

December Report From the District Councillors 2022

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Community Chest Cost of Living support

SCDC's Community Chest fund provides grants to voluntary and community sector groups, charities and public sector bodies wishing to further improve quality of life locally. Criteria have been expanded to allow bids that include contributions for any project that has a positive impact for communities related to the cost-of-living crisis. Parish Councils of any size can also now place grant bids. A ringfenced total sum of £20,000 has been made available for these new Community Chest grant applications, provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System, to ensure support is co-ordinated effectively and directed at those in need locally this winter.

Help for Households campaign – social tariffs

The government has worked with a range of Internet Service Providers (IPs) and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to deliver low-cost broadband and phone service packages, called social tariffs, for those on low incomes. Social tariffs are available for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits, with some providers offering deals from £15 a month. Please check: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs>

Warm Home Discount scheme reopened

The Warm Home Discount scheme will provide a discount of £150 off electricity bills for three million low-income households this winter. Most households will receive the discount automatically. The government has launched a new online tool, to make it easier for the public to check if they are eligible for the discount. The online tool will guide customers through the eligibility criteria in England and Wales, asking questions about electricity supply, the benefits they receive and characteristics of their property. All customers will receive a letter between this month (November) and mid-January.

Anglian Water

Anglian Water offer a range of financial assistance, including discounted tariffs, assistance schemes if you've fallen behind with payments and affordable payment plans. Call Anglian Water's specially trained Priority Services team on 0800 232 1951.

Cam Sight Befriending service

Would you like a bit of company – someone to pop in for a chat, join you for a cuppa or maybe read your post, a book or newspaper? Would it be easier to get out if someone accompanied you? If the answer is 'yes', please let us know. Camsight volunteers are trained in visual awareness and sighted guiding and have been through our recruitment process. Email or phone Joy Hallifax on 01223 420033.

Ukraine – new hosts for guests needed

Cambridge and South Cambs have between them about 500 hosts for Ukraine guests. With the war in Ukraine continuing, the six-month hosting arrangements have needed to be renewed, though not all hosts are in a position to do so. Anyone who might be able to provide a spare room for a guest from Ukraine is asked to get in touch with SCDC. We need new homes for about 200 people. For this reason we have launched the GOT A SPARE ROOM campaign. If you are interested all you have to do is text ROOM to 88802. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/support-for-ukraine-it-all-starts-with-a-spare-room/>

Housing Issues

If you rent a home in the private sector, we would urge you to seek help from the Council if mould or associated issues are not resolved by your landlord. In South Cambridgeshire, the District Council has a role in ensuring that homes in the private sector and the Council's own properties do not contain health hazards. Most properties within the private rented sector in the district are in good condition, but the Council's Environmental Health team will investigate any complaints. Private Sector and Housing Association tenants can make a complaint about the condition of their home by emailing env.health@scambs.gov.uk The Council has the power to take the appropriate enforcement action if there are issues that need to be resolved. This action could include writing to the landlord to ensure the issue is resolved, but the Council can also serve a legal notice to instruct works to be carried out.

The Council manages around 5,500 Council homes and takes reports of mould in any of them extremely seriously. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have an unresolved issue in your Council house.

Making Connections Consultation

Please send in your thoughts and suggestions about the Sustainable Travel Zone by 23rd December. The proposed bus plan for Dry Drayton would be an hourly service seven days a week at a cost of £2.00.

The Zone would be fully operational in 2027/28 but only after the bus improvements are introduced. Again, we need your input please. consultations@greatercambridge.org.uk.

None of these parts could work without the others and the fundamental premise is that attractive alternatives to driving must exist prior to the introduction of a congestion charge – which once in place would provide the revenue to run the scheme long-term .

Your Councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can!