

## **District and County Councillor's Report – April 2026**

### **Cambridge Growth Company**

You may recall from previous reports that the government have identified Cambridge as an area they see prime for growth, due to the boom of the science and tech sector in the Greater Cambridge area. The numbers of additional houses that the government think would be sufficient to support this economic growth still uncertain, with numbers around the 100,000 mark being mooted, although still unconfirmed.

To manage this growth, and to identify areas to build these new houses, the government have set up the Cambridge Growth Company, which will end up morphing into the Development Corporation (DevCo). A lot of the detail of how this will be set up is still unclear, but from correspondence with the relevant government minister, it would seem that this DevCo would ultimately take planning powers away from the local authorities for the larger 'strategic sites'. The point has been made that to disrupt one of the highest achieving planning services in the country could be hugely damaging to the local landscape. This point may have fallen on deaf ears, but we will see.

There was a public consultation on the above, which ended on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The results of this will, or won't, shape the DevCo and how it proposes to operate.

### **Food Waste Collection**

You may recall from previous reports that due to a change in the law by DEFRA (the government department for environment & food), all local authorities will have to collect food waste separately from other green waste, starting this year. This means we will all get a new separate food caddy in the coming months that all food waste must be disposed into. This will then be collected every week alongside the usual bin. For most of us this is on Wednesday.

We are expecting the new caddies to reach us by September-time, as the rollout is across the Greater Cambridge area, with our area one of the last to receive them.

### **Electric Vehicle Cable Channel Trial**

The County Council are embarking on a trial in an attempt to help people that have electric vehicles but no driveway to park and charge them on.

The trial will offer up to a certain number of people in our district the chance to apply for a channel, which runs from their charger within their property, across the pavement, and connect to their vehicle. It's made clear that the homeowner will need their own charging system, all the trial provides is the channel to cross the pavement. There are some costs involved, depending on your personal circumstances.

Full info and to register your interest - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/electric-vehicle-charging/electric-vehicle-cable-channel-trial>

Councillors Henry Batchelor and Geoff Harvey

### **Oil Fund**

The County Council has received £708,000 from the Government which is ring-fenced to support households struggling with the cost of domestic oil heating. The money has been added to the council's Crisis & Resilience Fund, and applications are being administered by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. Applications to the fund opened on Monday 30 March. The link to apply is at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/crisis-payment>

This fund is intended for Cambridgeshire households on low incomes who are reliant on heating oil and who need to top up their tanks as a matter of urgency. To receive this support, applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- Live in Cambridgeshire.
- Be reliant on heating oil to heat their home and/or water.
- Have 150 litres or less of oil remaining at the time of application.
- Be in receipt of or eligible for one of the following means-tested benefits:
  - Universal Credit
  - Pension Credit
  - Income based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

### **Life Skills**

The County Council's Skills team are offering a number of classes called life skills. These are designed to help people pick up a variety of new skills that could help with day-to-day life. Most of these classes could be fully funded, depending on an individual's circumstance.

Full information can be found here -

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/adults/cambridgeshire-skills-adult-learning>

### **Elections**

As just mentioned, there are District Council elections this May, where the electors in the Balsham area are being asked to elect someone to represent them at the District Council for the next two years, until it becomes the new Unitary authority in 2028. Geoff is re-standing and seeking re-election to remain as your District Councillors for another 2 years.

If you aren't registered to vote in local elections here (you may have just moved to the area), you have until April 20<sup>th</sup> to do so - <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

### **Contact Details**

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