

District and County Councillor's Report – May 2023

A1307 Works

Work continues on the upgrades to the road and the next scheme to be implemented is the roundabout at the Bartlow Road, Linton crossing, which is scheduled to start early May and go on for about 40 weeks.

For more up to date information go to the Greater Cambridge Partnership website: www.greatercambridge.org.uk and look for the Cambridge South-East project.

Zero Carbon Communities Grant

The popular ZCC grant from South Cambs is open again for bids until June 2nd. There is a pot of £125,000 available for community groups and parish councils to bid for up to £15,000 for a project that will help with the reduction of carbon emissions in the district. Full detail and application form can be seen here - <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant>

Four Day Week Trail

You may recall the, as of January, South Cambs DC has been running a four-day week trial for office-based staff, the results of the which are now available.

All local authorities across the country are facing huge problems in recruiting and retaining staff. It is impossible to compete with the private sector especially for planning and environmental officers and so councils have to offer something other than money. The cost of having to use agency staff to fill unfilled posts is currently running at £2m per year - which is a lot of money for a District Council like South Cambs. For these reasons South Cambs District Council has had to think laterally and hence the Four Day Week trial. Officers have had to work differently and more intensely in order to do 100% of the work in 80% of the time to receive 100% of the pay. The results have been enormously encouraging: performance (which has been independently assessed) has been maintained and in some instances improved and staff who were thinking of leaving are now likely to stay. Officer feedback was 88% positive; and satisfaction feedback from residents was not impacted. The recommendation is to extend the trail for a further year.

Councillors are also to be asked to include the refuse collection services in the 4 Day Week trail as of this summer. Many councils already do not collect bins on a Monday because of all the disruption caused by bank holidays so this is being looked at as a way of extending the benefits to more colleagues.

Winter Gritting/Maintenance

This Winter season has just concluded and from a Highways Gritting perspective it has been generally, a mild one, but this hasn't meant the gritters stayed parked up! The team carried out 51 full runs and 6 part runs across the County. A total distance of 111,286 km or 69,000 miles or two and a half times round the world! We used nearly 9,000 tonnes of salt. Which brings us to....

Potholes

This winter has seen a rise in the number of potholes and surface defects across the road network. Whilst the demand has been increasing, the County Council has been recording and fixing potholes as fast as they can. They have put in additional repair gangs and currently have 8 patching Gangs and

Councillors Henry and John Batchelor

2 Dragon Patchers working full time. They are aiming to fix most permanently first time. However, they are having to do temporary repairs where the road is very poor condition and when they are fixing in rain and wet weather. These temporary fixes are recorded, and they will be going back to do a permanent repair.

Hopefully there will be a fall in pothole numbers over the coming months as the roads dry out and The Council repairs all those they know about. Their normal additional proactive Dragon Patcher is now with us for the summer and will be working across the County. £3.6million additional funding for road defect repairs from Government will be used to bring in additional dragon patchers to work proactively on a find, record and fix regime.

No Mow May

Cambridgeshire County Council is promoting biodiversity this spring as part of No Mow May as our Highways maintenance team pause grass cutting on road verges so habitats for wildlife, plant species and pollinators can thrive. 'No Mow May' is run by Plantlife who say more than 700 species of wildflowers grow on road verges in the UK - this is almost 45% of the total wildflower species found across the country. The County Council committed to a greener Cambridgeshire but of course road safety remains a priority so they will still cut grass where needed to ensure visibility at junctions and bends.

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