



SOUTH CAMBRIDESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillors James Hutchcraft and Aisha Rashid

Community groups invited to apply for new Community Pantry Grant

South Cambridgeshire groups can now apply for funding to set up community pantries, thanks to a new grant launched by the District Council.

The Community Pantry Grant offers up to £400 to buy equipment and materials to get a community pantry up and running. The new grant is part of a £449,000 package of support to tackle cost-of-living challenges over a 2-year period until March 2028, which was agreed by South Cambridgeshire District Council's Cabinet at the end of 2025.

Pantries of this type are simple, community-run spaces that provide residents with free access to food and everyday essentials, helping to tackle food insecurity while also reducing food waste. They are generally accessible, do not usually require staffing, and are maintained by the community. The grant can be used for items such as shelving, indoor or outdoor storage, small venue adaptations, fridges or freezers, advertising, or other essential costs needed to start a pantry or expand an existing food hub to include one.

Eligible applicants include: (1) Parish Councils; (2) Constituted community groups with a bank account; (3) Informal groups with written support from their Parish Council or District Councillor.

£5,000 has been allocated this year up to 31 March 2027, or until all funds are allocated. Applications will be assessed by Council officers. A further £5,000 will be available next year, depending on demand for the scheme.

Visit www.scambs.gov.uk/community-pantry-grant to apply.

High Street Grants

More than £130,000 is being invested in 20 businesses and community groups across South Cambridgeshire, helping to bring new life to local high streets.

Projects range from shopfront upgrades to community space improvements in the District Council's Improving the High Street grants scheme. Grants have been allocated to help promote rejuvenation, improve the look of high streets, encourage residents to shop locally, and attract more local businesses to the area.

Among the 20 projects chosen for grant funding are Willingham Creative Grounds Café who will receive just over £1,000 for shop frontage improvements including adding greenery and new signage.

Cambridge Growth Company, DEVCo and Local Government Reorganisation

Following the announcement establishing the DEVCo, work began this month engaging MPs and Peers to support Lord Lansley's 'Motion of Regret', submitted to the House of Lords on 11th June. The motion seeks to force the Statutory Instrument creating the DEVCo to be debated either in the

Commons or by the Delegated Decision Committee. The window is tight and government resistance is expected.

While the current Statutory Instrument only establishes the DEVCo and its location, securing a debate creates an opportunity to raise both the Geography question and the further transfer of planning powers expected in an Autumn Statutory Instrument, after which point it would be too late to influence. This work continues to add to pressure already being placed on the government over the wider planning powers transfer.

David Hill has been announced as CEO of CGC DEVCo, taking up post in August. He brings director general-level experience, most recently as a Permanent Secretary at DEFRA, combined with local government experience, and lives locally.

Cottenham / Smithy Fen Site Inspection

South Cambridgeshire District Council visited a Gypsy and Traveller site in Smithy Fen, Cottenham, to help ensure it is complying with regulations.

The Council visited approximately 70 caravans and spoke to some residents to establish who is living there as part of the District Council's wider action to ensure Gypsy and Traveller sites are safe, lawful, and used for their intended purpose.

Smithy Fen is a well-established Gypsy and Traveller site. A condition of the planning permission for individual plots includes the need for Gypsy and Travellers to live in the caravans.

Caravans at the site also need to comply with The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 which regulates caravan sites across the UK and gives local authorities control over where and how caravans are used.

This legislation considers health, safety, and living conditions for people staying in caravans. It includes areas such as spacing between units, water supply, drainage, toilets, fire safety and electrical systems. A significant, closely coordinated and confidential inspection of the Smithy Fen site was carried out to identify any illegal activity or occupation, the second such operation recently.

Northstowe Phase 3B Consultation

There is a consultation being held on Phase 3B of Northstowe at a public event on Tuesday 7th July, 2.30–7pm, Unity Centre, The Green, Northstowe. Outline consent for Northstowe dates to 2022, tied to New Homes Accelerator funding.

The emerging proposals for Phase 3B are expected to include:

- Up to 1,000 new homes
- A local centre, including a primary school, faith and community building
- Play areas
- Significant public open space at the heart of the site

The ambition is to deliver a high-quality, well-connected neighbourhood that contributes positively to Northstowe and provides new homes, community facilities, and open space for existing and future residents.

Northstowe Faith Land Allocation

Northstowe Church Network has been awarded the first plot of land for faith and community groups in Northstowe, following approval at a South Cambridgeshire District Council Cabinet meeting.

The long leasehold is being given at peppercorn rent following the Council's consideration of bids made to develop the land and having received public feedback on the proposals. Northstowe Church Network outlined its role in bringing together a range of faith and community groups to

support worship and create an inclusive space for all residents. Their bid included dedicated worship space plus shared areas available for use by the wider community, including Northstowe Muslims as an anchor tenant, and Turtle Dove Cambridge, which supports young women.

Other collaborators include Romsey Mill, a charity that supports young people and families, Youth Hive, Scouts, Air Cadets, Park Run, art groups and local schools and community groups.

This is the first of four opportunities for faith and / or community groups to secure land in Northstowe. The land was secured by the Council as part of the planning process. In future, there will be further land or floorspace within the town centre on phase 2, plus two more opportunities within phase 3.

Cambridge South Station

The multi-million pound railway station that has capacity to welcome 1.8 million passengers annually has opened. Cambridge South station will serve trains to London, Birmingham and Stansted Airport, and is a short walk away from the city's Biomedical Campus.

A collection of local Liberal Democrats councillors and MPs welcomed the opening of Cambridge South Station and caught the first train of this new era. We are also calling on local authorities and transport bodies to work closely with residents to ensure that its benefits are widely shared while concerns about traffic, parking and neighbourhood impacts are properly addressed.



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