

District and County Councillor's Report – March 2022

Budgets

During February both the County and District Councils set their budgets for the forthcoming municipal year.

The main headline, that most people will be interested in is that the council decided to increase their share of Council Tax by a total of 4.99%, which is made up of 1.99% for general services and 3% for Adult Social Care. In real money this equates to – 90p per week for band A homes, £1.04 per week for band B, £1.19 per week for band C and £1.34 per week for band D. There is support available for those families who are struggling financially – for example the household support fund mentioned below.

The District Council agreed to limit their Council Tax rise to £5 per year. This equates to 10p per week for houses that fall within a band D and scales up and down from there, dependant on banding.

Ukrainian Situation

With many people asking for ways that they can help the situation in Ukraine, the District Council are suggesting that if people wish to support, this is best directed towards the following organisations:

- The British Red Cross – provides food, medicine, clothing and shelter
- The UNHCR refugee agency – funds emergency shelters, repairs to damaged homes, psychological assistance and clothing
- UNICEF – helps ensure families have clean water and food
- Save the Children – provides cash assistance, food and support to other refugees crossing into Romania and Lithuania

Flood Risk Management Strategy

The County Council has recently approved their strategy towards flood risk management for the next 5 years. Thank you to all those that took the time to feed into this document whilst going through its inception. The final strategy can be viewed here under agenda item 6 -

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1820/Committee/67/Default.aspx

Community Chest Fund

Another existing fund that is opening a new round of bidding, with some good news, the amount groups are able to bid for has doubled from £1,000 to £2,000 per group. Full criteria and applications can be found at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/grants/community-chest-grants/> - the District Council recently extended the criteria of the grant to allow grants for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations.

Household Support Fund

There is a support fund available from the County Council that is aimed at supporting families with a below average income, through the more difficult winter months. There is a fair amount of money in the pot at the moment and the fund will remain open until March 2022. Eligibility criteria and application form can be found here -

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund>

Business Covid Grants

The government have released a new batch of Covid related support grants for businesses, primarily in the hospitality sector, to apply for to assist them 'restarting' after a period of inconsistent trading. Applications are made through the District Council and full detail can be found here -

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/business-can-apply-now-for-latest-support-grants/>

County Council Farm Holdings

The County Council owns lots of rural estate in Cambridgeshire. They are now looking for applicants for tenancy on these parcels of land. The main thrust of the lease will be to cultivate some sort of business, not necessarily agriculture related. It's a very interesting opportunity for those that are looking to start their own business. Full detail can be found here -

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/applications-open-for-farm-holdings-on-councils-rural-estate>

Parking Enforcement

The County and District Councils have officially begun the process of taking parking enforcement powers away from the Police and managing this themselves, as happens in Cambridge City. The next step is that the County Council have prepared an application to the Secretary of State to attempt to formalise this. We will keep you updated as this progresses.

Solar Farm

A solar farm is planned beside the waste depot in Waterbeach to help power bin lorries across Greater Cambridge.

The board of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has agreed £2.7million funding towards the renewable energy plant while approving its budget last week.

Following successful trials with the first electric bin lorry, three more are now on order for delivery this year. Diesel fuel to power the existing fleet is the biggest single source of carbon emissions for South Cambs District Council.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service - the partnership between South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council that collects recycling and rubbish from around 127,000 households - applied for the funding towards the £4.2m project. The councils will fund the balance.

Farmgate

For those following the 'Farmgate' story in local media, which concerns a former County Councillor that abused their position within the council to bully and harass officers to get their way, has taken a significant step forward in that the full report into what occurred has now been published. For those interested, this can be read in full on the County Council website under Appendix B -

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1742/Committee/10/Default.aspx

Needless to say it has promoted many questions into some Councillors' behaviour towards staff and has made the Council implement steps to ensure this behaviour will not be tolerated by officers or fellow councillors.

A1307 Upgrades

The next set of upgrades to be implemented on the A1307 is the safer crossing point at the Hildersham junction. This involves putting in a crossing that all non-motorised users (pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders) can use. This has begun already and will be fully completed in the summer.

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