

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

MAY 2020

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

Our report this month will again begin with a focus on South Cambs District Councils response to the current Covid 19 pandemic and the support being provided by SCDC to residents, communities and businesses. Further information can be found via the Coronavirus pages on the SCDC website: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

We would also again like to recognise and thank the Parish Councils of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick and Oakington and Westwick Neighbours and all the volunteers in our communities who are continuing to pull together to coordinate the incredible local response to Covid 19 and provide support for our most vulnerable residents.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITIES

SCDC has put together a number of helpful resources to support community groups and volunteers on their website <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/advice-for-communities/> including links to safeguarding training and details of how to report concerns about a resident.

The council has also updated its dedicated funding pages on the website with details of dedicated funding available for community groups: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/advice-for-communities/funding-for-community-groups/>

SUPPORT AND ADVICE FOR RESIDENTS

There is also regularly updated information for residents on the support that is available for them on the SCDC website <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/support-for-residents/>

There is also information on the many ways in which residents can volunteer or offer support during this crisis, including information about donating to your local foodbank <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/i-want-to-help/>

SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS

The District Councils other main role remain during this period is in providing support for local businesses. For the most up to date information on the support available to business or the self-employed, we recommend checking the Council webpages <https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/> or visiting the governments business information pages: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

It is also possible to sign up for the regular South Cambs 'Open for Business' newsletter via the SCDC website link.

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

This week HMRC will start contacting people who may be eligible for the new Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

If they are eligible, this scheme will allow them to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits up to a maximum of £7,500.

Under the rules of the scheme, not every self-employed person will be able to claim. You can review HMRC's updated guidance for information on eligibility, how to make a claim and how HMRC calculate the grants. In order to receive quick confirmation from the eligibility checker, you should:

- have your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) and your National Insurance Number to hand
- make sure your details are up to date in their Government Gateway account

The claims service will open on 13 May.

Business Grants

As part of the Government's two grant funding schemes for small businesses, the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, SCDC have already successfully paid grants to over 80% of eligible businesses in the district.

Grants for small businesses that already pay little or no business rates because of small business rate relief (SBRR), rural rate relief (RRR) and tapered relief will provide a one-off grant of £10,000 to eligible businesses to help meet their ongoing business costs.

Grant funding of up to £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses:

- businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of under £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000
- businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000.

SCDC have previously sent emails and letters inviting eligible businesses to apply for the grants using the online form: www.scams.gov.uk/governmentbusinessgrants. We have also called all those eligible businesses that have not yet claimed their grant. This process is continuing with Councillors and officers working to ensure funding gets to where it's needed as quickly as possible.

If, having looked at the Government's guidance, a business thinks they might be eligible for one of these grants please contact our team as soon as possible so that they can help access the funding. Email businessgrants@scams.gov.uk and title the email ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT FUNDING

Business rates holidays

For all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses:

The Council has now identified and re-billed business accounts eligible for this relief. If a business has not received a £0.00 balance bill, but think you should qualify for the relief, please email NNDR@scams.gov.uk Please use "Expanded Retail Claim" in the subject of your email. The full criteria for this relief can be found on our website by clicking on the 'Internal Policies/Guidance' link.

For children's nurseries:

The council have now applied business rates holiday for nurseries to all eligible premises. Properties that benefit from the relief are those occupied by providers on Ofsted's Early Years Register and wholly or mainly used for the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Support and guidance for businesses making and delivering food

South Cambridgeshire District Council has recently published support and advice especially for local food companies. Sources of guidance are highlighted, and food related Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are answered specifically around making and delivering food.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/food-businesses-and-coronavirus/>

Business Recovery

A joint group has been set up with councillors from SCDC and Cambridge City and officers from the GCP, SCDC and City to begin to look at how we can support businesses and develop a plan to support business recovery across the District.

UPDATE ON SERVICES IMPACTED BY COVID 19

Officers are doing their very best to maintain services during this period, but some council services have been impacted. Full details of services that are currently impacted can be found via:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/coronavirus/our-services-that-are-impacted/>

Reinstatement of green bin collections

Residents in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are being asked to put their green bins out on their normal days from Monday 4 May as part of a phased reintroduction of garden waste collections.

Households would usually have two green bin collections between 4 and 30 May but, due to the impact of national social distancing measures, only one collection will be guaranteed. Crews will try to empty more bins on each occasion if they can.

For clarity, households can check their online bin collection calendar to find out their guaranteed green bin collection date. In addition, Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service crews may be able to collect some green bins more frequently than this - when there are enough staff and vehicles. Putting your green bin out with your blue bin every fortnight will mean it is available for them to empty if they are able to.

