

Open Door, Summer 2022



For the tenants and leaseholders of Cambridge City Council

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Editorial

From David Greening, Head of Housing Services



Welcome to this summer edition of Open Door.

With the cost of living rising and further increases on energy prices ahead, this issue explains the [‘cost of living’ payments](#) that the government will soon be making to millions of households who need them.

This edition also brings you more than twenty other sources of grants and free support that can help you manage bills, debts and rising costs. They range from taxi journeys for people with disabilities, to free children’s meals and holiday activities, to free data for accessing the internet for those on benefits.

To accompany you throughout the year ahead, future editions of Open Door will expand further on this sort of help with the cost of living.

On a brighter note, we bring you a wide range of [free holiday activities](#) across the city this summer, from concerts in the parks to organised play activities for kids, to days out picnicking at the city's free pools and water play areas.

Based on your feedback in our last customer satisfaction survey, we committed to making it clearer what each of our housing services do, and how you can get the most from using them. Our feature this time is on [tenancy management](#). It shows you a typical day in the life of a housing officer. It explains the new 'Tenancy Audit' visits that we are making to all our tenants' homes, and it shows improvements made in the service based on your feedback in our last survey. You can also hear about the work of an officer implementing our ['zero tolerance' policy](#) on items left in communal areas.

This issue also brings you practical guidance on things like requesting a repair, the new contractors who are cleaning estates' communal areas, letting our safety inspectors into your home, buildings insurance for leaseholders, and the law on image-capturing doorbells.

We show you some of the [beautiful new council housing](#) that we are building around the city. And you can hear about the amazing work done by residents in their [community gardens](#), as well as the Council's progress towards maintaining [green spaces](#) without using harmful chemicals.

Wishing you a lovely summer in our beautiful city,

David Greening

Receive Open Door electronically



Why not receive Open Door by email instead of on paper? It's easy to read on any device with wifi, at the same time saving on paper and carbon footprint. To receive it by email instead of post, visit <https://camcit.co/opendooremail>

One copy of Open Door is sent to each council home. If you'd like to request another copy for a joint tenant, please email opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk

An editorial panel of council tenants and leaseholders help to select and edit the content of every edition of Open Door, to ensure it continues to reflect residents' needs and interests. To get involved, email opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk

Get online for easiest access to the Council

City Council services are increasingly available in one place, through the My Cambridge portal on the Council's website. It's easy to register, in the top right-hand corner of the Council's homepage at www.cambridge.gov.uk Or just type my.cambridge.gov.uk into your search engine's address box.

The portal lets you request services and see the progress of your requests. On there, you can also:

- manage your Council Tax account

- claim benefits
- notify about a change of circumstances
- report a missed bin collection
- report issues in streets or parks

The portal also lets you access your own personal housing account, to:

- check your account balance and print statements
- make payments
- communicate with council staff
- request a repair, booking your appointment slot
- follow the progress of your repair

The Council's Customer Service Centre at Mandela House in St Andrew's Street is now for pre-booked appointments only. But if you need extra support or don't yet have access to the internet, you can still phone the Council at 01223-457000.

Tablet Loan Scheme

The City Council is enabling free digital access for eligible tenants and leaseholders, through a free tablet loan scheme. These wifi-enabled tablets are pre-loaded with 20GB of data and are loaned for 3 months initially.

The scheme is for residents who are at risk of social exclusion, to help improve their economic situation. Using the internet can help them to access employment or benefits, for instance, or to swap utility providers.

The loan period can be extended for an additional 3 months if the resident still needs the laptop for internet access.

To be eligible, the resident must be a council tenant or leaseholder who has no access to digital equipment or wifi at home (other than smart phones), and they must be receiving Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. To apply, email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-458323.

Free data if on benefits



As well as the tablet loan scheme already described, the Council is also offering tenants and leaseholders on benefits 6 months of free data for their own internet or mobile device, even if they're not borrowing a council tablet.

To receive free data from this scheme, you must currently have an O2 pay-as-you-go SIM card. (The offer will hopefully be available to users of other networks in the near future.)

Many vital services such as benefits, health care and training require you to be online. Both schools and employers also expect you to use the internet. But with increasing pressure on the cost of living, many struggle to afford all the data they need on their internet devices. For more information on this offer, email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-458323.

If you don't have access to a computer, tablet or smart phone or are unsure how to use them, the charity Cambridge Online can help at little or no cost to you. You can phone them at 01223-300407.

Covid vaccines and help for 'Long Covid'

There are still many easy actions that we can all take to help avoid Covid-19. They include:

- getting vaccinated, to protect oneself and others
- keeping up our social distancing
- washing our hands frequently
- keeping buildings well ventilated with fresh air
- wearing masks when appropriate

Sometimes it can be hard to distinguish between facts and fake news around Covid, making us feel confused and nervous about what to do next.

But science shows that vaccines do protect against the most serious effects of Covid-19, and help to reduce the transmission of it. The best thing you can do to protect yourself, your friends and your family is to get vaccinated.

The most recent, accurate NHS advice on Covid-19, the vaccines, who is eligible, and vaccine safety is available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

Vaccination without appointment

Vaccinations are available without an appointment seven days a week at the Grafton Centre, Cambridge CB1 1PS.

And look out for the Vaccine Bus that will be on tour across festivals, events and in community centres throughout the summer.

To find a vaccine event near you, visit www.thevaccinators.co.uk

Or if you don't use the internet, you can phone 119 free from a mobile or landline phone. They will support you to choose a booked appointment.

119 provides support in up to 200 languages, so you can speak to a translator if you need one.

Those using British Sign Language (BSL) can use textphone 18001 119, or the NHS 119 BSL interpreter service.

Help for 'Long Covid'

Did you have Covid-19 more than three months ago? Are you still experiencing fatigue, breathlessness, brain fog, pain, anxiety, low mood or other symptoms?

If so, see your GP, and they may refer you on to the Long Covid Service, if your symptoms are having a big impact on your life.



Long Covid specialists can support your recovery over time, and help you manage your symptoms in the meantime.

So don't suffer in silence. You could get started by visiting the Long Covid support website at www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk

It has a huge roadmap of resources to support you, your recovery and those who are helping to care for you.

