

District and County Councillor's Report – August 2024

Four Day Week

The District Council are now at the end of their 15 months trial of a four-day working week. The results of this have been analysed by two independent universities – Cambridge and Salford. They found that out of the 24 key performance indicators measured, 22 showed that performance had increased or remained the same. The two that showed a decrease in performance were the amount of time to collect housing rent and the time taken to re-let council housing stock.

Staff turnover over the time period, especially in 'hard to fill' posts such as senior planners, has dropped by 40%. 11 bin lorry drivers left the council in 2022 whilst only 5 did in all of 2023 and 2024.

The next steps for the council will be to digest this, offer a consultation, and then make a decision whether to take the four-day week permanent or not.

Old Shire Hall

The old HQ of the County Council, Shire Hall in Cambridge, has been on the market to be sold since the authority moved from there a few years ago. After some years on the market, it now has a new buyer, who will be turning the historic building into a luxury hotel. As the building has many parts which are listed, the new operator will need to be careful when renovating.

Holiday Voucher Scheme

The County Council will again offer its supermarket voucher scheme to eligible families this summer holiday period. Every application can also help with some funding towards the child's school, if they are also in receipt of Free School Meals. Full detail can be seen here -

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/help-with-school-learning-costs/cambridgeshire-holiday-voucher-scheme>

Rural Prosperity Fund

There is a new fund from central government, facilitated by the District Council, that is aimed at supporting rural communities with the aim to help support local businesses and communities. Worth taking a look at if you are looking for funding for a project or you're a local business looking to expand and progress - <https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/rural-england-prosperity-fund/> - applications opened on Monday April 8th and when the money is gone, it's gone!

Anaerobic Digestion Plant Proposal – Streetly End

The planning application for a new anaerobic digestion facility at Streetly End, West Wickham was approved at the County Council's planning committee on July 17th. Thank you to all those that engaged with the process and submitted comments to the County Council during the consultation period. A special thanks to those that attended and spoke at the committee meeting, as they represented their communities and neighbours very ably.

The decision notice, with all of the conditions attached to the approval, can be seen here -

<https://planning.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=S0BB1JDYKNQ00>

Councillors Henry Batchelor and Geoff Harvey

Physical Activity Grant

The District Council has launched a new grant for members of the voluntary sector, specialist group or leisure centre. It is to help with classes aimed at people with long-term health conditions. There is up to £2,000 per applicant available and full details, plus an application form, is available on the website - <https://www.scamb.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/grants/physical-activity-grant-for-long-term-health-condition-management>

Police Survey

The Police have launched a short online survey for residents to give their views on crime and disorder prior to a new Policing Plan for the county. The survey closes on August 16th and can be found here - <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk>

War Memorials Grant Scheme

The War Memorials Trust is providing grants for the repair and conservation of free-standing war memorials in England intended to help those who are responsible for the upkeep of war memorials. The grants support the care and preservation of war memorials to a high standard, and to prevent the decay of this important part of our built heritage. Grants will normally be for between 25% and a maximum of 75% of eligible costs. The maximum grant is £5,000 for non-freestanding war memorials while freestanding, non-beneficiary war memorials may be considered up to a maximum grant of £20,000. Application close on October 31st 2024. <http://www.warmemorials.org/grants/>

Coffee Pod Recycling comes to Cambridgeshire Household Recycling Centres

CCC has introduced coffee pod recycling at all nine of its Household Recycling Centres. The new coffee pod bins offer residents an environmentally friendly way to separately dispose of both aluminium and plastic coffee pods. Over 1 billion coffee pods are sold each year in the UK alone. Waste from these 'single-use' pods will lead to a huge environmental impact if not recycled properly, in the UK and globally. CCC is partnering with Podback to provide coffee pod recycling services. Podback was initially created by Nespresso, Nescafe, Dolce Gusto and Tassimo to help their customers recycle their coffee pods and is now supported by many more coffee brands. Podback recycles coffee pods in the UK, to reduce waste and saving on new materials. Collected pods are shredded and cleaned of coffee. The shredded pods can be made into new products, while the coffee grounds are used to help create renewable energy and soil improver.

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