

## **Councillors' Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council**

**Clare Delderfield and Brian Milnes**

**November 2018**

**You can follow your councillors on Facebook: [brianandclare4sawston](#)**

### **Sheltered Housing Communal Rooms**

During October we were really pleased to get the opportunity to meet with a good number of people who live in or near our three sheltered housing schemes, at Chapelfield Way, The Green Road and Uffen Way. This was as part of a review undertaken by the District Council to look at how the communal rooms are being used across South Cambs. It was a real pleasure to meet many local residents as well as the staff who help to support these facilities, and it was heartening to hear of all the wonderful activities that are already happening in these community spaces, from bingo to keep fit, as well as Christmas parties. We hope that this review will further strengthen the use of these much appreciated spaces which provide support and community to many of their residents. We hope we get invited back!

### **Refuse and Recycling Collections**

We have received a number of concerns from residents about examples of the blue or green recycling bins not being collected first time, and then later being both tipped into the same refuse vehicle later in the day. We have also been investigating a small number of cases where less mobile residents (who should have assisted collection and return of their bins) have not been receiving the promised service. On the whole the waste services team do a great job, but do report any problems to South Cambs, or let us know if things have not been resolved and we will look into it.

<https://scambs-missedbinform.egovhub.net/MissedBinForm/launch>

### **LLF GCP Update.**

We are awaiting the feedback from the in-principle accepted Option 1 for the route of an access route into Cambridge. There will inevitably be friction between people along the route about the route and which form of transport (CAM Metro/Light Rail/Guided Bus). The Mayor is not making many friends with his, ahem, cavalier attitude...

## **Waste Truck Safety Campaign**

South Cambs and Cambridge City Councils have launched a campaign to ensure drivers act safely behind waste trucks. They have released a pretty shocking video on their website which is well worth watching:

[http://www.scambs.gov.uk/cctv-footage-released-to-bin-bad-driving/?fbclid=IwAR3y\\_KHRnvP0Rji7OeWghQdBllzlrJOVQdr6syVTZho9YZFgeJYFHO9n0hA](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/cctv-footage-released-to-bin-bad-driving/?fbclid=IwAR3y_KHRnvP0Rji7OeWghQdBllzlrJOVQdr6syVTZho9YZFgeJYFHO9n0hA)

They feature top tips from 6 year old Finley Edwards whose dad Kristian is a waste worker. The video also shows recent CCTV of cars driving on the pavement rather than waiting behind bin trucks. Finley's tips are:

- Be patient behind dustcarts
- Look out for his daddy and his friends while they work
- If you know the dustcart is expected on your street, allow extra time

Most local drivers help crews by driving safely and patiently. However, national figures from waste firm Biffa suggest there are 30,000 reports of drivers mounting pavements to get around collection trucks every month. Since June, several similar reports have been received locally.

## **Time Banking**

We are delighted that Sawston Parish Council has agreed to commit to supporting a Time Banking Project in Sawston. Sawston and Melbourn have been confirmed as the two villages in South Cambridgeshire that will be supported by a Time Banking Coordinator. Clare and Brian will be working closely with the Parish Council and the Coordinator to help ensure that the village gets maximum benefit from this exciting project. There are many potential opportunities from this scheme for Sawston residents.

You can read more about Time Banking here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community/community/timebanking/>

## **Universal Credit.**

Universal Credit was rolled out for new applicants in South Cambs last month. Help is available on the South Cambs website and in the latest South Cambs magazine. A number of officers have also been specially trained to deal with any problems and you can make an appointment to see one of them at Cambourne. If you experience any difficulties and are not able to access the help you need please do contact us as soon as you are able.

## **Expansion of Sawston Schools**

We are very lucky to have two great primary schools in Sawston. We have a growing population in the village and there is a need to expand the number of primary places in the village. Bellbird School has now received planning permission to expand their site, but as yet it hasn't been decided how quickly they can expand their pupil numbers. Clare has asked the Local Education Authority at the County Council to properly review the way the expansion will be implemented to ensure that any expansion is handled sensitively and that all local schools are able to continue providing a great education to the children in and around Sawston both now and in the future. On 13th November Clare will attend the Children's and Young People's Committee at the County Council to ensure the views of Sawston's schools are heard by the committee. We want all our local schools to be successful and continue to provide a great education to our local young people.

## **Fee for extra green bin collections approved**

South Cambridgeshire residents will have to pay a small annual fee to have more than one green bin collected in future – which Councillors have described as being fairer for all.

On 7th November the District Council's Cabinet backed a report which stated that 95% of Councils nationally that offer a garden waste collection service already charge to pick-up additional green bins.

The collection of the first green bin will remain free. Currently, around 2,300 households in South Cambridgeshire have more than one green bin, out of around 66,000 households in total.

The charge for collecting additional green bins already operates in Cambridge City. South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils share a waste collection service – the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service. This change will mean residents across both areas will receive the same service levels.

