**Report of District Councillors Claire Daunton and Councillor John Williams to the**

**Annual Parish Meeting of Great Wilbraham Parish Council 2022**

*This report contains factual information which we hope will be of use and of interest to the parish council and to the wider community of the parish.*

**Summary for 2021-22**

As you can see we have had a very busy municipal year.

The Council now has enough new homes in to pipeline for the next five years to fend off speculative developments and launched its proposed draft Local Plan, Anglian Water has been consulting on its proposed site for the relocation of the Cambridge Water Treatment Works, a report was published into the delivery of water for future housing development and funding was secured for a project to protect our chalk streams. We also found time to produce a new housing policy to deliver greener homes that are more affordable to live in and started the work to get parking enforcement under local control.

After deducting Right to Buy losses, the number of council homes rose in the financial year from 5,459 to 5,532. Since May 2018, 144 rentable council properties have been completed and a further 48 are in the pipeline at this time. This was achieved without large scale Government funding.

South Cambs got national recognition for its climate change initiatives and so did the Building Control team.

The Council not only continued with its support for local communities with grants from the Community Chest, the Zero Carbon Community Fund and other Covid related funding, but also it introduced new grants for fitness and wellbeing and children and young people and increased the community warden scheme to more villages. Not to forget the increase in the number of free trees given to parishes, the homes for refugees and more support for the homeless.

South Cambs has of course faced difficulties. Covid and Brexit has affected staff sickness and the ability to recruit and this led to us having to suspend the emptying of green bins just before Christmas – and we are still being affected by this and now the increase in fuel which is impacting on the cost of collecting waste, even though we will have three electric bin lorries by the summer.

Even so South Cambs was one of a few councils in the country that could set a balanced budget with the vast majority being in the red. And our sizable reserves will help us weather the soaring fuel and other costs we will face in the coming financial year.

And our staff must be congratulated on distributing some £45m in Government subsidies to local businesses.

We have regularly attended parish council meetings, public forum meetings and briefings throughout the year. Quite a fair amount of time has been taken up with confidential casework from residents across the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn ward, including Teversham.

As to our work on South Cambridgeshire District Council, Claire sits on the following committees: Scrutiny, Grants, Civic Affairs, the Community Safety Partnership, the Joint Development Control Committee and the Housing Engagement Board; Claire is also involved with county archives and the local studies group and the Police and Crime Panel. I am the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance as well as deputising for the Council Leader on the Board of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. I am also a member of the Shared Services Board (which includes Huntingdonshire and Cambridge City) and a director of Cambridgeshire Horizons representing the interest of South Cambs.

**Housing Land Supply**

It has been confirmed that South Cambs and the City taken together now have a 6.5 years housing land supply comfortably above the minimum 5 year supply the Government expects it to have. We ca therefore refuse applications that do not conform to the Local Plan. Not having a 5 year supply before 2018 led to speculative house building across the District and many of our villages having large housing developments or the threat of such developments outside the Local Plan.

**Council Tax for 2022/23**

In February South Cambridgeshire District approved its budget for the coming financial year, noting that because of the strength of the council’s finances it was one of a few in the country to be able to set a balanced budget.

The Council’s total spending on providing services for the next 12 months is expected to be around £70 million. The total amount expected to be spent on capital costs, that being purchasing equipment, vehicles, and property, is expected to be around £48 million.

A total of £6.83 million has been earmarked for projects, services and equipment that tackle climate change on a local level in South Cambridgeshire.

As a result the Council Tax for South Cambridgeshire has risen 10p a week for the average band D household - a below inflation 3.4% increase. Not to have raised Council Tax would have left a shortfall of £1.4 million over the coming four years.

**Planning Matters**

**The new Local Plan**

In November residents were urged to give their feedback on the First Proposals for the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan, during a six-week public consultation period. Feedback from residents, businesses and groups in the area will help to shape the plan – which will eventually set out how Greater Cambridge will develop over the next twenty years. Online and in-person events will take place over the next month, where residents can discuss the plans with Council officers, and the whole Plan is available for comment online in an easy-to-use format.

Taking forward the 37,000 new homes in the current Local Plan and a further 11,000 in the new one the Councils have set out an ambitious vision for minimising carbon emissions alongside improving the quality of life for residents across the area, with all new homes to be carbon-neutral. The proposals at this stage include 19 new sites for homes and business space, with the majority of extra development proposed for North East Cambridge and the Cambridge Airport site.

It sets out a range of new policies to meet the environmental challenges facing the area – including tackling carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity, while highlighting that this can only happen if further work is done to address current water supply issues. Residents can comment using a quick questionnaire, or leave more detailed comments on specific sites and policy proposals.

