

**Madingley Parish Council**  
**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 6pm**

**Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Minutes**

Present: Councillor Crichton Stuart (CCS) (Chair), Naughton (FN) (Vice Chair), Harvey (NH) and Stevenson-Hinde (JSH). Five members of the public and District Councillor Stobart.

**1 To Record Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Wallace-Hadrill sent apologies.

**2 To Sign and Approve Minutes of 2025 – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

The Annual Parish Meeting minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were agreed unanimously as a true and accurate record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chair of the Parish Council.

**3 To receive District and County Councillors' Annual Reports**

A full written report is included within the meeting minutes. Key elements touched upon included;

Healthy Streets in a village context

Empty Homes – a list of Madingley homes was to be provided to RS to progress.

Logistics Centre – concerns from Bar Hill and Dry Drayton Parish were discussed and traffic modelling a priority for all surrounding villages.

Local Plan

Neighbourhood Plans and the possibility of a joint parish plan. RS to facilitate all parishes to meet.

**4 To Receive Chair's Annual Report**

The Chair of the Parish Council gave a brief overview of the Parish Council's activities over the past 12 months and highlighted the success of the 20mph implementation for Madingley. Special thanks went to Councillor Naughton for her continued commitment to the project.

**5 To receive Village Groups' Annual Reports and questions/ comments from the floor**

All reports are attached to the meeting minutes.

Meeting closed at 18.39

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To be signed by the Chair of the Parish Council at the next Annual General Meeting in May 2027 - in draft format until this date

## St Mary Magdalene Church Report

St Mary Magdalene, Madingley, continues to welcome all sorts of people to our weekly Sunday services. We are hugely fortunate to have such a supportive community that enables us to maintain weekly services in a village of this size. A huge number of people contribute in a range of ways and we are very grateful for it.

In addition to our Sunday services we often have weddings at the church and it's worth reminding people that anyone who lives in the village is entitled to be married here (and your children have the same entitlement!) We continue to run a monthly coffee morning and everyone is welcome to come along and meet others.

In January Apex Roofing and Scaffolding completed their work to repair the north roof of the nave and north aisle and replace dilapidated rainwater goods. Unfortunately, an inspection by the church architect, Ashley Courtney, at the end of the contract, revealed worrying issues under the roof covering on the north aisle which will require attention in the not-too-distant future: caring for a historic grade 2\* listed building is very much an ongoing process. Conservators from The Skillington Workshop spent five weeks in Madingley repairing and restoring the Royal Arms (c. 1802), which are set into the wall above the south door inside the church. We are very grateful for grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, The Pilgrim Trust, The Radcliffe Trust (all administered by the Church Buildings Council) and the Betty Lawes Foundation for their invaluable assistance in supporting this project. The large iron armature which held the monument in place has been replaced with stainless steel bars, missing details to the Coade Stone (the lion's crown finial, unicorn's right front hoof and unicorn's horn) were modelled in Plaster of Paris, fixed in place and toned in using artist's acrylics. The Coade Stone has been cleaned and repaired and the buildup of distemper removed. This careful and skilled work allows us to see the monument in all its glory, much as it would have appeared when first installed. The PCC also acknowledges, with thanks, the helpful cooperation of the University of Cambridge/Madingley Hall whilst both projects were taking place.

Stone conservator Matthew Beesley has been investigating the effect of moisture on the fabric of the church. He will be carrying out a first phase of conservation work in late March 2026, using eco-friendly treatments informed through scientific analysis.

The churchyard grass is now cut by a contractor, paid for from our Churchyard Fund. An annual maintenance day for volunteers to carry out additional work in the churchyard is arranged every Summer. Volunteers also clean the church and carry out other tasks as necessary, week-by-week, to keep our church open for all. Yew trees alongside the Church Lane pavement have been cut back to prevent damage from passing traffic with other trees receiving safety work as required. General repairs to the organ (Lieblich flute pipes and pedal motor), drains, electrical system and other matters are dealt with as they occur.

Particular thanks go to Sue Baldwin and Susan Rawlings for their dedication to the church and the time they spend to support us.

