

Councillor Peter McDonald
District Councillor for Parishes of Duxford, Hinxton, Ickleton, Babraham, Pampisford.
County Councillor for Foxton, Fowlmere, Shepreth, Thriplow & Heathfield, Heydon, Chishills,
Whittlesford

Parish Council Report October 2026

South Cambs Council

Delay to Local Government Reorganisation

On 7 September the government announced a delay in the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). For the past two years, local councils in Cambridgeshire have been preparing for the process of reorganisation into Unitary Authorities that was announced by the government in 2024. We had been working hard to meet a challenging timetable, as elections to these new authorities had been scheduled for May 2027, followed by a handover of control in 2028. This involved significant outlay of council officer time and money in preparing the business plans for the proposed new councils and preparing council operations for the anticipated handover. The details of the delay have still not been clarified, but the information so far indicates that there will be no elections to the new Unitary Authorities in 2027 as previously planned. Instead, we are expecting the local elections scheduled for existing councils to take place next May (this includes Cambridge City Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council). The delay appears to be due to the risk of a legal challenge over some of the decisions that we had been expecting to be announced this summer. South Cambridgeshire District Council will be submitting a compensation claim to the government to avoid the costs of the delay being borne by local taxpayers. In the meantime, the district council will focus on providing the highest quality services for a year longer than previously expected.

New tool to help Planning applicants

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has launched a new online tool called PlanX to help residents work out what permission they need for changes to their property. Planning permission may be required for some developments, but other proposals can be carried out under permitted development rights without the need for a formal planning application. The new service has been introduced to help residents access clear guidance before starting a project, without having to pay the fees associated with formal planning advice.

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/check-if-i-need-planning-permission>

Six Free Trees

This year, once again, South Cambridgeshire District Council is offering Six Free Trees to parish councils across the district. Each parish may receive 6 small whips or one larger container-grown tree from a list of native species. Please apply via the Six Free Trees web page. The deadline for applications is 31 October. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/grants-and-funding/six-free-trees-open>

If you are considering a larger-scale tree planting project then the Woodland Trust's free tree packs for schools and communities offers tree packs of 15, 30, 105 or 420 saplings.

People's Emergency Briefing showings

In November 2025, the National Emergency Briefing brought together leading experts to present the latest evidence on the climate and nature crisis to politicians and other influential people in Westminster. The People's Emergency Briefing brings together people in local

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communities across the UK to hear the evidence and discuss how to respond, together with their local representatives. A live map of briefings lists showings in Thriplow, Great Shelford, Fulbourn, Hardwick and several in Cambridge during October and November. Residents are invited to a screening of the film at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne on 6 October at 6pm. <https://www.nebriefing.org/screening-map>

The event will be followed by a discussion to consider what further action can be taken locally. Please register here. Local Climate Action Conference 2026 The council is hosting its fourth annual Local Climate Action Conference on 6 November at Storey's Field Centre, Eddington. Please register via this link if you would like to attend.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=Yr5uzntVNkShnHZ-yizUUc6vYpr2O01Bunna9y-iW2NURU1UMTgxNzdZWtZTU1M4TEFQR1dKVzJSMY4u&route=shorturl>

Transformation Programme secures £11.9 million in savings over 5 years

The council launched its Transformation Programme in 2020 to ensure that it could continue to deliver high-quality services despite rising demand and reduced central Government funding. A report presented to Cabinet in September illustrates how the programme has generated efficiencies worth around £11.9 million, with more than £8.2 million directly benefiting the District Council. The rest is shared with Cambridge City Council through joint services, including Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, which is now recognised nationally for its innovative use of technology, customer focus and service performance.

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s144455/Transformation%20report%20Cabinet%20sept%2026.pdf>

Financial hardship funding of £180k secured

A package of targeted support to help low-income households facing financial hardship build long-term financial resilience has been agreed by Cabinet. The funding comes from the new Crisis and Resilience Fund, a national Government scheme. It will support a range of initiatives across South Cambridgeshire, including baby boxes for low-income households, emergency supermarket vouchers, travel support, debt reduction schemes and a savings incentive scheme. The work of the council on tackling poverty via the Low Income Family Tracker was recognised recently with an award at the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/council-confirms-180000-to-help-residents-facing-financial-hardship>

Cambs County Council

Budget & Spending

Cambridgeshire County Council has launched a public engagement survey to ask for residents' opinions on where it should prioritise spending and savings in the years ahead.

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Every year, the council must set a legal budget which balances spending needs against income from council tax, which accounts for around one-third of council funding, business rates, government grants, and fees and charges for some services. These funding sources collectively support a wide range of services including children's and adult social care, education and SEND services, libraries, highways, public health, regulatory services and waste management and recycling.

With a growing population and rising demand for services, particularly in children's social care and SEND services, the council continues to face difficult decisions about how to balance all of priorities at a time when costs also continue to rise.

The majority of our day-to-day spending is required to support children's and adult social care, education and SEND, and with the remainder the council has to maintain the highways network and deliver valued community-based services, including libraries and registration services. In addition to these challenges and achieving the right balance between investing and saving, the council also faces ongoing uncertainty about the Government's plans for Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The draft Business Plan will propose a budget for 2027-28 and set out our medium term financial strategy through to 2029-30 focussed upon delivering the council's vision of a healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire and the three ambitions of our Strategic Framework. The Engagement Survey will be in two phases. Phase 1 closes on 15 November 2026.

