

Open Door

Summer 2023



For the Tenants & Leaseholders of Cambridge City Council



Contents

Online service & offers 3

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Future Council & services online | 3 |
| Free tablet loans and data | 3 |

Resident elections 4

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Stand as a candidate | 4 |
| Interview: Elected residents | 5 |

Cost of living help 6

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Financial help for families | 6 |
| 'Eat Well on a Budget' series | 6 |
| Reduced water bills | 7 |
| Free grass cutting service | 7 |

Council help for you 8

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Your City Councillors | 8 |
| Electrical safety inspections | 8 |
| Don't suffer in silence | 9 |
| Use your Community Centre | 9 |

Free summer activities 10

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Free street festival | 10 |
| Mayor's Day Out for elders | 10 |
| Free concerts in the parks | 11 |
| Poolside & free <i>Splash Pads</i> | 11 |

Resident involvement 12

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Help protect bees, pets & kids | 12 |
| Ways to have your say | 12 |

Leaseholders 13

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Leasehold rep election | 13 |
| Interview: Leaseholders' rep | 13 |

Caring for your estate 14

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Interview: Estate Champion | 14 |
| Zero carbon & low energy bills | 15 |
| £40 million to insulate homes | 15 |

You need to know 16

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| More sources of financial help | 16 |
| How to contact services | 16 |



David Greening
Head of Housing Services

Welcome to this Summer edition of *Open Door*.

Pages 4-5 remind you about the resident elections process that starts in a few months' time. Every four years, each council tenant and leaseholder home in the city receives a voting pack, to choose tenant and leaseholder representatives who will sit and vote on the Council's *Housing Scrutiny Committee*, which makes the big decisions about your housing.

Have a look at the articles to see whether you'd like to stand for election yourself. This edition brings interviews with several of your current elected reps, showing what they enjoy about the role, and why it is so important. An article on page 8 reminds you how City Councillors work alongside them to improve life and services on your estates.

If you don't want to stand for an elected resident role, why not just join our *Residents' Panel*? On page 12 you can read about this larger group of council tenants and leaseholders who meet online with council staff to be consulted on issues affecting residents, and to raise any concerns about estates or services.

This summer you really can enjoy dozens of activities and days out for free around the city. On page 10 and 11 you can read about them, from the upcoming street festival to the season of free concerts in the city's parks. You could spend days out picnicking while the kids play for free in the *SplashPad* water play facilities provided by the Council. On page 9 we remind you to make full use of your local Community Centre too: Community Centres can be a hive of support, friendship and activities for all generations and lifestyles.

An interview on page 14 introduces you to some of your grounds maintenance staff, who look after the physical environment on your estates. From overseeing communal cleaning to planting wildflower beds and avoiding the use of herbicides, they always welcome your feedback or volunteer involvement in your neighbourhood. And see page 15 for a pilot scheme to 'retro-fit' some of our council homes to the latest ecological standards, making them almost entirely self-sufficient in energy, with very low energy bills.

On pages 6, 7 and 16 we continue our series on the financial supports available for households, from reducing bills to receiving grants and benefits. An important aspect of cutting your costs is to be able to use the internet. We know that up to a quarter of council tenants still don't have access to it and we really want to fix this: see page 3 for the free training, equipment and data that we can provide you with, to get you online for free.

With best wishes, 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

A *Residents' Editorial Panel* of council tenants and leaseholders helps 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

The cover shows a resident's garden - this and all the large photos inside are from previous years' Residents' Garden Competitions



www.facebook.com/camcitco



www.facebook.com/CamCitCoRI



cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor

What matters most to city residents?

What do you like about where you live? What do you dislike?

In a recent consultation, over 850 Cambridge residents told the Council about their

priorities, and what matters most to them about our city. A favourite was the 'close proximity to everything' - shops, green spaces, culture, work and families - and the fact that they could walk or cycle everywhere.

Easy access to good GPs, health services and pharmacies was seen as important, especially for those with health conditions. For others it was an important element of staying healthy and well.

For tenants, problems with affordability of rents was raised many times, causing young adults to have to stay living at home, often causing overcrowding.

