

District Councillors' Report for Dry Drayton Parish Council, April 2023

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We've included a lot of material in this month's report which is a reflection of just how much is going on at national, county and district level. There is some news concerning recent campaigns and notices of the award of government grants for such essential things as improving energy efficiency of homes. If you have any difficulty accessing information, please let one of us know and we will make some further enquiries.

Cost of Living

A further cost of living support package for residents, worth more than £200,000, has been agreed by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The plans include a roadshow of cost-of-living talks, increasing awareness of Council Tax support, more free energy saving appliances and the creation of a South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Food Network.

It builds on a package of almost £400,000 of support which was agreed by the Council in November last year. Just over half of that initial funding came from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS) to support community-based programmes tackling prevention of poor health resulting from financial hardship, and community engagement.

The roadshow of cost-of-living talks, organised in partnership with parish councils, will see a rolling programme of events designed to highlight support available to the most vulnerable. This will aim to improve reach and uptake of grants and other support services that many don't know are available to them. We will keep you up to date with the schedule and location of events.

Reductions in Council Tax

A large-scale Council Tax communications campaign will take place, to increase the number of people who are aware of, and subsequently claim financial help towards their Council Tax bill. More deprived areas will be targeted with communications, to help inform people of their potential eligibility.

Free energy saving appliances to those residents who are just-about-managing

South Cambridgeshire District Council's scheme to provide free energy saving appliances to those residents who are only just about managing will be expanded into next winter. So far this winter, more than 400 South Cambridgeshire residents have been provided with either a slow cooker, electric blanket, or both by the Council. A charitable giving fund, which residents who are able-to can donate towards as part of this scheme, has raised nearly £2,000 and remains open.

South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Food Network.

Finally, funds have also been allocated to help create a South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Food Network. Work will take place to link-up all the existing foodbanks in the district, creating a network of support for each other – with the overriding aim of distributing food that would otherwise be thrown away. The network will also look to create links with local farmers to donate excess food that is not suitable for supermarkets, encourage communities to grow fresh vegetables for the most

vulnerable, and promote healthy eating and more plant-based diets. This network will be a key part of the emerging South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Food Strategy, which is being developed by the District Council and set to be discussed by its Climate and Environment Advisory Group next month (April). Please check this web page (<https://tinyurl.com/yckmnx3p>) for the committee and agenda information.

£1.7 million Government funding to continue work to decarbonise Council homes

The Council has successfully bid for £1.7 million from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This funding will go towards some of the projects we have already started to improve the fabric of our Council homes. It will also support other measures being put in place to help the Council achieve its own and the Government's Net Zero targets. The Fund is designed to upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock across the country, that is currently below Energy Performance Certificate C, up to that standard. Energy saving measures such as exterior wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, new windows and doors, draft proofing measures, as well as heat pumps and solar panel installation can be provided with the funding. These measures could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills. You can contact our Service Manager – Housing Assets, Eddie Spicer, if you would like further information. (<mailto:eddie.spicer@scambs.gov.uk>)

Easter Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

Cambridgeshire County Council have received DfE funding until the end of 2024 to support children, in receipt of income-related free school meals, attend a holiday scheme for free during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. The Easter Holiday and Activities Food Programme will run between 4-14 April with over 120 schemes participating across the county. Parents can book places directly with holiday schemes. Further information:

HAF Provider Directory - Cambridgeshire County Council - <https://tinyurl.com/yc8frdzd>

There is also a publicity poster which you can download - <https://tinyurl.com/386h2tj4>

Launch of life-saving public emergency alerts

You may have seen in the news recently that a new system, that will give the Government and emergency services the capability to send an alert directly to mobile phones when there is a risk to life, has been launched. Working with mobile broadcasting technology, the Emergency Alerts system will help improve the UK's warning and informing capability; providing a means to get urgent messages quickly to nearly 90 percent of mobile phones in a defined area; providing clear instructions about how best to respond. The system is now ready to be tested across the country following successful tests in East Suffolk and Reading.

A UK-wide alerts test will take place in the early evening of Sunday 23 April 2023 which will see people receive a test message on their mobile phones.

Make Things Right campaign to empower social tenants to make complaints

On 6 March 2023, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, launched the government's 'Make Things Right' advertising campaign which urges social housing tenants to complain about substandard housing. Residents are being encouraged to make a complaint to their landlord in the first instance and then escalate to the Housing Ombudsman if they are unhappy with the landlord's final response. The national campaign will run across England until the end of April and will give tenants key information about their rights, the responsibilities of their

landlord, and give step-by-step advice about how to make a complaint via the website, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-things-right-introduction-and-how-to-help> .

A14 Tree Planting

Thanks to Edna Murphy, our very own County Councillor, we now have a commitment from National Highways regarding the replanting of 1000s of trees along the A14 standard trees be replanted to replace the dead ones. National Highways will look after them for 5 years. Edna has been campaigning for these trees to be replaced since she was elected to office.