Follow this link to have your say: Business Plan and Budget 2027-28 to 2029-30: Phase 1 Engagement - Your Voice - Cambridgeshire County Council - Citizen Space
<https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business-planning/27-28-phase-1-engagement/>

Flood Warnings

As the season changes into autumn, Cambridgeshire County Council is urging local residents to think about whether their property is at risk of flooding and take time to prepare for potential flooding.

Anyone can check whether their property is at risk of flooding by visiting the Gov.uk website. <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/location/cambridge-cambridgeshire>

By typing in a postcode you can discover the long-term risk of flooding in that area, how climate change might increase the chance of flooding and how to manage a flood risk.

The County Council suggests the following steps if your home is at risk of flooding:

- Sign up for flood warnings.

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- Ensure your insurance covers flooding/ flood damage.
- Keep valuables and important documents upstairs or on higher shelves.
- Consider installing special equipment to help keep water out of your house.
- Prepare a flood kit that includes essential items that you might need if you're going to be away from your home for a few days.
- If you have a watercourse such as a stream, ditch, river or brook next to your property, make sure it's clear of any debris and is running fully

Roadworks Overruns

The number of days roadworks overran in Cambridgeshire fell by almost half during 2025/26, as Cambridgeshire County Council stepped up enforcement, issuing more than £424,000 in fines and charges to utility companies and other organisations.

The council issued 1,443 Fixed Penalty Notices, generating £196,286, for offences including working without the necessary permit or failing to comply with permit conditions. A further £228,350 was recovered through charges for works that overran their agreed duration.

The number of days that works overran fell from 1,191 days in 2024/25 to 692 days in 2025/26, a reduction of almost 42%. The decrease suggests that enforcement activity and overrun charges are encouraging companies to complete works within agreed timescales and helping to reduce disruption for road users.

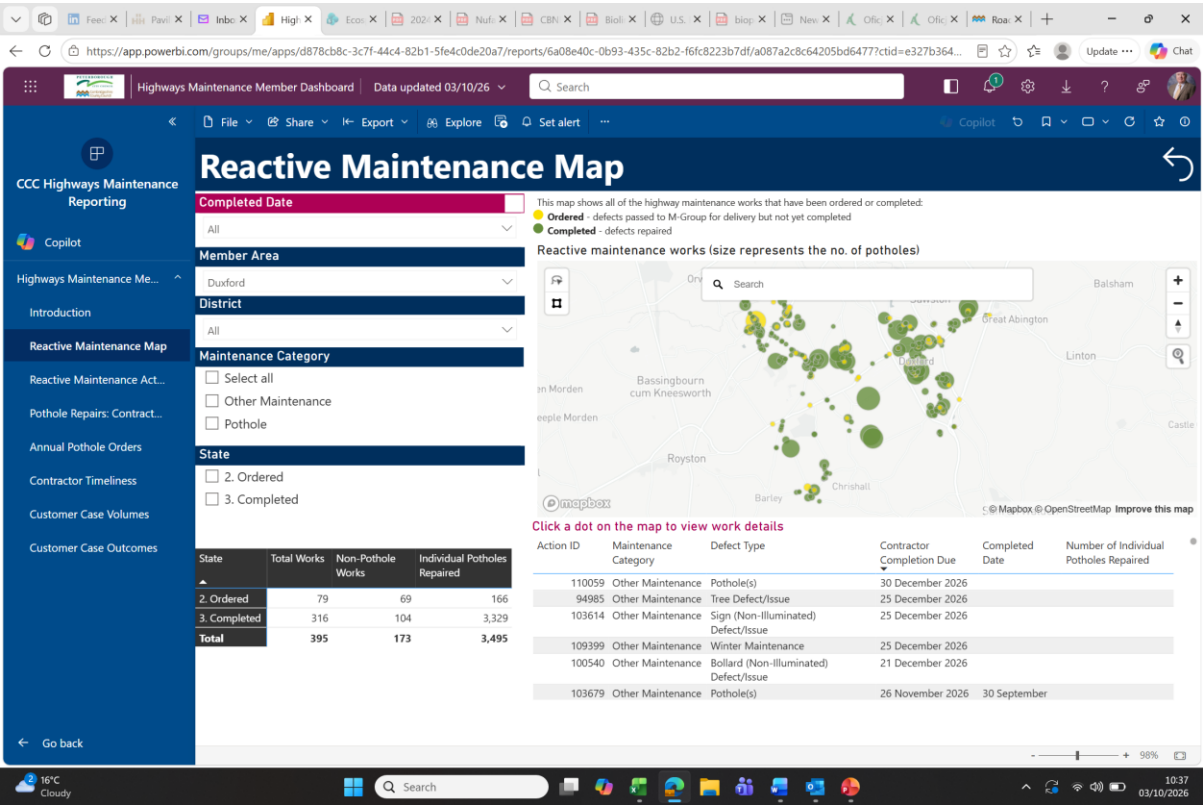
In total, the council issued 36,685 permits during 2025/26, regulating when and how works could take place across the county. In Cambridgeshire there are 51 utility companies that are permitted to work on our roads – and when that work is deemed an emergency, such as for a burst water main, they can legally start work before notifying the council.

New Highways Dashboard

Snapshot for Duxford Division end September

Previous number was 334 and now 396 in the month

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Peter McDonald Oct 5th 2026