Joint report from your District and County Councillors

Melbourn

Following the awful fire on Friday evening in Melbourn, we would like to thank vigilant residents who called the fire service and who've offered support to those affected. Also, a huge thanks to the fire fighters, the police and now SCDC officers who have been dealing with the aftermath over the weekend and continue to do so. Hopefully the family affected will get help to fix everything affected. Thank you all.

Vandalism and anti-social behaviour are a live concern.

Coffee with a cop has been organised for 4 November 11.00 – 13.00, at the Hub.

Residents can voice their priorities to shape the strategy of our neighbourhood policing team by completing the following survey or by attending a community engagement event.

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=G53Fo_G4mUKdajmtj1cEluNSj2t2XR9Ajs9uyzmKHftUMDcwWTZZU0lONENSNk9PV1g2Tk9BR0c5SCQlQCN0PWcu&origin=lprLink

https://www.cambs.police.uk/area/your-area/cambridgeshire/south-cambridgeshire/south-cambridgeshire/meetings-and-events/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area

Please continue to report all non-emergency incidents by calling 101 or completing an online police report.

Melbourn Practical Solutions Group (PSG) had a productive meeting at Melbourn Village College last month. In view of the recent heat, two councillors with relevant expertise will support village college students with energy and cooling advice.

Also look out for consultation notices for a Local Development Order for a local heat network promoted as the Melbourn Energy Superloop.

We plan to give an update on the Melbourn Greenway soon.

A big thank you to the Clerk for keeping us informed about views on the proposed designs for the LHI intervention. That will make it much easier for us to represent local views.

The 17t weight restriction signs on New Road near the A505 have now been reinstated.

Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey

One number stood out for us in the results of this year's Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey published last month. Although satisfaction with life in Cambridgeshire is improving according to many of the survey questions, still nearly 4 in 10 young people self-report that they are struggling with their mental health.

The causes behind this are complex. In her annual report, our Director of Public Health summarises the local and national evidence, connections between mental health and poverty, the services and financial support offered by councils, and what we can all do to support young people's wellbeing.

https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/quality-of-life-and-happiness-remains-high-across-cambridgeshire

Highways

The County Council's new Highway Asset Management Strategy has come into effect, and we should continue to see improvements in the works undertaken under a new highway maintenance contract.

https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/highway-policies-and-capital-maintenance-programme

Under the new arrangements, all roads are inspected in regular intervals, and repair jobs are raised as necessary, with a greater emphasis on data-driven decisions and accountability. However, council resources are limited. Many local roads and footways are in a poor state due to national funding cuts for road maintenance over many years. Please continue to report any faults, especially on the smaller routes, which aren't inspected as frequently.

Some of local roads have been resurfaced under this year's capital maintenance programme, notably Chestnut Lane from Kneesworth to Meldreth and Station Road onwards to Melbourn. We are working with officers to understand and hopefully prioritise necessary action on Malton Lane between Meldreth and Orwell. White lines have also been refreshed at Back Lane, Melbourn.

Please continue to report any issues and do not hesitate to contact us if repairs aren't carried out in a timely manner.

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

Buses

The Combined Authority has published its bus proposals with a view to the introduction of bus franchising in the second half of 2027.

In general, the proposal is to merge the historic 17 and 26 services into a new 26 route, to be complemented by an entirely new 27 service. The intention is to improve the service and its reliability by avoiding level railway crossing at Foxton.

For our area, the proposals are a tale of two halves. Melbourn and Bassingbourn will see more buses and better commuter services. Whaddon village and Meldreth's scheduled bus services are to be cut. We are concerned that the alternative Tiger on Demand service isn't accessible or practicable for many residents. We also need better bus times to and from the village colleges in Bassingbourn and Melbourn, for students and staff.

Full details of the proposals are available on Adam's website.

Please send us your feedback so we can lobby the Combined Authority for a service that really works for our villages.

https://adambostanci.mycouncillor.org.uk/2026/09/11/combined-authority-bus-proposals-cam-vale-bus-user-group/

Local Government

Local government continues to see many, sometimes contradictory, changes with the shifting priorities of national government.

Local Government Reorganisation, the process of merging of district and county council, has been paused. There will therefore be no local elections in our area in May 2027. Council staff and councillors will have to live with the stop-start timetable.

Andy Burnham's "rewiring of the state" envisages more local control, with more powers and even some local revenue to be given to area mayors. But elsewhere, the Greater Cambridge

Development Corporation looks set to be given planning powers that were previously under local control.

South Cambs District Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee, together with members of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, recently had a chance to ask questions of the newly installed staff of the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation. The session, like all council meetings has been recorded, and is available online. We will continue to update you as these arrangements evolve.

Planning

The national emphasis on economic growth continues to be seen in planning policy. There have been major changes to the national planning policy framework which will affect the way planning decisions will have to be made in South Cambridgeshire.

The Government has strengthened the presumption in favour of sustainable development within existing settlements. Parish councils and district councillors also now have very limited ability to request for planning proposals to go to planning committee.

Environment

While the summer's heat is gone, it has been unseasonably warm and still hasn't rained much. This year is only the latest in a series of tough years for local farmers. We could go on, but if you want to form your own opinion, the People's Emergency Briefing film continues to be screened in our area during November and December. It is worth spending one hour of your life on this.

https://www.nebriefing.org/

Education

We continue to work in partnership with local schools through our Practical Solutions Groups in Melbourn and Bassingbourn. We are aware of the critical delays in processing Education, Health and Care Plans due increasing referrals at the national level. The council has pledged additional investment to tackle long waits for EHCP assessments.

https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/additional-investment-pledged-to-tackle-long-waits-for-ehcp-assessments

Support and Grants

A package of targeted support to help low-income households facing financial hardship has been put together by South Cambs District Council with funding from the national Crisis and Resilience Fund. This will include baby boxes, emergency supermarket vouchers, travel support, debt reduction schemes and a savings incentive scheme.

https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/council-confirms-180000-to-help-residents-facing-financial-hardship

Cambridgeshire County Council also offers a range of services, such as Best Start in Life to support residents and families.

https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/best-start-in-life

Council News

Currently, 35 children across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are waiting to be adopted. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption Service has launched an urgent campaign to find more adoptive families.

https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-adoption-service-launches-urgent-campaign-to-find-more-adoptive-families

Further press releases are available on both council websites and we often share them via Facebook.

If you have any questions or need any advice or support, please don't hesitate to contact your local councillors.

Jose Hales, District Councillor

Sally-Ann Hart, District Councillor

Adam Bostanci, County Councillor