

District and County Councillor's Report – October 2024

Bus Franchising Consultation

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) launched a consultation on the concept of bus franchising in the county and how the authority can help reform bus travel. It's a very big step forward, as the idea of introducing a road charge in Cambridge to pay for more busses in Cambridgeshire has been binned, this is a more realistic alternative to improving public transport, but will involve more public funding to get it off the ground and possibly an increase in the Mayor's precept to help fund it, so please do contribute to the consultation if possible.

<https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/>

There is also a pop-up event that anyone can attend, if they'd like to discuss the proposals with an officer of the CPCA. The closest one to us will be held at Duxford Imperial War Museum between 6-8pm on October 10th.

Police Community Engagement Panel

Cambridgeshire Police hold quarterly public forums where they give updates on the service in South Cambs as well as take questions from the public. The next one is to be held online on November 27th at 7pm. To register for the event, follow this link - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-cambridgeshire-community-engagement-meeting-november-2024-tickets-772923213137?aff=oddtcreator>

Cost of Living Support

The District Council has a raft of Cost-of-Living support packages available for those that need them. These range from free electric blankets to mobile food hubs to advice on what support can be claimed. Around 25% of benefits go unclaimed, so please do check, or ask those in need to check, if they are owed anything that they haven't been claiming.

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support>

Cambridge 2050

For those keeping an eye on the news, you may recall that the former housing minister, Michael Gove, had announced that they saw Cambridge as an area of the country for growth and estimated that they'd like to build an additional 250,000 houses in the area, to encourage players in the science and tech industry to relocate here. Since the new government has come in our local authorities and MPs have been asking if they have similar ambitions for the area. We recently had a visit from the new minister, Matthew Pennycook, who said that the new government still saw Cambridge as an area for growth but have so far refused to put a number on this. We imagine it will likely be closer to the 100,000-150,000 mark, which is actually almost in line with the current plan for the area – so we're hoping we won't see large swathes of our countryside unexpectedly developed!

Councillors Henry Batchelor and Geoff Harvey

Household Support Fund

We were under the impression a few months ago that the much-used household support fund, which is central government money distributed by the County Council, was due to cease. We were pleased to hear recently that it is now set to continue. This year Cambridgeshire was awarded £3.5 million to help with cost of living support.

There is free advice on the cost of living support available from the County Council for anyone who may be in need of it - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living>

Local Highways Improvement Fund

Each year the County Council runs a scheme called Local Highways Improvement (LHI) where parish councils can bid into the Council for part-funding for a small highways project that wouldn't ordinarily be built out by the County Council. The applications for the scheme will be reopening before Christmas, so if you think of any smaller projects in your local area that might warrant a bid, do speak to your parish council about it.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/improving-the-local-highway/local-highway-improvement-funding>

Small Business Support Grant

The District Council have announced a new grant which is available to support small businesses in South Cambs. Small businesses can apply for up to £5,000 from a £100,000 pot and is a part of the wider Rural Prosperity Scheme, mentioned below, from the Combined Authority.

SCDC still offers free advice to small businesses and startups. Full detail can be found here - <https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/small-business-grant/>

Community Energy Consultation

The County Council are consulting on how they can support communities with local clean energy projects. If you'd like to participate in this, more info is here -

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/community-energy-project>

Physical Activity Grant

The District Council has launched a new grant for members of the voluntary sector, specialist group or leisure centre. It is to help with classes aimed at people with long-term health conditions. There is up to £2,000 per applicant available and full details, plus an application form, is available on the website - <https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/grants/physical-activity-grant-for-long-term-health-condition-management>

Councillors Henry Batchelor and Geoff Harvey

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