

Highlights of the Cambs South Villages Community Warden Schemes

The Community Warden, Anita Gilchrist, works 20 hours per week supporting older people in Cambs South Villages to live independently and safely in their own homes. The scheme is currently above capacity at 17. There are 3 older people on the waiting list.

Warden Service	Sawston	Duxford
Male	4	
Female	12	1
Couple	2	

The primary objectives underlying the warden service are to promote community, support digital inclusion and prevent more serious health or wellbeing issues manifesting in the older person. These aspirations are in line with the 10-year NHS Health Plan 'Fit for the Future'.

Value add service:

The Community Warden Service is person centred and flexible to meet and adapt to the individual's needs. The service involves daily contact either by phone or a personal visit, from Monday through to Friday. The warden service provides reassurance and security through a regular point of contact to older residents and their families, being a listening ear and importantly noticing changes in their wellbeing and acting accordingly. See Appendix B – Quotes.

Illustrative of the bespoke nature of the service, below are examples of the value-add support provided by the Community Warden:

- Attends soup and sandwiches every month with some of the older people, reducing isolation and helping them integrate into the community.
- Worked alongside the John Huntingdon Charity to follow up on an attendance allowance claim which was turned down for one of the older people on the scheme.
- Regularly applies or reapplies for taxi vouchers and advocates for older people where some taxi drivers refuse to accept the vouchers due to lack of training of staff.
- Contacted Camsight as concerned for an older person being at risk when out and about in Sawston. Awaiting confirmation for a volunteer from Camsight to accompany the older person. In the meantime, the Community Warden has provided a high vis jacket and is applying for taxi vouchers.
- Resolving a dispute with British Gas on behalf of an older person, which has been referred to VSSOP and is now settled.
- Providing puzzles to a small group of keen puzzle enthusiasts on the scheme.
- Encouraging a live in carer to use music and to sing along with an older person with breathing difficulties so as to strengthen breathing and vocal usage.

Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Cambs South Villages

Community Warden Service update



- Acting as a liaison between next of kin and an older person where there is a break of communication and the older person feels overwhelmed when communicating.

Funding Request

Based on the scheme at full capacity of 16 and provisional budget projections, the funding deficit per annum per older person in 2026/27 is:

Operating cost of providing the scheme	£1,734
Warden fees	£900
SCDC contribution	£332
Funding deficit	£512

See Appendix A for details of the forecast budget for 2025-26 and the provisional budget for 2026-27.

We are currently supporting 17 older people on the community wardens service in Sawston. A financial contribution of approximately **£6,000** towards the scheme would fully fund a minimum of 12 places in Sawston on the scheme.

Future developments towards sustainability

Through the Rose Regeneration research project commissioned by South Cambs District Council, it was identified that the community warden schemes have a good Social Return on Investment at £4,92:£1,00.

There were concerns raised, however, as to the financial viability of the schemes; consequently, there have been two fee charge increases throughout 2025-2026 to reflect a move towards sustainability. There are steps being taken to introduce a monthly fee as from October 2025, moving away from weekly charges and using mobile apps to facilitate the payment of both warden fees and shopping.

We are also looking to remodel the community warden service. We would like to group the warden schemes geographically and appoint a Hub Coordinator to assist the wardens in their phone calls and administrative tasks. The adaptation of the service would deliver:

- More time for face-to-face visits with older people
- More older people would be able to access the scheme
- Increased value for money as the older person would be getting an enhanced service
- Improvements in operational delivery e.g. when a warden is on annual leave the Hub Coordinator will cover the role

This Hub model has been successfully implemented incorporating the Peterborough, Ramsey and Fenland South warden schemes. We are hoping to see an increase in capacity and warden fees across these schemes, which should in turn improve the sustainability of the service.

Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Cambs South Villages
Community Warden Service update



A: Forecast Budget 2025-26 and Provisional Budget 2026-27

	2025-2026	2026-2027
Income	£'s	£'s
Parish Council – Sawston	1,000	TBC
Parish Councils - Other	0	TBC
SCDC	10,915	5,158
Warden Fees	12,500	14,400
Brought forward figure as at 01.04.26	1,335	0
Total	25,750	19,558
Expenditure (3% uplift applied)	£'s	£'s
Salaries/Ni/Pension/Staff Cover	17,800	18,334
Travel Expenses	1,000	1,030
Stationery/Telephone/Postage/Adverts	642	661
Contribution to overheads	7,494	7,719
Total	26,936	27,744
Provisional deficit budget as at 31st March	1,186	8,186

Appendix B – Quotes from older people using the service and next of kin

The Warden service really is a lifeline. You have provided conversation, advice on benefit claims, put us in touch with other local support services from help with walking sticks to suggesting mobile hairdressers. You were someone that my father would consult, and he valued your advice and companionship. You also made suggestions such as balance exercises for my mother and getting her to help with simple household chores.

I have spoken to mum about the service you provide, and she is very happy with all you do for her. I have to say it helps myself and my sister to know that you are there for mum as a service as we both live so far away. Your service helps keep her independence and we feel reassured that you are there to help her with appointments etc. But this is an email just to say mum is happy with the service you provide, and we are very grateful to your service for providing the help you do.

I call it my 'all-sorts' person: you do anything from filling my bird feeder to lifting bags of compost from the car boot (max 40 litres!) to helping me package and return a chair to Amazon at the Post Office. All done with the utmost grace and generosity of spirit. And sometimes we just talk – about all sorts. As it is in life, I would be the poorer in my late 80s without you.