

District and County Councillor's Report – June 2025

Zero Carbon Communities Grant

SCDC's popular Zero Carbon Communities Grant is open for applications, closing Tuesday 1 July 2025.

Parish councils and voluntary/community organisations are invited to apply for grants of between £2,000 and £15,000 for projects that either:

- a) reduce carbon emissions e.g. from a community building, or
- b) Foster greater community engagement on climate issues and encourage sustainable behaviour change.

For full eligibility criteria and information, please consult the guidance documents on <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-and-environment/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant> or email zcc@scambs.gov.uk

Allotment Improvement Grant

A new grant from the District Council that can provide up to £10,000 in funding to support projects that enhance the productivity, sustainability, and social value of allotment spaces.

Key priorities include:

- improving water access through reliable connections and rainwater harvesting
- implementing pest control measures, such as fencing
- upgrading facilities such as waterless toilets
- delivering measurable social benefits, such as promoting mental well-being, outdoor activity and community engagement.

Other allotment improvements will also be considered, ensuring that allotments remain thriving, inclusive spaces for all.

For more information, visit <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-and-people/community-action/allotment-improvement-grant>

Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT)

South Cambridgeshire District Council has helped residents on lower incomes secure up to £3.6 million in benefits they're entitled to – but weren't claiming.

The Council's innovative Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) software identifies households likely to be eligible for benefits but not claiming them. They are then sent a letter or text encouraging them to apply – with follow-up phone calls also made.

For example, the Council has helped over 110 households who were eligible for Pension Credit but weren't claiming it. Pension Credit is a benefit for people over State Pension age (currently 66) with low incomes. It provides extra money for living costs and can lead to other support. If they remain eligible for the rest of their lives, these households will receive up to £3.2 million in Pension Credit between them.

Households that applied for Pension Credit before last Christmas were also eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment following a change in eligibility criteria last year. This is a payment of

either £200 or £300, depending on a person's age. The projected extra income this Winter Fuel Payment will bring new claimants across South Cambridgeshire, as long as they remain eligible for it, is just over £229,000.

In addition, the programme has been used to promote the availability of the Household Support Fund. This is a one-off hardship payment of £110 administered by Cambridgeshire County Council. Just under 250 South Cambridgeshire households went on to claim it during the past 12 months – with a total claim value of £26,400.

The Council also identified nearly 70 households that only just missed out on being eligible for Pension Credit – and therefore the Winter Fuel Payment. They were all contacted and offered a free electric blanket and financial advice through 'Income Maximisation' appointments with Council officers. These appointments identified unclaimed benefits – that could be worth a total of more than £500,000 shared between just five households, as long as they remain eligible. Two of those claims have already been approved.

The next areas of focus for the Council's Data Team – using the LIFT software – will include encouraging more eligible residents to claim grants to retrofit their home with energy efficiency measures. There will also be a campaign to raise awareness of Cambridge Water's 'Assure Tariff' – which offers discounts on water bills for those eligible. The next areas of focus for the Council's Data Team – using the LIFT software – will include encouraging more eligible residents to claim grants to retrofit their home with energy efficiency measures. There will also be a campaign to raise awareness of Cambridge Water's 'Assure Tariff' – which offers discounts on water bills for those eligible.

Acorn Anaerobic Digester

The Acorn anaerobic biodigester planning application, which has been rolling through the system for a few years now, is finally coming to Suffolk County Council's planning committee this month for a decision.

Henry has registered to speak at the committee to put across the views that have been made to him, so far. The date of the committee is June 19th, so if you'd like him to raise any points for you at the meeting, please do write to him before this date with your views.

At time of writing the planning officer's recommendation to the planning committee is unknown, as the papers, with the recommendation in, aren't published until circa a week before.

Contact Details

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