

## Report of County Councillor Claire Daunton to parish councils in the Fulbourn Division

March 2024

### Quy issues

- (i) Weed killing: I provided written information to parish councillors concerning the details of weed killing chemicals used, including HSE guidance; and I also provided the contact details of the lead officer for further information.
- (ii) Anglian Water: there was another fault at the sewage pumping station in recent weeks. Anglian Water were quick to attend and were in touch afterwards to explain the issues. There have been problems in other villages in this division and across the county. Other councillors and officers are to seek a high-level meeting with AW to ask for better preparedness and increased maintenance.
- (iii) Public Rights of Way (PROW): the county now has a Green Team with some modest additional funding for a whole range of work from verges to footpaths, with a small amount of specific funding for mapping projects. They will work closely with local organisations such as the Quy Fen Trust.
- (iv) Potholes. These have been reported and will be repaired, but please as soon as you see a hole report it on line. Incessant rain has held up some of the repairs.
- (v) 20mph. Have reviewed the bid for grant funding for a 20mph zone and made comments. I have followed this for some time and am in full support of the bid.

**FULL COUNCIL Budget** :The council agreed its budget on Tuesday 13 February, prioritising funding to: improve the condition of roads and footpaths, social care, and support for vulnerable communities.

This was a difficult budget process as many residents continue to feel the squeeze from cost of living pressures, but the council also faces significant cost increases. Those on the lowest incomes are also those who are often most reliant on services provided by the council. The county council had to close a gap of £37.4M, with 75 per cent of the Council's net spending now being funded from Council Tax. Councillors have prioritised a number of key areas, based on residents' feedback from last summer's Quality of Life survey. The budget

- Sustains critical adults' & children's social care services.
- Includes record levels of highways funding to strengthen and improve the standard of roads and pavements, including tackling potholes, weeds and gulleys—in direct response to residents' concerns.
- Prioritises support for vulnerable communities, including continuing to providing holiday supermarket vouchers for those children most in need.

The council agreed a Council Tax rise of 4.99 per cent—2 per cent for Adult Social Services, and 2.99 per cent for general services—raising £17.5M of local income to help maintain and protect critical services for the most vulnerable communities. For the majority of residents in Band A-D properties that will mean an extra 99p to £1.48 a week.

## STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE Shire Hall back on the market

Bids are invited for the lease or purchase of part of the Shire Hall site in Cambridge, after the previous preferred bidder was unable to continue their interest. Shire Hall had been the County Council's headquarters since the 1930s, but the site itself was the seat of government in Cambridge for over a thousand years. Previously the site of two medieval castles, the building was the county council's administrative centre from its completion in 1933 until 2022, when the council relocated to Alconbury as part of its planned savings programme. The property comprises the original Shire Hall, the Octagon, the Old Police Station, Castle Lodge and public car parking. Offers will be considered by the council's Assets & Procurement Committee in June, when councillors will review not only the financial bid made but whether the offer delivers environmental and social benefits. The council expects strong interest from commercial bidders, with the building's prime position in Cambridge making it highly suitable for different uses. Due to the historic importance of the site all proposals will require full planning and listed building consents to ensure protection of the assets on site. The council has applied to give part of the lawn between the front of Shire Hall and the Mound the legal protection of 'Town Green' status.

## ADULTS & HEALTH

**Measles update** : With cases of measles rising in some areas of the country, the council is asking everyone to check their MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination status and get vaccinated if not up to date. Measles is a highly infectious illness which can be very unpleasant and sometimes lead to serious complications. Two doses of the MMR vaccination give long-lasting protection against measles. In the UK, the MMR vaccination is given as part of the routine childhood vaccination schedule. The vaccine is free, available from GPs, and anyone can catch up at any age on missed doses. An alternative MMR vaccination is available which does not contain pork products.

Walk-in vaccination clinics are taking place across Cambridgeshire. These are for anyone over the age of one year who is not up to date with their MMR vaccinations. More information at <https://www.cpics.org.uk/measles>

Individuals should check their vaccination status if possible before attending one of these clinics. Vaccination records are in a child's personal health record (red book). Adults can check if they have been vaccinated with their GP or vaccination records from childhood.

**NHS dentistry under the spotlight:** The county council's Adults & Health Committee will be scrutinising the provision of NHS dentistry in Cambridgeshire at its meeting on Thursday 7 March. In recent years the availability of NHS dental care has shrivelled to almost zero, with many practices closing their doors to new NHS patients or ceasing to provide NHS dental care altogether. Dentists say that one in five people have resorted to 'DIY dentistry' and 4.4 million children in England have not seen an NHS dentist in at least a year, leading to a 17 per cent increase in tooth decay-related extractions in children. East Cambridgeshire is one of the worst 'dental deserts' in the country.

In February NHS England published a joint NHS and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) 'Dental Recovery Plan' to try to address the growing crisis. This includes

- a 'new patient' payment of between £15 and £50 (depending on treatment need) to treat around a million new patients who have not seen an NHS dentist in two years or more under the current contract, it is no longer financially viable to offer NHS procedures because of a lack of Government investment
- focus on prevention and good oral health in young children and an expanded dental workforce
- advice for parents and parents-to-be on taking care of baby gums and milk teeth
- one-off payments of up to £20,000 for dentists working in under-served areas for up to three years.