**MADINGLEY VILLAGE HALL  
ANNUAL REPORT to MADINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL 2025**

Charity Registration number:	300410
Address of the Charity:	c/o 1 The Old Wood Mill Church Lane Madingley, Cambridge CB23 8AF
Governing document	Declaration of Trust dated 14.10.1964, schedule of 19.11.1985 and Deed Of Amendment 11.04.2024.
Charity Trustees	Mr Chris Baldwin Rev'd Christine Barrow Mrs Leslie Buckley Mr John Freegard Professor Frank Jiggins Professor John Naughton
Aims and objectives of the Charity	A village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Civil Parish of Madingley (the "Area of Benefit") without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions and in particular for use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.
The Charity is organised by the six elected members.	
Bankers:	Lloyds TSB Chesterton Road, Cambridge
Independent Audit Examiner	Simplex Solutions, 33 Hoylake Drive, Farcet, Peterborough RE7 3BD

Activities of the Charity

The Hall is used for a variety of bookings, some coming from residents of the village and others from outside the Parish. The Stephen Perse School Nursery Department uses the Hall once a week during term time for pre-school gymnastics. Other events have included small-scale dance and drama practices and meetings, regular movement classes, regular wellbeing classes and private hires.

Coffee mornings in association with the Parish Church take place in the Village Hall on the first Saturday every month, have proved to be very successful and are an excellent place for new and existing Madingley residents to get to know each other.

In summary, the strategy of the Committee has been continued guardianship of the building, on a 'not-for-profit' financial basis, so that villagers can continue to benefit from this facility. In planning the hire costs and further development of the Hall, the Committee has kept in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at their meetings and in their planning. The Trustees have been working with HCR (Hewitsons) legal team with particular expertise in charity law, to examine the current Trust document which dates from the 1960s and ensure that it meets fitness for purpose in 2024. A Deed of Amendment was agreed and signed by all Trustees on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

With the exception of cleaning services, all work undertaken for the running of the hall and the building development programme has been undertaken on a voluntary basis. I would like to thank the following volunteers whose particular contribution has been invaluable: John Naughton our secretary, John and Fiona Naughton and Anna Baldwin who have assisted me through the year with setting up, opening and closing. Thanks to you all!

This year has seen the retirement of two of our longest serving Trustees: Janet Dean and Virginia King. We are grateful to them both for their valuable service to this community.

We welcome two new Trustees Professor Frank Jiggins and Mrs Lesley Buckley and look forward to the contribution that they will make.

## Madingley News Reports

### Madingley News 2026

Fiona and I are now in our fifth year of putting together the *Madingley News* for the village as a quarterly newsletter. For many villagers, each issue arrives in their email inboxes after subscribing to it on the newsletter-publishing service, Substack. At the moment we have 104 subscribers and the March issue, our seventeenth newsletter, has been opened 359 times.

This year, for the first time, we published a newsflash issue. This was because we felt it was important to alert residents of a new mobile library service which was going to start between publication dates.

We aim to provide:

- \* News and updates on events in the village
- \* A list of useful contacts
- \* Invited contributions from the Church; the Village Hall; the Cricket Club; the Village History Group; Camshedders; Village Speedwatch; Madingley Hall and Estate; the American Cemetery; County and District Councillors and the local MP.
- \* Information on bus and other services, as well as links to volunteering and other activities.

For villagers who don't wish to subscribe to receive the email version, *Madingley News* is also published on the Web at <https://madingleynews.substack.com>, where it's always available and you can find back numbers.

Those who decide it would be more convenient to get the email version can subscribe on the website. And anyone who wishes to alert us to news or suggested topics can email us at:

[madingley.news@gmail.com](mailto:madingley.news@gmail.com)

## District Councillors' Annual Report to Madingley Parish, May 2026

This municipal year 2025/26 has been quite a busy one and this report covers the last 12 months of activities by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Councillors.

Your District Councillors have been Richard Stobart and Corinne Garvie

In addition to ward work we have served on the following committees: Scrutiny and Overview, Audit, Civil Affairs, Licensing, Planning, the Joint Development Management Committee (Strategic Planning), SCIP, the South Cambridgeshire and Investment Partnership which has recently started the development of the Cambium Square estate in Cambourne, and the Blue Plaque committee.

We attended most Parish Council meetings and when we missed some we would endeavour to attend the monthly coffee mornings to hear about any concerns residents may have. We hope that we have been able to keep the Parish Council up to date with developments in the District, and to offer advice and guidance where it has been most needed.

We have responded to planning proposals for infrastructure projects which may affect the village. Examples include the Fen Reservoir project and the associated holding reservoir in Madingley.

We have been concerned about the many potholes in the roads and are pleased to see that they have been filled. We kept an eye on the Reporting tool to check that the holes had been reported and even added a pothole which had not been logged.

We were concerned about an empty home and reported it to the Empty Homes office who contacted the university who owned it and it was repaired eventually, though sadly it is still empty.

