
COUNCILLORS REPORT – SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CLARE DELDERFIELD AND BRIAN MILNES

FEBRUARY 2019

YOU CAN FOLLOW YOUR COUNCILLORS ON FACEBOOK: [BRIANANDCLARE4SAWSTON](https://www.facebook.com/BrianandClare4Sawston)

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other - matters, please do not hesitate to contact Clare Delderfield cllr.delderfield@scamb.gov.uk or Brian Milnes cllr.milnes@scamb.gov.uk

BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX

The Plan and Budget recommendations will be reviewed at the Council meeting on February 21. The proposed increase in SCDC tax will be £5, taking the charge for a Band D property in the District to £145.31. The Business Plan consultation was interesting – the people that did respond particularly highlighted the issues around transportation and affordable housing. Copies of the Business Plan are available via the following link: <http://bit.ly/2PqjPTM>

Proposals will be discussed at the Cabinet meeting this week to increase the premium for empty properties that remain unoccupied for extended periods of time. This is to encourage owners to bring properties back into use and to ensure that such properties do not attract vandals and/or become a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

FOOTPRINTS CAFÉ

In recent weeks, Footprints Café (the new name for the café at the rear of the free church) was shocked to receive a hefty rates demand for the period since taking over the Café from Papworth Trust in the summer. This has now been resolved with the District Council offering 100% exemption due to the charitable nature of the work undertaken. We were pleased to support the Parish Council in offering a grant towards the sound insulation proposal and similarly will support their application for a Community Chest grant towards the same project.

There is a lot of support around the village for the Café and its work. Many young people with learning difficulties have been assisted whilst providing inexpensive food and drinks in bright, comfortable surroundings.

CHURCH LANE

The District Council only has one street-cleaning team – so it's in high demand. Also street cleaning is one of those odd cases that for some things, e.g. mud on the road from a tractor, it's a County Council thing, as is cleaning out the drains and gullies. But for other things, like leaves forming mud in the gutter and on the paths (at least some of the paths) it's a District Council thing.

Church Lane has been causing concern for some time, so we were pleased that we were able to determine that the leaves were "our sort of muddy stuff" and got our one team on the case with their road/gutter sweeper and the little path cleaner, both at the same time!

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

There will be a Greater Cambridge Partnership consultation starting 4th February on proposals for the Cambourne to Cambridge Transport link. Although not directly affecting residents in Sawston, it might be of interest to residents who travel that way. Councillors have been asked to promote this as much as possible.

The Strategic Bus Review report, commissioned by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, was published on 23rd January. The options being considered will be outlined in a business case. These could include franchising and enhanced partnerships but the timescale is depressingly long. Some improvements in bus networks could be introduced sooner but the report is rather disappointing given the time it has taken to produce. The report can be found on:

<http://bit.ly/2l6Upai>

We will endeavour to make sure that the interests of residents living in the villages around Cambridge will be served as these proposals progress.

Elsewhere, proposals on the Cambridge/Bedford section of the East-West Rail Route between Cambridge and Oxford have been published for public consultation. The consultation runs from 28 th January to 11 th March. Information about the options being considered can be found on:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/haveyoursay> This is just a start and there will be more opportunities for people to comment as proposals evolve.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Central government announced in the October 2018 budget, changes to Business rates. It proposed the introduction of a new business rates relief for retail premises that are occupied and have a Rateable Value (RV) of less than £51,000. It also announced an extension of the current relief scheme for newspapers.

As one of our three main priorities is to support economic growth in the district, and this involves supporting small and medium businesses too, the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance has agreed revisions to the existing Council rates relief policy to reflect the changes that government announced.

So if you are small business, you can find out more about the available relief by clicking on this link <http://bit.ly/NDR-Relief2019> or contact the Business Rates team at the Council for more information or to find out if you qualify.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Following on from our report last Dec, the decision by South Cambs councillors to raise the bar by aiming to be carbon neutral by 2050 has been making headlines. ITV News carried an interview with a resident of Histon and the District Councillor – which you can read about here.

<http://bit.ly/2RKgyuP>

It is encouraging to see that some residents are taking the carbon reduction challenge seriously.

ADDITIONAL GREEN BIN CHARGE

Changes to some aspects of bin collections in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are being proposed to streamline the service. Now that we have a shared service they need to be streamlined.

Most of the changes affect Cambridge City only but the one proposed change for South Cambs residents is the introduction of a charge for those who want more than one green bin, which Cambridge City residents already pay. The first green bin will remain free.