The national social distancing measures outlined for waste collection services mean that each collection vehicle currently has a driver and only one loader (the crew member who loads the bins onto the lorry), rather than the usual driver plus two loaders. This is in order to ensure enough space is left between staff when travelling, which means what would normally be one week's work could be spread across two weeks.

Councils in other parts of the country are making similar arrangements for their green waste collections as the recycling and waste industry deals with the impacts of this global health emergency.

The decision to suspend green bin collections in March was taken to ensure black bin (general rubbish) and blue bin (recycling) collections could be maintained despite crew members becoming

ill or needing to isolate. At one point, around a third of operatives at the Shared Waste Service were absent for one of these reasons.

While the service runs with only one loader per truck, in line with Government guidance on avoiding spreading the virus, it takes longer and is much more physically demanding to complete each round.

Although crews will do their best to collect as many green bins as possible during the first fortnight, only half of residents will have a guaranteed collection in these first two weeks of May. As well as finding out when their scheduled collection is via the councils' websites, residents will be able to report any accidentally missed bins online, on their guaranteed collection date, as usual. It will not be possible to report a missed green bin collection on non-guaranteed days.

There are some FAQs about the reintroduction of the green bin collections on the SCDC website:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/green-bin-re-introduction-faqs/>

Residents can check their guaranteed collection date via the online calendar

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/find-your-household-bin-collection-day/>

Bulky Waste Collections

Bulky waste collections also resumed from 27th April. Further details and charges for this service can be found here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/bulky-item-collection-service/>

Community Governance Review for Longstanton Oakington and Northstowe

Unfortunately, all face to face meetings and consultations planned as part of the CGR process in April have had to be cancelled due to the current restrictions. The Council is seeking advice on how the timetable for the review can be amended, to enable effective consultation to take place.

Proposed options for pausing or extending the consultation phase will be discussed at the Civic Affairs Committee on June 2nd and Parish Councils and residents will be notified as soon as a firm plan can be made.

It is still possible to view and comment on the three options being proposed as part of the second phase of the CGR consultation. Full details and maps can be found here

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cgr-lown>

As a reminder the three options being proposed are:

Option A - All phases of Northstowe create a new parish. Oakington & Westwick remains its own parish with boundaries to include the green separation land with Northstowe as defined by Oakington Parish Council. Longstanton Parish would remain the same up to the roundabout separating Station Road and the B1050 towards Willingham. Land north of the Guided Busway will go to Willingham Parish.

Option B - As above but land north of the Guided Busway to go to Northstowe.

Option C - Only Northstowe phases east of the B1050 would go to create a Northstowe Parish. Longstanton Parish would retain all land to the west of the B1050 which would include Northstowe Phase 3b and Bloor homes.

As District Councillors we do not support option C, as this could eventually add over 2000 Northstowe residents to Longstanton Parish. However, as this was a preference given by a number of residents during phase 1 of the consultation, we are keen for this to be included in the second phase of the consultation so that residents can fully understand the implications of this option and can express their views on this option.

Council Meetings

Meetings of the council, including committee meeting are now being held virtually. We will be holding our first virtual Full Council Meeting on 21st May at 2pm.

INFORMATION FROM CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE

Advice for communities and volunteers

Cambridgeshire police have provided some guidance about what residents and community group volunteers should do if they are concerned about someone and not able to make contact with them – for example, if they knock on someone’s door or try to reach them by telephone and the resident doesn’t respond. In this situation there are a few steps to take before calling 101 or 999 for support. The he main steps are outlined below:

If you are keeping an eye on someone in your neighbourhood and are concerned for their welfare, for example, if you knock on someone’s door or try to reach them by telephone and they don’t respond, there are some simple steps you can take.

1. Have a quick check through windows to see if you can see the person involved (make sure you exercise social distancing and don’t touch any surfaces);
2. Check for signs that the person may not be at home or may need assistance, such as a build-up of post, milk on the doorstep or anything else that may suggest the occupant needs help;
3. Speak to neighbours, making sure you keep the 2 metre social distancing rule to see if they know of any close friends or relatives that may be able to help or know where the person might be; could you contact them to confirm their whereabouts?;
4. If the person is home but does not wish to answer the door/telephone but requires food or medication, you can email communityCV@cambridgeshire.gov.uk who will be able to help;
5. If you are still concerned, and have carried out the checks as listed above, call the police on 101 giving the person’s name, address and telephone number if possible. It is helpful that the person calling 101 is the one who has made the checks. The police call handler will then go through a set of questions to establish if an officer should attend. Examples of the sort of questions they will ask are ‘could anything be seen inside the property?’ and ‘have the neighbours been spoken to?’
6. If you see someone whose life is in danger, for example, they are lying on the floor, always call 999 and request an ambulance.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary have pulled together a list of responses to commonly asked questions during the coronavirus lock down. For more details visit: <https://www.cambs.police.uk/information-and-services/Coronavirus-COVID19/Coronavirus-COVID-19-FAQs2>

