

Report of County Councillor Claire Daunton to parishes in the Fulbourn Division for March 2025

Great Wilbraham Issues

20mph. Work to implement the scheme took place in the week of 3rd March.

Cycle paths. A report and recommendations concerning a preferred cycle route from the Wilbrahams will be made available to the joint parishes cycling working group in the near future and thence to the parish councils. Three options were put forward in the feasibility study and the working group commented on all three. The consultants will be steering us to choice of one, but their latest report has not yet been made available. In good news, there is funding for a further round of work with the consultants; and the Wilbrahams have now been moved on to the list for funding of a cycle path. No timetable for that yet; but we are on that list for delivery in the future.

School Crossing. I continue to work with the chair of the parish council and chair of the Highways subcommittee to explore all options relating to the school crossing

Maintenance. Additional crews are being brought in, now that there is some more Spring-like weather to deal with pothole and other road and footpath defects. I am fully aware that there is outstanding work on holes and footpaths in Great Wilbraham.

Drainage:gulleys. There are drainage problems in two parts of Frog End. I need to bring in the LHO and a member of the drainage team to look at the causes of problems.

Drainage: investigative work. A report on recent work carried out on surface water drainage in Church Street and The Lanes and in Little Wilbraham (with a mix of issues in both places) has shown that:

- Parts of the system are working fine with none/minimal defects, for example, gully connections into chambers/main pipes.
- Some of the system is facing root intrusions/ingress which could be a cause for flow of water to be limited.
- Some connections/pipes have deformations which cause level issues for water to flow downstream.
- There are a FEW instances where a pipe has holes, and the broken bits lie within the pipe. This could be a cause for limit in flow of water further downstream.
- Some of the assets, such as chambers/gullies MAY not be fit for the current climate change because of their limited sizing.

The team are now designing schemes to deal with these issues. I still need complete clarification of the surface water drainage into the cemetery ditch and am following this up.

HGVs. Following the last divisional highways quarterly meeting (with main agenda items on HGV traffic; new developments and highways involvement; drainage), representatives of Fulbourn, Great Wilbraham, Little Wilbraham and Teversham parish councils met to consider ways forward. It was agreed to make contact with Haddenham parish council to find out in detail how they log traffic and how they have approached hauliers to sign covenants. Also agreed to carry out a jointly-agreed and jointly-staffed roadside survey when the through-route to Fulbourn is closed during the Cadent gas works (17th March to 13th June) when only HGVs will be allowed through the village to this side of the level crossing. No private vehicles will be allowed through, only vehicles needing access to the industrial areas on the north western side of the level crossing.

Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC). I attended another of the regular briefings for councillors concerning developments on CBC (also known generally as ‘Addenbrooks’). The site is growing all the time. We heard about the timeframe of the development of the Cancer Research Hospital (building to start in 2026 with opening due for 2029); the children’s hospital (bringing together physical and mental illness treatments and moving wards from the Fulbourn Hospital site) is on the way with detailed construction planning now. The meeting also covered recreational opportunities (concerts, sport and open-air cinema) on the CBC site; and a brief update on the travel plan. There was also a brief presentation concerning attempts to provide offsite logistics hubs for use by all CBC institutions so that HGV traffic could be removed from entering the site.

County Council Budget agreed for 2025/26

On 11 February 2025 the County Council agreed a budget for 2025/26. Members prioritised investment in highways maintenance as well as in children who become looked-after and building new schools. The county council had to close a gap of £35.1m – with 73% of the Council’s net spend now being funded from Council Tax.

Based on resident feedback through the Quality-of-Life Survey, the council has prioritised key areas, which are aligned to its vision to make Cambridgeshire greener, fairer and more caring:

- Investment of more than **£56m in highways maintenance**. This is to tackle the significant backlog of repairs, addressing resident concerns. This includes £14.5m for the day-to-day management of the highway and an additional £20m in planned maintenance including roads, pavements, drainage, bridges, safety barriers, traffic lights, public rights of way and cycleways.
- Sustaining critical adults and children’s social care, which includes **£3m to cover inflation for local care providers and an extra £8m for the 5% increase in the Real Living Wage. An additional £9m for children who become looked-after, £4.7m to support home to school transport services and £920,000 investment in capacity in SEND services.**
- The council continues to support vulnerable communities, with an estimated **£6m of Household Support Fund** that will be delivered to support those most in need alongside investment in further improvements in our libraries through **£1.3m already committed to the Libraries Plus programme.**

It was agreed to increase Council Tax by 4.99% (2% of which is for Adult Social Services) – raising £20m of local income to help maintain and protect critical services for the most vulnerable communities. For most of our residents in Band A-D properties that will mean between an extra £1.04 pence to £1.55 a week.