**Water Resource**

Local Councils welcomed a long-term plan that aims to help ensure there is enough water in the region – but say it must aim for even higher water efficiency standards.

Evidence commissioned by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning to support the First Proposals for the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which were published in November 2021, found that water resources are already an issue in the region. The evidence also shows water supplies could be a potential 'show stopper' for meeting future development needs in Greater Cambridge.

**Protecting Chalk Stream**

Plans for a project to support Greater Cambridge’s chalk streams moved forward following a decision by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to support a project between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils which will make local chalk streams and the species they support more resilient

The plan now forms part of the Combined Authority’s budget, which was discussed and agreed by its board in January. It was agreed by Board Members that £420,000 towards this work will be made available from the Combined Authority, so long as additional checks such as value for money assurances are passed. This follows an invitation from the Combined Authority to its constituent councils, where funding has been made available to support ideas for projects that reflect the aspirations and business plan objectives of the Combined Authority.

**Proposed relocation of Cambridge Water Treatment Works**

Anglian Water commenced their second public consultation on the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation proposal on 23 June 2021 and invited comments up to the 18 August 2021.Greater Cambridge Shared Planning provided a response on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council which included local residents’ concerns about traffic, visual impact, lighting etc and support for an access direct from the A14.

**New Housing Policy**

Following consultation in the spring of 2021, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils have approved three new housing policies, affecting :the setting of Affordable Rents by Registered Housing Providers, for homes let to people on the councils’ housing registers; the location and mix of Affordable Homes in new developments;

and the councils’ expectations of new homes that are built specifically to be rented out (Build to Rent).

Both councils are committed to building homes that are affordable to live in, and ensuring that new Affordable Homes will be well-designed and located within new developments in such a way as to promote mixed, balanced and inclusive communities.

**Awards for the Council**

**Silver Award for our Green Agenda**

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.

The award for the Council’s ‘Being Green to our Core’ programme of work comes in the Green Public Service category at the annual Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) awards.

**Gold Award for Building Control**

The building control service for Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire has won Gold in the ‘Efficiency and Effectiveness’ category at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards, which celebrate best practice and innovation among public bodies.

**Grants for our communities**

**The Zero Carbon Communities Fund**

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, now in its fourth year, 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.

Last year thirteen exciting community projects in South Cambridgeshire aimed at reducing carbon emissions received grant funding totalling £79,796.

The Zero Carbon Communities grants award by South Cambridgeshire District Council are part of its drive for the district to become net zero carbon by 2050.

**Grants for fitness and wellbeing**

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. Activities could range from walking football/rugby/netball, to chair-based exercise classes, diabetes walking groups, yoga for the over 60s, baby yoga classes or more.

**Grants for children & young people**

Thirteen local organisations across South Cambridgeshire have been awarded a total of almost £78,000 from the District Council, for projects which help motivate and empower children and young people.

The new grant scheme was launched last year as a pilot by South Cambridgeshire District Council, with £40,000 of the funding provided on a one-off basis by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Grants totalling £77,920 were awarded to voluntary and community sector groups, charities and public sector bodies for projects aiming to improve quality of life for hundreds of children and young people in the District, addressing social disadvantage and equality of opportunity and issues such as mental health, diet and nutrition and anti-social behaviour.

**Support for homeless**

A housing charity which works to end homelessness has received a helping hand from South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Emmaus Cambridge, based in Landbeach, has been given a one-off grant of £30,000 which will allow it to employ an additional support worker to continue supporting single homeless people referred to the charity by the Council.

The funding comes from the Council’s Homeless Prevention Grant which district councils are allocated from the Government’s Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The purpose of the Homelessness Prevention Grant is to give local authorities more assistance in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness.

One of the priorities councils are asked to address with the grant is to aid reduction of rough sleeping and support provision for single homeless people.

**Support for communiites**

Council bosses are urging residents and community groups to use a new personalised advice service which will identify free tools and funding to tackle local problems and create safer communities in South Cambridgeshire.

Residents and community groups can complete a short online form outlining the initiative they want to set up or the problem they want to solve, and Council staff will offer tailored solutions. The guidance will include information about different grants that a particular project might be eligible for, the most appropriate toolkits to use, and introductions to community contacts who have seen success in similar projects locally.

**More trees for parishes**

The Three Free Trees scheme in 2020 saw 54 parishes in the district plant a total of 162 trees and in 2021 the Six Free Trees scheme saw a further 227 planted. Last summer saw an offer of free trees to South Cambridgeshire’s villages doubled on the previous year– in line with the District Council’s strategy to Double Nature. Parishes were invited to apply for six free trees. With trees absorbing CO2 from the atmosphere, they play a key role in helping to combat climate change.