Your Tenancy Management service

Acting on your feedback

In the last Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey in 2020, your feedback about your housing service was mostly positive. However, the service has in the meantime taken specific actions to improve on any areas where you expressed lower satisfaction.

Here is some of your feedback from the 2020 satisfaction survey, along with some of the specific actions the service has now taken to improve your rates of customer satisfaction in these areas.

Are you satisfied that City Homes is easy to deal with?

Satisfied: 73%

Neutral: 15%

Dissatisfied: 12%

How is the Council improving this?

- All our internal housing procedures were reviewed. Our letters to you have been made clearer, and better tailored to your individual circumstances.

- Our Complaints Policy and process are now easier to understand, highlighting your rights more clearly and removing jargon.
- We are focusing now on improving our learning from complaints, so as to resolve issues before they get to the complaint stage.
- We have improved our advice for signposting residents to the services they need. (Residents were sometimes making a formal complaint simply because they didn't know where to ask for the exact service they needed.)

Are you satisfied with your neighbourhood as a place to live?

Satisfied: 72%

Neutral: 16%

Dissatisfied: 12%

How is the Council improving this?

- Our Estate Improvement Scheme is funding improvements on council estates citywide. It has acted on the priorities named in your satisfaction survey, doing estate improvements that have included:
 - security measures, e.g. locked bin doors at Bermuda Road
 - sheds and storage, e.g. for bikes and mobility scooters at Lichfield Road
 - improvements to estate fencing, e.g. at Greystoke Road
 - major upgrading of street lights on your estates (details further on in this edition)

The next edition of Open Door will bring you a full feature on these Estate Improvement Scheme works citywide.

Fire safety with Jamie

As a landlord, the City Council has a legal duty to have Fire Risk Assessments done on the communal areas of flat-blocks. With help from independent contractors, over 300 inspections are to be done by September, including around the entry doors of tenants' flats.

Council officer Jamie Lambert has inspected over 80% of communal areas. Here he explains how he works with residents to remove items, charge offenders for costs, and get fines imposed.



“Jamie, what effect does the Council's 'Zero Tolerance Policy' have?”

It fines residents who leave personal or dumped items in communal areas, where they are a fire hazard.

What did your inspections reveal?

We found blocked entrances, fire doors wedged open, vehicles in communal areas! Bikes, pushchairs, prams, buggies, shopping trolleys, wheeled bins...

So which areas must be kept clear?

All communal gardens, drying areas, paths, walkways, stairs, balconies, storage areas and doorways. In flat blocks, even residents' doorways must be free of toys,

carpets, plants, rubbish-bags, etc. They are fire hazards that can obstruct emergency services.

How are the Council tackling this?

Any item left in a communal area is now tagged with a deadline for the resident to remove it. Otherwise, we remove it, charging the resident (or all the block's residents) for the cost. By investigating, we identify those littering or fly-tipping and fine them up to £400.

What should residents do with bikes?

Bikes, mopeds or motorbikes must not be serviced or stored in communal areas, unless in stores provided by the Council. Mobility scooters must be stored inside the home or away from communal areas.

How to dump waste items legally?

Just place them in your estate's waste or recycling bins, or take them to Milton Recycling Centre for free. For items you can't transport, the Council will remove them for £30, plus £5 per additional item. Request it at www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulkywaste-collection or phone 01223-457000. And see our free local Community Clean-Up Days (further on in this edition), where we remove residents' unwanted items for free.

How to report left items?

For items in indoor communal areas, email me at Jamie.Lambert@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457000. Report outdoor flytipping in estates' communal areas at www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-flytipping, or by phoning 01223-457000. Or why not volunteer as a Resident Inspector, reporting your estate's problems to the Council? See further inside this edition for a resident's description of the role..."

An Audit Visit to your home

The Council is now making Tenancy Audit Visits to all its tenanted homes. We aim to visit at least 15% by April 2023, and to continue until we have visited all our properties.

A Tenancy Audit means council officers visit your home to check on the condition of the home, any needs the household has, and to ensure tenancy rules are being respected.

We would like to thank all those tenants who have already had their Tenancy Audit Visit completed. We hope you found it supportive and beneficial. These Tenancy Audit Visits enable us to:

- check the condition of properties, for any repairs needed
- update our information on your household
- deliver quality, timely services tailored to your individual needs
- identify any housing needs you have, and signpost them to relevant staff
- identify households whose homes are too large, providing support if they wish to move to a smaller home
- identify any other support needs you may have, referring them to specialist agencies
- spot any tenancy fraud or breaches of the Tenancy Agreement

Due to the number of properties we need to visit, we will be conducting most of these visits without sending you an appointment first. This also helps to ensure that properties are being used correctly, and are occupied by the people who should be in them.

We appreciate that under your Tenancy Agreement, we are normally required to give you 24 hours' notice before we visit you. But if you are able to allow your housing officer to complete this Tenancy Audit Visit the first time that they come to see your property, it would be really helpful for carrying out this task as efficiently as possible.

If you are not able to let us in on the first visit, we understand and we will return the following day or as soon as possible afterwards.

Your Housing Officer's day...

"Hi, I'm Housing Officer Nathan Chapman. I start my day responding to requests to phone tenants back. These are enquiries that Customer Services weren't able to answer. I'm responsible for 1,500 tenancies, so calls range from neighbour disputes to re-housing requests.

Next, I have a Child Protection Conference. Local authorities have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This meeting includes the child's school and GP. The social worker is concerned about aspects of the child's housing.

Then I make a home visit with an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate. We often receive reports of tenants experiencing domestic abuse from a partner or family member. We discuss with the tenant what their wishes are, and how we can help them feel safe. We look at options to improve security, and the legal options available.

I then visit a tenant who is 'hoarding'. The Ambulance Service are concerned since the tenant fell in their home. We try to understand what is making this tenant 'hoard', and how we can work together to make their home safe. But if

tenants who hoard won't engage with us, we seek legal action. I then prepare a witness statement and attend court, where evidence is presented to a judge.

Next, the police phone me. They have uncovered a cannabis farm at a council home. They need council staff there immediately to ensure it is safe and to secure the front door.

The day has flown by, but I still have customer enquiries to respond to. I must prioritise the most urgent of these now, and respond to the others tomorrow. But tomorrow I also have a meeting with our Housing Development Agency to receive handover of 15 new-built council homes.

