

## **Whaddon Parish Council - Report July 2025**

Following the County Council elections, your new team of local councillors are:

Sally Ann Hart & Jose Hales - South Cambs District Council

Adam Bostanci - Cambridgeshire County Council

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

This will be a recurrent theme, bringing major changes to the delivery of local services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The government's intention is that the long-standing two-tier system of county and district councils will be replaced by new unitary councils from April 2028. This means residents will deal with just one council for all local services. Council leaders have announced a shortlist of 3 options for creating the new unitary councils in our area:

Proposal A: North-West/South-East Option

Unitary 1: Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils along with County Council functions

Unitary 2: Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils along with County Council functions

Proposal B: North/South Option

Unitary 1: Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Councils along with County Council functions

Unitary 2: Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District along with County Council functions

Proposal C: East/West Option

Unitary 1: Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils along with County Council functions

Unitary 2: Cambridge City Council, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils along with County Council functions

Now residents and communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are being given an opportunity to have their say to shape the future of local government. An initial cut of the results will be taken on Sunday 20 July, but we are told that the survey will continue to run beyond this date.

Complete the survey:

<https://can-campaigns.co.uk/local-councils-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-are-changing/>

Hard copies will be available at council offices and in all libraries.

### **Grants available for active lifestyle initiatives**

A new grant scheme offers grants of up to £500 to create or expand physical activity sessions, sports clubs or fitness classes in rural settings with limited existing provision. The scheme builds on last year's similar scheme. The scheme will close once the funding is spent or by 31 March 2026.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/lets-get-south-cambridgeshire-active-grant>

### **Expiry of postal votes**

Postal votes no longer apply indefinitely following a change to the law as part of the Elections Act. They now expire after three years. Due to the timing of the reapplication legislation, around 15,000 South Cambridgeshire postal votes are due to expire at the end of January 2026. The South Cambs Elections Team has started the process of contacting

those residents whose postal vote will expire. Affected electors who do not make a fresh application will have their postal votes removed when they expire at the end of January 2026. If you have any questions, please email the elections team at [elections@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:elections@scambs.gov.uk)

### **Combined Authority Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

A key component of the Environment Act 2021, the aim of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is to set priorities for nature recovery. The Combined Authority's Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy will now be subject to a public consultation until 12 September. The link to the draft strategy and consultation materials is:

<https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=1575>

### **Highways Survey**

Cambridgeshire residents are being asked for their views on Cambridgeshire County Council's highways and transport services in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction survey. The purpose of the survey is to give residents the chance to comment on highways and transport services in their local area. Local and national results will be published in late-October 2025, and feedback will be used to manage and improve local services. This month, a questionnaire is being sent to a random sample of at least 3,300 Cambridgeshire residents, followed by a reminder. Since the survey is based on a sample, residents who receive a copy are being urged to take part. They can do so either by post or online.

Last results can be found here:

<https://www.nhtnetwork.co.uk/isolated/page/793>

### **Highways Transparency**

Cambridgeshire County Council has responded to a request by the Department for Transport (DfT) for local highway authorities to produce detailed transparency reports on maintenance activities to secure additional funding.

Under the new requirements, 25% of the £500 million additional maintenance funding from Government for 2025-26 is contingent on authorities publishing reports by the end of June 2025 demonstrating compliance with best practice criteria. The reports must detail five-year maintenance spending comparisons, network condition statistics, pothole repair estimates, and planned maintenance activities. Authorities, such as the county council, must also submit additional information by October 2025 covering asset values and compliance with best practice criteria. The requirements apply to all local highway authorities in England.

The report is available at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/highways-transparency>

### **Contact Centre tested in Mystery Shopper exercise**

The South Cambs District Council recently commissioned another independent Mystery Shopper exercise to assess the quality of its Customer Contact Centre, which handles telephone calls to the council. The average customer satisfaction score was 81%, which compares well with a benchmark of 68% for other councils. The comment in the report that calls were 'jargon free' is very encouraging. This follows the recent renewal of the web site, including a highly recommended Service AI Assistant Module that even councillors find useful from time to time. If you have any comments on how to improve the telephone service or web site, then please let us know as it is important that both services operate to a high standard. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/contact-centre-shines-in-mystery-shopper-exercise>