### Governance

SCDC has a Liberal Democrat administration. The statutory services provided are: Waste Collection & Recycling, Planning (these two are shared services with Cambridge City but we host them), Housing, Environmental Health, Licensing, Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Business Development & Support, and Electoral and Community Services.

SCDC adopted the new corporate plan that has been shaped by feedback from residents in our communities.

The priority areas we identified are:

- **Healthy and Supported Communities (HSC)** – We want to create a district where people feel safe, supported, and confident in their communities. Together, we'll focus on what delivers for residents, enabling healthier, more independent lives for everyone.
- **Sustainable Homes and Vibrant Places (SHVP)** – We want to help people live near their work, shops, schools, leisure, and healthcare, with affordable and reliable public transport.
- **Being Green To Our Core (GTOC)** – We will consistently promote a cleaner, greener, zero carbon future for our communities. We aim to safeguard and enhance the natural world for future generations and help our communities do the same as we strive to be among the most sustainable places to live and work in the country.

· **Helping Businesses To Thrive in South Cambridgeshire (HBT)** – We will support Local businesses as they start up and grow and as we transition towards a sustainable economy. Working with partners we are helping our residents develop the skills they need to take full advantage of local opportunities.

· **Financially Secure and Fit For The Future (FSFF)** - We will make it easier for residents to engage with our services and democratic processes. We will make smart financial decisions to safeguard our services for the future and invest in our staff to ensure they remain equipped to deliver for our district's needs.

Full details on the SCDC website at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/our-corporate-plan>

## **Elections**

This is the final year of the current District Council Administration, and also the last election of SCDC as we know it, as Local Government Reorganisation is moving to a Unitary Authority within the next two years.

## **Highways and Road Conditions**

Road conditions remain a priority, and we continue to press on pothole repairs and the need for longer-term resurfacing solutions.

While there are maintenance programmes in place, we very aware that many residents are not yet seeing the level of improvement they expect. We have raised specific concerns about the quality and consistency of repairs, as well as the need to prioritise roads where there are clear safety concerns.

## **Zero Carbon Grants**

Since its launch in 2019, the Zero Carbon Grants Scheme has funded 82 different projects, awarding over £855,000 to initiatives across the district. This has included energy generation, energy efficiency and conservation measures at community buildings, community cycling events, cycle shelters, food waste reduction initiatives, community allotment and gardening projects and much more.

South Cambridgeshire communities will benefit from further money to cut carbon emissions - after the District Council committed another £152,000 to this popular grant scheme. It was agreed to increase the maximum amount that can be handed out from £15,000 per project in previous years, to £19,500 this year.

The application process will open on Monday 25 May 2026 and close on Friday 24 July 2026. Projects on school sites and by parent / teacher associations will be able to apply if there is a benefit to the wider community. Sports groups – like bowls clubs – will also be eligible, so long as they provide benefits to the wider community like improving mental health or strengthening community ties.

Groups will also be able to apply for money to pay for electric vehicle charging points under the grant.

Of the total of £152,000 available for the forthcoming financial year, half is set aside for carbon reduction or projects that lock-up carbon, and the other half is earmarked for community engagement and nature projects – reflecting the aspirations of the Council's new Climate and Nature Strategy. Those interested in applying for a Zero Carbon Communities grant can join a workshop to find out more. Two sessions will be held on Wednesday 20 May.

One will run from 12:30pm to 1:30pm and a second will take place from 6pm to 7pm. Potential applicants are encouraged to register for either.

### **More Grants**

SCDC has awarded Community Chest grants to projects that aim to bring an improvement to communities - improving wellbeing, tackling isolation, expanding support services, and creating welcoming spaces for residents of all ages.

### **New Hub for Northstowe**

South Cambridgeshire District Council and Kier Construction came together last month to celebrate the completion of the Unity Centre – the permanent community centre in Northstowe

### **Government's Plans for an Urban Development Corporation**

South Cambridgeshire District Councillors have voiced their strong opposition to Government proposals for a Greater Cambridge Urban Development Corporation. An Extraordinary Council Meeting was held to discuss the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Plans which would result in the creation of a board with most of its members appointed by Government, rather than being elected. At that meeting, Councillors also made clear they were strongly opposed to MHCLG's plans to remove key elements of the Council's planning powers and pass them to the new organisation for 25 years.

