



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE CITY OF ELY COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY,
27TH OCTOBER 2025 AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY**

PRESENT: Mrs T Coulson – Clerk to the Council

Cllr M Banyard, Mayor

Cllr R Denness

Cllr C Phillips

Cllr C Whelan

Cllr R Morgan

Cllr R Trent

Cllr L Fox

Cllr S Sandhu

Cllr M Hucker

Cllr D Warman

Cllr Ní Dhónaill (arrived 7.05 pm)

Cllr R Ward (arrived 7.17 pm)

County Cllr A Whelan

Amy Ruffle and Alison Maw, Smartphone Free Childhood Cambridgeshire

1. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Moss-Eccardt and Wade. The reasons for their absences were accepted.

2. COUNCILLOR REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensations.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

**4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 15TH SEPTEMBER 2025 AND
MATTERS ARISING**

Minutes of the last meeting held on the 15th September 2025 were proposed by Cllr Denness that they be agreed and signed as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan and unanimously approved. They were signed by the Chairman. Pages 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188 and 2189 refer.

Matters arising:- Page 2183, item 12(i) – the Chairman asked if the Clerk had updated the Standing Orders yet. She confirmed she would be doing shortly. Page 2185, item 19 – the Clerk informed councillors that the East Ward councillor vacancy had been readvertised and no applications had been received. As this had been advertised twice now, this will be readvertised in the new year.

**5. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM THE SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE – AMY RUFFLE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE REPRESENTATIVE AND
ALISON MAW, ELY CITY WORKING GROUP FOR SFC**

- Amy Ruffle explained to councillors that the Smartphone Free Childhood was a grassroots movement bringing families together to stand up for healthier, happier childhoods. She provided information with regards to how smartphones affect children and the pressures they put on them. Alison Maw asked that at a future meeting the Council considered passing a motion to:-
- *support and promote delaying smartphones for children until age 14 and social media until 16; and a community-wide Parent Pact initiative.*
- *issue a formal statement of support to schools in their efforts to impose a full ban of smartphones on school premises; and encourage collaboration between headteachers.*

5. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM THE SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD CAMBRIDGESHIRE – AMY RUFFLE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE REPRESENTATIVE AND ALISON MAW, ELY CITY WORKING GROUP FOR SFC continued

- *lobby higher levels of council to help get children off smartphones and make schools safer, healthier places to learn.*

They answered questions from councillors and the Chairman thanked them for a very detailed and helpful presentation. This will be discussed at a future Full Council meeting.

Amy Ruffle and Alison Maw left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman thanked Cllr Fox, who would be leaving soon for all that she had done as a councillor and the difference she had made. He informed councillors of the Cycling Criterium in Cambridge and the discussions they have had with Visit Ely about the possibility of holding such an event in Ely. The Sales and Events Officer is working with them and it may be possible for 2027. He announced that on the 22nd November Ely Consort were holding a Mayoral Charities Concert at St Mary's Church for his charity and on the 1st February he would be having a charity event at the Maltings, celebrating the Chinese New Year.

7. QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present, so no questions were asked.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

A written report for October was received from County Cllrs C Whelan and A Whelan. This was presented by Cllr A Whelan. A copy of which will be attached to the minutes. A written report from District Cllrs C Whelan, A Whelan, Trent, Wade, Holtzmann, Colbert and Akinwale was received. A copy of which will be attached to the minutes.

9. MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS & REPORT

The Mayor had attended the launch of Ely Fireworks at OCH; Civic Leaders tour at RAF Lakenheath; the official opening of the Bishop Laney Sxith Form; the Cycling Criterium event meeting; a Fenland District Council Reception; the opening of the Jubilee Church community hub at the Railway Mission building; Needham's Association AGM and lunch; KD Theatre Pantomime launch at Poets House; meeting with Bidwells regarding purchase of ECDC buildings currently leased to Council; Civic Leaders Community Cohesion at St Mary's Church; opened St Peter's Church Flower Festival; Stuntney Harvest Service and supper; RAF Wyton Freedom of St Ives Parade; Ely Sinfonia concert at Ely Cathedral; Greater Anglia Poetry train, Peterborough to Ely, with reception at the Maltings; Ribe Visit by the Ely Ribe Association 2-7 October; Cambridgeshire ACRE AGM; opened Ely Apple Fair and Harvest; Ramsey Civic Service; visit to Ribe Court, Ely; St Etheldreda Day at Ely Cathedral; Ely Choral Society concert at Ely Cathedral; visit and talk to Ely Inner Wheel; coffee morning at Fenland District Council, March and the High Sheriff's Justice Service at Ely Cathedral.

The Deputy Mayor had attended the Summer Reading Competition at Ely Library and presented certificates.

The Deputy Mayor and Ambassador had attended the Methodist Church tea where there was a presentation of the recycling unit of Cambs County Council. The Deputy Mayor asked if councillors would like her to arrange a presentation for them and they agreed this would be beneficial. The Deputy Mayor will arrange this.

The Ambassador had attended the Friends of Ely Library quiz.

10. PLANNING

Cllr Morgan as the Planning Committee Chairman gave a report on the planning meetings which had been held since the last meeting and prior to this meeting.

11. INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS

The following information only items were received and noted:-

Road Closures – Nos 16 -18 Church Lane, Ely – 1.12.25 (to facilitate meter maintenance); Nos 20 -24 The Vineyards, Ely – 9 – 11.12.25 (to facilitate stop tap replacement)

Tree Preservation Order – Three Himalayan Birch at verge to front 77 Bell Holt, Ely

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(i) PERSONNEL, FINANCE & GOVERNANCE – No report as the Committee had not met. The next meeting is on the 3rd November 2025. Cllr Denness presented the minutes of the CIL Sub-Committee held on the 6th October 2025. Three applications for CIL funding had been considered with the recommendations considered by Full Council. Funding for improvements to St Mary's Church buildings - £40,000. Cllr Denness proposed this be approved and this was seconded by Cllr Morgan. A vote was undertaken with 5 for and 7 against. This resulted in the application being unsuccessful. The Gateway Phase 4 - £4,110. Cllr Denness proposed this be approved and this was seconded by Cllr Morgan. A vote was undertaken with 11 for and 1 abstention. The application was approved. Heating pumps for the Maltings - £8,812.25. Cllr Denness proposed this be approved and this was seconded by Cllr Morgan. A vote was undertaken with 9 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions. The application was approved.

(ii) CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT – Cllr Denness presented a report of a meeting held on the 20th October, which was noted and approved. The proposed draft budget for 2026/27 was approved. The quotes for both the carbon footprint audit and the energy efficiency surveys were considered with a recommendation that Team Energy quotes be approved. Cllr Fox proposed that this be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Denness and unanimously approved. Cllr Denness proposed that only one bid for the LHI Bids be submitted by the Council this year and this would be for A142 near to Ben's Yard. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan and unanimously approved. Cllr Denness will submit the bid. It was agreed the Council would now move forward with Paperlite meetings. Councillors would confirm to the Clerk whether they wish to have a Paperlite or hard copy option. Once all responses had been received this will be introduced. Cllr Denness thanked Cllr Fox for all the work she had done with regards to the Climate Action Plan. Cllr Fox said that she could not have done it without the help of Pip Gardner and Kathrin Holtzman, past councillors.

(iii) ASSETS – Cllr Morgan presented a report of a meeting held on the 13th October 2025, which was noted and approved. The proposed draft budgets for 2026/27 were approved. The Wicksteed Horse had been installed at St John's Road play area and the play equipment at High Barns play area had also been installed. The anchor point testing for the Christmas lights had been completed with all points passing. The erection of the Christmas Lights had now commenced and will continue until the weekend of the 22nd November. The Clerk and Chairman should be meeting with ECDC shortly to discuss the purchase of the ECDC buildings leased to the Council. It was agreed to undertake repairs to the fire escape at the Maltings at a cost of £4300 plus VAT. Due to the specialised nature of the repairs it had only been able to obtain one quote. Cllr Morgan thanked Cllr Fox for all her hard work over the last two and a half years and said she would be greatly missed. He wished her well for the future.

(iv) TOURISM – Cllr Warman presented a report of a meeting held on the 21st October 2025, which was noted and approved. The proposed budget for 2026/27 was accepted. Cllr Denness commented on how successful the Apple Festival had been. It was proposed to have this over two days again next year and the name of the Festival would be rebranded for next year. The Visitor Guide for 2026 is now underway with three quotes being obtained for the production of the Guide. It was agreed that the removal of one and repair of another of the digital boards, would be undertaken in the next financial year, which had been budgeted for. Cllr Phillips will undertake an active role in the meetings and process for the building work at OCH.

13. REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL MEETINGS

The Chairman gave a verbal report of the recent twinning visit by the Ely Ribe Association to Ribe and councillors noted the Ely Ribe Association minutes of the AGM held on the 16th October 2025.

Councillors noted the minutes of a meeting of the City of Ely Gardens and Allotments Association held on the 20th August 2025.

Executive Review – Notes of a meeting held on the 14th October 2025 were noted.

14. TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF POLICY FOR USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT IN COUNCIL BUILDINGS

Councillors agreed the Policy could be approved at the next Personnel, Finance & Governance Committee following some amendments. It would not be necessary to bring back to Full Council.

15. TO APPOINT A NEW SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING ASSISTANT AND TO PASS A RESOLUTION THAT THIS PERSON BE SPECIFIED AS A PENSIONABLE EMPLOYEE UNDER REGULATION B1(5) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS 1986 (AS AMENDED)

This item was deferred to the next meeting, due to the interviews having to be postponed until November.

16. FINANCE

The Chairman proposed these all be approved, which was seconded by Cllr Denness and unanimously approved.