Members began debating the draft business plan and budget in December 2024. The scrutiny from all the council’s January policy and service committees, as well as feedback from our online public consultation ([Business Plan and Budget 2025-26 Consultation Survey | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)) and the views of Town and Parish Councils, other local and public authorities, business representatives and trade unions have contributed to the debate. The Council heard about the final Local Government Finance Settlement, which means over £98m of central government funding for Cambridgeshire in 2025-26. Our funding is also likely to be impacted by the anticipated Comprehensive Spending Review in Spring 2025 and the ambitions for

Local Government Reorganisation set out in the Government's recently published English Devolution White Paper. The business plan and budget are available to view on the Council's [website](#) and you can view the live stream here [Cambridgeshire County Council - YouTube](#)

Free Breakfast Clubs

Fourteen primary schools across Cambridgeshire are set to run a free breakfast club as part of the pilot for a new Government scheme in April. 750 schools across the country have been selected to take part in an 'early adopters' scheme which will test the delivery of the programme before it is implemented nationally.

The pilot is set to launch in April and will run until July, before it is introduced across the UK. The schools chosen for the pilot will offer a free breakfast to all pupils and at least 30 minutes of childcare before school. The fourteen Cambridgeshire schools selected are:

- Buckden CofE Primary School, St Neots
- Peckover Primary School, Wisbech
- Mepal and Witcham CofE Primary School, Ely
- Hartford Junior School, Huntingdon
- Hartford Infant and Pre School, Huntingdon
- Stapleford Community Primary School, Cambridge
- Upwood Primary Academy, Huntingdon
- St Laurence Catholic Primary School, Cambridge
- **Great Wilbraham CofE Primary School, Great Wilbraham**
- Meldreth Primary School, Royston
- The Spinney Primary School, Cambridge
- Kings Hedges Primary School, Chesterton
- Northborough Primary School, Peterborough
- St John Henry Newman Catholic VA Primary School, Peterborough

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said that the free breakfast clubs would help break the link "between background and success" for families.

The scheme has been welcomed by the headteachers' union, though they fear that the funding allocated by Government will fall short of the cost; and they have said it is 'crucial' that concerns are addressed before the national rollout.

Security support for domestic abuse survivors

The council has renewed a scheme which helps survivors of domestic abuse to feel safer and more secure in their own homes. The scheme provides additional security measures which can delay or prevent a perpetrator from entering a property. It supported 525 people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough between April 2023 and March 2024. Measures offered depend on the level of risk, and may include window alarms, additional bolts, lock changes, security advice, video doorbells, dummy cameras, and response lights. The service is available for all types of housing, whether owned, privately rented, or social housing.

The contract will be funded by a Safe Accommodation grant from Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), for the council to carry out its statutory duty.

Benefits of play

The committee received a report last month on the benefits of play, which concluded: “five place-based teams within the Communities service will continue to provide support to community organisations, including town and parish councils, who have an ambition to create or update spaces for young people. This support extends to training in good practice in engaging young people throughout the process.”

indeed to see more arrests in connection with the dreadful and intimidating disorder across Fenland and East Cambridgeshire in January. The Chief Constable has acknowledged that the response at the time wasn't good enough. It's important that the guilty parties are found and brought to justice, and that a strong message is sent and received that this sort of behaviour will not be tolerated.

Highways procurement

The current highways contract in place with Milestone Infrastructure is set to expire on 30 June 2027, with an option for up to five years extension dependent on performance. The contract has not delivered the efficiencies and service levels expected or required by the Council. The current model of sub-contracting under the contract does not enable value for money to be easily demonstrated and there is a lack of contract options and investment in skills, processes and systems. CDM [Construction (Design & Management)] and health and safety compliance has been poor in the past but is improving. Response times and quality of work are continued concerns.

Based on an assessment of options for the future post-2027 council officers have recommended a mixed economy model which would include:

- In-house delivery for Asset Management, Design, Commercial Management, Client Management, routine maintenance works
- Contract(s) for reactive/cyclical works, emergencies, winter maintenance
- A Professional Services Contract
- Use of Frameworks to deliver planned maintenance and major schemes.

Highways spending Capital maintenance and improvement works

On Tuesday 4 March the Highways & Transport Committee considered proposals for spending on capital maintenance and improvements. This includes the additional £8.146M from Government for highways maintenance. The total capital budget for highways maintenance and improvements in 25/26 is £59.332 million. This is funded through a combination of grant funding and council investment. A decision has been taken over priorities for road repairs in 2025-2026 using new, transparent criteria back up by digital and inspection evidence. **This new method will then apply in future years and maintenance for future years is already being planned. In the new financial year, starting in April 2025, a**

number of roads in the village (including Angle End) will receive surface treatment as a preparation for more substantial work the following year.

County farms

The county council owns ca. 30,000 acres of farmland. The county farms AGM was held recently. The rural estates team introduced the event saying that the council is looking for innovation and a reduction in its carbon footprint.

Martin Lines from Nature Friendly Farming Network, who farms near St Neots, spoke about improving farms' bottom line, biodiversity, and carbon footprint, and illustrating the multiple benefits of a nature-friendly approach to how he farms.

We need to eat less meat, but better meat, he says. And climate change is the biggest challenge. "We need to change agricultural practices, including a shift towards regenerative system thinking."

Many farmers have been affected by hare coursing and are concerned how vulnerable rural communities are.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Mayor has now signed into effect a decision to introduce franchising of bus services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This would put control of routes, fares and timetables into democratic hands, and enable profit-making routes to subsidise socially needed but less used ones. However, as he is not standing again in May, this will be for his successor to implement.