

Cambridgeshire County Council – Papworth and Swavesey Division

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

County and District Councillors' Monthly Report – May 2025

Elections and County Council Composition

The elections in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on Thursday 1 May have resulted in changes of political control at both Mayoral and County Council level. Conservative Paul Bristow gained the Mayoralty, following four years of Labour under Mayor Nik Johnson.

Meanwhile the Liberal Democrats won a majority of seats on the County Council. The composition of the council following the 1 May elections is as follows:

Liberal Democrat	31
Conservative	10
Reform UK	10
Labour	5
Green	3
Independent	2

Chris Poulton was voted in as our new County Councillor. Chris is a local resident from Caxton and is rapidly getting up to speed on the many issues in the other villages. You can contact Chris by email on Chris.Poulton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or on his mobile, 07971 594037/ He will also be attending many of the annual parish meetings and parish councils in the coming weeks.

We should also say thanks to the outgoing County Councillor Mandy Smith, who represented our division for 20 years. There is no transition period after elections and if you feel any of the projects Mandy was working on hasn't transferred to Chris, please contact him.

As a reminder of the division of responsibilities between County and District Councils:

- The County Council's main responsibilities include travel, adopted roads and footpaths, education and schools (including SEND provision), libraries and the recycling centres.
- The District Council looks after bin collections, planning, licensing and housing.

If you have an issue that doesn't fall into any of the main categories, please contact either of your councillors and we will send it to the correct person or department.

Upcoming Biodiversity Webinar

The SCDC Climate and Environment team are hosting an online event to support parish and town councils in their response to the [Biodiversity Duty](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>). This session will provide a clear explanation of the Duty's requirements, practical tips for ensuring your compliance, case studies of good work and plenty of opportunity to ask questions. We welcome councillors, clerks and anyone else interested in the requirements of the Duty.

Wednesday 28 May, 5-6:30pm. Email zcc@scams.gov.uk to sign up for this session.

Zero Carbon Communities Grant

SCDC is pleased to announce that the Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) Grant scheme has now reopened for applications. Parish councils and voluntary or community organisations are invited to apply.

- Grants of between £2,000 and £15,000 available, with a total pot of £125,000.
- Projects must reduce carbon emissions e.g. from a community building, or foster greater community engagement on climate issues and encourage sustainable behaviour change.
- For full eligibility criteria, please consult the guidance documents on the South Cambs website: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-and-environment/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant>

The grants team will be running an online application workshop where you can ask any questions and discuss project ideas: Wednesday 21 May 2025, 5-6:30pm. Email zcc@scambs.gov.uk to sign up for this session, or for any further information.

Applications for ZCC grants close: 5pm, Tuesday 1 July 2025.

Allotment Improvement Grant is open for applications

This grant provides up to £10,000 in funding to support projects that enhance the productivity, sustainability, and social value of allotment spaces. Key priorities include:

- Improving water access through reliable connections and rainwater harvesting
- Implementing pest control measures, such as fencing
- Upgrading facilities such as waterless toilets
- Delivering measurable social benefits, such as promoting mental well-being, outdoor activity, and community engagement.

Other allotment improvements will also be considered, ensuring that allotments remain thriving, inclusive spaces for all.

For more information, visit the [Allotment Improvement Grant webpage](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-and-people/community-action/allotment-improvement-grant):

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-and-people/community-action/allotment-improvement-grant>

4 Day Working Week Trial at SCDC – Next Steps

South Cambs District Council has sought additional employment legal advice which has concluded that a permanent change to a four-day week working model would amount to a change to the terms and conditions of employment for officers. A consequence of this is a report with supporting data will be brought to Full Council for a decision. We are expecting a report to be presented to the Full Council meeting on 17 July.

Due to SCDC being the employing authority for Planning and Waste, Cambridge City Council has considered the appropriate process for their member review as well. They will discuss the same report that goes to SCDC's Full Council meeting at their Full Council on 24 July. Consequently,

any SCDC Full Council decision to proceed to a permanent four-day week would only be progressed subject to support from the City Council the following week.

The advice has also confirmed that consideration of the practical elements of any change should be carried out at Employment and Staffing Committee. The next Employment and Staffing Committee following July Full Council takes place in September. If councillors at Full Council voted to implement a permanent four-day week, a detailed Productivity Policy would then be assessed by Employment and Staffing.

Local Government reorganisation: Q&A for residents

SCDC has published an FAQ-style webpage for residents, trying to answer what we believe are likely to be some of their most common questions around local government reorganisation. You can view the page here: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation> .

If there is a particular question or subject that you think we should be including, please email Communications and Marketing Manager Tom Horn on tom.horn@scambs.gov.uk who will look into adding it.

New Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Community Lottery

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation is launching a new community lottery on 20 May. The lottery aims to provide an effective way for local charities and community organisations to fundraise and engage with supporters. A total of 60p in every £1 sold in tickets goes directly to good causes.