Direct debit payments and BACS payments

ECDC	499.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	524.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	2295.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	299.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	200.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	499.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	524.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	2295.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	299.00	Paid by direct debit
ECDC	200.00	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	73.46	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	73.46	Paid by direct debit
Greene King Brewing & Retail Ltd	1265.13	Paid by direct debit
EE Ltd	85.56	Paid by direct debit
Lex Autolease Ltd	353.67	Paid by direct debit
Virgin Media Business Ltd	62.40	Paid by direct debit
Virgin Media Business Ltd	62.40	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	191.12	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	96.35	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	85.39	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	65.31	Paid by direct debit
Cellair Ltd	55.20	Paid by direct debit
Barclays	44.16	Paid by direct debit
Cybertill Ltd	79.25	Paid by direct debit
FuelGenie	372.23	Paid by direct debit
Barclaycard	2003.14	Paid by direct debit
Francotyp Postalia Ltd	250.00	Paid by direct debit

16. FINANCE CONTINUED

Bidfood Ltd	956.45	Paid by direct debit
Greene King Brewing & Retail Ltd	1854.63	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	336.53	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	523.41	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	91.69	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	30.53	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	254.41	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	5164.34	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	590.44	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	102.29	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	82.65	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	79.19	Paid by direct debit
Greene King Brewing & Retail Ltd	1244.13	Paid by direct debit
Francotyp Postalia Ltd	150.00	Paid by direct debit
P Sadgrove	25.00	Paid by BACS
East Cambs Street Scene Ltd	330.00	Paid by BACS
Soham Pest Control	99.00	Paid by BACS
RBK (Ely) Ltd	492.00	Paid by BACS
RGP Security Services Ltd	126.00	Paid by BACS
Human Capital Department Ltd	226.80	Paid by BACS
CamAlarms Ltd	601.14	Paid by BACS
Prepared Media Ltd	180.00	Paid by BACS
Ellgia Ltd	215.69	Paid by BACS
Stark Building Materials UK Ltd	152.39	Paid by BACS
O Theobald	645.00	Paid by BACS
RGP Security Services Ltd	258.30	Paid by BACS
Bannold Supplies & Services Ltd	534.76	Paid by BACS
Ely Central Heating Ltd	720.00	Paid by BACS
G & G Gallo Enterprises Ltd	1044.68	Paid by BACS
HM Customs & Revenue	10295.38	Paid by BACS
Calico Cottage	347.04	Paid by BACS
Ely Folk Festival	400.00	Paid by BACS
Konica Minolta Business Sols Ltd	40.21	Paid by BACS
Savills (UK) Ltd	338.09	Paid by BACS
Mrs N Booth	550.15	Paid by BACS
Aztek Services Ltd	241.20	Paid by BACS
House of Marbles	374.88	Paid by BACS
Ely Museum	10000.00	Paid by BACS
We Are Blueshed Ltd	918.00	Paid by BACS
Kevin Robinson	381.00	Paid by BACS
We Are Blueshed Ltd	744.00	Paid by BACS
Darren Wailes	1200.00	Paid by BACS
Onedirect Ltd	1058.39	Paid by BACS
M Slezacek	470.00	Paid by BACS
Grocer's Brokers Ltd	135.96	Paid by BACS
Ely Tool Hire Ltd	84.00	Paid by BACS
Cruse Bereavement Support	962.00	Paid by BACS
Ely Cathedral	864.00	Paid by BACS
ECDC	70.00	Paid by BACS
Konica Minolta Bus Solutions Ltd	341.46	Paid by BACS

16. FINANCE CONTINUED

Latta Hire Ltd	361.44	Paid by BACS
Ely Tyre Services	231.60	Paid by BACS
Welford Christmas Tree Farm	2200.00	Paid by BACS
Two Bad Mice Publishers Ltd	417.24	Paid by BACS
We Are Blueshed Ltd	606.00	Paid by BACS
G & G Gallo Enterprises Ltd	670.55	Paid by BACS
Cheffins	152.78	Paid by BACS
City Cycle Centre	5.41	Paid by BACS
House of Marbles	86.40	Paid by BACS
Heightsafe Systems Ltd	660.00	Paid by BACS
Advanced Thinking Systems Ltd	234.00	Paid by BACS
Yellow Publications Ltd	118.80	Paid by BACS
ECDC	1101.71	Paid by BACS
Studio Nova Ltd	36.00	Paid by BACS
CoolerAid Ltd	20.45	Paid by BACS
GR Peachey & Sons Ltd	32.00	Paid by BACS
Kanazawa Security Services Ltd	572.00	Paid by BACS
Ely Skip Hire Ltd	334.00	Paid by BACS
RGP Security Services Ltd	244.20	Paid by BACS
Mr C Berry	65.00	Paid by BACS
M Slezacek	1070.00	Paid by BACS
Waterbeach Brass	250.00	Paid by BACS
SC International Ltd	118.80	Paid by BACS
Ellgia Ltd	225.30	Paid by BACS
Ely & District U3A	252.00	Paid by BACS
UK Tool Hire Group Ltd	238.80	Paid by BACS
K Evans	187.00	Paid by BACS
PPL PRS Ltd	8214.14	Paid by BACS
RBK (Ely) Ltd	1162.80	Paid by BACS
Arco Ltd	256.96	Paid by BACS
SIS Global Seating Ltd	3584.17	Paid by BACS
Millennium Pest Control Ltd	75.60	Paid by BACS
Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	11056.38	Paid by BACS
Human Capital Development Ltd	226.80	Paid by BACS
Ely Community Cinema	121.00	Paid by BACS
Trade Uk Ltd	244.06	Paid by BACS
PJP Cambridge Ltd	262.50	Paid by BACS
Jake's Kitchen	54.00	Paid by BACS
ECDC	163.30	Paid by BACS
Amazon Business UK Payments	562.21	Paid by BACS
Anglian Water	72.28	Paid by BACS
Anglian Water	82.50	Paid by BACS
Elyi Magazine	175.00	Paid by BACS
RHS Horticultural Services	2102.40	Paid by BACS
Royal Marquees	1488.00	Paid by BACS
ECDC	561.60	Paid by BACS
East Cambs Trading Co Ltd	2596.68	Paid by BACS
Stark Building Materials UK Ltd	105.93	Paid by BACS
Beau Business Media Ltd	360.00	Paid by BACS