Councillors discussed how there is already approved or proposed development in Greater Cambridge's pipeline for over 100,000 new jobs and up to 77,000 new homes and suggested Government should focus on bringing forward these new homes and offices first in partnership with local councils. They said the main barriers to meeting current commitments are the lack of funding and slow delivery of transport and utility improvements. They stressed these problems do not come from the local planning system, but from wider infrastructure challenges and national regulations.

MHCLG are proposing that the new Development Corporation would become the local planning authority for major planning decisions above a certain threshold, as well as on larger development sites – removing that responsibility from the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) service which South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils share.

It would also replace the councils' role in preparing Local Plans after the conclusion of the current emerging Joint Local Plan. This would mean that, in future, decisions about where new homes and jobs come forward across Greater Cambridge would be made by the Development Corporation, rather than by local communities through the councils and the democratically elected councillors.

### **Plans to protect the South Cambridgeshire's Natural Environment**

Plans for how the environment in South Cambridgeshire will be protected and improved over the next five years have been launched following an extensive consultation. South Cambridgeshire District Council has confirmed its new Climate and Nature Strategy, which will guide environmental priorities until 2030.

The launch of the new strategy comes after residents, community groups, businesses and partners contributed ideas for the vision - a district that leads boldly with a clear pathway for climate action, biodiversity recovery, and community resilience. Feedback to last year's consultation into the proposed strategy showed strong public backing for the Council's environmental ambitions and for the strategy's eight focus areas.

- Doubling the land managed for nature across the district by 2050, with support for meadow creation, enhanced waterways, and connected wildlife corridors.
- Reaching Net Zero district-wide by 2050, with significant interest in renewable energy, low carbon transport, and home retrofit.
- Reducing the Council's operational emissions by 75% by 2030, being an important leadership example for the district. The new solar farm at the Council's Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Waterbeach depot to fuel electric bin lorries is part of this vision.
- Ensuring communities are resilient to at least a 2°C rise in global temperatures, with feedback emphasising flood resilience, heat adaptation and community preparedness.

### **More Free Trees**

Parish and town councils across South Cambridgeshire have been given free commemorative blossom trees by the District Council - to honour community volunteers and remember those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The trees were provided for this year's UK-wide COVID-19 Day of Reflection - which took place on Sunday (8 March 2026).

South Cambridgeshire District Council offered all parish and town councils a free wild cherry tree – with 58 taking-up the offer. The idea is for the trees to stand as living tributes to the strength and compassion shown by the community during the pandemic.

The trees are being provided with plaques that honour the volunteers who gave their time and care to support those in need and remember all who were impacted and those who lost their lives.

### **Weekly food waste collections**

This year will see the roll-out of the government's weekly food waste collections. This will help reduce the amount of food waste being sent to landfill and the waste will be used in anaerobic digesters to produce biofuels. The reason for the delay is that it takes a lot of time to acquire all the additional lorries that are needed. More information is here: <https://tinyurl.com/ykwrf83t>

### **Local Government Reorganisation LGR**

The council has spent a great deal of time during the last year dealing with government requirements for a Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This is the Government's plan to merge two-level County and District councils across the country into a single layer of unitary councils. In November 2025, the principal authorities of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough submitted their proposals for what those new councils should look like. The Government consultation ended on 26th March 2026 and decisions are expected to be announced during the summer.

SCDC submitted Option B. Elections will take place in May 2027 into the shadow councils, giving them a year to prepare ready to start operating in May 2028.

## **New Council Homes**

We recognise that everyone deserves a high-quality, safe, and affordable place to live. When the current administration came to power in 2018, the council was building about 35 new council houses each year. Furthermore, because of 'right to buy' sales its portfolio was shrinking so the period 2013 to 2018 saw a net reduction of 99 council houses.

Since 2018 the current administration has nearly quadrupled the rate of council house building. This year, at the time of writing, at least 130 new council homes had been completed across the district and by the end of the financial year, we will have delivered 139 new council homes with a further 160 planned for next year. This is something the administration is very proud of - developing affordable housing in our district, responding to resident requirements as quickly as possible.

## **Affordable Housing Delivery**

Affordable housing is generally delivered by housing associations, often through S106 schemes especially on major sites. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) recently published by the GC Shared Planning Service shows that 2024-2025 2,265 new homes were completed across Greater Cambridge, the highest since 2011. Of these 1,735 new homes were in South Cambridgeshire, of which 424 were affordable homes.

Work has begun on building out the SCIP (South Cambridgeshire Investment Partnership) development next to South Cambs Hall in Cambourne. SCIP is a 50:50 partnership of SCDC and The Hill Group. The project will deliver 256 new low-carbon Passivhaus principles homes of which 40% (102) will be affordable comprising 72 for rent and 30 for shared ownership.