Many also felt there is not enough affordable, council or social housing. And some felt the term 'affordable' is misleading too, as it is often still too expensive for many lower income families. Meanwhile, the affordable element of housing developments was

often perceived to be smaller and of limited quality and design.

Home security was considered important for feeling safe and well. It was also seen as important that new developments should offer a good range of housing options and types. Having access to gardens and allotments was identified as supporting health, happiness and wellbeing. The consultation's findings are available at www.cambridge.gov.uk/putting-residents-and-communities-at-the-heart-of-the-conversation

It was part of the Council's transformation programme, *Our Cambridge*, which is working with partners, residents and communities to help everyone live safe, happy and healthy lives in a better city.

This includes creating new relationships and developing new ways of working with our partners and communities, to help deliver our future council and improved outcomes for everyone. Have a look at the progress at www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-cambridge-transformation-programme

#OurCambridge

Save time, report it online

Did you know that you can report issues online? It's quick and simple: you just fill in an online form giving details of the issue, and we will work to resolve it. A reference number will be provided in case you wish to follow up on it.

For instance you can report a problem:

- with flytipping, including waste left beside street bins or recycling banks at www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-flytipping
- with a play area or park at www.cambridge.gov.uk/park-or-playground
- with a public toilet at www.cambridge.gov.uk/public-toilet
- with overgrown hedges, shrubs grass or a fallen branch at www.cambridge.gov.uk/vegetation-or-a-fallen-branch
- with graffiti at www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-graffiti

If you are having trouble finding the correct form, use the Search box on the Council's homepage at www.cambridge.gov.uk Type *report* followed by key words describing your issue, such as *report flytipping*.

Cheap or free internet if on benefits

Benefits and 'Social Tariffs'

Those receiving Universal Credit can get discounts on internet costs. Called Social Tariffs, these deals:

- cost just £10-£20 per month
- provide fast, unlimited broadband
- have either no setup costs, or very little
- may be offered by your current provider who may switch you to it for free (if they don't, switch for free to a provider that does offer a Social Tariff)
- can't rise in cost during the contract, which you end any time without exit fees

You can apply for most Social Tariffs online, or phone your provider and ask to switch. Your provider might let you leave your current contract without paying a penalty fee. Some providers also offer Social Tariffs to those on benefits other than Universal Credit (eg. Pension Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, etc.).

For a trustworthy guide to switching internet providers, visit www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs

Note that BT and KCOM also provide cheaper phone landline tariffs for households on certain benefits. For details see the website above.

Tablet Loan Scheme

The City Council is enabling free access to the internet for eligible council tenants, 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 tenants 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 tablet for internet access.

To be eligible, the resident must be a Cambridge City Council tenant 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 01223-457343.

Free data for those on benefits

As well as the tablet loan scheme described on the left, the Council is also offering its tenants 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 are struggling 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 01223-457343.

If you don't have access to a computer, tablet or smart phone or are unsure how to use them, the charity [Cambridge Online](http://www.cambridgeonline.org.uk) can help at little or no cost to you. You can phone them at 01223-300407.

Resident Elections: Remember to vote!



Resident rep elections

In early 2024, an independent electoral organisation will again run citywide elections for you to elect five council tenant representatives and one council leaseholder representative onto the City Council's *Housing Scrutiny Committee*.

Every four years, every council tenant and leaseholder home in the city receives this Freepost voting pack with information about the resident candidates, so you can choose your resident representatives.

Unlike most other councils, Cambridge City has these six council residents, elected by their peers, who sit and vote on the *Housing Scrutiny Committee* alongside City Councillors.

They help to make the top decisions about your council housing, and play a crucial role in helping to shape the housing service. They help ensure that the estates' residents are kept at the heart of decision-making.

The Council very much hopes that you will vote, but also that you will consider standing to be elected as a resident representative yourself...

The *Housing Scrutiny Committee* needs people from every background. No prior experience or formal qualifications are needed.

If elected, you will receive an induction programme, with ongoing support and training to help you perform your role.

PEOPLE POWER!



Elected resident reps also receive an allowance for their time.

