

## **Report for Great Shelford Parish Council**

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council – February 2021**

#### **1. Climate and environment fortnight 2021**

Starting next week (Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>), the District Council is holding a Climate and Environment Fortnight with a series of webinars to help people think about how to live more sustainably, reduce carbon emissions and in turn help tackle climate change. Everyone is welcome to join any of these free events:

- Greener businesses Thursday Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 1pm-2pm
- Sustainable farming in Cambridgeshire, online film premiere and discussion, Friday Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 9am-10am
- Greening your older home, tips and inspiration, Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1pm-2pm
- Shrinking your carbon footprint, Wednesday March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7.30pm-8.30pm
- Food for our Future: workshop on food waste, Thursday March 4<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm-8.30pm

Further details, including how to book tickets, can be found at  
<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/nature-and-climate-change/>

#### **2. Doubling nature**

SCDC has just announced a high-level strategy for 'Doubling Nature' in South Cambridgeshire, setting out an approach to increasing wildlife-rich habitats tree canopies (we have the lowest in the country) and improving access to green spaces. The Strategy will see the Council working with communities and businesses to protect and enhance the district's natural capital, as well as taking action on its own estate. The aims are to:

- give nature space and help to reverse declines in habitat and species
- provide more areas for people to enjoy nature and benefit their health & wellbeing
- improve the quality of air
- help to manage water for nature
- create more resilience to climate change, and
- boost the economy of the district.

While it directly controls only a tiny area of land in the district, the Council aspires to be as an exemplar to others through nature enhancing measures such as tree planting and reseeded suitable green spaces with wildflowers. The Council will make the most of its influence as the local planning authority to achieve 20% biodiversity net gain on all developments in the district and ensure that nature is not just protected but significantly enhanced, especially important since South Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. The strategy also sets out how

the Council will support and encourage residents and communities to do more for nature including through grants programmes and support for volunteer Tree Wardens.

You can find the Doubling nature report at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/council-lays-out-strategy-to-double-the-nature-on-its-doorstep-for-the-benefit-of-all/>

### **3. Chalk streams**

Parish councils are being invited to comment on the **Greater Cambridge Chalk Streams** draft report, to local knowledge of the watercourses and identify how best to work in partnership to protect and restore them.

The report covers the health of the 17 main chalk streams that emerge from the aquifer in South Cambridgeshire, including the Cam, and is open for comments until 4 March – please visit <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/chalk-streams>. It was written by local experts at the Wildlife Trust and the Wild Trout Trust.

As you know, chalk streams are internationally rare habitats, providing homes for many significant species, including brown trout and water vole. The chalk aquifer also provides water for communities and businesses in the area, and is reliant on winter rainfall for recharge. Dry winters have led to concern about the condition of local watercourse.

The report identifies a number of challenges, including flow pressures, channel modification and poor water quality, and makes recommendations for practical measures that can be taken together to make the water courses more resilient to low flows, such as reintroducing gravels, bank reprofiling and removing artificial weirs.

There is a short questionnaire which is live until 4<sup>th</sup> March and it would be helpful if parish councillors would share their views and knowledge before then. Some of the smaller projects might lend themselves to being community-led, and could be suitable for grant funding from Councils and other organisations.

### **4. Drainage and Flooding**

The last few weeks has seen a lot of rain and some local flooding. The Environment Agency say they are dealing with the third largest accumulative rainfall event from October – January since their records began in 1850. Similarly, Anglian Water declared that their resources are running at maximum capacity, with 11,000 calls to their helplines, brought in extra resources to keep systems going but still not responding as quickly as they normally would.

We thought it might helpful to summarise which authority is responsible for how flood water is dealt with:

Ground water and surface	Everywhere	Cambridgeshire County
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water caused by rain		Council
Blocked or broken highway/road drain	Local road	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Major road or motorway	Highways England
Sewer	Anglian water	Anglian Water
Drainage Ditch or River	Large river	Environmental agency
	Small river or ditch	Internal Drainage Boards (IDB)
	Small river or ditch not in Internal Drainage Boards	Cambridgeshire County Council OR South Cambs District Council
	Small river or ditch not in Internal Draining Boards but awarded	
	Small ditch or river through or adjacent to private/homeowners land	Homeowner

For further information please check [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) › [emergency-planning](#) › [flooding](#)

## **5. Housing strategy**

South Cambridgeshire District Council are consulting on three new housing policies, and parish councils and residents are invited to respond. The policies will add detail to the joint housing strategy (2019-2023), and cover:

1. How to ensure affordable housing is well mixed with market housing on new developments
2. How should rent levels for social housing be set, to ensure that they are as affordable as possible to applicants on the councils' housing waiting list; and
3. For Build to Rent houses, what should be the size and layout; quality of design and management.

