

Happy New Year everyone 😊

Level Crossing at Meldreth Road, Shepreth

With the works completed a week earlier than scheduled, allowing the road closure to be lifted, the new double barriers and the associated CCTV equipment at the level crossing on Meldreth Road are now in full operation.

Network Rail has now written to stakeholders to say that they will continue to be available to discuss issues that may arise, and that they will work with the local authority and community representatives to monitor the performance of the crossing and any associated impacts. Please let us know if there are any concerns.

The Community Rail Partnership has organized a visit for Meldreth and Shepreth Parish Councils to the Foxton and Cambridge Signal Boxes on Feb 6, for a closer examination of the barrier management system.

Local Highway Improvements

A reminder that applications for the 2026/2027 LHI round close at 5:00PM on Friday 16 January.

Winter gritting

The winter service has been in operation since 1 November 2025, and will continue until 15 April. Several days of continuous low temperatures triggered treatment of secondary gritting routes on Friday 2 January.

Buses

We have continued to receive much feedback about how the 17 (and 26) bus services in Meldreth (and Melbourn) may be improved, which we have forwarded to the Mayoral Combined Authority as responsible Transport Authority. As a result, the Combined Authority has now called a meeting with the current operator A2B to discuss the feedback.

Thanks to an increase in the Transport Levy the Mayoral Combined Authority receives from the County Council and Peterborough, the popular Tiger Pass will now continue to be available until March 2027. It offers bus fares for just £1 for those under 25.

A meeting of the Cam Valley Bus User Group will be organised soon. Please contact us if you want to be invited or would like to join the mailing list.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Consultation

The government has now confirmed that the public consultation on LGR for our area will start in early February, and last for seven weeks. There will be statutory consultees (yet to be confirmed) but the general public will be invited to respond. We will include a link to this in a future report.

Local Authority Elections May 2026 (South Cambs District Council)

As a consequence of the Local Government Reorganisation, just before Christmas the government wrote to all local authorities about next May's elections. Because of the short time between the 2026 elections and those for shadow Unitary Councils planned for 2027 they have invited local authorities in England to request the cancellation of their May 2026 elections. This has divided opinion, with some people thinking that a postponement would be undemocratic and, at the other end of the spectrum, there are concerns that the voting public might be turned off by having two local elections within 12 months of each other; a real concern since only around 30% of the electorate turns out for local elections at the best of times.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council plan for 2026 local elections to go ahead and will not be asking the Secretary of State to postpone.

SCDC pledges £900,000 to local organisations through 3-year Service Support Grant funding

SCDC has just committed Service Support Grant funding of £300,000 a year to local groups to underpin the delivery of services to support people with their mental health, independent living, advice services, and to help residents through the cost-of-living crisis.

SCDC's Service Support Grant funding has almost doubled compared to the previous budget, made possible by prudent management of the council's finances and a recognition of the acute need for these services.

Grant recipients include:

- **Royston and District Community Transport (RDCT) – £7,000 per year to maintain accessible transport for those who need it most.**
- Over Day Centre – £30,000 per year to provide a transport and hospital discharge support service for older residents.
- For Citizens Advice centres that serve South Cambs residents – £105,000 per year to provide free, confidential advice services to residents.
- Disability Huntingdonshire – £12,998 per year to support South Cambs people with disabilities to live independently.
- Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre – £10,000 per year to deliver specialist support for survivors of sexual violence.
- Support Cambridgeshire (CCVS) – £20,000 per year to strengthen the voluntary and community sector in the district.
- Hope Against Poverty CIC – £14,400 per year to provide a Wellbeing Programme for people experiencing anxiety, bereavement, or social isolation.

More information, including the full list of grant recipients can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/exbkw6eu>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – new planning reforms

The government has launched a consultation on its proposals for reform of the NPPF and will run until March. The consultation can be found [here](#). The councils' planners will be digesting the proposals and will respond in the new year. We will report these comments to you when we can

As ever, please do not hesitate to contact Adam, Jose or Sally Ann if you have any queries.