**Platinum Jubilee**

This month a tree has been planted in honour of Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee by the Chair of South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cllr Anna Bradnam. Cllr Bradnam planted the Prunus Domestica (plum) on green space owned by the District Council in Fen Ditton.

All civic heads were invited to plant a tree today as part of a major initiative for The Queen’s Green Canopy project. The day was chosen as it is the seventieth day of the year in which The Queen marks the seventieth anniversary of her accession.

A plaque has been created and will be installed at the site on Musgrave Way as a legacy to the occasion.

**New Street Trading Policy**

A new street trading policy has been approved by South Cambridgeshire District Council to ensure local businesses are supported whilst providing residents with a varied choice of goods and services.

The Council, in relation to its responsibility for street trading, has designated that all streets in the District will now come under its remit, with the exception of the A11 and A14 and any area of land which is in direct ownership and control of the County, District or Parish Councils.

All designated streets will be subject to the new regulations which aim to create an environment which complements premises-based trading, is sensitive to the needs of residents, provides diversity and consumer choice, and enhances the character, ambience, and safety of local environments.

**Green Bin Collections hit by Covid and Brexit**

In December how waste collection service was hit by staff shortage arising from high sickness levels and difficult recruitment by the Council and agencies. Green bin collections across Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire had to be suspended from 13 December because of the number of drivers and loaders absent - particularly with Coronavirus or self-isolating.

The Greater Cambridge Waste Service resorted to running catch-up green bin collection rounds on Saturdays, to collect green bins that couldn’t be collected as per normal due to continued staff shortages (from COVID and a shortage of national HGV drivers and agency staff).

**Bringing parking enforcement under local control**

A route to tackling illegal and inconsiderate parking in South Cambridgeshire has been started.

Introducing civil parking enforcement in South Cambridgeshire will see responsibilities for dealing with illegal parking shift from Cambridgeshire Police to Cambridgeshire County Council. This will mean drivers parking illegally, such as on double yellow lines, could be issued a ticket by Civil Enforcement Officers and ordered to pay a penalty charge. This arrangement is in place in Cambridge City and many other areas.

**COVID Matters**

**Support for communities**

The South Cambs Community Safety Partnership launched a free toolkit to help local people keep caring for their community as the pressures of the pandemic ease.

Over the past 15 months volunteers all across the country have stepped up to help out their neighbours – dropping off shopping, collecting prescriptions, walking people’s dogs, making sure people weren’t feeling isolated, setting up meal schemes, and much more. But, as we approach the final stage of restrictions easing, many volunteers are thinking about putting in place longer-term structures to build community cohesion, and to tackle some of the other concerns that residents have.

The Community Safety Partnership – a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire County councils; the Police, Fire and Rescue Services; the Probation Service; and the NHS – has created a toolkit that provides guidance, training and other tools to support residents’ activities.

**Support for local business**

South Cambridgeshire businesses could apply for the latest COVID Government support grants via the District Council.

Applications opened in January this year for the latest grant schemes to be administered by South Cambridgeshire District Council. The first is the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG). The second is further funding available via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). Full eligibility criteria and application forms can be viewed now.

Last year South Cambridgeshire District Council contacted local businesses to help support their efforts to reduce COVID transmission in the workplace.

Working with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and alongside local public health authorities to support the understanding of patterns in confirmed coronavirus cases in the area, the Council will be providing advice and guidance via telephone or un-announced in-person visits.

This follows the grant scheme launched in July 2021 based micro and small to medium sized businesses looking to scale and grow. The Growth Fund scheme, using funding provided by Government, was designed to support businesses’ growth and expansion plans in the district. Eligible applicants for the scheme had to be South Cambridgeshire based start-ups who are looking to scale and grow quickly, or established South Cambridgeshire based companies who can clearly demonstrate ambitious growth plans in the District. Businesses in any sectors can apply, including, sole traders and partnerships.

**Homes for refugees**

In September five more homes for families from Afghanistan were put forward by South Cambridgeshire District Council – meaning up to around 40 refugees can now be housed, the Council having said it would provide homes to three families the previous month as part of its response to the international crisis.

Since then, five further suitable properties have been put forward, including some which have been identified following conversations with housing associations working in the area. All the properties are being made available to support families relocating to the UK through the Afghan Locally Employed Support (LES) scheme, following a plea for Government for Councils to provide more housing help to Afghan nationals who worked for the British Government.

***Claire & John***