

## Joint District Councillors' Report for February 2022

District councillors' monthly report for the communities of Histon & Impington, Orchard Park and King's Meadow.

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other - matters, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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You can also follow us on our webpage & blog at <http://hiopcouncillors.org>, where this report and previous ones can be read or downloaded in PDF form. Keep in touch with us on Twitter @pippa4hiop @stevehunt4hiop, and on Facebook @pippaheylings4hiop

### Ukrainian crisis

The illegal and barbaric war on Ukraine has induced many people affected by the attacks to flee. The Government has insisted on maintaining a visa regulated entry scheme but is expecting an large number to avail themselves of asylum in Britain. Currently all applications for a visa need a support from a family member in Britain or a sponsor, and it remains to be seen exactly this will work out. There are 110 Ukrainian families in South Cambridgeshire and a great interest expressed by families wishing to host refugees. Government support for local authorities is promised but the details are not yet clear. Some houses belonging to the District Council's private rental enterprise Ermine Street are being allocated to house refugees.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has pledged to support people fleeing Ukraine if a national resettlement programme is set up by the Government. The Leader, along with leaders of Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Mayor have written an open letter to Home Secretary Priti Patel MP urging her to move faster and do more to help refugees and support Ukraine.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/council-pledges-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/>

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/letter-to-rt-hon-priti-patel-mp/>

There has been strong advice from leading aid agencies and the Ukrainian ambassador that well-intentioned collections of goods to send to refugees in the countries bordering Ukraine are generally **not** the most beneficial way to help currently. Such shipments face export difficulties and require extensive storage, sorting and management when they arrive. Very often what is donated is not what is needed. Donating money through DEC affiliated charities is the best way to help. Money travels instantaneously, helps local economies, and can be used to buy exactly what is needed, often at favourable rates when bulk purchases can be negotiated. And if you are a taxpayer, you can use Gift Aid to make your money work harder.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/assistance-for-those-affected-by-the-war-in-ukraine/>

## Coronavirus

Following the abandonment of mandatory restrictions in England, there is no longer an obligation to self-isolate or test and routine contact tracing has ceased. Free testing ends on April 1<sup>st</sup>. As routine testing has reduced the data are unreliable and depend more on ONS survey data (which is out of date when published). Current indications however are that hospital admissions are increasing driven by the BA2 variant. There has been a significant rise in cases in schools since half term with a particular problem of student absences due to anxiety which is aggravated by problems of recruiting early years and support staff.

## Solar Together

A second phase of the Solar Together scheme has been launched and expressions of interest were requested by 15<sup>th</sup> March. An auction will be held and installations should take place from mid-May. In the first phase almost half the installations in all of Cambridgeshire were installed in South Cambridgeshire.

## New Street Trading Policy

The Council, in relation to its responsibility for street trading, has designated that all streets in the District will now come under its remit, with the exception of the A11 and A14 and any area of land which is in direct ownership and control of the County, District or Parish Councils. Previously, street trading did not apply to the whole of the District, which resulted in some street traders operating in areas with the consent of the local Parish or Town Councils but with no licence from the District Council.

To support those current traders now coming under the new regime, which will go 'live' from April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Council is to introduce grandfather rights for those trading up to the period ending 1 March 2022, so they will have the right to retain their pitch or pitches subject to basic safety principles being adhered to within a grace period of up to six months.

In addition, a new streamlined regime (which has been welcomed by the trade and the National Caterers Association) is to be introduced for owners of outside areas such as pub car parks. This will allow them to be used on an ad-hoc basis such as for pop-up food traders and also non-food articles like Christmas trees.

## Budget

Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February approved the 2022-2023 budget. An increase of £5 per Band D household has been levied, which on average is an increase of 3.89%. This includes the parish council precepts (which latter are at an average rate of 5%). The County Council has levied an increase of 4.99%. Inflation is currently in excess of 5% so overall this represents a real terms cut in resources.