The minimum value of dental activity under the dental contract will increase from £23 to £28. This will affect only a small number of contracts across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and any additional funding will need to be covered from the current dental budget of the local NHS Integrated Care Board. Mobile 'dental vans' will be launched in rural and coastal areas, with at least one of these vans coming to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Cambridgeshire NHS has put in place a local Dental Improvement Plan, and identified the areas most in need as being Fenland, Littleport, Ely, and Peterborough.

**Have your say on creating Healthy Places** : Cambridgeshire's public health team is inviting residents to have their say on how new and existing communities can be healthy, supportive and inclusive. Work is currently under way to develop the Healthy Places Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. To inform this, the team has launched a survey asking for views on access to healthcare services, inclusive and accessible green spaces, opportunities for active travel and healthy play and leisure, and the provision of affordable healthy food options.

The survey is at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/WNC1CB/> and is open until Monday 15 April at 5:00PM. It will take around 10-15 minutes to fill in and may be completed on behalf of yourself or someone you care for. If you would prefer to complete a paper copy, you can pick one up from your local library. If you have any questions about the survey or the Healthy Places Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, please email [healthinallpolicies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:healthinallpolicies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

**More pupils get first choice of secondary school** : A greater percentage of Cambridgeshire students will be going to their first choice secondary school this September. A total of 87.9 per cent have been offered a place at their first choice school—up from 87.1 per cent last year. The proportion offered a place at their first, second or third preference school has also risen, from 95.4 per cent in 2023 to 95.8 per cent this year. The total number of places offered this year was fewer than last – 7,220 compared with 7,413.

**Supermarket vouchers:** More than 23,000 supermarket vouchers were distributed during the February half term to eligible families in Cambridgeshire.

## **COMMUNITIES SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)**

**Free data SIM cards for low-income households:** A reminder that Cambridgeshire Libraries are part of Good Things Foundation’s National Databank, O2 and Vodafone scheme, which makes free data SIM cards or vouchers available to anyone aged 18+ from a low-income household. Recipients can self-declare as eligible, and the support is available for a maximum period of twelve months. The data can be used with any SIM-enabled device. This offer is available at a range of libraries including Ely. Ask library staff for more details.

## **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT Weekly food waste collections**

The Government is moving towards weekly food waste collections across the country, with financial support to district councils for changes to collection of the waste, but not to county councils for disposing of it. Any councils not taking up the arrangements would be ‘named in legislation’ as being exempt from these collection arrangements, until such time as their existing waste contracts expired. In Cambridgeshire’s case this is 2037, when the PFI contract at Waterbeach ends—a long time to wait. After prolonged discussion between Cambridgeshire’s county and district councils, they have been able to agree to move to weekly collections, and avoid being listed in the legislation.

report it, even if it is not internal flooding, and even if the immediate danger has passed. In the event of a flood, if there is a threat to life call 999. To report a non-life threatening flood emergency to the police, please call 101. Outside of those events, the County Council’s flood reporting page

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and- parking/roads-and-pathways/report-a-flood> provides options to:

- Report a flooding problem on roads and pavements
- Report flooding in a property, home or garden
- Report flooding from water pipes or sewers
- Report flooding from surface water, groundwater or ordinary watercourses
- Report flooding from a main river or the sea as well as information on how to prepare for flooding, and flood emergency contacts.

## **Crucifixion**

The skeleton of a man who was crucified in Roman-era Cambridgeshire is on display as part of a blockbuster exhibition at the British Museum, after a loan of the remains was agreed by Cambridgeshire County Council. The British Museum’s exhibition is called *Legion: Life in the Roman Army* and will run until 23 June 2024 in the Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery.

Discovered as part of an excavation in Fenstanton, the body is only the second confirmed example of the Roman use of this barbaric punishment ever.

Once the exhibition ends, the remains will be transferred back into the guardianship of Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team.

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## HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

The council's Joint Administration has reinstated the programme of regular, cyclical gully clearing that the previous Conservative administration ceased. As noted above the budgeted includes record levels of highways funding to strengthen and improve the standard of roads and pavements, including tackling potholes, weeds and gulleys—in direct response to residents' concerns.

In Fulbourn the following areas will be completed: resurfacing of footpaths in Cow Lane and Station Road; drainage scheme on Geoffrey Bishop Avenue; drainage work on Wilbraham Road. In addition to regular gully clearing and additional road repairs.

### Busway works

A draft highways capital spending programme has been put to the council's Highways & Transport Committee for comment. It remains in draft only, and further work will be done to prioritise the use of the council's capital funding.

Safety works are under way on the Guided Busway to allow the busway to return to full, two-way operation. Since February 2022, a section of the Guided Busway in one direction has been closed between Cambridge Railway Station and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. A temporary fence was installed whilst an independent safety review was in progress, and following ongoing communications with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and as part of continuous safety reviews on the busway. Since then, the county council has been working with the bus operators and emergency services to risk-assess and design a fence to be installed next to the upstand along sections of the southern busway. It has been specifically designed with removable sections to allow for safe evacuation. This work is being carried out in sections to minimise disruption to passengers. Contractors are working seven days a week and the busway and maintenance track are currently programmed to re-open on Saturday 30 March.

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