

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

Report for Parish Councils – March 2022.

South Cambs District Council

Ukraine

The Council has pledged to support people fleeing the Ukraine and is calling for a national resettlement programme to be set up by the Government so that this can happen. Councillors have said that the Council will play their part and work to identify local homes for refugees leaving the warzone if needed. You can read the Council's position in full here: [pledge to support people fleeing Ukraine](#).

We hear and empathise with the anxiety and concern of residents who want to do something to help those affected and we want to help by signposting people who wish to offer support in response to the humanitarian crisis.

Donations

The Disasters Emergency Committee brings together 15 leading UK aid charities to raise funds quickly and efficiently at times of crisis overseas. You can [learn more about their Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal](#).

Additionally, local organisation [Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action](#) – which ordinarily works to take regular convoys of donated items to refugees in Calais – has advised that it is NOT currently collecting items for Ukraine. They suggest instead that donations of money is a much more effective way of helping the aid organisations that are working in the region. Furthermore, the Local Government Association (LGA) has provided Councils with [this link to BBC News online](#) where it suggests people should direct their support to organisations including:

- [The British Red Cross](#), which has launched an appeal to help the Ukrainian Red Cross to provide food, medicine, clothing and shelter, as well as first aid training in bomb shelters, and drinking water to villages in eastern Ukraine
- [The UNHCR refugee agency](#), which is funding emergency shelters, repairs for homes damaged by shelling, emergency cash assistance, psychological support and warm clothing
- [UNICEF](#), the UN's children's charity, which is helping to ensure families have clean water and food and that child health and protection services continue
- [Save the Children](#), which is providing cash assistance, food and other support to refugees crossing into Romanian and Lithuania, as well as in Ukraine itself.

Additionally, the Secretary of State for Defence, Ben Wallace, has suggested donating money through the Ukrainian Embassy's [With Ukraine](#) fund. The money will be spent on providing humanitarian assistance to the civilian population and to purchase medical and military supplies for Ukraine's army.

Business grants update: Hospitality and Leisure Grant and Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) top-up. This is up and running and the status as of March 1st was:

OHLG

Applications received: 328
Applications processed: 237
Processed value: £819.4k

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Rejected/duplicate:83
Pending/in progress: 8

ARG – please see attached analysis

Applications received: 133
Applications processed:82
Process value: £256.8k
Rejected: 34
Pending/in progress: 17

Cambridgeshire County Report

Secondary School Places

The proportion of pupils offered a place at one of their preferred Cambridgeshire secondary schools has risen.

In total, 90% of pupils have received a place at their first choice school for 2022/23, similar to the 90.9% figure from this time last year. Moreover, 97.2% of pupils were allocated a spot at either their first, second or third preference school, a rise from 97% last year.

Overall, 6,983 offers were made, up from 6,819. There were more online applications and fewer paper applications in 2022. Students heard on 1 March 2022 at which secondary school they have been offered a place in September 2022.

Easter Programme for Children

Enriching experiences and a nutritious lunch are being made available in the Easter holidays for the children of families receiving benefits-related free school meals.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme offers fun with friends and free food for primary and secondary school children in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The sessions will include a healthy meal, a variety of exciting activities or sports and the opportunity to socialise with other children. Any child receiving benefits-related free school meals is eligible for the programme. Funded by the Department for Education (DfE), the HAF scheme enables local authorities to coordinate free holiday childcare and enriching experiences locally. The programme will be delivered by approved providers, co-ordinated by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

Each eligible child will be able to access up to 16 hours of free holiday childcare or enriching experiences through the school Easter holiday period. Further information can be found at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/haf and Early Years & Childcare | Peterborough Information Network

As part of the HAF programme, eligible children will be able to access:

- Fun and enriching play opportunities or new experiences that provide children with new skills and knowledge.
- At least one meal a day.

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- Guidance on healthy eating and getting children involved in food preparation and cooking.
- Support for parents, carers or other family members with guidance on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.

Information and signposting to other services and support which might be helpful.

Both councils are working with local schools, voluntary and community organisations, and childcare providers to deliver the HAF programme.

Highways Capital Spending

The 2 year capital plan including footways and paths is here [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

The priority schemes are listed here [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Flooding

A new plan to reduce the risk of flooding in Cambridgeshire over the next five years has been approved by Members of the county council's Environment & Green Investment Committee agreed the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy and supporting action plan at its meeting on Thursday. The council is responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a local flood risk management strategy (LFRMS) for the county.

The key objectives of the strategy are: understanding flood risk in Cambridgeshire, managing the likelihood of flooding, helping residents to manage their own risk, ensuring appropriate development in Cambridgeshire and improving flood prediction, warning and post flood recovery.

The newly agreed strategy and action plan will run until 2027 and was agreed following a public consultation which lasted for nearly two months until late January.

The consultation received 31 responses, which led to changes in areas including: greater reference to the natural and historic environment, greater representation of local flooding issues, the impact of new development on flood risk, communication with the community and more details around timescales.

The strategy and action plan are included in the meeting's agenda, which can be viewed here. [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Residents can check their flood risk by using the online flood maps to check whether they're at risk of flooding at <https://www.gov.uk/check-flooding>.

Ethics & Behaviour at the County Council

You may be aware of 'Farmgate' whereby an independent investigation concluded that the former Cambridgeshire County Council deputy leader breached the Council's Code of Conduct in six different areas. Ex-Councillor Hickford failed to treat Officers and others acting on behalf of the Council with respect; used a bullying manner in order for the Council to pay for works that would otherwise be the responsibility of the tenant. He also used a bullying manner in order to set the terms of the lease for Manor Farm. He compromised Officers and others' impartiality in his dealings with regard to Manor Farm and his conduct

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towards Officers and others and his conflict of interest would have reduced the public's confidence in him being able to fulfil his role or the Council being able to discharge its functions.

He also used his position as Deputy Leader to receive concessions that the Council would not otherwise have agreed to and failed to register a disclosable pecuniary interest (the tenancy of Manor Farm) within 28 days and he failed to declare a non-statutory disclosable interest in meetings with regard to County Farms matters. Obviously one bad apple is a bad apple too many so the Council is taking a wide range of steps to ensure that appalling behaviour such as this will never be tolerated again by officers or Councillors.

Thakeham

Seems the OxCam Arc is dead for now and Thakeham seems to be quiet.

County Farms Estate

Cambridgeshire County Council has been advertising for new tenants for seven council-owned farms, part of the council's 33,000 acre rural estate. The council's estate – the largest public sector estate in the country – is divided into 226 holdings, with 160 different tenants. The seven farms up for application, 1,800 acres in total, are in South Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Littleport. Interest is high, with 67 viewings booked by mid-February. The estate brings in £5M in rent to the council each year, to support local services. It contributes to the local economy, enables the council to put its environmental commitments into practice, and ensure public access to the countryside with permissive paths and bridleways.

The council is looking for innovative, entrepreneurial applicants with new ideas for developing their own businesses on the land. These could well be arable or livestock farming, but there are also opportunities for ancillary enterprises such as livery, farm shops or engineering.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have the necessary skills and a viable three-year business plan and budget. They will also need to show that they understand the council's expectations for the farms estate, and in particular are keen to farm in step with nature and do their bit to help tackle climate change and increase biodiversity.

Interviews will take place this month, and tenancies will be ready to take up from October onwards. The council has published a brochure about this opportunity, <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/business-with-the-council/rural-business-opportunities>

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Mach 6th 2022