bridge under the high voltage power cables running along the A505, 2) design, and 3) construction. Completion of the Melbourn Greenway with an active travel route all the way through the village of Melbourn and through to Royston along the eastern side of the A505 will improve the travel options for residents in Melbourn, Meldreth, Whaddon and along the A10 corridor.

In connection with the Greenway, councillors may remember that three TROs were out for consultation last year, detailing works through Melbourn and along Station Road to Meldreth. When it came to approving these TROs earlier this year, a question was raised about some elements of the proposed vertical traffic calming measures. The technical work has shown that these are justified in terms of creating a safe and comfortable environment for active travellers of all abilities, in line with national design guides and policy ambitions such as LTN 1/20 and as set out in recent government announcements.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cycling-and-walking-boom-with-45-billion-for-thousands-of-new-routes-and-safer-crossings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

Unrelated but opportune, Cambridgeshire County Council is pleased to be working with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council to deliver high quality cycle training for all ages.

<https://grafhamwater.cinolla.com/grafham-water/category/funded-cycle-training>

Practical Solutions Group

The practical solutions group met at Melbourn Village College to discuss updates relating to youth and the two schools. The recent uptick in non-emergency criminal behaviour was discussed, and the Community Safety Partnership and PCSO were in attendance. The school is in the process of appointing more prefects.

Non-emergency criminal behaviour

Related to the previous item, we have included the following message in our Joint Report in Meldreth Matters:

Following some recent incidents, a reminder about reporting:

If you see any non-emergency criminal activity in our area, please do report it to the Police – see <https://www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/> for details on how to report, including via the online forms.

If the activity involves the railway, you may also report it to the British Transport Police, for example by text message to 61016.

In cases of anti-social behaviour, fly tipping or licensing, please also consider notifying South Cambridgeshire District Council online at:

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

Reporting issues in our community is crucial so that the relevant services are aware, can act on any incidents and patterns of incidents, and involve local services including those run by your councils.

Local Buses

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has launched a Bus Network Engagement. They are asking residents to share their views on proposed changes to bus services, including significant changes in Bassingbourn, Kneesworth, Litlington and Whaddon. It is important to respond in order to inform future decisions.

<https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-network-review-engagement/>

The engagement closes at 5:00pm on 28th July 2026.

In connection with this, we will be holding another Bus User Group meeting in Bassingbourn, on 2 July, 12.00 noon at the Old School Community Centre. CPCA are keen to attend, and A2B have agreed to a meeting with local councillors. Please contact me for further details, or if you would like to attend the meeting with A2B.

Local Government Reorganisation: Where Are We Now?

The process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is moving forward. A decision announcement from the Government is expected in July 2026. If confirmed, a Structural Changes Order would follow in late 2026, with the legislation needing to pass through Parliament. This will formally establish the new unitary authority, setting out names, boundaries, electoral arrangements, and the vesting day for new councils as well as the abolition date for existing ones, which would cut current councillors' terms short by two years. Elections to a “shadow” authority are anticipated for 6 May 2027, with the shadow authority meeting and appointing its executive and interim statutory officers by 20 May 2027. The expected vesting day, when the new authority becomes fully operational and South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire County councils are wound up, is 1 April 2028.

Improved road maintenance contract extension agreed with M Group

The council has agreed an extension of its road maintenance contract with M Group, which will provide improved value for taxpayers and stability during local government reorganisation (LGR).

This follows ongoing collaborative work with M Group over a number of years to address serious and systemic challenges on our highways (long term government under investment, climate change impacts and our soil affected roads) and deliver a revitalised highways service that's equipped to ensure safe and well-connected travel across our county.

The council's contract with M Group, which was due to end in June 2027, will be extended until June 2030. As part of the extension a number of enhancements to the contract have been jointly agreed between the council and M Group, prioritising improved value for money and quality control.

The new contract extension will come into effect in July this year, with agreed improvements in the delivery of road maintenance services to be rolled out over the course of the summer.

In July 2025, the Government advised that authorities going through LGR should ensure that their decisions do not negatively impact the sustainability of successor authorities or limit the ability of those future councils to deliver on their priorities, within their budgets.

Securing a prudent extension and enhancement of the council's road maintenance contract with M Group was agreed by the Highways and Transport Committee, in January 2026, to be the best way to ensure a safe and legal LGR transition process, whilst representing good stewardship by the county council.

This short-term extension will enable the future councils to procure their own road maintenance contract, rather than tying them into a long-term contract.

The collaboratively agreed enhancements secure an improved deal for Cambridgeshire's taxpayers a year ahead of when the current contract was due to expire, and include:

Fixed costs – introduction of fixed costs for regular maintenance activities to secure better value for money and improved accuracy for budgeting

Quality control – a revised quality control regime that incentivises delivery of work on time and meeting standards

Financial penalties – direct penalties for failure to deliver to the required quality and time standards (in addition to remediation of work)

Maintenance vehicle tracking – All road maintenance vehicles will be tracked to enable monitoring of their whereabouts and outputs to ensure we are getting an efficient service

Highway maintenance

Please continue to report any highway issues via the Highway Faults website.