To stand for election

Applicants must:

- be a Cambridge City Council tenant or leaseholder
- not be behind with paying their rent or any service-charges that are due
- sign and keep to a Code of Conduct for the *Housing Scrutiny Committee*
- agree to represent the interests of all City Council residents, not just those of their own locality or their own personal agenda
- be able to attend 12 meetings per year, taking about 32 hours of time in all per year; the *Scrutiny Committee* meets 4 times per year at fixed times on weekday evenings, but the 8 background meetings can be arranged flexibly around resident reps' availability
- prepare for the meetings by reading *Committee* agendas and reports: each of the 4 *Committee* meetings in the year can require a few hours' background reading beforehand
- accept relevant training and ongoing support provided for free by the Council

Other roles for you

If you don't want to be a high-level elected resident rep, there are other rewarding roles available that you can join more easily, without going through elections. They include...

- the *Residents' Panel*: influencing council housing policies and services, they meet several times a year online (see the article on page 12)
- *Resident Inspectors*, *Green Inspectors*, *Recycling Champions*: inspecting work and improving services on their estates
- *Residents' Associations* and community groups on council estates across the city: to set up a new one, funding and support are available
- *Digital Champions*: they get trained up for free, to teach other residents how to use computers

To get involved in any of these roles, please email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457343.

How to stand as a candidate

The window for applications to stand for the *Housing Scrutiny Committee* resident elections will be open **from 1st November 2023 to 31st January 2024**.

Application forms and information will be available on the City Council's website at www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement or can be posted to you if you phone 01223-457343.

To apply, candidates must complete an application form, supply a passport-style photo, and write a short statement saying why they are standing for election as a resident representative. (Help is available for anyone wanting assistance to do their application.)

For the elections, candidate statements and photos will be printed on a ballot paper and posted to all the City Council's tenant and leasehold homes. After voting has closed, successful candidates will be informed and their names will be listed on the City Council's website.

If you are interested in applying as a candidate or would like to find out more about the role, please phone the Council's Resident Engagement Officer at 01223-457343 or email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk




Why not stand for election?



Some of the resident representatives whom you have elected onto the Housing Scrutiny Committee in the past. Below is a message from Christabella, first on the left.

Message from one of your elected tenant representatives

 "Dear fellow tenants and leaseholders, I'm Mrs Christabella Amiteye Laryea, one of your elected tenant reps on the *Housing Scrutiny Committee*. The role has been a pleasure - the journey has been totally insightful, informative and incredibly educational for me.

I confess that I was daunted at my first *Housing Scrutiny Committee* meeting. It discussed housing budgets and incomes. But the other resident reps were very supportive in helping me manoeuvre my way through the documents.

Before applying, I had no clue what to expect! I thought I'd be in meetings with the City Councillors just to answer a simple 'YES' or 'NO' on behalf of tenants, but how wrong I was! Instead, it's been a positive, mind-blowing journey involving:

- poring over Housing budget accounts (lots of interesting numbers)
- helping Councillors make critical decisions on how best to transform the city to benefit all its inhabitants
- providing decent homes for those in housing need, and those already housed
- hearing housing strategy proposals and effective ways to tackle homelessness in Cambridge

- us six resident reps making crucial contributions towards gas and electrical checks on behalf of tenants
- discussing how some tenants' mental health problems might be triggered by some housing decisions, and ways to solve or avoid these issues
- highlighting problems with previous cleaning contracts, to make sure new contractors perform efficiently

Not only have I represented you, but I've also gained a lifetime of friends who have supported me and genuinely have our wellbeing at heart.

We all miss our fellow elected tenant rep Colin Stevens, who passed away recently. The Council is grateful for the service he gave on the Committee: everyone appreciated the cheery, zestful approach he brought to it all.

I encourage tenants and leaseholders to grab the opportunity of the forthcoming election to make a real difference to your communities. Make sure you vote - and why not stand as a candidate yourself?

If you have any questions for us about the roles or about standing for election, you can contact us resident reps directly via our email address at hsc.residents@gmail.com

Kind regards, Bella"



"Hi all, I'm Mandy Powell-Hardy. I'm one of your current tenant reps on the Housing Scrutiny Committee. I stood as a candidate because I wanted to get more involved with how the City Council works.

On the Committee, we resident reps get to vote on certain topics, and to debate on other items that matter to residents. We scrutinise the papers and have been known to stop something we feel is not fair to tenants and leaseholders. We ask questions about new council housing being built, and we get updated on the relevant building regulations.