And I'll have Tenancy Audit visits to do (see the article above). One thing is for sure, no two days are the same for a Housing Officer!"

To contact the Council about any aspect of your tenancy, log in to your personal Housing Account on the Council's website at <https://my.cambridge.gov.uk> or phone 01223-457000.

Summer fun and activities for free



On Sunday afternoons, 3-5pm in August and September, the Council will provide free live concerts in the city's parks. In parks like Cherry Hinton Hall and Jesus Green, there will be local jazz and folk, and summery brass bands. Why not take a picnic for a relaxing, music-filled outing in the sun?

Music in the Parks is a long established tradition in the city's summer calendar, with people enjoying the greens in a different way to usual. Live afternoon music provides a good reason to stop and stay for a while, enjoying the company of friends and family.

The final concert, on Sunday 25th September and also free to attend, will be in the beautiful riverside setting of the grounds of the Graduate Cambridge Hotel.

- Sun 17th July, Dudley Road Recreation Ground
- Sun 7th August, Chesterton Recreation Ground
- Sun 21st August, King's Hedges Recreation Ground
- Sun 18th September, Jesus Green
- Sun 25th September, grounds of the Graduate Cambridge Hotel, Granta Place, Mill Lane

These free events are the perfect way to end your weekend on a high. So while away a couple of hours on a Sunday afternoon by packing up a picnic, grabbing a blanket and heading out to the music. Why not jot all the dates into your household calendar now, for a summer of free weekend entertainment?

For more information visit www.cambridgelive.org.uk/city-events/Music-in-the-Parks

Days out in nature reserves

With about 100 free play areas and nature reserves around the city, there's always one near you. These reserves protect habitats for wildlife and biodiversity, but they are for the benefit of people too. Why not spend a few days this summer exploring them?

You can browse a map of the city's parks, nature reserves and playgrounds at www.cambridge.gov.uk/parks-and-playgrounds

To locate the city's nature reserves, visit <http://lnr.cambridge.gov.uk/visit-the-cambridge-nature-reserves>

These reserves provide an amazing diversity of different landscapes to explore around the city. They include local nature reserves at Barnwell, Bramblefields,

Byron's Pool in Trumpington, Coldham's Common, East and West Pits, Limekiln Close, Logan's Meadow, Nine Wells, Paradise, Sheep's Green, Coe Fen and Stourbridge Common. For more information, email parks@cambridge.gov.uk

Mayor's Day Out

The annual Mayor's Day Out for over 60's and senior citizens is on Tuesday 16th August this year. It's a specially organised day out by the sea at Great Yarmouth, which is famed for its Golden Mile beachside promenade. Tickets are just £9!

Mayor of Cambridge, Cllr. Mark Ashton, says: "It's a wonderful and unique tradition of the city, now in its 37th year, to take so many of Cambridge's older citizens on this much-loved and uplifting day trip. I look forward to relaxing along Great Yarmouth's historic seafront with its traditional seaside attractions."

To book your £9 tickets:

- visit online at www.cambridgelivetrust.co.uk/city-events
- or phone 07415-327876 at the times below
- or go in person to Corn Exchange Box Office, Wheeler Street, Mon–Fri, 12–5pm or Sat 12-3pm in June; or Mon–Fri, 12–3pm in July

Free activities for kids and families

Make the most of the holidays with ChYpPS, the City Council service that provides play and leisure activities for children and young people in Cambridge. ChYpPS (the Children and Young People's Participation Service) work all over the city, providing a welcoming, safe and exciting programme of activities and events for young people of all ages.

The school summer holidays start for most Cambridge children towards the end of July. One great way to stave off any summer boredom during July and August is by bringing school-aged children along to the free programme of outdoor activities in the city's parks and open spaces. Once again this summer, it's being organised by ChYpPS, who will be out and about across the city on weekdays from Monday 25th July to Friday 26th August.

It's a fun-packed programme of free play sessions for children and families involving a whole range of arts and crafts, games and sports, and a whole load of fun. This summer the programme will also include activities contributed by a number of other local organisations, bringing some exciting themed sessions.

These will include activities led by the University of Cambridge Museums, by Cambridgeshire Child and Family Centres, and by the City Council's Active Lifestyle Team.

Why not follow the ChYpPS team's regular updates on Facebook at www.facebook.com/chypps, showing all the innovative fun that children and families are having with them?

For more information or to see the full programme of Chypps' summer activities for kids:

- visit online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/chypps
- follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/chypps
- email chypps@cambridge.gov.uk
- or phone 01223-457873

Community Clear Up Days!

Running from 9am-1pm, these are fun local mornings where the Council brings free skips to your locality for a clear-out of communal areas, your own unwanted items and garden waste.

They'll also take bulky items like sofas and washing machines. And there's usually a 'Take it or Leave it' stall where you can exchange unwanted items with neighbours.

22 June: Ekin Road

2 July: Whitehill estate

9 July: Brackley Close

16 July: Tenby Close estate

20 July: Hanover, Princess & Russell Courts and Coronation Street

23 July: Ashfield Road

9 August: Davy Road

10 September: Wulfstan Way

15 October: Ancaster Way

For information, email housing.officer@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457000.

Lounging by the water



Open since 1923, Jesus Green Lido is one of the few remaining examples of the swimming lidos that were built around the country in the 1920s and '30s. It's the biggest swimming pool in Cambridge, and one of the country's longest outdoor pools. Across the summer, it's open daily, 7am to 7pm.

It's in a beautiful setting, with lawn and paved areas for sunbathing, surrounded by mature trees. There are male and female facilities for changing and showering, and a basket room for clothes.

You must book your swim in advance online, and you can swim for up to an hour. Just choose your time-slot and book it at www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/cambridge/jesusgreenlido

Sessions cost £5 for adults, but £3 for children and seniors, or less if you become a member. There is full disabled access, with disabled toilet facilities and a hoist to help disabled residents to enter the pool.

Social distancing applies, and you must arrive wearing your swimsuit under your clothes. You only access the changing rooms after your swim. There are bike racks outside the pool, and buses stop nearby on Chesterton Road and on Bridge Street.

Meanwhile, the Council's Abbey and Parkside Pools are also open. And the Council provides free paddling pools and water play areas for children at several locations around the city.

