

District Councillors 'Report for Dry Drayton Parish Council, September 2024

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Connect and collaborate at a free business workspace in South Cambridgeshire!

Regional businesses, entrepreneurs, community groups and charities are being invited to Cambourne to try a new collaborative working space - free of charge until the new year!

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) has redesigned its head office ground floor with a vibrant, collaborative workspace for use by business professionals.

The area, called [South Cambs Connect](#), has comfortable workstations, high-speed Wi-Fi, meeting pods and bookable meeting rooms which offer a productive spot to work, a meeting venue, and a chance to network with other local professionals. Read more about [our facilities](#) and how to book. For more details email: southcambsconnect@scambs.gov.uk

Local Climate Action Conference encourages everyone to do their bit to tackle climate change

Creating a cleaner district for South Cambridgeshire residents is on the agenda at a climate conference in Cambourne celebrating net zero action locally.

SCDC is holding its second Local Climate Action Conference in November to tie in with the global [COP29](#) event – 12 days of worldwide talks to determine ambition and responsibilities in addressing climate issues. The local event is being held on *Tuesday 19 November from 11-3* at The Hub in High Street, Cambourne. Refreshments and a plant-based lunch will be provided. Please complete [this form](#) to RSVP for the event, by Tuesday 5 November.

It will be followed by a pop-up inspiration evening at the same venue, called the *Local Climate Action Fair, running from 5.30-8pm*. Various community groups and organisations will be available to chat and share ideas about climate action. All are welcome.

Attendees are encouraged to consider sustainable travel options. There is cycle storage onsite and for those traveling by bus there are nearby stops on X3/4/18 bus routes.

Quality of life survey: South Cambridgeshire summary

You may have picked-up in the news that Cambridgeshire County Council last week reported on the high-level findings of [their latest quality of life survey](#). This year, the County Council carried out this survey in partnership with SCDC, the Combined Authority and Cambridge Ahead. The initial results for our district are very positive. South Cambridgeshire reports most positively about happiness, and personal health. South Cambs also reports less change in behaviour due to cost-of-living; residents are less concerned about cost-of-living, climate change, and investment and jobs than elsewhere in the County. There is a lot to digest and a more detailed report for our area to follow. But for now, the County Council have provided us with the following summary of results for South Cambridgeshire:

- 86% of respondents are happy (Cambridgeshire average 82%)
- 64% see family and friends as often as they would like (Cambridgeshire average 64%)
- 61% feel they have enough free time (Cambridgeshire average 64%)
- 27% often feel lonely (Cambridgeshire average 31%)
- 23% have struggled with their mental health in the last year (Cambridgeshire average 29%)
- 31% of parents say their child has experienced mental health problems this year (Cambridgeshire average 31%)
- 87% of parents feel their child has good relationships with their peers (Cambridgeshire average 89%)
- 29% report struggling with their physical health this year (Cambridgeshire average 31%)
- 85% concerned by cost-of-living increases (Cambridgeshire average 87%)

- 79% concerned by climate change (Cambridgeshire average 79%)
- 56% concerned by investment and jobs (Cambridgeshire average 59%)
- 54% have taken action due to cost-of-living increases (Cambridgeshire average 59%)
- 57% report having a problem with their home (Cambridgeshire average 58%)
- 85% agree people from different backgrounds get on well together (Cambridgeshire average 78%)
- 88% feel safe (Cambridgeshire average 85%)
- 79% feel like they belong (Cambridgeshire average 75%)
- 77% know where to go to find out how to get involved e.g. volunteering (Cambridgeshire average 71%)

You can read more and get the Cambridgeshire-wide figures in the [County Council's news release](#).

East West Rail

Following the Government's Budget announcements last week, we now know that the construction of the eastern section of EWR will be funded with a view to opening in 2030. Between Cambridge and Bedford, the route will use a system of "discontinuous electrification" which lowers costs and diminishes visual impact.