We are well into a programme of upgrading the thermal efficiency of our existing council housing stock using grant funding from Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to bring them up to EPC Band C which will result in a significant reduction in energy running costs for tenants.

## **Bringing Empty Homes Back into Use**

A major milestone has been reached in tackling long-term empty homes in South Cambridgeshire, with 75 properties brought back into use in the last three years. This was achieved by appointing an Empty Homes Officer in 2022. To find out more about our work bringing empty homes back into use visit our webpage at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/empty-homes>.

## **M&Me App – For council tenants to report repairs**

The Council has launched M&Me, a new mobile app developed in partnership with Mears, offering council tenants a quicker and more convenient way to report repairs. Using the app, tenants can report a repair at any time, choose an appointment slot that suits them, receive real-time alerts and updates about their repair, see who will be attending their home and when.

Mears will be writing to all council tenants with full details about the new app, including their unique access code.

## **Multi-award Winning Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS)**

South Cambs hosts the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS), the joint planning service for both SCDC and Cambridge City. As the Cabinet Member responsible for

the Service, it was pleasing to see the focussed transformation work over the years (from 2018 when we took over administration) result in the service winning three prestigious awards in 2025.

- The Royal Town Planning Institute's national Local Planning Authority of the Year 2025
- The Planning Award for 'Planning for the Natural Environment',
- The TET (Thornton Education Trust) Inspire Future Generations Award for 'Best Local Authority in Youth Engagement' 2025.

The service has come a long way and hopefully will continue to provide this level of service when the councils transform to a new unitary authority and if/when the proposed Development Corporation is established.

### **Emerging Draft Joint Local Plan**

Work is much advanced on the joint local plan with Cambridge City that should determine how our district is developed over the period 2025-2045 (DevCo permitting). The recently concluded consultation on the Reg18 stage showed strong community engagement with over 4500 responses gained from over 80 events online and offline. These comments are now being compiled and analysed. The proposals will go through normal process with members to finalise the version to go to final Reg 19 stage. This will then come out for final public consultation in the summer and subsequently submitted to MHCLG by the deadline of December 2026. More information at <https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/>.

### **Current Local Plan and Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**

The AMR is a requirement by Government and is a report tracking how well Greater Cambridge is delivering its current adopted Local Plans. The report is for the 2024-2025 municipal year and highlights include:

- 7,000+ applications handled
- 9,900 homes approved
- 2,264 homes completed — highest since 2011 – 1735 in South Cambs
- 687 affordable homes - 424 in South Cambs (part of total)
- 62,000 sqm employment space completed - 51,956 in South Cambs
- 408,000 sqm approved

### **Helping Businesses To Thrive in South Cambridgeshire**

The Business team is doing a lot of work to support local businesses (specifically SMEs) to grow, which will help local communities thrive, bringing jobs and opportunities into our villages.

The team continues to work closely with local businesses, stallholders, traders and event organisers to run markets across the district. It benefits residents and communities by being able to shop locally. One of these is the Girton Farmers Market that takes place in Williams Collyn Village Hall on the second Saturday of the month. The full list available at <https://visitsouthcambs.co.uk/see-do/markets/>.

### **South Cambs Christmas Market**

South Cambridgeshire District Council hosted its indoor Christmas Market for the fourth year running. The festive extravaganza usually has around 100 stalls from local independent small businesses and market stallholders.

### **Visit South Cambs Website**

The VisitSouthCambs website at <https://visitsouthcambs.co.uk/> is increasingly popular with small businesses advertising and used by visitors to the area to see what's available to do in the district.

### **South Cambs Business Newsletter**

The Business Newsletter is available and anyone can sign for business support, news and information. More information at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business>

### **Healthy and Supported Communities**

We are making more and more of our services available online and launched our new website with much improved accessibility. SAM – the web chat help has been very useful.

Our commercial investments are successfully bringing increasing income to the Council enabling us to provide more facilities. One example is the recently completed Unity Centre at Northstowe. The construction combines Passive House principles (low operational carbon) with low lifecycle carbon materials to deliver a net zero design. The building has been leased to the Northstowe Town Council who are now the operators of this impressive new facility. Doors will open to the public from 30 March.

We are also providing targeted health and wellbeing support for vulnerable residents and ensuring our staff have the training to respond appropriately to safeguarding issues.