I encourage anyone with some time to give to apply for election onto the Committee. It makes a big difference to what happens in the city. And it benefits tenants and leaseholders to have us voting on there.

We are the eyes and ears of the city, and a voice for residents. We know things that Councillors can't know. I'm also a 'Green Inspector', monitoring grounds maintenance on estates. That gives me insights too for the Scrutiny Committee.

Everyone at the Committee is very helpful. The other resident reps, the City Councillors, and council staff are all very supportive as you go along. So why not give it a go...?

Best wishes,
Mandy"



Help for the cost of living

Help for families

Free school meals

Children in homes receiving certain benefits may be entitled to free school meals, worth up to £450 per year per child. Secondary school children may also receive help with school transport costs. Apply at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/help-with-school-learning-costs/free-school-meals

Free childcare and meals in school holidays

Those receiving free school meals can also receive free childcare and meals during school holidays. Visit the 'Holiday Activities and Food Programme' link on the webpage above.

Free childcare

Visit <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs> for information on:

- 15 or 30 hours of free childcare, and tax-free childcare
- Child Benefit
- £500 help with maternity costs

See also <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/childcare-and-early-learning>

Free school uniforms

The organisation *Grow Kids* provides free 'pre-loved' clothes in good condition for ages 0-10 years, and some school uniforms. Visit www.facebook.com/CambridgeGrowKids
Trumpington Kids Clothes Hub offers the same: visit them at www.trumpingtonkidsclotheshub.co.uk

Cambridgeshire Local Assistance

Scheme provides advice, grants and practical support to households under exceptional pressure. They can provide supermarket vouchers, energy vouchers, new white goods, decorating packs, beds, mattresses, recycled white goods and other furniture. See the back cover of this edition for eligibility criteria and contact details.

Household Support Fund

Grants are available to help with energy bills and food, for those in immediate financial hardship. For eligibility and applications, visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/support-with-the-cost

Or email community.resilience@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457000.

Eat well on a tight budget

A series by [Dr Richard Hoffman, Registered Nutritionist](#)

Snack attack: We all like a snack but did you know you can snack in a way that actually boosts your health, rather than harming it?

Swapping to healthier snacks is an instant way to improve your health! Try the tricks in the column on the right.

Remember, most unhealthy, commercial snacks are not actual foods, but harmful concoctions of chemicals made in factories. Examples are crisps, biscuits and shop-bought cakes - packed with salt, bad fats and sugar.

Studies prove that they make you more likely to get cancer or have a heart attack. And they cause weight gain and poor overall health.

But healthy snacks are real foods, packed full of nutrients. Every bite is an investment in your long-term health. They can be just as tasty, cheap and easy. Having them instantly to hand is the key. Just keep a jarfull on your kitchen counter or a sachet of them in your bag.

Actions - First, swap just one unhealthy snack for a healthier version below. You'll soon get addicted to the tasty, healthy one!

Then choose the next bad snack you'll stop buying, and get used to turning to a healthy version instead.

1. Dried fruits (raisins, sultanas, figs, apricots, dates, prunes) are full of fibre and nutrients. Buy bagfuls, chop them up and make your own mixes - far cheaper than ready-made versions. Add pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds - true superfoods loaded with nutrients and fats that are actually *good* for your heart.

2. Fresh fruit is so high in vitamins and fibre. Chopping it up nicely makes it sweeter and easier to eat. Drizzle a plate of chopped fruit with honey to sweeten. Or mix up a fruit salad of it, sweetened with honey, to keep in the fridge and dip into: it will taste even better a day or two later.

3. Nuts (like almonds and walnuts) are super-rich in vitamins and healthy fats that are good for your heart. Salted peanuts are okay in moderation but have fewer health benefits.

More help for the cost of living

Keep your water use, and tax, under control

The City Council recently commissioned a study to reduce water use in council homes. It examined how the city's council homes currently use water, and how residents could reduce their water use, in this time of water shortages. In homes with a water meter, using less water will mean lower water bills. (If you don't have a meter, speak to your water company about installing one - it's free.)