All non-profit organisations operating within Cambridgeshire can sign up to be a recipient of the money that will be available to local groups. Organisations eligible include charities, sports clubs, community groups, Community Interest Companies and schools.

Charities or community organisations keen to register early can do so now. This could mean they are also featured in the launch communications. Any organisations keen to get on board early should email info@cambscf.org.uk and mention the community lottery when they get in touch.

Local organisations that could benefit will also be asked by Cambridgeshire Community Foundation to pass on details about the lottery to their supporters who may choose to give a little extra by purchasing tickets.

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation is partnering with Gatherwell to run the community lottery. Gatherwell runs many community lotteries including the one in Watford. Watford has been running their's since June 2023 and is now selling over 900 weekly tickets. 63 causes have signed up and £40,000 has been raised for those local causes since launch.

Local good causes can attend Cambridgeshire Community Lottery's online launch webinar at 11am on Tuesday 20 May to find out how they can benefit from this free fundraising opportunity. People can find out more and register for the webinar at <https://www.cambscf.org.uk/lottery/>

South Cambridgeshire reports country's largest rise in Healthy Start uptake following District Council's targeted campaign

South Cambridgeshire has seen the biggest increase in NHS Healthy Start claims in the country, following a targeted campaign by the District Council encouraging eligible parents to sign up for free food and milk support. The three-week campaign is projected to have distributed nearly £60,000 of previously unclaimed funds.

The campaign used the District Council's innovative new Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) software to identify families who were likely to be eligible for this support. These families were then sent a letter or text encouraging them to apply if they had not already done so.

The NHS Healthy Start scheme provides vital help for pregnant women as well as parents with children under four, offering free fruit, vegetables, milk and infant formula to those who qualify. It can be worth up to £8.50 a week depending on the age of the child. However many people are unaware of their eligibility.

Thanks to the Council's proactive approach, the number of people claiming from the NHS Healthy Start scheme in the district jumped by over 12% between February and March, from 526 to nearly 600 residents. This increase is higher than any other district in the country for this time period and compares to a national increase of just 1.4%. Using average claim figures, this increase is projected to be worth a total of £42,858.40.

The Council also used the campaign as an opportunity to increase uptake of the Household Support Fund, a one-off payment of £110 to eligible families. 137 Household Support Fund applications were completed as part of the campaign, valued at over £15,000. This takes the financial impact of this three-week campaign to £57,928.40.

Parents are eligible for the NHS Healthy Start scheme if they have a child under the age of four and are on certain benefits. If eligible, parents will receive a Healthy Start card that can be used in most UK supermarkets, like a debit card. The card will be pre-loaded with £8.50 a week for children aged under one, and £4.25 a week for children aged between one and four years old. The card can be used to buy:

- Fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- Fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- Plain liquid cow's milk
- Infant formula milk based on cow's milk

The card can also be used to collect:

- Healthy Start vitamins – these support a parent during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Vitamin drops for babies and young children – these are suitable from birth to 4 years old

A household must be claiming one of the following benefits to qualify:

- Universal Credit with earned income of less than £408 per month from employment
- Child Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance

- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance (not contributory benefits) and have a household income below a specified amount

The easiest way to apply for the Healthy Start scheme is <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/>. If residents are unable to apply online, they can call the Healthy Start helpline on 0300 330 7010 and a member of staff will help complete an application.

School Places

94.5 per cent of Cambridgeshire applicants will be going to their first preference primary school this September—above the national proportion of 93.2 per cent from 2024. This is marginally down from the 95.9 per cent who were offered their preferred choice in Cambridgeshire last year.

The proportion offered a place at their first, second, or third choice school has also slightly fallen—from 99.1 per cent last year to 98.9 per cent this year. Just over one per cent of pupils (76 children in total) have been allocated places at other schools, outside of their expressed preferences, the second lowest number in the last four years.

This year saw a slight increase in the total number of applications for a primary school place—from 6,418 in 2024 to 6,457 this year. Parents applying for primary school places for this September should have received offers by Wednesday 16 April. As always, the council advises parents to include their child’s local catchment school in their application.

Carbon literacy accreditation

Cambridgeshire County Council has been re-accredited as a Bronze ‘Carbon Literate Organisation’, highlighting the organisation's dedication towards tackling climate change, working towards a zero-carbon future, and reducing its organisational carbon emissions.

The Carbon Literacy accreditation is a nationally recognised scheme which helps organisations reach their carbon targets and is defined as ‘an awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community and organisational basis’, and involves learning and action on climate change.

Peter Sandford and Chris Poulton
12 May 2025

Email: cllr.sandford@scambs.gov.uk (Peter) or Chris.Poulton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (Chris)
Mobiles: 07985 425414 (Peter) or 07971 594037 (Chris)