Check the news here:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/plans-for-powering-trains-and-details-of-our-upcoming-consultation>

The details of the "non-statutory" consultation are published here, together with locations for the in-person meetings:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>

Cambridge 2050 - The Case for Cambridge

This is a short extract of a letter written last week by Matthew Pennycook, the Local Government Minister to Council leaders in the Greater Cambridge area.

"... It is also vital that we take a collaborative approach to addressing the costs that have come with success, including housing affordability pressures, traffic and congestion, and air pollution. We all know what can be achieved when local authorities, central government and public bodies work in partnership to overcome these challenges and I want to sustain the constructive relationship we have established over recent months. I am therefore very pleased that today's Budget confirms £10 million of new funding to enable the Cambridge Growth Company to work with local partners to develop an ambitious plan for housing, transport, water, and wider infrastructure. Local leadership is critical to developing a plan that is right for Cambridge, and I am determined that we work together on this shared ambition."

The £10 million will be deployed to set up the Growth Co organisation that by March 2025 will be delivering significant economic and housing growth in our area. An initial briefing with Peter Freeman, revealed that the money will be spent recruiting a staff of about 50, setting up the Water Credit Scheme, commissioning the evidence base (to include transport) and working up the site specific options.

Electric Vehicle Charging

The grant scheme for the installation of EV charging in Parishes will be kept open until further notice. The maximum award has been increased to from £5k to £12k.

The scheme description is here: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/grants-funding-and-community-support/electric-vehicle-charge-point-grant>

Net Zero Villages

SCDC has been allocated over £400k from CPCA for their Net Zero Villages programme. We have received more money than other districts on the region due to the number of villages in the District. Between £25k - £100k is available per application. The scheme was approved by the SCDC Grants Advisory Committee at their October meeting and will be open from 11th December 2024 to 31st January 2025, and projects need to be complete by 31st March 2026. Funds will be available for projects that fall into the following categories:

- Tackling energy use and/or supporting energy efficiency or generation retrofit to community buildings.
- Enabling access to public transport or access to local services through low carbon transport.
- Nature based solutions to tackle overheating of community buildings.

The announcement of the scheme will take place in the coming weeks, and it would pay to reflect on whether there are projects that would benefit from this funding stream.

Impact Assessment Supplementary Planning Document

SCDC will be making decisions soon on whether to adopt planning guidance that embeds Health and Wellbeing into all new developments. New town and new housing developments can, if well designed, really make a positive difference to people's health and wellbeing. Northstowe New Town, for example, includes outdoor fitness equipment, lots of cycle and walks ways and well-designed green and blue spaces.

Empty Properties

SCDC will soon agree a new policy on Council Tax Charges for empty properties. This is to encourage owners to get empty homes back into use. Homes empty up to 2 years will pay 100% Council Tax; empty up to 5 years it results in a 200% levy and up to and over 10 years it will be 300%. One year's notice will be given of an increase. The District currently has about 300 empty properties; 84 of which have been empty over 10 years.

Improving the High Street

A new £200,000 grant scheme is available to support projects that boost the heart of communities across South Cambridgeshire. The "Improving the High Street" grants of between £5,000 to £20,000 per project are available to rural businesses, community groups and Parish Councils and the scheme aims to improve the look of local high streets, promote rejuvenation, encourage residents to shop locally and 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. Please check: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/improving-the-high-street-grant> for details of the scheme.

Ending Period Poverty

SCDC is joining the fight to end period poverty by providing free menstrual products for up to 700 residents. Councillors have agreed to champion the cause, to ensure dignity for all, by offering free sanitary products which are also kind to the environment. A funding pot of £12,000 has been agreed for the year-long innovative project. HeyGirls, a UK-wide social enterprise, will be distributing the packs. Please check: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/tackling-period-poverty-with-environmentally-friendly-menstrual-products>

Christmas Market

SCDC is once again hosting the South Cambridgeshire Christmas Market this winter! The event will be held at Cambourne Village College on Saturday 7th December 2024, and will be open to the public 11:00am – 3:00pm. More details to follow.

We hope you find these items of interest. If you have questions or comments, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us by email or phone.

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