16. FINANCE CONTINUED

V Rudkin	379.75	Paid by BACS
Cambridgeshire Turf Nurseries	24.00	Paid by BACS
Otis Ltd	1828.37	Paid by BACS
Ely College	1000.00	Paid by BACS
Konica Minolta Bus Solutions Ltd	89.93	Paid by BACS
Yandell Publishing Ltd	270.96	Paid by BACS
Kara Lumley	250.00	Paid by BACS
Abrey & Son Ltd	377.59	Paid by BACS
Waterland Media Ltd	330.00	Paid by BACS
Ely Tool Hire Ltd	480.00	Paid by BACS
Ely Museum	10000.00	Paid by BACS
Harper Collins Publishers	47.98	Paid by BACS
M Slezacek	270.00	Paid by BACS
Festive Lights Ltd	699.94	Paid by BACS
Churches Fire Security Ltd	833.46	Paid by BACS
Diversity Tennis CIC	1500.00	Paid by BACS

The following invoices had been paid prior to the meeting

A Reddick	91.80	114780
All In Sound	1000.00	114781
Ely City Football Club	1500.00	114783
Magpas Air Ambulance	500.00	114784
The Stained Glass Museum	1000.00	114785
Cambridgeshire Cricket Ltd	1000.00	114786
Prickwillow Village CIC	341.00	114787
Cambs Artistic Roller Skating Club	1000.00	114788
Ely Foodbank	1000.00	114789
VCAEC	971.00	114790

The following invoices had not been paid prior to the meeting

A Reddick	12.50	114791
A Bennett	71.87	114792
S Thompson	15.75	114793
City of Ely Gardens & Allotments Assoc	298.50	114794
Virgin Media Ltd	62.40	Paid by direct debit
Virgin Media Ltd	62.40	Paid by direct debit
EE Ltd	82.56	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	73.46	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	73.46	Paid by direct debit
Elizabeth Long	185.25	Paid by BACS
Cellair Ltd	55.20	Paid by direct debit
Lex Autolease Ltd	353.67	Paid by direct debit
Cambs County Council	500.00	Paid by BACS
Barclays	63.20	Paid by direct debit
Anglian Water	93.84	Paid by BACS
Anglian Water	643.97	Paid by BACS
Mrs N Booth	236.40	Paid by BACS
SSE Energy Solutions Ltd	116.00	Paid by direct debit
AC Environmental Services (UK) Ltd	714.00	Paid by BACS
Konica Minolta Bus Solutions Ltd	58.55	Paid by BACS

Payments relating to staff since meeting on the 15th September 2025

Salaries and wages	£47,380.09
Inland Revenue (tax & NI)	£15,902.03
Pension fund payments	£14,131.17

Councillors noted and approved the bank reconciliation for the period ending 30th September 2025.

Before he closed the meeting the Chairman thanked everyone for all the support and encouragement that he had received as the Chairman of the Council and Mayor. It was much appreciated.

The meeting closed at 8.28 pm.

Cllrs Christine Whelan and Alison Whelan

MONTHLY REPORT October 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The three options being considered by council leaders for the shape of future councils in Cambridgeshire have now expanded to five, or maybe four—with two new three-council options added to the mix.

Peterborough City Council is now working on the option proposed by its two MPs, with a 'Greater Peterborough'; a 'Greater Cambridge'; and a council covering East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and what would be left over of Huntingdonshire.

And Huntingdonshire District Council announced at the end of September that it would be working on a proposal for a go-it-alone Huntingdonshire, with East Cambridgeshire joined to Peterborough and Fenland, and with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire forming its own unitary council.

It is not yet clear (at the time of writing) whether this means Huntingdonshire will not be promoting Option C (which puts East Cambridgeshire in with Fenland and Peterborough), in which case it would not be presented to Government as no-one else is currently promoting that option.

East Cambridgeshire has not yet announced a go-it-alone option of its own, although the Leader of the District Council did say at the Full Council meeting of the District Council in mid-September "If I had my way we'd be a unitary council all of our own and I know that together we would do a brilliant job without fuss".

Might East Cambridgeshire follow Huntingdonshire's lead?

Cambridgeshire County Council is building the business case for Option A (East Cambridgeshire with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire) and at the County Council meeting on 21 October, supported submitting this case to the Government.

FULL COUNCIL 21 OCTOBER 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

The meeting formally approved the submission of option A to the government. This was the main part of the meeting, with opposition parties demanding that option A was not submitted which would have guaranteed that East Cambridgeshire would not be aligned with Cambridge.

Motions

Councillor Alison Whelan brought a motion that addressed urgent concerns around suicide prevention, with the related debate including many moving contributions from councillors.

The motion emphasised the importance of coordinated mental health support and community-based interventions, setting out actions that included improving the transition from children's to adult mental health services, expanding PTSD services for veterans and front-line staff, and developing a more integrated, health-led response to mental health crises.

