

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Report to Haslingfield Parish Council January 2020

Three Free Trees scheme

To encourage the planting of trees, the Council is offering every Parish in the district a voucher for £60 to cover the cost of three small trees, in exchange for an undertaking to plant the trees on parish council land.

With trees absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, they play a key role in helping to combat climate change. The District Council has already declared a climate emergency and, in November 2018, pledged to work towards making the District zero carbon by 2050.

Details of the scheme can be found at: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/three-free-trees>

The deadline for applying for your voucher is 14th March. Garden centres will accept the vouchers until 31st March.

New Business Support Service for South Cambridgeshire

A new team will be set up to increase support for local businesses – particularly small and medium-sized companies – in South Cambridgeshire.

The new Business Support Service will offer practical advice and targeted support to existing and growing businesses in the District and those looking to move into South Cambridgeshire.

Councillors want to build thriving village economies where people can work locally, buy what they need and access the services they require while keeping their impact on the environment to a minimum. The new team will be tasked with retaining existing employers, improving the survival rates of new enterprises and securing new investment in communities across the District.

When fully established, the new team of four officers will:

- Offer bespoke packages of support to small and medium-sized enterprises
- Help further develop the three Enterprise Zones in South Cambridgeshire, to encourage more businesses to locate to them
- Guide companies wishing to relocate to the district or move within it
- Deliver a programme of activities to support local village economies
- Develop new and environmentally friendly tourism initiatives such as cycling and walking routes to encourage visitors into South Cambridgeshire communities
- Provide guidance to companies on their response to the climate emergency, including advice on generating their own electricity, improving energy efficiency and recycling more waste and water
- Make the entire Council more business friendly, such as by creating one point of contact for local companies and becoming a vital link between the Council and other business support organisations

Growing local businesses and economies is one of the four priority areas in the Council's Business Plan and this new team, working closely with colleagues at the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, will lead the authority's work in this area.

The new roles and Business Support Service will now be finalised before recruitment takes place within the coming months. When up and running, the service will work closely with neighbouring councils, and organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, FSB, NFU and Visit Cambridge and Beyond to help complement the services that each provides.

Items referred to planning committee

A constitutional review has been taking place and has been looking at the wording of the procedure by which items can be referred to the planning committee. The aim of the review is not to alter the procedure but to ensure the wording in the constitution is robust enough to make sure the procedure works as it should and is not subject to challenge.

No decision has yet been taken on the best way to reword this part of the constitution – the constitution review task and finish group will consider this matter in February and subject to their views, it is likely to be referred to planning committee shortly after to make the change.

The process for determining which applications go before planning committee is that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the planning committee meet with a planning manager every week and consider requests for referral to planning committee. Once the Chairman and officer jointly conclude their deliberations, a record is signed by the Chairman and officer confirming the outcome.

Since May 2018 when the Liberal Democrat group took control of the Council and the current Chairman of the planning committee took up the role, there has not been a situation where agreement has not been reached. However, in order to give reassurance that democratically accountable elected representatives will continue to play a key role in this process, the Leader of the Council has recommended that in the unlikely event there is a disagreement between the Chairman of Planning Committee and the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development on any application, it is automatically referred to planning committee for it to be considered and determined.

Consultation on plans for Cambridge South station

Plans for a new railway station at Cambridge South will be set out by Network Rail at public consultation launched next week.

The six-week consultation on plans for Cambridge's third station will start on 20th January. The plans include four platforms, taxi and drop off areas, cycle and blue badge parking, shops and toilets.

For more information, visit www.networkrail.co.uk/cambridge-south-station

Cllr Philip Allen Cllr.Allen@scambs.gov.uk

Cllr Ian Sollom Cllr.Sollom@scambs.gov.uk

Cllr Tony Mason Cllr.Mason@scambs.gov.uk