Reporting a breach of Covid 19 restrictions

Local officers are seeking to resolve situations where people appear to be or are contravening the government advice on physical social distancing and the stay at home measures without resorting to enforcement and issuing fines. They have now produced an online form for reporting any serious concerns about breaches or issues you think they need to know about (this might be a large gathering or individuals repeatedly ignoring the restrictions). They are encouraging residents to use this method to report rather than the 101 service.

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/report/Report-a-breach-of-COVID-19-restrictions>

Cambridgeshire Constabulary has confirmed that while it is in the 'top half of the bottom end' of the league table for forces issuing fixed penalty notices for people breaking social distancing measures, it did issue a further eight fines over the past weekend. The Chief Constable has confirmed the Force will continue to issue fixed penalty notices - although it will rely most heavily on the 'Educate, Engage, Explain' part of its 'Four E' strategy, before it reaches 'Enforce'.

OTHER WARD NEWS

Issues with Northstowe construction work

We have continued to receive complaints about construction noise and out of hours working from residents in Rampton Drift, Longstanton. Out of hours working has been reported to enforcement. We continue to encourage residents to report these issues to us and to continue to report these directly to enforcement via the online system if they are able so that they can be investigated:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/portal-eform-landing-pages/?u=https://scambs-framework.egovhub.net/REPORTABREACHOFPLANNINGCONTROL/launch>

We have asked for measures to be put in place to mitigate the noise for residents from Phase 2a.

We had also received several complaints about dust, and we have asked if monitoring is in place and for mitigation measures to be put in place as per the CEMP- we are waiting a response on this. We have been informed that water spraying is being used to suppress the dust, but residents are still reporting issues with this, so we are continuing the chase on this issue with Sisk and Homes England.

On issues with construction traffic using Rampton Road to access site rather than the permitted route via the new Southern Access Road we are pleased to report that Homes England agreed to install a concrete barrier at the end of Rampton Road to completely restrict access. Homes England and L&Q have again reiterated the approved access routes for work on site to all contractors.

Planning application for Digital Park site S/3854/19/OL

The Council has now received a planning application for 106 homes on the Digital Park site, west of the B1050 in Longstanton. Residents have until 21st May to give comments on the application via <https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/.../search....>

For background:

- this is part of the Phase 3b build out which was part of Northstowe's plans.
- a consultation on this was launched last year so this is not the first time the community were informed, and the developers came to present at the Northstowe Community Forum last year.
- South Cambs District Council did not approve the developers plans, partly on the grounds it did not submit an environmental impact assessment. The developers appealed this decision. The Secretary of State overruled the councils request and said there was no evidence there would be material impact on the environment. We are exceedingly disappointed at this outcome and yet more evidence the planning system can be circumnavigated by developers and that the government can override decisions that local planners, councillors and the community do not agree with.

We therefore recommending that residents please add their comments to the consultation in the link below (not here on Facebook as we can't submit these as formal comments) in full.

We as district councillors will be making our own representations.

Phase 3a and 3b

We are expecting both submissions for Phase 3a and 3b will also be going out to consultation soon (Phase 3B first). The planning team are working with Homes England and consultees to ensure that comments and actions can be carried out.

Homes England will be assisting in sending the letters to residents (at their expense) and putting up site notices and we will be using the web and social media to spread awareness of this. Both Longstanton and Oakington Parish Councils have been informed already and have received copies of the application as planned directly from Homes England.

We also want to ensure that the community are not disenfranchised and have opportunities to engage in the application and therefore extra time will be given for people to review and comment. The Council continues to plan for a consultation event when and if current restrictions are lifted.

COUNCILLOR UPDATES

- Monthly email newsletter - with updates on local news as well as wider district issues which will impact us all. To sign up please go to:
https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/email_signup_longstanton
(Note to help us manage GDPR it is easier for us to host from the LibDems webpage, but we absolutely promise this link will NOT subscribe you to LibDem news)
- For all the latest news & updates so far please go to:
https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/longstanton_news
- For those on social media we have a very active Facebook group covering the whole ward here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/>

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about these, or any other matters.

Alex Malyon and Sarah Cheung Johnson

District Councillors for Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe

Contact details:

Sarah Cheung Johnson: cllr.cheungjohnson@scambs.gov.uk

Alex Malyon: cllr.malyon@scambs.gov.uk