A decision was taken last year to implement a charge for additional green bins, bringing the service into line with Cambridge City. All residents who have additional green bins will receive a letter this week, advising them of the change and the need to pay for a permit to continue using their extra bins.

The District Council would like as many residents as possible to pay on-line. The webpage explaining the service, payment form, terms and conditions and FAQs can be accessed here:

<http://bit.ly/2ScAyvb>

The timeline is as follows: Residents who already have bin have until the 8th March to subscribe. Those that have subscribed will be sent a permit in late March ready for the 1st April. A period of grace of one month will be run from 1st April. In this period those bins without permits will be emptied (until the end of April). Crews will leave a card on those bins with no permit to remind residents to subscribe.

From the 1st May those additional green bins that do not display a permit will no longer be emptied. Residents who don't subscribe can keep their bins and join up later if they wish.

From the 1st April anyone who wishes to order an additional green bin will have to pay for the permit at the time of ordering the bin. The bin and permit will then be dispatched. This will be communicated via the annual service leaflet going out in March and the next edition of South Cambs Magazine.

The current permit is £20 per additional bin will cover the period from 1 April up to the 30 September. From 1 October 2019 and the annual charge will be begin which is £35.

"MY SOUTH CAMBS" CUSTOMER PORTAL

Councillors attended a demonstration of a new South Cambs Council customer portal that went live on 21st January. Users will be able to sign in using e-mail, facebook, Microsoft and Google. The system allows customers to submit questions, contact the Council about planning, benefits, waste collections etc as well as to report problems. The system is evolving and will enable customers to track the progress of their complaint or enquiry. As the system is web based, it will free up officer time to carry out their work – we welcome any feedback. The new portal can be accessed from the South Cambs Council homepage or on <https://mysouthcambs.scambs.gov.uk>.

COMBINED AUTHORITY (CA)

It really is hard to know where to start. The Mayor's antics have not gone unnoticed by no less than the Private Eye magazine December edition and again in January in their infamous column 'Rotten Boroughs'.. In December the top story was about the combined authority and the Mayor making what it called "an expensive pig's ear of running what was meant to be a lean and mean operations". For January we have a double helping. We have a link to the copy of the article which you can find here Dec: <http://bit.ly/RottenBoroughCPA> and for Jan story on Deputy Leader getting a Farm tenancy: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!ArYIMhZXhOpbhMNMQJ5SxVhe5QqdEQ> and for Mayor using taxpayers money on a ball to raise funds <https://1drv.ms/u/s!ArYIMhZXhOpbhMNNmnoMjZAV3fGmig>

The Mayor's statement on this is here: <http://bit.ly/2Bq8jPg>

Did you respond to the Combined Authority's Budget Consultation? Well it's not altogether surprising you didn't, as it was held over Christmas. Which is bad enough but additionally there was no obvious effort to publicise it.

It would be nice to have some positive stories to share from the Combined Authority.

JOBS & EMPLOYMENT

House prices in South Cambridgeshire make it very difficult for many businesses, including the Councils to recruit staff. South Cambridgeshire District Council is hoping to fill quite a number of job vacancies early this year including apprenticeships. If you are thinking about a job change please do keep an eye on the website site. SCDC has a good reputation as a good employer and offers flexi-time, excellent training and many other incentives to ensure that it attracts the right people.

CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE

The Greater Cambridge shared planning service has published a joint plan for how a new district could be created on the land between the A14, new Cambridge North Railway Station and Cambridge Science Park.

This is the last brownfield site of its type in the area, and one that could be developed into a low carbon community with thousands of new homes, jobs and community facilities

Anglian Water's water treatment facility will need to be relocated for comprehensive regeneration of the area to take place.

In the past the cost of relocating the facility has meant this has not been an option the Councils could consider. However, a bid to Government under their Housing Infrastructure Fund – which was set up to help sites like Cambridge Northern Fringe get off the ground – has recently been submitted to move the water treatment facility. The bid successfully passed the first round of Government assessment and the final outcome is expected in the spring.

This is a unique opportunity for regeneration of a significant brownfield area right on the edge of the city, to provide an environmentally friendly way of living. Its location close to the Science Park, Cambridge North Station, the guided busway and the A14 means that it is well located in transport terms. The emphasis can then be placed on designing low-carbon development where the use of alternative modes of transport is giving precedence over the motor car. This should help its residents reduce their cost of living, running their homes etc.

Both SCDC and Cambridge City propose to carry out a public consultation early this year to give residents an opportunity to get involved and give suggestions on how to develop a plan for the area.

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE, OR ANY OTHER MATTERS.

BRIAN MILNES AND CLARE DELDERFIELD

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS FOR SAWSTON