The study found that, on average, council homes consume around 170 litres of water per person per day. By contrast, a modern water-efficient home aims to consume no more than 110 litres per person per day. Effective water-saving measures could reduce by almost a third the water bills of homes that have water meters.

The Council is about to run trials to try to achieve major savings in water use by installing in some council homes:

- low-flow kitchen and bathroom taps
- lower-flush toilets
- water-reducing showers over baths

These three measures alone could make major savings on water use. In the meantime, you can reduce your own

water use by adopting these habits so that they become second nature:

- Aim for showers instead of baths whenever possible.
- Make sure to fix all drips and leaks.
- Turn taps off while brushing your teeth.
- Use a bowl for washing up in the sink, without leaving a tap running.
- Use a gentle 'eco' washing-up liquid, then re-use the dishwater afterwards to water your plants, indoors and outdoors.
- Only run washing machines or dishwashers once they are full.
- Use the half-flush button whenever you can, if your toilet has a dual flush control.
- Switch to low-flow settings on shower heads: just flicking the switch from high to medium flow can save 14 litres of water *per shower!*
- Use a bucket instead of a hose for outdoor water use.
- Collect rainwater in a water-butt for watering your garden, instead of using an outdoor tap or hose.

Remember - reducing your use of hot water will also reduce your energy bills! For more tips, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/3244/greening-your-home-chapter-2.pdf

Is your income tax code right?

1257L is the tax code for most people who have one job or pension. The government's tax agency, HMRC, will automatically update your tax code if your income changes. They'll get this information from your employer.

But if HMRC has the wrong information on you, you may be given an incorrect tax code and pay too much tax. So do check the tax code on your payslip, and make sure HMRC has up-to-date details about your income.

If you think your tax code is wrong, tell HMRC online at www.gov.uk/check-income-tax-current-year Or phone them at 0300-200-3300, with your National Insurance Number and other personal information to hand.

Once they have the correct information about you, your next payslip should show your new tax code, and refund any excess tax that you have paid.

Grass cutting help and free pest control

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 can provide free grass-cutting for eligible council tenants who are unable to cut their grass due to disability, frailty or medical conditions.

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:

- be a Cambridge City Council tenant aged 18 or over
- show that you have frailty, a disability, or a relevant medical condition preventing you from cutting your grass
- 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

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 01223-457343 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.

Free pest-control by the Council

Do you have cockroaches, mice or rats affecting your home? It can happen to anyone. So don't be afraid to ask for help - it's available for free.

Did you know that for these pests, the City Council provides a free, discreet and professional pest-control service?

These pests can easily get out of control, and can then become a problem for your neighbours too. So please get in touch if you need help with them. The team can discreetly assess the problem at your property, providing a free treatment to eradicate the problem.

For a free assessment or treatment of a pest problem with mice, rats or cockroaches, phone the City Council at 01223-457000.

(Note that this free service doesn't apply to other infestations, for instance of ants, bedbugs, fleas or wasps).

Your Council - Help and resources

Your City Councillors can often help

Did you know that your elected City Councillors make a huge difference to the quality of life of local people, and how local issues are dealt with?

Councillors are local residents who have been elected to make decisions on how to improve local services and environments for local people. They come from all backgrounds and life experience, in order to reflect the diverse communities that they serve around the city.

They may be members of one of the three main political parties, or of another party like the Green Party, or they may be 'Independents', with no affiliation to any political party.

Cambridge City Council is led by 42 of these City Councillors elected by you, the people of Cambridge, in 14 neighbourhood 'wards' or election zones across the city.

They serve terms of four years, and they choose a Mayor for the city from among the Councillors you have elected. (Each of the city's 14 wards also elects a County Councillor onto Cambridgeshire County Council.)

Councillors are not paid a salary but receive allowances for their time and expenses.

In May 2023, Cambridge city residents elected a majority of Labour Councillors onto the City Council, which is now made up of:

- 27 Labour Councillors
- 10 Liberal Democrat Councillors
- 4 Green Party Councillors
- 1 Independent Councillor

Their job is to get things done for their local communities, decide how best to spend public money, and work on improving public services.

To hear what's happening on the ground, Councillors attend residents' meetings in their ward, and pick up residents' concerns that need tackling.

