

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Report to Hauxton Parish Council March 2020

February Full Council

The main items of business at February full council meeting were the District Council Budget. As part of the budget, £5 million has been pledged towards improvements linked to the District Council's 'green to the core' priorities, including improving the Council's offices to cut carbon emissions and energy bills, providing communities with grants for projects that cut carbon emissions in their areas, making Council houses more energy efficient and helping people cut the amount of food they waste.

In 2018 the Council declared a climate emergency and pledged to reach net zero carbon by 2050. To help move toward that goal the Council plans to, in 2020-21, invest a further £100,000 on Zero Carbon Community grants for community initiatives to cut carbon emissions and tackle climate change, £1.9 million 'greening' of its offices to cut energy bills and show others how they could go green, and a further £1.3 million on improving energy efficiency of Council homes. In addition, £1.3m will replace 1,800 District Council owned streetlights with LEDs to reduce energy consumption by 60% and £400,000 on an electric bin lorry to see whether it is viable to shift from a diesel to an all-electric fleet.

In 2020-21 the Council also expects to generate over £3.5 million from investments which will be spent on local services and help offset cuts to their funding by central Government. The Council's budget also proposes investing an extra £200,000 in expanding the mobile warden scheme in the district. Local Mobile Warden groups support older people to live independently by carrying out practical tasks such as making light meals, shopping, making appointments, filling in forms and collecting prescriptions.

A further £200,000 is also planned to be invested in increasing support for local businesses so that villages remain vibrant and new jobs are created close to where people live.

East West Rail events

Some initial community engagement events are ongoing. The full list is available here: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/the-project/central-section/community-events>, but the nearest are Cambridge, Friday 20 March, 2:30pm - 6:00pm Ross Street Community Centre; Comberton, Saturday 28 March, 3:30pm - 7:00pm Comberton Village Hall; Cambridge again, Monday 30 March, 11:30am - 5:00pm Webb Library; Barrington, Tuesday 31 March, 11:00am - 3:00pm Barrington Village Hall.

VE Day Grants

The Council is inviting people to apply for a Community Chest grant to fund projects that will help residents remember and reflect on the sacrifice, courage and determination of those at home and abroad who gave so much during World War II for VE Day on Friday 8th May. Communities are invited to apply for up to £1,000 to mark the 75th anniversary and the deadline to apply the 15th March.

Cambourne to Cambridge

As reported last month, the Cambourne to Cambridge proposal recommending an off-road bus way route was due go before the executive board of the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) on 19th February, but you may have seen that didn't happen. The Combined Authority Mayor, James Palmer, intervened before the board meeting, staking a claim to take control of public transport infrastructure development in the Cambourne to Cambridge (C2C) corridor away from the GCP. Whether he has the power to do this is not entirely clear – but it will no doubt be resolved in Whitehall in the coming weeks. We're glad that the Mayor now seems to share some of our concerns about the recommended route, having previously supported the GCP plan. The Mayor is currently consulting on plans for CAM, a rubber wheeled based "metro" – don't call it a bus! – including tunnels under Cambridge. You can find that here: <https://cam.consultationonline.co.uk/>. The GCP's C2C scheme was supposed to be the first phase of the wider CAM network, but the Mayor does not now believe it aligns with his vision. However, he has not yet articulated what his vision is for C2C, so we're all in the dark for the moment! The Combined Authority plans a meeting on 6 March to consider proposals which would include an interim solution, so we'll be watching very carefully.

Complaints and Compliments to South Cambs

The District Council have now launched the Open Process portal, which allows residents to create an account where complaints can be raised and tracked throughout the investigation, until resolution. There is the facility for supporting documents to be uploaded and messages can be sent between investigators and complainants, which will help to speed up the process. All complaints need to be made through: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/feedback/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions/> (selecting the option for the "Online Complaints Form").

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