

Councillor Peter McDonald Duxford Division & Ward:
District Councillor for Parishes of Duxford, Hinxtton, Ickleton, Babraham, Pampisford.
County Councillor also for Foxton, Fowlmere, Shepreth, Thriplow, Heydon, Chishills, Whittlesford

Parish Council County Report Nov 2024

South Cambs Council

Grants for Improving the High Street

A new £200,000 grant scheme has been launched to boost the heart of communities across the district. Grants of between £5,000 to £20,000 per project are available to rural businesses, community groups and Parish Councils across the district. The scheme aims to improve the look of local high streets, promote rejuvenation, encourage residents to shop locally, and to attract more local businesses to the area. The grant can cover a wide range of projects such as renovating shop fronts, street art, new benches, hanging baskets, interactive family fun trails, street cleaning, local maps or new signs. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is the lead authority for the fund, while South Cambridgeshire District Council is responsible for delivery and allocation. The first application window is now open until 10 November. The second application window will open on 14 November and close on 15 December. The third and final application window will open on 19 December and close on 19 January next year. Funds may run out before the end of these application windows, so you are encouraged to apply promptly. The scheme is part of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Scrutiny of council and partner services .

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/improving-the-high-street-grant>

Anglian Water & EA

In the October meeting we were visited by representatives from Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and the County Council to examine the state of drainage, flood control and pollution mitigation. This followed some extraordinary failures in recent months including sewage outflows in Fowlmere and Ickleton in the spring/summer and an alarming rate of discharge into our watercourses across the district.

Unsurprisingly, serious questions were asked about these incidents. Anglian Water have since agreed to regular meetings with local representatives to avoid a repeat of these incidents.

Pilot Employment Hubs

The pilot Employment Hub project now has 3 locations in place to support people who have been unemployed for some time due to a long-term physical/mental health condition or a disability. One of these is at the Melbourn Hub, provided by Citizens Advice. Funding has been allocated for 1 year. There is no pressure to find employment: the focus will be on helping people on their journey back into work.

By-election in Histon & Impington

A by-election for the role of South Cambridgeshire District Councillor for Histon and Impington took place on 24 October. This followed the resignation of Cllr Pippa Heylings, after her election as MP for South Cambridgeshire in July. James Rixon, the Liberal Democrat candidate, was elected and will represent the ward until May 2026, when all the seats on South Cambridgeshire District Council will be up for election again

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Cambs County Council

Cambridge Biomedical Campus Development

On 23rd October the Cambridge Biomedical Campus Landowners' Collaborative Group offered an update on our long-term development aspirations for the sustainable development and expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

Residents and stakeholders at the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Community Planning Update meeting heard that the outline concepts, which are at their earliest stages, put Addenbrooke's Hospital at the heart of a wider vision to meet health and community needs across the Cambridge Biomedical Campus site.

The Landowners' Collaboration Group is formed of Cambridgeshire County Council; Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust; the University of Cambridge; Prologis and the Pemberton Family Trust.

With continued Government interest in this area, these early ideas would continue to develop the Campus, and expand it further to the south. These ideas are being outlined in response to the growth proposals set out in the Greater Cambridge First Proposals documents and in response to Cambridge Biomedical Campus Ltd's Cambridge Biomedical Campus Vision 2050. Our ideas also show how we think development options being explored through the emerging Great Cambridge Local Plan and Cambridge Biomedical Campus Ltd's Vision for 2050 could be taken forward.

Whilst still working through the potential options ahead of any formal planning proposals, the various partners have collectively agreed to refine the various ambitious proposals for this nationally significant site.

The campus is of strategic importance for healthcare globally due to the unique health and research benefits achieved through the co-location of Addenbrooke's Hospital, University research departments, research institutes including the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, the Royal Papworth Hospital, the future Children's and Cancer Hospitals, AstraZeneca and other research companies in the life-science industry.

The Landowners' Collaborative Group intend to comprehensively engage with the local community, initially through a range of theme-based workshops which will take place in 2025. The workshops will align with planning timetables including the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and ensure that future proposals for the site benefit from the input of the wider community.

Workshops are anticipated to include representatives from campus occupiers, councillors, Parish Councils and key interested parties, with this meeting the first step in a substantial engagement process ahead of any decisions being made.

Recently representatives from local authorities met with Housing and Planning Minister, Matthew Pennycook MP at the Biomedical Campus to discuss partnership efforts to ensure responsible and sustainable economic growth around Greater Cambridge – and the Campus.

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The recording and slides are here:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/about-us/news/cambridge-biomedical-campus-planning-update/>

Care Leavers Event

A special celebration event was held October 30 for young people from across Cambridgeshire leaving care.

It is one of several events planned for National Care Leavers' Week this week.

Young people themselves have been involved in planning the celebration event, which was held at The Junction in Cambridge.

Activities will include a nail bar and henna tattoo artist, as well as activities from Inspire2Ignite – a locally based organisation which works to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training.

Support workers develop and deliver targeted programmes and experiences that engage and empower these young people, providing them with meaningful opportunities and support.

Representatives from the National Youth Advocacy Service will also be on hand with advice and guidance for care leavers.

The weekly drop-in hub for care experienced young people aged 16-25 continues in Huntingdon library on Thursdays between 10am and 1.30pm, with a focus on CV writing and career advice from Personal Advisors, education and employment workers and the Virtual School.

A Tenancy Ready course run by South Cambridgeshire District Council was held at Huntingdon Library. The course helped young people prepare for independent living, and covered topics such as how to maintain a tenancy, how to pay bills, how to manage money on a budget, and tenants' rights.

The Leaving Care Service works with many local and national organisations including Goal 17, who will be holding a mentoring session for care leavers at The Junction tomorrow afternoon (October 30) and Become – a charity for children in care and young care leavers.

Cambridgeshire County Council has recently updated and improved its local offer page for care leavers, which explains what services and support are available for those leaving care.

Half Term Vouchers

The supermarket voucher scheme operated again during October half-term, for all eligible families in Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire County Council is continuing to run the scheme during October half-term, using the Household Support Fund from the Department for Work and Pensions, with additional funding provided by the council.

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The council will issue a £15 voucher to the parent or guardian of each eligible child/young person. This will be sent via email and/or text on Saturday 26th October.

Children who become eligible up until Sunday 2nd November will also receive a voucher.

The voucher scheme has been a huge success since its introduction and is widely appreciated by families struggling in the current financial climate.

Details of how to apply for income related Free School Meals can be found here: [Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

There is a simple [application form](#) which only requires a few details for an instant eligibility check. Each successful application will also bring up to £1,500 additional funding for your child's school.

All vouchers must be claimed by 3pm on Friday 29 November. The council is unable to reinstate unclaimed vouchers after this date.

In addition to the Holiday Voucher Scheme, there is further support available in response to the cost of living which can be found here: [Support with the cost of living | Cambridgeshire County Council](#) - here you can find our dedicated Household Advice and Support Team, available to support families with information, advice and direct financial support.

Further information about the Holiday Voucher Scheme, including FAQs for parents, can be found here [Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Peter McDonald

Nov 2nd 2024