As well as being on their own *Local Area Committee*, they also often serve on decision-making committees at the Council that decide how to spend public money and manage specific services.

An example is the *Housing Scrutiny Committee*, described in some detail on pages 4-5 of this edition of *Open Door*.

To find your own local City Councillor and contact them about an issue, visit <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

To have your say at a meeting

On the City Council's website, consult the calendar of meetings of the Councillor Committees that oversee public services, like the *Housing Scrutiny Committee* described on pages 4-5 of this *Open Door*.

For transparency and open access by anyone, Committee Meetings are broadcast live on the City Council's *YouTube* channel. (Note that by speaking or appearing at a meeting you are consenting to be recorded.)

To ask a question or make a statement at a meeting, you must contact the service below by two working days beforehand:
Email democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk
Or phone 01223-457013
Or write to Committee Managers, Cambridge City Council, PO Box 700, Cambridge CB1 0JH

You can sign up to receive email updates on specific Council Committee Meetings or topics. Visit <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx>

Electrical safety inspections in your home

As your landlord the City Council is legally obliged to ensure your home is safe and fit to live in throughout the duration of your tenancy.

This includes the electrical installations within your property. The Council must ensure that the wiring and electrical installations are safe and remain in good working order.

Emergency electrical repairs will be attended to by the Council's repairs department if you report them to the number in the green box on the right.

However, periodic safety inspections - which are obligatory every 5 years - are carried out by the Council's contractor, TSG Building Services Plc.

TSG will contact you by letter when the essential periodic electrical inspection in your home is becoming due.

What is tested during the periodic electrical inspection of your home?

The electrician will test and inspect the fixed electrical installations in your property. This includes wiring, plug sockets, light fittings, fuse boxes, electric showers and extractor fans.

The electrician will make any immediate hazards safe before they leave your home.

Note that they will not check the safety of personal items that can be moved around, such as TVs, white goods, kettles or toasters. Those are your own responsibility.

TSG will provide you with an inspection report within 4 weeks. The Council will ensure that all your electrical installations meet the safety standards, and we will prioritise any further investigation or repair work required.

For your electrical safety

- Please ensure that you report any electrical faults at your home as soon as you spot them, or think there might be an electrical problem.
- Always allow access for emergency repairs and for the essential periodic electrical safety inspections.
- For more info, type *TSG Heating and Electricity Handbook* into the *Search* box at www.cambridge.gov.uk

To request an electrical repair

- Phone the City Council at 01223-457000 for an emergency repair, or phone 0300-303-8389 outside of council office hours
- For non-emergencies, request a repair via our online housing portal at <https://housing.cambridge.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard> or email housing.repairs@cambridge.gov.uk

More resources

Don't suffer neighbour noise

Please be careful about your noise levels at home this summer. Summertime can be notorious for increased neighbour noise, as people do a lot more activities outdoors in their yards or gardens, and windows and doors are open a lot more often.

Remember, causing persistent noise nuisance to your neighbours will break the terms of your *Tenancy Agreement*, and could get you evicted from your home.

The most common kinds of nuisance noise that negatively impact on neighbours when they go on for a long time are:

- loud music or radios playing
- parties
- revving vehicles or motorbikes
- barking dogs
- regular use of loud power tools
- shouting and very loud voices
- noisy play, such as footballs banging against walls

If you are hosting a once-off party, please do politely let your neighbours know beforehand that it's happening, and what time the noise will stop. Ideally, invite them! By dusk, bring all your party's noise indoors, closing all doors and windows.

Noisy play needs to move to the nearest park, green or playground. If a dog is barking excessively, there is advice, help and retraining available. For help or advice on a dog's behaviour, visit the resources online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/dogs

Report anti-social noise

We all have to tolerate some noise from neighbours. But if you are experiencing anti-social noise, first ask them politely to stop. You could say you know they probably didn't realise up to now how much the noise was affecting others.

But if asking them to reduce the noise doesn't help, do report it to the Council. You could also start keeping a diary of the noise (eg. time and date, duration, type of noise and loudness), to help the Council take action.

So don't suffer in silence! Anti-social noise is bad for neighbours' health. It degrades quality of life and damages communities. And there are known links between this sort of low-level anti-social behaviour and crime.