<https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/en-gb>

Quality of Life survey to gather resident views across Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire County Council's annual Quality of Life survey is an online and telephone survey that will capture the views of around 5,500 residents. The 20-minute telephone survey is being carried out by independent market research company Thinks Insight, which aims to speak to a representative sample of approximately 1,100 residents aged 18 and over in each of Cambridgeshire's five districts, ensuring a broad and balanced range of perspectives. Alongside the random sample, all residents are encouraged to take part in an online survey via the council's website.

Residents will be asked about a range of topics to inform the priorities of the council, including life and community, transport, health and wellbeing, children and young people, and perceptions of the council and its services. The survey closes on 5 August 2026 and is available at:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/quality-of-life-survey

Summer Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Children eligible for benefits-related free school meals can access 64 funded hours at a HAF holiday scheme where a daily meal, physical exercise and enriching experiences are offered. Families experiencing financial hardship also qualify.

The scheme operates 21 July to 28 August, and further details are available at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Feedback from Bridget Smith, Leader SCDC, regarding DevCo announcement

Parish Councils are probably aware that the last government and this government have both had designs on increasing the growth of housing and jobs in Greater Cambridge far beyond what we have identified through our local plan process: 150,000 by 2050 "theirs" compared with 77,000 by 2045 "ours".

This aspiration has now taken a leap forward with the Labour Government formally announcing its intention to create a government led Development Corporation covering the whole South Cambs and Cambridge City area. This is vastly larger in geography and population than has ever been seen before anywhere in the UK.

There is no doubt that this will result in loss of greenbelt land though where that might be, we cannot yet say. The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan gives a very high level of protection

to all our villages and the greenbelt but it would be naïve to say that the ‘Devco’ would respect this.

Currently, anyone wanting to build anything at all in Greater Cambridge has to submit a planning application to the Greater Cambridge Planning Service and the decisions are taken either by our expert planning officers or by the planning committee which is made up of elected members from both political parties that hold seat in South Cambs.

It would be a travesty if these plans damaged the Greater Cambridge Planning Service which has recently been awarded the title of Best Planning Authority in England.

If the government does not amend its plans, as they currently stand, all planning applications above 250 units will be submitted to the Devco and decided by its own planning committee which will only have 4 elected members with the majority being ‘experts. This represents a huge democratic deficit, with a Westminster minister having ultimate say.

We are talking to government to see if we can move this situation into something acceptable to our council and communities based upon the large amount of consultation we have conducted and the responses we have seen to their consultation, most of which align with our strongly held views.

As a minimum, that would mean increasing the thresholds for housing by a significant amount and getting assurance that the Devco will concentrate its resources on sorting out the infrastructure gap that is actually slowing growth of our area. This includes the shortage of water, electricity, health, education and transport links.

Zero Carbon Communities Grant

As mentioned previously, a reminder that South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Zero Carbon Communities Grant is open, with Parish Councils or local community groups invited to apply. Feel free to contact us with questions or visit.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-and-environment/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant>

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday 24 July 2025.

Community groups invited to apply for new Community Pantry Grant

South Cambridgeshire groups can now apply for funding to set up community pantries, thanks to a new grant launched by the District Council.

The Community Pantry Grant offers up to £400 to buy equipment and materials to get a community pantry up and running. The new grant is part of a [£449,000 package of support](#) to tackle cost-of-living challenges over a 2-year period until March 2028, which was agreed by South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Cabinet at the end of 2025.

Pantries of this type are simple, community-run spaces that provide residents with free access to food and everyday essentials, helping to tackle food insecurity while also reducing food waste. They are generally accessible, do not usually require staffing, and are maintained by the community.

The grant can be used for items such as shelving, indoor or outdoor storage, small venue adaptations, fridges or freezers, advertising, or other essential costs needed to start a pantry or expand an existing food hub to include one.

Eligible applicants include:

- Parish and Town Councils
- Constituted community groups with a bank account
- Informal groups with written support from their Parish or Town Council or District Councillor.

£5,000 has been allocated this year up to 31 March 2027, or until all funds are allocated. Applications will be assessed by Council officers. A further £5,000 will be available next year, depending on demand for the scheme.

Visit www.scambs.gov.uk/community-pantry-grant to apply.

Local Validation Checklist consultation

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has prepared a new Local Validation Checklist, providing a single checklist for both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils Council areas. It provides guidance on what supporting documents must be submitted with a planning application; some are always required, others will depend on the type of application and development proposed. We are running a 6-week consultation seeking views on the content of the new Local Validation Checklist. [Have your say by 28 July 2026.](#)

Unauthorised encampment sites

We are aware of concerns relating to potential unauthorised encampment sites in recent weeks. South Cambridgeshire District Council has been granted a High Court injunction under Section 187B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against persons unknown in relation to land west of Moor Drove, Histon/Cottenham. The illegal activity took place over the late May Bank Holiday weekend and was noticed by observant residents who then reported to local councillors.

Sally Ann, Jose & Adam