The consultation opened on 9<sup>th</sup> February and closes on 23rd March. More details are available here: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/residents-urged-to-share-views-on-new-affordable-homes-and-build-to-rent-policies/>

## **6. Covid related matters**

A reminder that information about South Cambs response to coronavirus can be found on the regularly updated coronavirus pages on the SCDC website:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

### **Business grants**

South Cambs District Council has facilitated payments of over £5.7m in grants to date to 2,573 businesses.

### **Self-isolation support: Direct mail to residents**

SCDC will be sending out a Coronavirus-related direct mail to all households in South Cambridgeshire in the next couple of weeks. This will contain an A4 flyer, produced by the Council, that details the financial and practical support available to people who need to self-isolate. This is to help ensure that residents feel there is enough local assistance available to assist them to comply with critical self-isolation. The main website page to plug for the latest support along these lines is [www.scambs.gov.uk/isolation](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/isolation)

The envelope will also include a flyer produced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG that provides helpful information about the vaccine roll-out locally. These will be sent to all residents this week and next (weeks commencing 8 and 15 February).

### **‘Stand Firm’ campaign**

In an effort to counter complacency about Covid and false information (that the pandemic is a hoax, or overblown) ‘Stand Firm’ is a new multi-media campaign for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which focuses on the personal testimonies of local people who have been impacted on by Covid-19. These stories work on the premise that by making the virus and its impacts tangible and local, you make the threat real and inspire others to follow the rules by use of the narrative ‘stand firm’. The delivery will involve a range of approaches and partners, including parish councils; you should receive something about this soon.

### **Resources for raising awareness about vaccine fraud**

Criminals are using the coronavirus vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages telling people they are eligible for the vaccine or are phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS or their local pharmacy. The Government has developed resources, including posters and guides, to help councils with their work to communicate to groups and networks the importance of staying alert to vaccine fraud.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-for-raising-awareness-about-vaccine-fraud>

## **7. Council tax**

The Cabinet approved the increase of £5 to £155.30 or 10p/week for a Band D property. This decision will go to full Council in February for approval.

## **8. Gypsy Roma Traveller workshops**

Funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner, the South Cambs Community Safety Partnership has created a toolkit to address unauthorised encampments. Each parish council has been invited to nominate a member to participate in online training followed by workshops hosted by Cambridgeshire Police. Following this, ‘microgrants’ of between £50 and £500 will be made available to parish councils to support their communities on this issue.

## **9. Reminders about grant schemes**

A round up of grants, mentioned in previous reports but still open:

### **1. Green Homes Grant scheme**

Government funding to make homes more energy efficient to help you saving money on household bills. The scheme closes on 31 March 2021. It could up to two thirds to full cost of improvements, from £5000 to £10,000 depending on your circumstances. Find out more if you are eligible at <https://greenhomesgrant.campaign.gov.uk/?> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>.

### **2. Broadband Voucher Scheme**

Those that are suffering from low broadband speeds (less than 30 Mbps) can still take advantage of the Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme <https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/funding-schemes/rural-gigabit-voucher-scheme/>. The Voucher is worth up to £3500 for small businesses and £1500 for residential premises. It remains open till 31 March 2021 or until the funds run out. The funds can then be used to commission service from suppliers such a BT or others. Also Connecting Cambridgeshire has secured £500,000 extra "top-up" funding from the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority](#) to provide an additional "top-up" of £1,500 per premise.

### **3. Business Grants for Lockdown**

South Cambs continues deliver the Government grants available for local businesses. For this National Lockdown #3, which started on January 5, three new schemes are available. The grants are (1) Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSB), Closed Business Lockdown Payment (CBLP) and the Additional Restrictions Support Grant (ARSG).

Businesses can find information on how to apply, along with eligibility criteria, via the Council's website <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/businessgrant>

The Closing date for the new grant schemes is 31 March 2021 and final payments expected to be made by 30 April 2021.

### **4. Winter support grants**

The charity Cambridge Online is running a grant scheme, awarded via the District Council, to provide computer devices and data for those in need of it. Contact them by email using [help@cambridgeonline.org.uk](mailto:help@cambridgeonline.org.uk) or call the Cambridge Online helpline on 01223 300407, quoting 'South Cambs Winter Support Grant'. Their website is at <http://cambridgeonline.org.uk/>