

District Councillors ' Report October 2024

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South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to ending violence against women and girls as a White Ribbon organisation

South Cambridgeshire District Council has become White Ribbon Accredited in recognition of its commitment to preventing harassment, abuse and violence against women and girls.

The District Council is committed to working towards ending men's violence against women by becoming accredited and aligning with White Ribbon UK, the leading charity engaging men and boys to end violence against women.

As part of our work towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, we introduced and strengthened policies and practices to support staff and residents of all genders who experience domestic abuse. This work was praised by assessors as inspiring and exemplary. As part of our White Ribbon action plan, our Ambassadors and Champions will continue to raise awareness of the White Ribbon promise to "never use, excuse or remain silent about men's violence against women". We have a strong group of male colleagues across numerous departments, our White Ribbon Ambassadors, who have pledged to advocate positive attitudes and behaviour within our organisation. Ambassadors and Champions (who are women who work to support the work of White Ribbon) will raise awareness and support our local community groups and partners in their own work to end men's violence against women.

Swap the way you shop for clothes

Local councils are urging residents to think differently about their clothes shopping habits to benefit the planet this autumn – with Greater Cambridge households currently throwing away around 2,500 tonnes of clothes in their rubbish every year.

This means a huge amount of clothing ends up being buried in landfill – harming the environment when much of it could instead be repaired, re-used or passed on.

The global fashion industry accounts for up to 10% of greenhouse gas emissions – more than aviation and shipping combined. Meanwhile, an average Briton has around 50 items of clothing in their wardrobe that they have never worn.

September marks several national prompts to think about our wardrobes, from Zero Waste Week and Oxfam's Second-hand September to Sustainable Fashion Week. Whether it's the vast amounts of water and land used, poor working conditions of garment workers or the pollution and mountains of waste clothing generated, what we wear and how many clothes we buy carries a heavy cost.

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste – a partnership between South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City councils – is keen to point out how easy it can be to make positive changes in our wardrobes.

The Peer Led review

The SCDC had invited a peer review last autumn. A follow-up report by the Local Government Association has praised South Cambridgeshire District Council's 'strong ambition', 'good leadership' and 'innovative approaches' following a recent visit.

The return visit comes after a [Corporate Peer Challenge Review by the LGA last year](#) described the Council as being in a positive financial position – with a comprehensive and innovative response to the cost-of-living crisis. Typically, all councils have one of these reviews every five years and they always contain recommendations to help councils improve.

A total of 12 recommendations were made by the peer team last year. A return visit last month and update report, a usual part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process, shows how 10 of those recommendations are completed or well underway and two are progressing.

Students have their say on climate action in the first meeting in a school for South Cambs District Council

Young people were encouraged to find solutions for local climate and environment action when South Cambridgeshire District Council held a meeting in a school for the first time. Comberton Village College hosted the event with around 40 students taking part in morning workshops on five themes of water resources, circular economy and fast fashion, sustainable food, biodiversity, nature and green spaces, and air quality.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/students-have-their-say-on-climate-action-in-the-first-meeting-in-a-school-for-south-cambs-district-council/>.

Free Electric blankets will help residents most in need this winter

More than 530 residents are being offered the chance of a free electric blanket in a scheme to further help people in need through another winter of high heating bills.

South Cambridgeshire District Council will shortly be offering 532 residents the opportunity to claim a free electric blanket (also known as a heated throw) as a cost-effective alternative to central heating.

Residents selected to qualify will be those who are (as of 1 July 2023) claiming Council Tax Support and at least one of the following:

- Attendance Allowance.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) mobility element at the enhanced rate.
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component at the higher rate.

These people have been selected because they experience mobility issues so are more susceptible to cold weather pressures and are experiencing at least some financial hardships, so are less able to afford their heating bills this winter.

Qualifying residents will receive a letter in the coming weeks from the Council telling them they are eligible and how to claim their free blanket. Only people who receive a letter will be able to claim a free blanket.

Analysis has shown that running an electric blanket costs just 5p per hour, compared to an average central heating cost of £2.03 per hour. The accumulation of these savings over the winter months has the potential to provide financial relief to those residents.

Help with energy bills

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills or can't afford to heat your home, contact the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP).

Email address: support@applyforleap.org.uk

New £100,000 small business grant programme is launched in South Cambridgeshire

Small businesses in South Cambridgeshire are being invited to apply for funding of up to £5,000 each in a new grant programme launched this week.

The funding is available to those already trading with ambitions to grow and will provide grants, advice and support for existing businesses with up to nine employees.

The new [support](#) grants are available as part of the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#). Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is the lead authority for delivery of the Fund, while the District Council is responsible for grant scheme delivery and allocation.

Cllr Peter McDonald, Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said: "We are thrilled to launch this small business grant program as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting local entrepreneurs and small businesses. South Cambridgeshire has a vibrant and innovative business community, and we want to ensure that both new and existing businesses have the resources they need to thrive. This funding will not only help safeguard jobs but also foster growth and innovation, driving our district's economy forward. We encourage all eligible businesses to take advantage of this opportunity and contribute to a sustainable and prosperous future for South Cambridgeshire."

For those looking to start a business and get their foot on the ladder, there is free advice on offer, including how to create a viable business plan.

The startup advice will be delivered by the [Business and Intellectual Property Centre](#) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority [Growth Hub](#). Resources are available to help entrepreneurs ensure their new business is viable, registering a new business, and how to market a business.

To successfully apply for a grant, small businesses must already be registered and trading in South Cambridgeshire and must show a business plan demonstrating:

- An innovative and ambitious business plan for growth over the next two years with evidence of the businesses ability to grow
- Evidence of how any funding received will be used
- Where applicable, evidence of how any funding received may be used to adopt new technologies and changing market conditions
- Number of jobs safeguarded
- Number of new jobs created
- Benefit to the local economy

- Steps your business is taking towards achieving net zero carbon and decarbonisation of your business activity and your supply chain.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available to fund the following:

- Website development
- Brand development
- Marketing campaigns
- Training for upskilling existing staff
- Commissioning of research
- Funding towards the use of workspace at South Cambs Hall
- Purchase machinery and associated tooling
- Purchase of office or technical equipment
- Funding towards electric business vehicles or an electric bike.
- Purchase of IT hardware
- Renovating buildings or businesses premises/furnishings

Applications will be open until 31 October 2024. Businesses may only make one application. South Cambridgeshire District Council reserves the right to close the application window earlier should the level of demand exceed the maximum funding available.

More information can be found [online](#).or please contact businessgrants@scambs.gov.uk quoting Small Business Grant.

Dry Drayton News

We have contacted Les Waters who manages the website about items residents need to know about .

We contacted the school about an item which referred to them.

We have discussed the community chest grant with some people in the village. I expect this will feature in the agenda