For help, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/resolve-or-report-a-noise-issue, email env.health@cambridge.gov.uk or phone the City Council at 01223-457000.

Use your *Community Centre*

Your local Community Centre provides a variety of comfortable, welcoming spaces for individuals and families to hang out, meet, learn, work, exercise and play.

The centres host a wide range of services, activities and events for the whole community.

The Community Centres that the City Council owns or manages include:

- Akeman Street Community Centre
- Brown's Field Community Centre
- Clay Farm Centre
- Meadows Community Centre
- Storey's Field Centre
- the new Darwin Green Community Centre

We also own or are involved in these centres managed by local organisations or residents' groups:

- Nuns Way Pavilion
- Ross Street Community Centre
- Trumpington Pavilion
- the new Mill Road Community Centre

There's always one near you where you will be welcome. To explore their locations around the city and see what they have to offer, visit their interactive map on the Council's website at www.cambridge.gov.uk/community-centres

You'll see that the many Community Centres around the city are located in areas with the greatest need, and in areas of significant new housing growth.

For instance, surveys showed that Cherry Hinton was lacking in community facilities. So the City Council is now leading a project to extend Cherry Hinton Library, in order to provide new community facilities there.

To find out more about this Cherry Hinton Hub project, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/Cherry-Hinton-Hub and the dedicated website www.cherryhintonhub.org



Summer fun for free

Free street festival

Step out and experience the extraordinary in Cambridge city streets this August Bank Holiday weekend, on the 26th and 27th August.

Supported by Cambridge BID, *Out of the Ordinary* is a brand-new event in the city centre this summer. For two days, performance artists will bring fantastical worlds of colour, imagination and humour to Cambridge's historic streets, entertaining and amazing everyone as they go! Performances will include:

- a dance display with a souped-up shopping trolley
- a bewitching, hilarious walkabout with a giant 'slinkie', the iconic toy from the 1970s
- unrivalled disco moves by dancers wearing good old-fashioned twin-sets
- traditional circus pushed to the limits
- and the startling *Mirror Men* in their multi-coloured suits!

A weekend of wonder is promised as international artists create a world of fun for you. Save the dates! No need to travel - it's a chance to create extraordinary summer memories, right here in the centre of your town! For the city's other free events, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/summer-events

Mayor's Day Out

The annual *Mayor's Day Out* for the over 55's is on Wed 16th August. It's a highlight in the city's calendar, with coaches setting off for a traditional fun day out at the seaside! Organised by the City Council, it's a popular outing for senior citizens. This year's destination is Great Yarmouth, famed for its beautiful *Golden Mile* of beach and its delicious fish and chips. Tickets are just £10 and include:

- return coach travel with several pick-up and drop-off points in the city
- live music in the Anchor Gardens on the seafront by band *Under the Covers*, performing classic hits from the 1950s, 60s and 70s

The Mayor of Cambridge has said in the past: 'It's a wonderful and unique tradition of the city, to take so many of Cambridge's older citizens on this much-loved and uplifting day trip.'

To book tickets

Online at www.cambridgelivetrust.co.uk/city-events

By phone at 01223-357851, Corn Exchange Box Office, Wheeler Street 10am-5pm, Mon to Fri

Note: Booking closes on Friday 14 July

The Folk Festival

Cambridge Folk Festival takes place on July 27-30 in the grounds of Cherry Hinton Hall. At time of writing, tickets were still on sale at www.cambridgelive.org.uk/folk-festival/tickets Though not cheap, a study has shown it's one of the best value for money festivals in the UK.

There will be world-class live music, but this brilliant event for kids and families also includes:

- a special show with *CBeebies'* Nick Cope (kids £8/adults £10)
- workshops on instrument-making and song-writing
- a 'silent disco', with dance-music through headsets
- storytelling, traditional clog-dancing, talks and tai-chi
- a fabulous selection of food-trucks and bars

The dazzling music line-up includes:

- Rufus Wainwright, one of the world's greatest male vocalists
- Scotland's *The Proclaimers*, with hits like "(I'm Gonna Be) 500 Miles"
- from Ireland, the lively Sharon Shannon and Imelda May
- 'Queen of Folk' Kate Rusby