Receiving unanimous support, the motion also called for increased use of street triage teams, a review of Section 136 detentions, and improvements to the NHS 111 Option 2 service.

Cllr Whelan's motion underlined the importance of involving people with lived experience in service design and the promotion of mental health awareness through education and local partnerships. Progress on these actions will be monitored by the Health Scrutiny Committee, with the first report due by October 2026.

A motion put forward by Councillor Ian Manning, advocated for electoral reform to coincide with local government reorganisation.

Cllr Manning's motion called on the Council to write to the minister responsible for local government reorganisation, requesting that, as part of the move to unitary councils for Cambridgeshire, all residents over the age of 16 be allowed to vote in local elections, and that elections be held under the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.

The council will also be asking local schools about how they promote democracy and voter engagement, as part of the national curriculum, with a report to be delivered to Children and Young People Committee.

A third motion, brought forward by Councillor Alex Bulat, focused on the impact of proposed changes to overseas recruitment in the social care sector. It called for a report to the Adults and Health Committee on how the end of overseas care visas will affect local services, and what mitigations can be put in place.

The motion asked the Council's Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary highlighting Cambridgeshire's recruitment challenges and recent successes such as the CARE Academy programme, and to request meaningful consultation with local authorities and care workers. It further urged the Government to launch a national awareness campaign and ensure adequate funding to support fair pay in the sector.

A final supported motion proposed by Cllr Elisa Meschini, with an approved amendment proposed by Cllr Edna Murphy, led to the council committing to publicly support and raise awareness of Usdaw's 'Freedom From Fear' campaign, which seeks to highlight the abuse that retail employees and other frontline staff encounter at work.

The council will be writing to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner asking what plans they have in place to ensure attacks on public facing staff are investigated – including attacks on shop workers, bank staff and others.

Changes to Council Groups

There were changes to the political groups with Cllr Watt resigning from the Reform Group, and the two independent Councillors joining the Lib Dem Group. The current make up of the Council is:

Group

Liberal Democrat & Independent	33
Conservative	10
Reform	9
Labour	5
The Green Party	3
Unaligned	1
	61

COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION

Every year, the council must set a budget which balances spending needs against income from council tax (around one-third of council funding), business rates, government grants, and service fees. These funds support a wide range of services including social care, education, libraries, highways and transport, environmental services, and waste management.

This new engagement survey, which will close on Monday 24 November, asks residents for their views on how the council should approach budget priorities. Respondents will be asked to consider questions such as whether the council should be looking to increase its income or decrease its spending on some of our services.

<https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business-planning/26-27-phase-1-engagement/>

QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

The results of the County Council's third annual Quality of Life survey have now been published.

1. Happiness is at its highest point since tracking began, but loneliness and mental health struggles remain high

Happiness levels remain high (84 per cent) consistent with the levels seen in previous years. Residents report often feeling lonely (30 per cent) and struggling with their mental health (28 per cent), with younger age groups more likely to report these concerns.

2. Residents remain concerned about the cost of living and jobs and investment

Concerns about cost of living increases remain high, with 87 per cent of residents reporting that they personally feel concerned. This is continuing to put pressure on residents, with over half of residents reporting taking action this year as a result of cost of living increases. Just under two thirds (62 per cent) of residents report concern over the level of investment and jobs in their local area. This has been steadily increasing year on year.

3. A sense of community and pride of place continues to be strong amongst residents

Consistent with previous years, residents continue to feel safe in (85 per cent) and have a sense of belonging to (76 per cent) their local communities. Around half (48 per cent) of residents are involved in their local community.

4. Residents' views on Cambridgeshire County Council performance are the most positive since tracking began

Residents continue to trust the Council to make decisions (52 per cent) and deliver value for money (47 per cent), higher than Local Government Association (LGA) averages. 50 per cent agree the Council acts on the concerns of local residents, lower than LGA averages but an increase locally compared to 45 per cent in the previous two years of the survey. Half (50 per cent) of residents feel that the Council keeps them well informed about the services and benefits it provides.

5. Usage of several services has increased since 2025 and residents' satisfaction with most CCC services is at its highest point since tracking began

Registration services, library services and waste management have the highest satisfaction ratings. Road and pavement maintenance continues to be the lowest area of satisfaction among service users but satisfaction has increased this year to 28 per cent.

More details of the survey and findings are available online.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/quality-of-life-survey/qualityof-life-survey-2025>

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND INCLUSION

High Intensity User Service

The HIU team works with residents who make repeated visits to A&E, often because of complex needs that are not primarily medical.

By focusing on individuals' concerns and building personalised support plans, the team connects service users with the right combination of health, housing, benefits, and community services.

This approach reduces A&E attendances and unplanned hospital admissions by at least 40 per cent.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) have committed £600,000 in funding for the council to run the High Impact Use (HIU) team in 2026/27.

We're currently the only local authority in the country to host such a service, and its community-led model is being promoted nationally as an example of good practice.

Locally, the project has already received an Outstanding Achievement Award from one of the county's acute hospital trusts.

In 2023, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System spent an estimated £28 million of NHS funding on emergency care for around 4,500 people who attended A&E between five and ten times a year - an average of £6,200 per person. The HIU service aims to reduce this demand by tackling the wider social, practical, and emotional factors that drive repeated A&E use.

An evaluation of the project's first year has recently concluded, with early findings showing significant positive impacts for both the individual residents and financial savings to the NHS and the wider system.

Service users, link workers and partner organisations highlighted the programme's personalised and practical support, from help with housing and benefits to coordinated clinical care.

Many users reported increased confidence and improved ability to navigate services, while partners noted that the council-hosted model filled vital gaps and eased pressure on overstretched teams.

Residents who turn repeatedly to A&E, often do so because they don't know where else to go. By listening, understanding their needs, and connecting them with the right support, we're improving lives and reducing pressure on our health services.

The HIU team plays a vital role in supporting our ambition to reduce health inequalities for our residents, and our vision of a more caring Cambridgeshire.

The HIU Operational Team was first established in 2024 as part of an 18-month pilot project, following committee approval in March of that year.

Youth Guarantee Trailblazer

We agreed to accept funding of £841,695 from the government via the CPCA with an aim of helping to deliver support and programmes that help secure employment and or education / apprenticeship opportunities, which will reduce the number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET)

As part of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer, the Council has been awarded £841,695 by the CPCA. This funding is to deliver two projects.

Firstly, to extend the statutory tracking that the Council already undertakes for young people aged 16 to 18 (year 12 and 13) to cover those aged 19 to 21. This will provide the data and insight into the issues and barriers faced by young people to ensure that the right provision and opportunities are in place to reduce NEET.

Secondly, the funding will maintain an existing programme of work that has included delivery of the National Citizens Service and which has provided targeted support to vulnerable groups at a time of transition. These programmes focussed on improving mental health and well-being, building life skills and independence, and helping young people find purpose. The programmes have enhanced young people's social mobility and provided pathways to further education, training, and employment and will be extended to the 18 to 21 age group.

Community Digital Hubs

Connecting Cambridgeshire is inviting applications from community groups and organisations to enable Digital Hubs across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Connecting Cambridgeshire will be supporting applicants by providing small grants of up to £4,200 to procure connectivity solutions and digital devices to be used in their spaces by the public, and provide the local community with access to digital skills and confidence.

These hubs aim to ensure holistic digital inclusion support can be delivered locally, through trusted partners, with established relationships within their communities.

The original deadline for applications was Tuesday 30 September, but I'm hoping they are still accepting submissions.

<https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/about/help-to-getonline/digital-hubs/>

Civic and Church Gathering

We were invited to attend a 'Civic and Church Gathering' hosted by St Mary's Church in Ely on Thursday 25 September. Unfortunately, this clashed with a District Council meeting.

The event was organised under the umbrella of Movement for Recovery Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. This initiative is bringing together churches from across the East Cambridgeshire District Council area—along with civic and community partners—to explore how we can work together for the good and flourishing of the places we live and serve.

With funding from Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service, Movement for Recovery have been mapping the ways local churches across the region are already contributing to community wellbeing in areas such as mental health and wellbeing, support for families and early years, and tackling food poverty.

In particular the organisers are interested in exploring the ways in which the church can add value to what its civic partners are already doing.

I was able to share the findings of the County Council's Quality of Life Survey and the Poverty Strategy Commission, and look forward to closer working.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme set to continue to 2029

The Holiday Activities and Food programme is set to continue to 2029, providing thousands of children in Cambridgeshire with food and fun during school holidays.

The Government has announced it will continue to fund the programme across England for a further three financial years, meaning that families in Cambridgeshire will continue to benefit from the scheme until March 2029.

Through the programme, local holiday schemes offer free access to fun, enriching activities and nutritious meals for children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Running during the Easter, summer, and Christmas holidays, HAF helps reduce pressure on families by providing safe, engaging environments where children receive a meal while having fun.

Holiday scheme experiences include sports, creative arts, Forest School, playschemes, and outdoor adventures. The programme also supports families by reducing childcare costs, promoting social inclusion, and connecting them with local support services.

Cambridgeshire County Council ran 132 schemes over the summer holiday period, with an estimated 3,300 children participating.

Cambridgeshire Youth Work Conference

Cambridgeshire County Council's Communities Service will be hosting the annual Cambridgeshire Youth Work Conference on Saturday 15 November at Ely Community College.

Through a series of talks, workshops and stalls, the conference will enable local partners and youth practitioners to come together and access specialist resources to support them in their work with young people.

If your community works with young people and would like to raise awareness of the support you provide, then please liz.morris@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and nichola.west@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Fens 2100+ update

The Fens 2100+ project has issued the following update.

Baseline reports

The final draft of the catchment baseline reports is due mid-July. Once issued there will be a review process undertaken with EA colleagues, IDBs and key stakeholders to ensure they are an accurate reflection of the current system and meet the objectives of Fens 2100+. Following the review process there will be a final period of refinement alongside the development of a system wide report, capturing the key elements from each catchment.

Case for Change

The team continue to develop the Case for Change alongside our partners with the completed first draft due in July. Building upon the evidence highlighted by the Baseline Reports the Case for Change explores the current and potential value of the Fens, sets out our case for continued and enhanced investment in the area and considers how we shift to a system wide approach to asset management. To support this a 10-step action plan has been developed which will be implemented by the Partnership over the next 2 years to ensure we set ourselves up for success.

Flood Resilience Strategy

The work we have done to date has further highlighted the need for continued investment in our existing, ageing asset base to ensure we manage the inherited system that we currently have. In the autumn we will publish our approach to how we will develop a Flood and Coastal resilient Strategy which will be finalised in 2027. The strategy will include a costed 10-year pipeline of investment priorities with a focus on 'no regret' decisions as well as identifying potential transformational shifts. In addition, it will define a 'target end state' for the system at the end of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years to allow us to monitor success.

The update says that the Environment Agency will be 'publishing [their] first set of key deliverables in the Autumn'.

Anglian Water Waste Water Treatment Plant move de-funded

The move of Anglian Water's waste water treatment plant from north-east Cambridge to Horningsea has had its funding withdrawn by the Government. £80M had already been spent on preparations for the move, and planning permission had already been granted.

The move was intended to make way for a large development of sustainable housing known as 'Hartree'. The decision to de-fund the project means that space will need to be found somewhere else in Greater Cambridge for those homes, and new plans will need to be drawn up for waste water treatment.

New town at Tempsford

The Government has announced its intention to build three new New Towns before the next General Election, in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Leeds. The Bedfordshire site is Tempsford, south of St Neots, earmarked for a new railway station on the proposed alignment of East West Rail.

Community watercourse maintenance grants

Community Watercourse Maintenance Grants of up to £10,000 are designed to support communities where the condition of local watercourses is increasing the risk of flooding. By providing funding directly, the County Council enables local people to take practical action to improve water flow, reduce flood risk, and enhance the surrounding environment.

The grant can be used for vegetation clearance and debris removal, minor repairs to banks or channels, equipment hire or contractor support, volunteer training and safety equipment, and other essential maintenance activities.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-anddevelopment/flood-and-water/community-flood-actionprogramme/watercourse-maintenance-grant>

Explore green spaces this autumn

There are many free to access green spaces across Cambridgeshire, providing opportunities to get out on foot and connect with nature.

The Cambs Open Space website shares the top 200 parks in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to explore, as well as an interactive map of parks across the county and upcoming events in green spaces.

The county council also owns eight Local Nature Reserves, all of which are open to the public. They are excellent places to study and learn about wildlife or simply enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of being in nature. Visit the council's website to access walking routes and top tips.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-andparking/active-travel-in-cambridgeshire/getting-started/walking>

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Local 20 mph Programme 2025-26

The Committee approved the list of eleven schemes to be designed and delivered. Two applications were received and approved in East Cambridgeshire.

A further round of applications will be opened next year and existing unfunded schemes will be carried forward.

Local Highway Improvements (LHI) 2025-26 Programme

The committee approved the new prioritised list of community-led schemes for delivery.

District	Funded Complex Projects	Funded NonComplex Projects	Total number applications received	% funded in each district
East Cambridgeshire	3	10	13	100.00%
Fenland	8	11	20	95.00%
Huntingdonshire	10	21	38	81.58%
South Cambridgeshire	10	23	47	70.21%
Cambridge City	5	19	42	57.14%

A Member Working Group will review the LHI process and report back with recommendations for improvements.

Department for Transport Incentive Fund Return

The committee approved the Council’s 2025 submission to the Department for Transport’s (DfT) reporting requirements in relation to the Incentive Fund. The Government has stated that 25% of the £500 million additional funding allocated nationally for 2025/26 is contingent on local highway authorities demonstrating to the Government that they are complying with certain criteria aimed at driving best practice and continual improvement in highways maintenance.

The Gross Replacement Cost, (GRC) / Asset Value of our total highway asset excluding land valued using the HAMFIG/CIPFA methodology and with rates uplifted to 31 March 2025 is £7.590 billion.

The amount spent on maintenance has grown significantly, but is still not at a level to repair the underinvestment under previous administrations.

Financial Year	Total £ spent on highway maintenance (Capital & Revenue)	Total Asset Value	% spent on highway maintenance vs total asset value
2020-21	£47.79 Million	£5.785 billion	0.83%
2021-22	£48.16 Million	£6.493 billion	0.74%
2022-23	£53.46 Million	£7.520 billion	0.71%
2023-24	£53.08 Million	£7.536 billion	0.70%
2024-25	£79.17 Million	£7.590 billion	1.04%
2025-26	£91.98 Million	£7.590 billion	1.21%

ADULTS & HEALTH

Outcome of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance Process

The Committee welcomed the CQC’s rating of “Good” for Cambridgeshire County Council’s adult social care services. Members noted the findings and discussed how the Council’s performance compared nationally. Next steps include developing an action plan to embed improvements and align with the Adults, Health and Commissioning Strategy.

Adults, Health and Commissioning Strategy

The Committee approved the overarching strategy setting out priorities for adult social care, public health, and commissioning for the coming years. The strategy focuses on prevention, integration of services, and promoting independence for residents.

Section 75 Agreement – Sexual and Reproductive Health Service

The joint agreement between Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, and Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) was varied to reflect a £495,015 inflationary uplift (funded by Peterborough City Council). The change ensures the sustainability of the joint sexual and reproductive health service, addressing inflationary pressures and rising demand.

Section 75 Agreement – Primary Care Commissioning

The Committee approved continued partnership with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for prescribing and medical devices, with annual recharges averaging £610,000. The Section 75 will be amended in 2026 to align with the new Central East ICB, and reviewed again in 2027 to accommodate the expected local government reorganisation in 2028.

Urgent Decision – Integrated Community Equipment Service

The Committee formally noted an urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive following the provider failure of Nottingham Rehab Limited (NRS). A direct award was made to Medequip Assistive Technology Ltd to ensure continuity of essential services (worth up to £35 million over 4 years).

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Ely School Provision

We have been meeting with headteachers at the Ely Schools to understand the concerns and issues with education and it is clear that there is an excess of primary education places while a shortage of secondary places. This is particularly marked in Ely St Marys Junior and Spring Meadow Infant.

The planned developments on Highflyer Farm include another primary school and we have asked for urgent discussions about how this can be best used.

We welcome any views on the future of education in Ely.

We received a tour of the SEND unit that has recently been opened at Spring Meadow and this appears to be having significantly positive impacts on children who have previously found mainstream schooling a major challenge.

SEND Area Ofsted/CQC Inspection Action Plan

The Committee received a detailed report following the January 2025 Ofsted and CQC inspection of the county's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) arrangements.

Inspection outcome: Cambridgeshire was rated as having "inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND" — the mid-tier rating nationally, aligning with most comparable counties.

Improvement Framework – the Inclusion for All programme incorporates Ofsted's five mandated improvement areas:

1. Timeliness and quality of EHCP processes
2. Access to specialist mental health and neurodevelopmental pathways
3. Co-production with children and young people
4. Preparation for adulthood
5. Communication and clarity of the local offer

£780,000 recommended from earmarked reserves for additional EHCP casework and educational psychology capacity. Regular Committee updates will combine themed "spotlight" reports and performance dashboards.

Cllr Christine Whelan County Councillor Ely South

Cllr Alison Whelan County Councillor Ely North

City of Ely Council – District Council Committee Report by Cllrs Christine and Alison Whelan (District for Ely Cllrs Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Kathrin Holtzman Christine Colbert and Chika Akinwale)

Finance & Assets Committee – 25 September 2025

Operational Services Committee – 29 September 2025

Watch the full meetings on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0cFMP6_WYXa6OZ7_lq4ZSg

Finance & Assets Committee – 25 September 2025

The Finance & Assets Committee meeting focused on the Council's financial stability, management of key projects, and oversight of East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC). Members received updates on gender pay, health and safety, and major assets.

- Gender Pay Report noted; further analysis requested for quartiles and inclusion of ECSS staff. Concerns were raised that the gap although improving has not gone far enough.
- Health & Safety Policy 2025 approved unanimously; significant reduction in workplace accidents reported. Questions were raised around accidents involving councillors, and whether they were included in the data. This was confirmed that these had been.
- £215,000 expenditure approved for progress on the Lake View Bereavement Centre; Update was given concerning the Dock commuter car park. The charge is now £4 per 24 hours. The machines are now up and working properly. There is an app that can be used but there is an extra 15p charge for using the app. It was suggested that this should be made clearer on the signs, so people are aware of the additional charge for this app.
- ECTC accounts and governance statements noted; all Combined Authority loans repaid.

- Cllr Anna Bailey appointed Trustee to the East Cambs Community Land Trust (Chair's casting vote).
- £72,142.61 grant approved for 27 fully affordable homes at Arbour Square, Ely (Chair's casting vote). The grant was approved although there was a debate around the actual number of homes as some of the money was allocated from the homes in Barton Road.
- Medium-Term Financial Strategy update noted; concerns raised about the impact of the national fair-funding review.
- Budget report showed a projected underspend of £331k; members unanimously rejected an additional planning enquiry fee.
- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme recommended unchanged for 2026/27 (Chair's casting vote).
- Cllrs Alan Sharp and Bill Hunt appointed to the A10 Ely-A14 Improvements Working Group. It was suggested that it should be a member from an area where the A10 goes through. The 2 appointments were voted on by using the chairs casting vote.
- Forward Plan updated: Biodiversity Report rescheduled to January 2026.

Operational Services Committee – 29 September 2025

The Operational Services Committee considered the district's frontline services, particularly waste management, street cleansing, and community safety. The meeting reflected progress towards the 2026 waste reform programme.

- Community Safety Partnership update noted, covering domestic abuse prevention, youth engagement, and road safety.
- Waste & Street Cleansing Q1 performance report noted; new waste collection system in development for 2026.
- Street Cleansing Review confirmed service specification fit for purpose; straw debris and parked-car issues raised for action. There were discussions around the amount of straw on the roads and kerbs from lorries transporting hay,

- New Waste Collection Service Project progressing on time and budget; new bins and food caddies to roll out from 23 March 2026.
- Public communication campaign to intensify after Christmas, with parish involvement.
- ECSS 2024/25 financial statement and governance statement noted; company operates on a cost-recovery basis.
- Budget Monitoring: £30k underspend on £6.84m revenue; capital programme aligned with budget.
- Clarification to be sought on unclaimed Police & Crime Commissioner grant funding.
- Anglia Revenues & Benefits Joint Committee minutes from March and June noted.
- Next major update on new waste service scheduled for January 2026; ECSS management accounts to June noted.

Watch the meetings:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0cFMP6_WYXa6OZ7_lq4ZSg

