

Councillor Peter McDonald
District Councillor for Duxford, Ickleton, Pampisford, Babraham, Hinxton.
County Councillor for Foxton, Fowlmere, Shepreth, Thriplow, Heydon, Chishills, Whittlesford

Parish Council Report January 2026

South Cambs Council

£900k support for Community Projects

Grants totalling £900,000 for local organisations that support residents of all ages
The latest round of grant funding for local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations – totalling £900,000 - has been announced.

For the next three years, Service Support Grants will provide crucial funding of £300,000 a year to local groups to deliver services that make a real difference including supporting people with their mental health, independent living, advice services, and helping residents through the cost-of-living crisis.

The Service Support Grants funding has significantly increased from the previous £167,400 a year budget - underscoring the Council's commitment to community wellbeing, tackling inequality and reducing social isolation.

Grant recipients include:

- Cambridge and District Citizens Advice – £105,000 per year to provide free, confidential advice services to residents.
- Disability Huntingdonshire – £12,998 per year to support people with disabilities to live independently.
- Royston and District Community Transport (RDCT) – £7,000 per year to maintain accessible transport for those who need it most.
- Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre – £10,000 per year to deliver specialist support for survivors of sexual violence.
- Over Day Care – £30,000 per year to provide a transport and hospital discharge support service for older residents.
- Support Cambridgeshire (CCVS) – £20,000 per year to strengthen the voluntary and community sector in the district.
- Hope Against Poverty CIC – £14,400 per year to provide a Wellbeing Programme for people experiencing anxiety, bereavement, or social isolation.

Other organisations receiving funding are

Young people - Blue Smile children's mental health charity; Cambridge Acorn Project supporting children who have experienced trauma; Home-Start home-visiting services; Ormiston Families helping families facing adversity; Romsey Mill to deliver youth work; Turtle Dove to improve mental health, wellbeing, and employment outcomes for young women; Waterbeach and Landbeach Action for Youth for youth club sessions.

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All Ages - CamSight helping people of all ages with low vision and blindness; Reach Community Projects supporting families facing poverty as well preventing others from falling into it

Older residents - Care Network Cambridgeshire to help continue and expand support for Community Car Schemes; Sew Positive using sewing to help address mental health challenges, social isolation, or economic inequality; The Voluntary Network helping older residents maintain independence.

The 2026-2029 funding allocations were awarded following a rigorous assessment process, ensuring funds are directed where they will have the greatest impact.

Cost of Living Support

A £449,000 package of support will tackle cost-of-living challenges for the next two years. A budget of £449,000 has been approved to help South Cambridgeshire residents through the next two years of cost-of-living financial pressures.

The 2026-2028 cost of living plan was agreed by the District Council at its latest Cabinet meeting. The plan focuses on supporting vulnerable households by expanding access to emergency food and energy support, building financial resilience by delivering workshops on budgeting and debt advice and continuing community partnerships to provide coordinated support.

Each year the key measures will include:

- £28,000 for laptops and digital training for young people and older residents to reduce digital exclusion.
- £50,000 for Community Hubs, warm places run by trained volunteers that serve the needs of the local community.
- £18,000 to continue to provide emergency food parcels to those in need to the door.
- £30,000 for an essential white good and furniture scheme for vulnerable people moving into homes to address furniture poverty.
- £50,000 for to continue the mobile food hub providing affordable healthy food in rural communities – with the potential to expand reach.
- £20,000 for dehumidifier and /or air drier provision to help relieve damp and mould for low income and vulnerable households
- £5,000 for grants to set up village pantries to increase access to affordable food in rural communities.

The approved cost-of-living two-year funding is in addition to a significant level of support across a range of service areas through the Council's business-as-usual activity.

This includes an innovative IT tool called the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to identify residents who are eligible for benefits but not currently claiming them. LIFT was developed

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as part of the Council's previous cost-of-living work, and its success means it will continue to reach those most in need.

Through LIFT, the Council has helped secure nearly 1,000 additional benefit claims for residents who were previously unaware of their entitlement. These claims are worth over £500,000 in the first year alone, with an estimated lifetime value of nearly £4 million based on average claim lengths. Alongside families now receiving free school meals, this includes:

113 households now receiving Pension Credit
65 households now receiving Healthy Start
480 households receiving a payment from the Household Support Fund
69 households now on a reduced water

Cambs County Council

IWM Duxford Avtech Plans 2026

A new AvTech project is set to be submitted to South Cambs in the Autumn of 2026. So far we know that it is planned a £162m investment and 1,200 jobs over a period of 3-5 yrs.

Duxford AvTech is planned to be the UK's new home for the research and development, prototype testing, certification and manufacture of new low- and zero-carbon advanced air mobility technologies.

The technologies that will be developed include electric, hydrogen and hybrid-powered aircraft, alternative power sources, new materials, and associated technologies and services to shape future air transport.

It is a joint project between Gonville & Caius college and the IWM.

Key local concerns will be the air traffic and road traffic entering and exiting from the A 505.

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Caption: High Level Location Drawing of the Site Courtesy of Henry Boot Developers.

County Council Budget

Councillors on the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee considered the next stage in the development of the Council's draft business plan and budget proposals for 2026/27.

The Committee also considered the emerging new vision for the authority for 'a healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire', supported by three ambitions which would shape all future business planning activities.

The County Council must set a legal budget to deliver public services for Cambridgeshire, including social care, highways, education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), waste disposal, public health, child protection, libraries and community services.

The draft business plan and budget paper discussed at committee sets out the latest financial position for the year ahead (2026-27), projecting growth of £31 million in the 2026-27 revenue budget – a 5.4% increase on 2025-26 – enabling the council to continue investing in key services. This would give the council a net budget of just over £600 million in 2026-27, and a gross total of about £1.2 billion once schools and services funded by specific grants from Government are included.

To develop a legal and balanced budget for 2026-27 and deliver the revised ambitions, the council has had to identify £40 million through a combination of savings or extra income. Proposals set out at the committee mean that a £6.4m gap now remains, which will have to be closed before the Council sets its final business plan and budget in February 2026.

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The draft business plan and budget proposals for 2026-27 will now be scrutinised by service and policy committees throughout January. Any feedback will then be presented to the

The business planning and budget consultation runs until 7 January 2026, with results reported to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee on 29 January 2026. You can find out more and have your say on our website.

You can read the full business plan and budget proposals on our website.

<https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business-planning/business-planning-26-27-phase-2-engagement/>

The meeting was live streamed on the council's YouTube channel.

Peter McDonald Jan 6th 2026