There is free water play available at Cherry Hinton water play area, Coleridge paddling pool, Lammas Land paddling pool and Sheep's Green learner pool.

Below are details of the more specialised, free Splashpad water play at Abbey Pool, Coleridge and King's Hedges Recreation Grounds.

For more information on all the above, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/swimming

Or follow Get Moving Cambridge on Facebook or Instagram.

Free *Splashpads* for kids

Abbey *Splashpad* is behind Abbey pool. It has 11 water-play features with tipping buckets, water cannons and spray jets. Coleridge Recreation Ground has a *Splashpad* near the play area. It has 14 water-play features. They include a tractor-themed play piece with interactive panels, a crawling tube and numerous water features. There is also a two-foot-deep paddling pool. The King's Hedges *Splashpad* is on the 'Pulley' play area at King's Hedges Recreation Ground, in front of the learner pool. It has 14 water-play features that have an 'outer space' theme.

For more information about the city's free *Splashpads* and water-play equipment, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/splashpads

For information, email sport@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457532.

Looking after your home

New council eco-homes built

The City Council is a year ahead on its target to start building at least 500 new council homes by March 2022, like those at Ironworks, Mill Road. The Ironworks development is providing 118 council rented homes. It also includes a new, highly sustainable community centre, a new neighbourhood park with a large play area and rainwater gardens, and a major programme of public art.

Another development is at Colville Road. There, two old council housing blocks of 24 ageing, post-war homes are making way for 67 brand new sustainable council homes. They are gas-free, with heating and hot water from an air-source heat pump,

and photovoltaic and solar thermal panels on the roof. Heat-recovery systems further reduce their energy needs. They will be triple-glazed, with enhanced insulation in walls, floors and roofs.

They will also have sedum green roofs and soft landscaping that absorbs surface water, helping to avoid flooding. Biodiversity is enhanced with bird and bat boxes, and a focus on trees to encourage insects and other wildlife. The new homes will have 10 charge points for electric vehicles, and ample bike storage.

The Council's aim now is to deliver 1,000 council homes in all within 10 years, including piloting the first Passivhaus council home in Cambridge. Literally meaning 'passive house', these are ecologically designed homes that require very little energy to maintain an almost constant temperature.

See the next edition of Open Door for a tenant's description of life in one of our new council homes.

Estates' street lighting upgraded

Most street lights along Cambridge city roads are the responsibility of the County Council. They are labelled, and are mapped online at <https://maps.cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

But there are street lights on council estates that are the responsibility of the City Council. Since 2020, the City Council has been upgrading its older street lights.

Over 100 have received new poles and LED lanterns, and 50 received new LED lights on existing poles. The Council has employed Bouygues E&S Solutions Ltd to:

- survey the remaining older street lights
- upgrade all lanterns to LED
- replace poles where required

- label all upgraded street lights

This replacement of 300 lanterns and 200 poles will be completed by September 2022.

Requesting a repair

The Council categorises most requests for repairs as either routine, urgent or emergency. Below are some details about each type. We aim to respond within these timescales:

- emergency repairs: 24 hours
- urgent repairs: 3 working days
- routine repairs: 20 working days

We might only be able to make your home safe at first, with a further visit needed to finish the work. Extra work can take 6-8 weeks if we need to order materials.



For routine repairs we will offer you a weekday appointment. It will be either between 8am and midday, or between midday and 4pm. If you tell us your mobile telephone number, we will send you a text reminder on the day before your appointment.

If your home was built recently and is still within its warranty period, check your property welcome pack for information about how to report a problem or request a repair.

The Council maintains the structure of your home and many of the fixtures and fittings. But some things are your responsibility to fix. For instance, the Council will not repair any alterations or items fitted by you or previous tenants. To see the list of things you are responsible for repairing, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/request-a-repair-for-your-council-home

We receive a high number of 'disrepair claim' lawsuits raised by legal firms on a 'no win, no fee' basis. But we encourage you to contact us rather than starting a lawsuit. Note that none of the claims brought against us in the last two years have been successful.

Who to contact

- To request a repair online on the Council's housing portal,

visit [https:// housing.cambridge.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard](https://housing.cambridge.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard)

- Or email housing.repairs@cambridge.gov.uk, or phone 01223-457000
- In an emergency, it's best to phone 01223-457000
- For emergencies outside office hours, phone 0300-303-8389

Emergency repairs - within 24 hours

- From 31 Oct-1 May, no central heating; or no hot water for bathing
- Uncontrollable leaks in pipes, tank or cistern
- Broken windows; or insecure external doors or windows
- Loss of electrical power; or smoke alarms sounding

- Toilet not flushing, if it's the only toilet in the home

Urgent repairs - within 3 days

- From 1 May-31 Oct, no central heating (temporary heaters will be delivered);
or no hot water for bathing
- Repairs to lighting, switches and electrical sockets
- Sink and bath waste blockages
- Leaking pipework (but if in heating pipes, phone Mears at 03332-070-766)
- Temporary roofing repairs
- Repairs to toilet pan or cistern

Routine repairs - within 28 days

- Kitchen units and extractor fans
- External doors and windows, and internal joinery
- Roofs and guttering
- Plastering and wall tiling
- Fencing and external paving
- Communal gates and fencing

Let safety inspectors in

Fines for not keeping your gas check appointment

Your Tenancy Agreement states that you must allow access to your home so that council gas appliances or central heating can receive an annual service and safety inspection. This is for the safety of your own household and that of your neighbours.

Even if you don't have gas appliances or mains, you must still allow the Council's contractor, Mears, access to your home in order to verify that it is safe.

They do not service gas appliances in your home that are not owned by the Council. So the Council strongly advises that you get those serviced annually yourself, to ensure their safety.

Win £100

Keeping your first gas service appointment enters you into a monthly draw to win £100. If the appointment isn't suitable, please phone Freephone 0333-207-0766 to rearrange.

Or pay £100 penalty...

Having to return repeatedly to addresses that fail to open up is a serious waste of staff time and resources that are needed by other tenants. So if you fail to be at home and allow entry for a third inspection appointment that has been booked with you, the Council has legal powers to gain entry to your home to carry out these safety checks that are required by law.