### **Mobile Wardens scheme**

SCDC continues to support the Mobile Wardens Scheme, which offers support and assistance for older people. This allows them to continue to live independently at home by providing daily contact (Monday to Friday) either by a personal visit or by a telephone call, to ensure a sense of security and wellbeing. SCDC has set out a funding programme which will enable mobile warden schemes to become more financially independent, hopefully securing their long-term viability across the district.

### **Homes for Ukraine scheme and Newsletter**

Sadly, it's now been four years since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, and many Ukrainians are still unable to safely return home. South Cambridgeshire continues to support Ukrainian guests. There are 104 Ukrainian guests being hosted in South Cambridgeshire, being hosted by 75 households. Many have moved on to private rented accommodation in the UK. In total 1,009 people have arrived in South Cambridgeshire under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. South Cambs provides a regular newsletter for Ukrainian guests living in our district.

### **Cabinet and Town / Parish Council Liaison**

Cabinet holds meetings with parish councils, to share information relevant to communities and give opportunity to parish councillors to raise issues of concern directly to the administration.

## Cost of Living Support

With many residents still facing financial pressures, the Council will continue providing its comprehensive cost-of-living support package. A budget of £449,000 is set aside to help residents through the next two years through schemes such as emergency food and energy support, workshops, budgeting and debt advice, white goods and furniture for vulnerable people and laptops with digital training.

## Town and Parish Council Liaison Officer

The council continues to employ a Town and Parish Council Liaison Officer – Jack Bullimore – who has acted as a point of contact for parish councils over the last year. Along-side your district councillors, please look out for communications from Jack.

## Solar Energy Park Construction

Construction has begun on a pioneering renewable energy solar park to power the growing fleet of electric bin lorries for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. Due for completion by end of 2026, it is expected to supply 59% of the Waterbeach depot's total energy needs and achieve over 40% biodiversity net gain through measures such as wildflower planting and new hedgerows to create a haven for local wildlife. More details at <https://bit.ly/SolarEnergyPark>.

## Financial Position and Budget

At the Council's budget meeting, members approved its business plan and budget for the coming financial year. The meeting agreed to a £5.24 increase for an average Band D property. This works out to 10p a week and below inflation rise.

The table below shows comparison of the different precepts charged across Cambridgeshire

District	Unitary Precept	District Precept	County Precept	Total
East Cambs		£142.14	£1,785.42	£1,927.56
Huntingdonshire		£170.86	£1,785.42	£1,956.28
South Cambs		£180.64	£1,785.42	£1,966.06
Cambridge		£239.07	£1,785.42	£2,024.49
Fenland		£253.35	£1,785.42	£2,038.77
Peterborough	£1,836.72			£1,836.72

This doesn't include the police, fire, parish council or Mayor's precepts which are not set by SCDC but are collected by the council. It also doesn't include town and parish precepts(which in an increasing number of cases are now larger than the District Council's).

As seen, South Cambridgeshire charges slightly more than Huntingdonshire DC, but significantly less than both Cambridge CC and Fenland DCs.

SCDC is one of the best run councils in the country and is often held up as an exemplar. It continues to deliver high quality services in the face of sustained cuts by central government, including recent reductions to the amount of Business Rates that local authorities can retain. Our core spending power is being cut by over £5 million over the next 3 years, thanks to the Government's "fair funding review 2.0" which is hurting councils in rural areas like ours. That drop is the equivalent to 15% of our core spending power.

As a result of the government's funding changes, we are increasingly reliant on council tax. In this budget - council tax represents 35% of our core spending power. Come 2028/29 - council tax will represent 47% of our core spending power.

We have council tax relief offering up to 100% relief from council tax for those residents who need it most. Even with the rise, South Cambridgeshire would remain among the lowest-taxing district councils in the country.

### **Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT)**

Another proud initiative is the LIFT scheme, which was made permanent in the last year. The LIFT software interrogates the council's databases to identify residents living in South Cambridgeshire who are missing out on benefits that they are entitled to claim. A two-year apprentice role has been added to the scheme to make the most of the LIFT programme.

It's already done fantastic work for residents – helping over 1,000 residents so far to secure more than £4 million in benefits for local households.

### **Support Grant funding**

South Cambs District Council has committed Service Support Grant funding of £300,000 a year to local community 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.

The 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.

### **East West Rail (EWR)**

Finally this year, EWR has started communicating better. We were pleased that they finally listened to councillors, parish councils and MPs and decided to use a mined tunnel (not cut-and-cover) underneath A428, Bourn Airfield and Highfields Caldecote.

*Corinne Garvie*

*Richard Stobart*