## First Homes

A draft policy statement on this topic for Greater Cambridge, which has been agreed with Cambridge City Council, was presented to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> March and is expected to be confirmed by Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Government policy now requires 25% of the affordable housing provided in developments to be the Government's preferred tenure type of 'First Homes' which are sold at a discount of 30% on market rates and have a price cap of £250,000. (This does not apply to schemes

that are wholly rental accommodation, either as build to rent or social/affordable housing.) In view of the difficulty of providing anything other than one-bedroom accommodation in this area within the price cap, South Cambridgeshire is planning to apply the current proposed balance between affordable/social housing (70%) and shared ownership (30%) in dealing with planning applications unless the applicant specifically proposes to provide First Homes.

South Cambridgeshire requires 40% of housing on developments of 10 dwellings or more to be affordable. The current proposal being put to Cabinet is for social housing which includes First Homes to be 70% affordable or social rent, 5% shared ownership and 25% First Homes.

## £300 grants available for community fitness and wellbeing activities

Grants are available up to £300 to lead fitness and wellbeing activities in our communities.

Anyone who leads an existing group or who wants to set up a new initiative in the District, such as leading a walking group in their local park or running a weekly yoga class in a village hall, could be eligible for the small grant. Providers running multiple groups can also apply to fund multiple programmes. Activities could range from walking football/rugby/netball, to chair-based exercise classes, diabetes walking groups, yoga for the over 60s, baby yoga classes or more.

The grant, which is funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, is to help deliver physical activity programmes provided by the District Council in partnership with Living Sport. It is designed to cover costs such as venue hire for up to six weeks, with new participants being entitled to four free sessions. Once the free sessions are complete, participants would be expected to begin paying a small fee to continue participation, meaning that the initiative should become a sustainable source of income for the instructor.

If you're interested in applying for the £300 grant, you will need to demonstrate that there is need for your proposed programme in the local area. You could liaise with the parish council or Primary Care Network to check whether there is a gap in provision in the community or a specific health need that isn't catered for. Individual instructors, Primary Care Networks or people running community facilities or leisure centres are all eligible to apply.

Applications for the grants will be invited throughout 2022.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/300-grants-available-for-community-fitness-and-wellbeing-activities/>

## Biodiversity advice

South Cambridgeshire passed a motion at the last Council supporting the provision of advice to parish councils to help them meet their statutory commitments to have regard to conserving biodiversity. This should provide assistance in preparing a biodiversity policy and a biodiversity audit. It was noted that a Developing with Nature toolkit is available from Natural Cambridgeshire.

<https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/nc-developing-with-nature-toolkit.pdf>

## Bin Collections

Bin collections continue to be challenging due to staffing issues which we have highlighted before. When a collection is missed, please check South Cambs Facebook or Twitter feeds for announcements of catch-up collections (or ask us). The collections team knows how frustrating missed collections are, and in cases when a catch-up collection is not possible, they try to prioritise missed streets when they do the next scheduled collection.

## Meetings in February 2022

8 Feb	Local Access Forum	Martin
8 Feb	Scrutiny and Overview Committee -Cancelled	-
9 Feb	Planning Committee	Pippa, Martin
9 Feb	North East Cambridge Community Forum	
10 Feb	Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) Natural Capital Workshop – Health and Wellbeing	Martin
16 Feb	Biodiversity Net Gain Consultation Workshop	Martin
21 Feb	HIPC Meeting	Martin, Steve
22 Feb	FPA Natural Capital Workshop – Growth and Development	Martin
22 Feb	Council	Martin, Pippa, Steve
23 Feb	Licensing Committee	Steve
24 Feb	Darwin Green Consultation	Martin, Pippa, Steve
25 Feb	Grants Committee	Pippa, Martin (re Zero Carbon Grants)
28 Feb	Special Planning Committee	Pippa. Martin

## Meetings in March 2022

2 Mar	Civic Affairs Committee	Martin (cancelled)
3 Mar	Meeting on Cultural Strategy - Cambourne	Martin
3 Mar	Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Martin, Steve
7 Mar	Climate Change and Environment Committee	Pippa, Martin
9 Mar	Planning Committee	Pippa. Martin
9 Mar	OPCC Meeting	Steve, Martin
16 Mar	JDCC	Steve
16 Mar	North west Cambridge Community Forum	Martin, Pippa, Steve
21 Mar	HIPC Meeting	
23 Mar	Council	Martin, Pippa, Steve
24 Mar	JDCC (cancelled)	Steve