From 1 March next year, South Cambridgeshire residents wanting to have an extra green bin picked-up will be asked to pay £35 a year. This is the same charge as for Cambridge City residents. South Cambridgeshire residents wanting to sign-up for the service will be able to do so from early next year.

If three quarters of residents that currently have more than one bin decide to pay the extra fee, the policy change will raise around £80,000 a year which will go towards frontline Council services. The new charge is per bin and covers collections for the whole year.

Cllr Neil Gough, South Cambridgeshire District Council's Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing, said: *"Only a relatively small proportion of households*

*use this currently free service and it's not fair that other residents are subsidising this through their Council Tax. This change will contribute towards making the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service more efficient for taxpayers, and this is always something we will be looking to do. Every other Council in Cambridgeshire already operates this way, and the vast majority of Councils nationally do so too. I'd encourage residents with larger amounts of garden waste to look into the benefits of composting it at home. By doing this, they will be contributing to reduced carbon emissions from our waste collection trucks."*

Residents signing up to the scheme early next year will pay £20 to cover the collection of additional green bins from March to October. From October, residents will pay £35 annually for a 12-month cycle of collections.

### **The Combined Authority and Mayor James Palmer**

There are still concerns on the lack of oversight at the Combined Authority with important issues not being put forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which is meant to review and scrutinise important decisions.

Only after journalists made Freedom of Information requests did the Committee members know that the former chief executive of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, was paid a 'golden goodbye' of £94,500 when he left the job. This is despite not serving out any notice period of his £182,000 a year job, for which he was also paid £15,000 'accommodation Allowance'

The last meeting of the combined authority's overview and scrutiny committee heard Mayor James Palmer, had made the decision to award the payout on his own, having taken "independent legal advice". This legal advice cost £11k plus VAT. He has since told a local BBC reporter that the public are "not the interested" in why this payout was made.

During his election campaign Mayor Palmer had promised to keep his staff costs low (20) and said his office would only cost £850,000 a year to run. The org chart for the Combined Authority shows 71 (24 transferred over from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which the Mayor took over).

### **Empty Properties Survey**

SCDC would like your views on whether Council Tax should be higher for empty properties.

You can respond at

<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/Consultations?fbclid=IwAR0SwlQWgqoYuemnUp0Z0IzLPfySpBHUgEdCLxbu3YskFxFuQr8ASD0-l-M>

## **SCDC are hiring Customer Service assistants apprenticeships:**

<https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/Search/Jobs.aspx?id=91781>

## **Council House Ban on Borrowing Lifted**

The scrapping of a limit on the amount Councils can borrow to spend on building homes is being welcomed in South Cambridgeshire – with leading Councillors calling for the small print to be confirmed as soon as possible.

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond MP, gave confirmation in his autumn budget that the cap on the amount authorities can borrow to invest in new Council homes will be lifted. This announcement follows an indication of this course of action by the Prime Minister at her party's conference earlier this month. The borrowing cap has been widely seen as the greatest restraint on the ability of Councils to build new homes.

Members of South Cambridgeshire District Council are now calling for the precise details around the scheme to be confirmed rapidly, so they can understand exactly what it will mean for South Cambridgeshire and the authority's ambition to build more homes that are affordable for people to live in as quickly as possible.

## **A Cambridgeshire Headteacher Speaks:**

*"The £400 million announced by the Chancellor barely scratches the surface of what is needed to make up for the erosion of school funding over the last few years.*

*His comment that the money will help schools 'to buy the little extras they need' shows a complete misunderstanding of the prevailing funding pressures. Many schools do not have enough money to provide a full curriculum or individual support for pupils, let alone 'little extras.'*

*What they desperately need is improved core funding. The increasing demand for adequate provision for the growing proportion of children with special needs is particularly challenging. School funding in real terms has gone down by nearly 8% since 2014. 'Real terms' means what the money can buy. The gross figure has increased but there are more children going through the education system. The reduction in real terms money is confirmed by the Institute for Fiscal Studies.*

*The proportion of children needing some kind of special help is increasing due to improved medical care, societal and domestic pressures caused by instability in housing and poverty, greater stress in terms of academic expectations in the system at far too early a stage.*

*There are welcome if small increases in teachers' pay this year – but this scratches the surface and isn't enough to stop the exodus of teachers from the classroom. Schools are having to pay higher pension contributions and NI, and an apprenticeship levy as well as higher salaries.*

*The teachers' pay rise is not fully funded – schools have to find the first 1% out of their existing budget – and there are different pay rises for different grades of teacher, with teachers on the upper pay scale and leadership scale being awarded below-inflation pay rises. This makes them feel unvalued and will do nothing to halt the recruitment and retention crisis in senior leadership positions.*

*Particularly badly hit is post-16 where the funding per student has not increased for some years and consequently, the curricular range is being narrowed."*

Got a problem? Issue? Something you'd like to discuss? Your Councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can!

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