Grant for Planning

£290,000 funding allowance awarded to Greater Cambridge Shared Planning for advances in digital consultation from DLUHC. The funding seeks to build upon the earlier work in producing a “digital” Local Plan by speeding up the processing and the review of the thousands of comments made by communities and developers through the process. This will shorten the time between people making comments and Councillors and communities being able to see who has said what about the emerging plan.

Latest South Cambs magazine

If you have not received the latest South Cambs magazine ring 0800 6444011 or email scdc@smartdistribution.co.uk.

Bird Flu

The threat of avian influenza (‘bird flu’) to poultry and other captive birds continues. Reports of found dead wild birds should be reported through Defra’s new online reporting tool or the helpline 03459 335577.

Some news for businesses

There are only a few weeks left for businesses based in South Cambridgeshire to apply for and claim their *Growth Works Revenue Grants*.

If you are a small business with 3 or more employees, you could apply for a grant of up to £20,000 towards a project that will help you: Increase your sales, improve your performance, attract more customers, recruit additional talent, grow your business and scale up to the next level.

You still have time to access the funding, but the clock is ticking. The deadline is 23rd June 2023, so new applications need to be submitted by the end of May 2023.

Register your interest online (<https://tinyurl.com/2p95srrn>) and you will be contacted for a free, no obligation chat, to see if you could receive up to £20k by June to help your business grow in 2023. Alternatively email Mark Longman (mailto:mark.longman@growthworks.uk) or Gary Parker (mailto:gary.parker@growthworks.uk) directly who will be happy to help and answer any of your questions.

Bank Holiday bin collection changes

The addition of the Coronation to the usual schedule of Bank Holidays for Easter and the two May holidays means that over half the bin collections in April and May will be delayed by one or two days. Bin collection dates can be checked for any postcode in the district at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/binday>, which also provides links to add bin calendars to your mobile phone.

The cardboard, plastic and aluminium foil from Easter eggs can all be placed in the blue bin. The council is also reminding residents that in the UK, around £140 million worth of used but still wearable clothing goes to landfill every year. Please try to keep your unwanted items out of landfill by passing them on to someone who needs them. This can be done through neighbourhood Facebook groups, Gumtree ads, charity shops – some of which offer collections for large items – and even phone apps, like Olio.

Public encouraged to add Coronation events to digital map

Members of the public and community organisations across the UK have been invited by the government to share how they will celebrate the Coronation on a digital map launched on 4th March 2023. The map can be found on the Coronation website, linked below. The map is designed to encourage people to add their own Coronation Big Lunches, street parties, Big Help Out plans and other Coronation activities so others in the local community can find out about events near them and get involved. The Coronation website also includes information for getting involved, a toolkit including templates, a playlist, recipes, and designs. The Coronation will take place on the morning of 6 May at Westminster Abbey. Throughout the UK, Coronation Big Lunches will bring communities together on 7 May. The weekend of celebrations will end with the Big Help Out on 8 May, which will highlight the impact of volunteering. This will encourage people to get involved with activities run by local community groups, organisations and charities. The digital map is here:

<https://coronation.gov.uk/events/>

East–West Rail route announcement due in May

In the Spring Budget policy paper released following the Chancellor’s Budget speech on 15th March 2023, it was confirmed that:

- The East–West Rail route announcement will happen in May, and
- The government will provide up to £15 million local capacity funding to support local authorities along the East West Rail route to maximise economic opportunities.

Lucy Frazer MP has come out publicly in support of a southern route. EWR has not yet confirmed that the route will be electrified.

To keep up to date with announcements, you can register with the Community Hub (<https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/>).

Compost Week UK

For Compost Week (13–19 March), the District Council has been promoting home composting to residents through our social media channels, in particular the opportunity to buy low-cost compost bins through our collaboration with www.getcomposting.com. A basic composter costs our residents £25 from Get Composting, a considerable saving compared with buying the same product on popular online shopping sites.

English Devolution Accountability Framework

On 16th March 2023 the Government published guidance which sets out devolved authorities will be held to account through local scrutiny, by the public and by the government. The English Devolution Accountability Framework is a new accountability framework to apply to all English institutions with

devolved powers. It is an element of the Local Government Accountability Framework which applies to all councils, including combined authorities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-accountability-framework>

Updated guidance for landlords and tenants

The Government has published updates to the 'How to Rent', and 'How to Let' guidance. The updates include information for tenants and landlords in the Private Rented Sector to help them understand their rights and responsibilities.

How to let guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-let> How to rent guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>

Housing disrepair online signposting tool

The Ministry of Justice is promoting its housing disrepair online signposting tool. This has been developed for private rented sector tenants with housing disrepair issues. The tool gives users the information and guidance they need to resolve their housing disrepair issues before they worsen. It asks users a series of targeted questions before providing them with tailored information, guidance, and signposting to relevant advice and support. This helps them understand their rights and responsibilities and identify an appropriate next step when trying to resolve their housing disrepair issues. Please check: <https://tinyurl.com/2nbjmufx>

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