You will be charged for this. Costs are currently £50 if we arrive on the day of the service and you are at home to let us in. (The Council will have already incurred this cost by bringing a locksmith to the appointment.) But if you are not at home and the locksmith has to intervene to gain entry to the property, you will then be charged £100.

For more information, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants or phone 01223-457000.

New communal cleaners



A new contractor is now responsible for cleaning communal areas on the city's council estates. The company is called Goshen. Your elected tenant and leaseholder representatives helped to oversee the competitive process that awarded the contract to Goshen.

Your resident representatives also helped to review the details of the cleaning contract before it was awarded, as well as evaluating the various bids that were submitted for it.

Goshen bring with them two significant improvements to the service on your estates. Firstly, their cleaning process is mechanised, so you will now see the cleaners on your estate using electric scrubbers and sweepers, rather than scrubbing by hand as they used to do.

Secondly, Goshen use a fleet of entirely electric vehicles. As the City Council is aiming to achieve 'net zero carbon' output by 2030, these new electric cleaning vans on estates will assist towards that goal.

If it's relevant to you, please note too another change in the contract, namely that Category 2 Sheltered Schemes such as Talbot House and Stanton House will from now on be cleaned by the City Council's own cleaners, rather than by those of the external contractor.

You can contact Goshen by emailing cs@goshenmultiservices.com or phoning 0754-2826553.

And why not spend an hour now and then as a Resident Inspector, inspecting the quality of cleaning work done on your own estate? You'll be given all the training and support you need. It's a good way to get things done when only a resident may notice that they need doing. See further on in this edition for an interview with local resident Joy, who is already enjoying this role.

Help with the cost of living and energy

Free food and sports

Fun activities and nourishing lunches are available free in the summer holidays for children of families receiving certain benefits. The Holiday Activities and Food scheme (HAF) offers up to 64 hours of free activities per child. Eligible families can also receive:

- Supermarket Food Vouchers during all school holidays
- the Household Support Fund to help pay for food and bills, in case of hardship

Your child is eligible for income-related Free School Meals and this Holiday Activities and Food scheme if you receive any of the following:

- Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, with an annual income of £16,190 or less
- Universal Credit, with annual net earned income of £7,400 or less

For more information, visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/holiday-activities-and-food-programme or email HAF@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Fitness for mental health

Free fitness activities to help with mental health

The City Council's sports team provide free or low-cost activities to help anyone with anxiety, depression or other mental health problems.

Activities include badminton, bowls, football, basketball, table tennis, volleyball, swimming, tai chi, tennis, running and walking. A trainer helps you to have a go, so there really is something for everyone.

They also offer wellbeing walks, and walks at the Botanic Gardens to see the gardens change with the seasons. Or why not follow their exercise sessions online? They offer a 6-week self-care programme and 6-week beginners' courses in pilates and yoga.

For information, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/fitness-activities-to-help-improve-your-wellbeing, email sport@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457532. Or follow them at www.facebook.com/getmovingcam

Free grass-cut if needed

As part of your Tenancy Agreement, it is your responsibility to maintain your garden. This means keeping it tidy and free of rubbish, pruning trees and bushes as needed before they get out of control, and keeping your grass cut reasonably often. Failure to look after your garden can negatively affect your property, as well as affecting your neighbours and the local area.



If you find you are not able to maintain your garden, you could consider requesting a move to a suitable council property without a garden. But in the meantime, Cambridge City Council's housing service is currently able to provide a free grass-cutting service for eligible council tenants who are unable to cut their own grass.

The service includes one free grass-cut per month from April to October. (This free offer only covers grass-cutting, not any other kind of garden maintenance or garden clearance.)

Naturally, there is limited availability on this free service. So in order to ensure that the offer benefits those who need it most, to qualify as eligible you must:

- have a disability
- provide proof that you receive benefit in relation to your disability
- live alone, or with other people who are also eligible
- have no family living within a 10-mile radius who could do your grass-cutting, and are willing to do it
- be a Cambridge City Council tenant aged 18 or over

To apply for this free grass-cutting service if you think you or someone you know may be eligible, please contact your Resident Involvement service by phoning 01223-458323 or emailing resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk

You will receive a simple application form that will enable you to apply for this helpful free service.

Cost of living payments for you

Unfortunately, household energy bills are expected to rise by an average of £1,500 this year. There is likely to be a rise of £800 in the national 'price cap' on energy bills in October, adding to the £700 increase that occurred last April. There are many forms of help available across this edition of Open Door.

Most households received a £150 reduction in council tax bills last April. The government will also make the following payments to households, to help them manage rising prices:

- £650 paid directly into the bank account of those on benefits, paid partly in July, partly in the autumn
- a £400 grant towards energy bills for all households, paid in full by the autumn
- £300 for pensioner households
- £150 for disabled individuals

The government says: "This payment will be tax-free, will not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards." For simplicity, all the government payments will be made directly to the bank accounts of those receiving benefits and pensions. (This will replace the former 'Warm Homes' discount payments that claimants used to have to apply for.)

The payments mean that most of the 8 million most vulnerable households will receive at least £1,200 of extra support this year (including the £150 council tax rebate that many received in the spring).

The government has also pledged to increase benefit and pension payments in April 2023 by the rate of inflation. With inflation potentially reaching 10%, this could mean a 10% increase in benefits and pension payments from April 2023.

Note too that Winter Fuel Payments provide £200 for households with someone of state pension age, or £300 for someone aged 80 or older. And Cold Weather Payments give £25 extra per week for eligible poorer households while it's zero or below. For details see www.which.co.uk/reviews/home-grants/article/home-grants/cold-weather-payment-winter-fuel-payment-and-fuel-direct-ajAb61U0gPCl

Other help with the cost of living



The Household Support Fund helps those experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food and household energy bills. Support is offered in two ways: support with food and household energy, and via a food voucher scheme.

You are eligible to access this support through the Household Support Fund if you earn less than £17,940 per year or are in receipt of one of the following:

- Income Support

- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Working Tax Credit

You can apply directly to the fund by completing the online application form. This is the quickest and most direct route for accessing support through the Household Support Fund. They aim to process applications in 5 working days.

Visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund or phone 0345-045-5219.

But you can also access the fund through the City Council. To do this, fill in the General Enquiries form on the Council's website at www.cambridge.gov.uk/contact-us or phone the Council at 01223-457000.

