

## **COUNCILLORS REPORT FOR APRIL 2022**

### **Henry Batchelor County and District Councillor**

#### **John Batchelor District Councillor**

##### **A1307**

Progress is being made with the lights at the Hildersham Crossroads and with the extension of the cycle route into the Abingtons. Work is expected to continue for several months yet.

The next project on the list is the roundabout at the Bartlow crossing and the Changes to the Dean Road access to the dual carriageway. We do not have a date for this yet other than to say it will be in this financial year.

##### **AFGHAN REFUGEES**

South Cambs District Council has made available 9 homes for Afghan refugees. All are now occupied, and the families are starting to make a new life for themselves. They are being supported by the local authority and funded through government grants.

##### **UKRANIAN REFUGEES**

The District Council is responsible for vetting the homes of sponsors and checking their suitability to receive their guests. They are not offering homes at this stage but may have an obligation later if the accommodation arrangements breakdown and the Ukrainians become 'homeless'.

If you are interested in this issue, there is a wealth of information on the District Council website [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

##### **COVID FUNDING**

A new discretionary fund has opened to help businesses who have not benefited from previous funding rounds. Full details can be found at [www.scambs.gov.uk/CARF](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/CARF)

##### **Bin Collections**

Covid is still making it very challenging to run all the bin collections. As we write over 40 of the workforce of 150 are away. Despite this it is the council's intention to continue the green bin collection but if your bin is not collected at the normal time please leave it out and we will be picking it up as soon as we can.

##### **Council Tax Rebate Scheme.**

The government's council tax rebate scheme goes live on 1st April. FAQs will be on the district council website. It is aimed at homes in council tax bands A-D. The amount of £150 is not repayable and will not show up on your Council Tax bill.

## **Zero Carbon Award**

South Cambridgeshire District Council has been recognised for its work to tackle climate change, with a Silver accolade at the 2022 Public Sector Transformation Awards.

## **Fitness and Wellbeing Grants**

South Cambridgeshire District Council is urging instructors to apply for up to £300 to lead fitness and wellbeing activities in their communities. Anyone who leads an existing group or who wants to set up a new initiative in the District, such as leading a walking group in their local park or running a weekly yoga class in a village hall, could be eligible for the small grant. Providers running multiple groups can also apply to fund multiple programmes.

## **Zero Carbon Communities Grants**

South Cambridgeshire's community groups can now bid for a share of more than £120,000 from the District Council's popular Zero Carbon Communities Grant scheme. The scheme has so far provided £310,000 to 51 grassroots projects that work to tackle climate change in South Cambridgeshire. The deadline to apply for the latest round of grants is Wednesday 1 June 2022. Full eligibility criteria and ideas for projects are available at [www.scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant)

## **County Underspend**

Amazingly the County Council has a forecast end of year underspend of £15.7m caused by short term implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is intended to use some of this in immediate and visible improvements to county highways including extra work in pothole 'hot spots', an increased programme to reduce surface water in locations highlighted by the community and improving lines and road markings in more rural areas to make driving safer at night and in bad weather.

## **Family Support**

Although Government-backed schemes set up to help struggling families during the pandemic ended on March 31, Cambridgeshire County Council's Joint Administration has agreed to earmark £3.6m to extend the Holiday Voucher Scheme for a further year.

We will issue each eligible child or young person a £30 supermarket voucher to cover the Easter holiday period. It will be sent by email and/or text to the nominated parent or carer. The voucher does not need to be used in a single shopping trip and once claimed will last for at least a year.

If your child is eligible for income-related free school meals as well as a number of other criteria, they will automatically receive a voucher for the Easter holiday period. Any children who become eligible up until 19 April 2022 will also receive a voucher. More at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk).