Report of District Councillors Carla Hofman and John Williams

to Parish Councils for July 2023

This report contains factual information which we hop will be of use and of interest to the parish council and to the wider community of the parish. For queries, please email us at cllr.williamsjg@scambs.gov.uk or cllr.hofman@scambs.gov.uk

Successful Performance Maintained in 4 Day Week Trial

One of the objectives of the 4 Day Week is to improve recruitment, Data published for May shows that recruitment levels continue to improve, with previously difficult to recruit jobs attracting many more applicants and appointments. Already the Council is expecting to save over £300,000 in staffing costs because of this, with the aim being a saving over the financial year of £1 million.

This improvement comes on top of the Key Performance Indicators for the period January to March 2023 showing not just performance being maintained generally, but in some areas improved. This having been independently verified by Cambridge University. Moreover, a "mystery shopper" exercise on the Contact Centre has shown the Council is handling telephone calls very much better than then other Councils also measured.

The 4 Day Week trial will continue to next April, when with all the evidence provided, the Council will decide whether to make it permanent. The Council's Shared Waste Service will join the 4 Day week trial this summer. Currently new routes are being tested for robustness. This will avoid emptying bins on Mondays, which because of Bank Holidays will save expenditure on agency staff to make up the lost day.

Mobile Food Hub Launched in South Cambridgeshire

A new Mobile Food Hub, funded by the District Council and run by not-for-profit organisation, Hope CIC, has been launched.

Fresh produce and essential items, some of which will be free and others at below retail prices, will be brought directly to villages around South Cambridgeshire to help people with rising food prices.

Currently, the Mobile Food Hub will visit Papworth, Orchard Park and Duxford weekly, with further locations to be confirmed, including one in Fulbourn. Villages have been selected based on 2021 Census deprivation data, mapped against where current foodbanks and food hubs operate from.

Any resident can access this Mobile Food Hub by turning up on the day. No vouchers or referrals are needed.

There will be a mix of fresh and long-life food on offer. Food is coming from both donations and purchasing from local suppliers. Residents will also be able to buy essential affordable items.

Community Hubs Network Created

South Cambs residents can continue to benefit from local support in community buildings this summer, thanks to a new initiative developed on the back of the original Warm Hubs concept, using funding from Cambridgeshire County Council.

Operating at the heart of local communities, the Warm Hubs offered warm, friendly and inclusive places with access to light refreshments. Hubs also provided residents with somewhere to socialise, take part in activities and receive information on how to reduce bills, access financial support, and stay healthy and well.

Whilst establishing the Warm Hubs, it became evident that there was a desire to see them continue and become community hubs.

Homes for Ukraine guest welcome payment – temporary suspension of payment cards

Under the Homes for Ukraine scheme guests receive a welcome payment on arrival in the UK. This is to provide financial support until the guest either starts work or starts to receive benefits. Since the start of the scheme the Council have used pre-paid cards provided by Their Perfect Gift to make payment to guests.

The Council has been informed by Their Perfect Gift that the bank that supports their Mastercards has had their licence taken away and they have had to change their Mastercard issuer. This means that cards cannot currently be used or activated. We have been told that this may be for a period of around 3 weeks. Once Their Perfect Gift have had been approved by their new issuer, we have been assured that guests will be able to access any balance on cards.

Until the situation has been resolved we will be working with hosts and guests to make alternative arrangements for payment. If you have any queries from hosts or guest, please direct them to Ukrainepayments@scambs.gov.uk so we can help them as quickly as possible.

Carla and John