Financial advice from the Council

As a council tenant, you can also receive free, one to one financial support and advice from the Council's Financial Inclusion Officers. They help struggling tenants to claim the benefits they need, manage their finances and arrange payment plans for bills. You can contact them by phoning 01223-457000.

Try the City Council's free, confidential online budget planner. It helps you to better organise the money you have coming in, and where it's going out to. You can save and finish later if you do not have all the information ready at first. Visit <https://budget.entitledto.co.uk/cambridge>

Also see the City Council's bill-reducing tips at www.cambridge.gov.uk/home-energy-and-water-use-advice Warm Homes

For the autumn and winter ahead, Warm Homes is a free service with information and resources that help you stay warm at home, while cutting your costs and carbon output too. They can help you find the best energy price and supplier, manage your water bills and, where eligible, help you to access grants and financial support.

To see if you're eligible for one to one help from them, visit www.pect.org.uk/WarmHomes, phone 0800-8021773 or email warmhomes@pect.org.uk

Mental health and money

The charity MIND provide very helpful information about the links between money and mental health, and how to manage both together. Visit www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/money-and-mental-health

Other help and support

Help with paying for taxis

The City Council's Taxicard scheme gives vouchers to disabled people on low incomes in Cambridge, to help towards the cost of taxis. Travelling companions can accompany the person for free.

The scheme runs from 1 April to 31 March each year. You receive vouchers worth £5 and £1, totalling £150, towards taxis in Cambridge. (Vouchers reduce proportionally if you join part-way through the year.) You must pay at least £1 towards each journey, then you use as many vouchers as you wish to pay for the rest of your trip.

Taxicard vouchers can also be used on the community transport bus, Cambridge Dial-a-Ride, once you are a Dial-a-Ride member. Phone Cambridge Dial-a-Ride at 01223-506335 or email memberssupport@cambridgedialaride.org.uk for information on becoming a Dial-a-Ride member. To be eligible for a Taxicard, you must receive at least one of these benefits:

- Income Support, Pension Credit or Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Housing Benefit, Universal Credit or Council Tax Reduction (including disability reductions, but not single- occupancy reduction)
- Employment & Support Allowance (income-related, not contribution-based)

You should also be either registered blind or partially sighted, or else receive at least one of the following:

- higher mobility or higher care component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Mobility or Daily Living Enhanced Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement

But even if you meet none of the criteria just listed above, you're still eligible if unable to use public transport because you:

- are a permanent wheelchair user
- cannot walk more than 100 metres
- cannot walk without a walking aid, e.g. a frame or crutches, or cannot stand unsupported for more than 5 minutes

You can apply for a Taxicard online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/taxicard

Or print an application form and post it to Taxicard Administrator, PO Box 700, Cambridge CB1 0JH. For information visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/taxicard or phone 01223-457000.

Help with paying for groceries



Fairbite is a charity supermarket in Arbury Court for those struggling to pay for food. For just £2 at each visit, you can have 12 items - fruit, vegetables, tinned foods, baby formula, even hygiene products...

You must be referred by an agency like the City Council, a children's centre, or any of the agencies that issue foodbank vouchers. The Fairbite shop is at 41 Arbury Court, CB4 2JQ. For more information, visit their website at www.fairbite.org.uk or follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Fairbite

Free trainings to help get a job

Cambridgeshire Skills is an adult learning service. Their tutors deliver accredited and non-accredited courses covering a wide variety of subjects and skills. As they put it...

"Learning with us is rewarding and enjoyable. We celebrate and encourage the learner experience of everyone! Together we form a mix of different ages, backgrounds and experiences and we recognise that learning isn't about just one approach.

When you come to study with us, you will have great opportunities to develop your confidence and your skills, with excellent support from our qualified and committed team of teachers and teaching assistants. We have a variety of different courses to suit all learning needs.

Fancy just a nibble to start? If you like to learn quickly and are short of time, why not try our range of Byte Size Courses? All the knowledge and learning is packed into sessions of 1, 2 or 3 hours, streamed live online for your convenience!

Or do you work unsocial hours? Our Online Flexible Courses could enable you to train and study at your own speed. With our online learning portal, you can complete your course on the go anywhere, at any time. If you are looking for a more structured learning experience, our Online Livestreamed Courses have set times and dates, full tutor support and are delivered live-streamed.

Or would you prefer a more traditional classroom learning experience? We also deliver Face to Face courses in Cambridge..."

Most Cambridgeshire Skills courses are free if you have lived in the European Economic Area for at least 3 years, are over 19 years of age and have a Cambridgeshire postcode.

For information phone 01353-613013 Monday to Friday, 8.45-5pm, or email cambsals@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or visit online at www.cambsals.co.uk

Work experience with the Council

The City Council can now offer work experience in partnership with West Suffolk College and Cambridge Futures. School leavers gain experience alongside council teams, preparing vacated homes for re-letting. For instance, young workers Jeremiah Crowl and Leon Galler have learned tiling, decorating, door-fitting and plastering under the care of council officer Bruce Carter. It's a great way to gain skills that stand out when applying for a job. For information on future opportunities, email Alan.Small@cambridge.gov.uk

Resident Involvement

Greetings from Joy Cavanagh, a leaseholder who volunteers as a Resident Inspector, checking the quality of work done on her local council estates...



"Being a Resident Inspector is an interesting role because it gives me the chance to make small, beneficial changes to some of the council estates near me. It involves wearing a 'hi-viz' jacket and an ID badge, taking a tick sheet, clipboard, pen and my two dogs once a week or so to four different estates for an hour or two.

I get to meet lots of people while I am doing this. I listen to what they say and if needed, note it down for action. This can be anything from providing more recycling bins to the removal of fly tipping, or giving residents phone numbers to call if they are worried about anything.

Mainly though, I use the Estate Services Inspection Form to assess and rate the standard of service. An A means all clear, B satisfactory, C poor, or D, failure to provide the service required. I have a list of contact numbers just in case I need to get some work done quickly. To be able to do all this, I enjoyed several interesting sessions of training with the Estates Manager.

When I have completed my visits and my tick sheet, I go home and enter the grades into the online reporting system that Cambridge City Council provides. In return I get a reference number so I know that everything has been logged and will be dealt with.

Sometimes, I go back to the estate at a later date and have a look to check that any problems I picked up on have been sorted out. I often talk to the residents then too, and they are helpful to me if I have missed anything.

Interested in joining us by inspecting your own estate now and then? Email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-458323..."

Have your say

The City Council is proud of its track record in involving tenants and leaseholders in the housing services they receive. Tenants and leaseholders are active as Resident Inspectors (like Joy in the article above), on editorial panels, and on the Housing Scrutiny Committee affecting high-level decisions.

Communities on the estates participate via surveys, resident newsletters, social media and their own local residents' groups. To increase opportunities to get

involved and have your say, we also provide funding for residents' associations and community groups, to help buy equipment and run projects.

Why not join in? You could do any of the following, and more...

- Join the Residents' Panel
- Be a Resident Inspector
- Become a Digital Champion, showing residents how to get online
- Join the Sheltered Housing Scheme Residents' Group
- Join the Open Door Editorial Panel

Volunteering can help improve your IT, office and literacy skills, and we could give you a reference for your CV or for a job application if you ever need one. It can take as much or as little time as you want. We provide full training and resources, and cover any travel or childcare costs.

And for every hour you spend volunteering, you can earn Time Credits - vouchers for venues around the city, from exercise classes to cinema or theatre.

A good first step is to start following us on Facebook or Twitter at www.facebook.com/CamCitCoRI or www.twitter.com/CamCitCoRI

To find out more about getting involved in improving your housing service, view the many opportunities online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement, or email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-458323.

Leaseholders

Buildings insurance

The Council is responsible for organising your flat block's buildings insurance. As a result of an insured peril, this covers the cost of rebuilding your home if it is damaged or destroyed. You pay a premium for this via your service charges, as listed on your service charge schedule.

The current Buildings Insurance Cover with Protector Insurance can be downloaded at www.cambridge.gov.uk/building-insurance-at-your-leasehold-property It is your responsibility to be familiar with the policy.

The most common claim is for damage by a leak from above, including the roof. If this happens to you, alert your neighbour immediately. If they are a council tenant or if the leak is from the roof, it will be the Council's responsibility to fix. But if the property above you is leasehold, it is likely the leaseholder's responsibility to repair the leak. You must give the Council or leaseholder reasonable time to do so.

We can provide a copy of the Buildings Insurance cover free of charge by email or post. If you or your mortgage provider require additional confirmation on the insurance, there is a £30 administration fee. You must make any claim within 30 days of the incident, on the buildings insurance claim form, downloadable at www.cambridge.gov.uk/building-insurance-at-your-leasehold-property There is currently a £75 excess to pay.

On receiving your claim, a council surveyor may inspect to confirm the cause and estimate the cost. You must provide two quotations for the work, and the Council will reimburse you reasonable costs.

If your property is left empty for over 30 days, parts of your buildings insurance are invalidated. "Malicious damage" or damage caused by the "escape of water from any

tank apparatus or pipe” is not covered. The policy does not cover your trees, fences, internal contents, nor most flooring. You should consider additional insurance to cover for every eventuality.

For more information visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/building-insurance-at-your-leasehold-property, email leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457835.

The law on domestic CCTV

If you have CCTV cameras in or around your home, you must know and observe your legal obligations. This applies equally to leaseholders and tenants, and is a particularly difficult issue in flats. Otherwise, you could suffer fines or a civil lawsuit, as recently happened when a man who had installed Ring Doorbell cameras around his home was ordered to pay £100,000 to his neighbour.

Any CCTV or image-capturing technology at your home is subject to data protection laws (specifically, the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018).

What you need to know

The main principle is quite simple: if you set up your system so it captures only images within the boundary of your private domestic property (including your garden), then the data protection laws will not apply to you. But the laws do apply if your system captures any images of people outside the boundary of your private domestic property - for example, people in a neighbour's property or garden, or on a public footpath or street.

Essentially, it would be difficult to use outward-facing CCTV or a digital imaging doorbell in a block of flats without breaking the law. And council residents will soon need council permission before installing them.

The best way to deal with the data protection laws is to set up your system so that it cannot view anything outside the boundaries of your own property. But if that's not possible, then under the law you become a 'Data Controller' and must take a range of serious steps to comply with data protection laws and protect yourself from fines or law suits.

These include putting up signs to let people know what you are doing and why; limiting how many images you capture; holding them securely; not sharing them without permission; deleting them promptly, etc.

For official guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office, visit <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/domestic-cctv-systems-guidance-for-people-using-cctv>

Tackling climate change

Community gardeners

Since 2015, local volunteers at Nightingale Community Garden have worked with the City Council to develop a beautiful community garden in place of the former bowling green on Nightingale Park. The garden remains the property and responsibility of the City Council but the community group members work very closely with council staff.



The Nightingale Gardeners Group have their own constitution, bank account and insurance, to support the community volunteers' work on the garden. Details about community gardening and how to get involved are at www.nightingalegarden.org.uk/communitygardening But you don't need to be a member to enjoy the garden!

They also collaborate with the City Council to invest in the park some of the community funding paid by developers building housing developments nearby. For instance, an almost derelict pavilion will hopefully be replaced by a brand new facility with sports changing rooms, a multi-use community room and a kitchenette.

There is also a City Council project to provide enhancements to the play area. Local residents would like to see the community fully involved in designing these changes.

To contact them if you're interested in what they're doing, visit <https://queen-ediths.info/about-us> or follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NightingaleGardenCambridgeUK

Or check out their community gardening video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=7T-jAoB5zo4

Enjoy a quick local clean up

Following the success of the Great British Spring Clean, the Council is providing equipment and guidance for anyone to clear litter from their own locality. Even an hour spent litter-picking with a few friends, neighbours or kids can make your area beautiful again.

And you can earn Time Credits while you work: each hour you spend volunteering like this earns you a free hour at a range of cinemas, gyms, swimming pools or music venues in town!

For more information on volunteering to help with the city's green environment, or on earning Time Credits by volunteering, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/volunteer-litter-picking, email sosvolunteers@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-458084.

Towards chemical-free green areas



Alternatives to herbicides are being trialled in two parts of Cambridge after the City Council took a major step towards stopping using these chemicals. During March, the Newnham and Arbury areas had trials of alternative methods for controlling weeds in public areas. The areas were chosen for the diversity of their properties and road types. The aim is for the entire city to be free of council-sprayed herbicides by the end of 2022.

Up to 12 'herbicide-free streets' are also being selected elsewhere in the city. There, local residents can volunteer to clear their street's green space themselves, to help avoid herbicide use.

The organisation Pesticide-Free Cambridge, which has been campaigning for this cause, called for the City Council to go further still, "given the growing evidence regarding the harmful impacts of herbicides on human health and the environment", as they put it.

A Council statement said: "When we declared a biodiversity emergency we committed to making our parks and open spaces more hospitable to plants and animals. This restriction of herbicides is a significant first step toward fulfilling this

vision. We are particularly grateful to Pesticide-Free Cambridge for their continuous commitment and support with our work."

In parts of the city where herbicides are still being used, the Council is considering using signs and a website to inform residents when spraying is happening.

Alternatives to herbicides (which can be hazardous for biodiversity) are already in use in some cities. They include brush cleaning, using hot water or manual cleaning. Meanwhile, the Council is also planning rewilding projects, an increase in wildflower meadows and the extension of the city's tree canopy.

There is a volunteer event to help with chemical-free maintenance of the city's public green spaces on the third Tuesday of every month. Why not come along? For information email Will.Beavitt@cambridge.gov.uk

Eco-Volunteering

Why not volunteer with the Council to help improve a local nature reserve, benches or railings, or remove graffiti? It's great work experience, with all training and equipment provided.

You do as many hours as you like, and you can earn Time Credit vouchers for entertainment venues around town. Eco-volunteers are helping to keep the city cleaner, greener and safer. Whether you're a resident or local community group or school, they're keen to work with you too.

For information visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/streets-and-open-spaces-volunteers, email sosvolunteers@cambridge.gov.uk, phone 01223-458084 or follow the city's eco-volunteers on Twitter [@CambStreetScene](https://twitter.com/CambStreetScene)

Where to get financial help

Struggling to afford food?

To see how to get a voucher so you can visit one of Cambridge's Food Banks, visit <https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk> or phone 07772-538628.

Can't pay your rent?

Phone 01223-457000 today to request a payment plan, spreading the cost over months, to avoid losing your home.

If you need to claim Universal Credit...

Apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit

If you can't pay your Council Tax...

See if you are entitled to claim Council Tax Reduction. Apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction

If struggling with mobile phone or internet bills...

See online at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/2020/04

[/keeping-everyone-connected](#) to find companies supporting customers who are having difficulty in paying.

Can't pay your water bills?

Cambridge Water may be able to help at tel. 0800-587-7701 or online at www.cambridge-water.co.uk/household/extra-help/help-with-paying

Cambridge Citizen's Advice can also help with all the issues just listed. Contact them at tel. 0344-848-7979.

And Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme can provide help in the form of supermarket vouchers, energy vouchers, used cookers, white goods, furniture and clothes. Freephone 0808-278-7807, Mon-Friday, 9.30am-3.30pm. To be eligible with them, you must:

- have no savings
- if working, have a total household income of less than about £16,000 per year
- if on benefits, receive Pension Credit, Universal Credit, Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance or Income-related Employment & Support Allowance

To apply, phone Cambridge Citizens' Advice Bureau at 0344-848-7979 or 01223-222660, or email them at caba@cambridgecab.org.uk

If you don't have access to the internet...

If you want to learn to use the internet, Cambridge Online may be able to help you for free, if you phone them at 01223-300407.

£500 for local groups

The Cambridge Good Life Fund is giving grants of up to £500 to local residents who create or run a group encouraging people to connect up and learn new skills. Examples might be a book club, walking group, craft class, gardening group or any other activity that reduces isolation and supports wellbeing. They hope to approve as many applications for small grants as possible. So do apply if:

- your activity promotes wellbeing
- at least four people are involved
- they are volunteering their time and energy

- your group is open to all, without discrimination

See the information video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3HrFZfT6l0

Apply online at www.cpslmind.org.uk/how-we-help/good-life-service/good-life-fund, or email goodlifefund@cpslmind.org.uk or phone 0300-303-4363.

Who to contact for services



Your My Cambridge account and your Housing Services account are online at www.cambridge.gov.uk (top right-hand corner)

Cambridge Virtual Community Centre

For support around effects of Covid-19 visit www.facebook.com/cambridgevcc

Domestic Abuse 24-hour Helpline

Tel: 0808-2000-247 (Freephone, no cost)

Visit www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Council Payments by phone

Tel: 01223-457779, with bank card

Rents, tenancies, lettings, renting a council garage

Tel: 01223-457000

Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants

Contact Council in Sign Language

Register at <https://signlive.co.uk>, then dial 01223-457000: a live Sign Language interpreter will interpret during your call

Repairs

Tel: 01223-457000; or 0300-303-8389 for out of hours emergency repairs

Council Tax

Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk

Tel: 01223-457000

Housing for Older People, Visiting Support Service, Community Alarms

E: independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk

Tel: 01223-457199

Home-Link lettings

Visit www.home-link.org.uk

Tel: 01223-457918

Homelessness & temporary accommodation, outside office hours

Tel: 03300-538-109 (same cost as a normal landline)

Housing & Council Tax Benefits

Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk

Tel: 01223-457000

Bins, recycling, street-cleaning

Visit <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-rubbish>

Tel: 01223-457000

Bulky waste collection

Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulky-waste-collection

Tel: 01223-457000

Report anti-social behaviour

E: asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk

Tel: 01223-457950

Noise complaints

E: env.health@cambridge.gov.uk

Tel: 01223-457000

Report tenancy fraud

E: fightfraud@cambridge.gov.uk

Council emergencies out of hours

Tel: 0300-3038389

To complain about council services

Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions.

The Council's partners for housing...

Mears gas servicing

Freephone 03332-070-766, including out of hours; (for leaseholders' gas emergencies, tel. 0800-111-999)

TSG Services

E: enquiries@tsgplc.co.uk

Tel: 01223-828777

Goshen communal cleaning

E: cs@goshenmultiservices.com

Tel: 0754-2826553

Suicide Awareness

If you or someone else feels suicidal, dial 111, then option 2, for help from NHS mental health professionals.

And www.stayingsafe.net is a free website offering practical help for people with suicidal thoughts, and for those caring for them.