- award-winning rap collective *Arrested Development* from Atlanta
- Grammy-winner Angélique Kidjo, blending West African sounds with R&B, funk and jazz
- American actor Kiefer Sutherland, who is also a well-respected touring musician
- Cornwall's *Fisherman's Friends* with rousing sea shanties
- *Stornoway's* windswept pop with soul, folk, African and electronica influences
- London octet *Ibibio Sound Machine*
- *Eliza Carthy & The Restitution*, leading the English folk scene for over 30 years
- Angeline Morrison with Folk Album of the Year *Folk Songs of Black British Experience*



More summer fun for free

Free concerts in the parks



Celebrate your Cambridge summer in musical style as the free *Music in the Parks* makes a welcome return from July. This programme of free Sunday afternoon concerts is open to all and will take place on beautiful green open spaces throughout the whole of the city.

Music in the Parks is another highlight in the city's free summer calendar, with people enjoying the opportunity to get together in our local parks and recreation grounds for relaxing live music in the company of friends and family!

It promises to be extra special this summer, featuring more concerts than ever, with eight music events taking

place on various Sundays from July 9th through to September 17th.

Concerts will include the infectious and irresistible ska dance rhythms of Cambridge's massively popular *Big 10*; sophisticated funk and pop; mesmerising multi-voiced choral creations; and the warm strains of brass on a summery breeze...

These will be essential dates in your diary, for free, easy-going outdoor Sunday afternoons of music, fun and relaxation!

Hotel Graduate Cambridge is sponsoring *Music in the Parks* for the second year running. They told *Open Door*:

'We are really looking forward to hosting a concert again in our beautiful riverside garden setting.

This time *4Villages Orchestra*, a 40-piece group specialising in favourite themes from film and TV, will put on a great afternoon performance!'

So do put these Sunday afternoons in your diary...

From 3-5pm on Sundays...

- 9th July: *Royston Town Band* at Coleridge Recreation Ground
- 16th July: *Big 10* and *DisFunkcional* at Jesus Green
- 6th August: *Haverhill Youth & Community Band* at King George V Playing Field
- 13th August: *Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band* and *Dance & Poetry* at Jesus Green
- 20th August: *Vocal Remix Choir* plus support performers at St. Albans Recreation Ground
- 3rd September: *Somersham Town Band* at Nightingale Recreation Ground
- 10th September: *Soham Comrades Band* at Cherry Hinton Hall
- 17th September: *4 Villages Orchestra* at Graduate Cambridge Hotel

For more information, please visit www.cambridgelive.org.uk/city-events and www.facebook.com/CamCityEvents

Organised by Cambridge City Council in association with Graduate Cambridge Hotel, Cambridge BID, Cambridge Water, High Sheriff's Fund and Cambs Community Foundation.

Lounging by the water

Open since 1923, Jesus Green Lido is one of the few remaining examples of the beautiful 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. The length is meant to make you feel as if you're swimming in the river Cam, that runs alongside.

Across the summer, it's open daily, 7am to 7pm, unheated. (Wetsuits are recommended when the water is less than 14 degrees.)

In a beautiful setting beside the Cam and Jesus Green, it has a sauna, a lawn and paved areas for sunbathing, and is surrounded by mature trees. There are male and female facilities for changing and showering, and a basket room for clothes.

Entry costs £6 for adults, £3 for children and seniors, £3.50 for 11-17-year-olds, 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. There are bike racks outside the pool, and buses stop nearby on Chesterton Road and on Bridge Street. For more information, visit www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/cambridge/jesusgreenlido#

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 at Cherry Hinton water play area; at Coleridge paddling pool; and at Lammas Land paddling pool and Sheep's Green learner pool in Newnham.

And see the green box here on the right for the more specialised, free *Splashpad* water play areas 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

The outdoor Abbey *Splashpad* for kids is behind Abbey pool. It has no fewer than 11 different water-play features including tipping buckets, water cannons and spray jets!

Coleridge Recreation Ground also has a *Splashpad* near its play area, with 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 a map of all the city's free *Splashpads* and water-play equipment, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/splashpads For more information, email sport@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457000.

Resident Involvement

Help us protect bees, pets and kids!



**HONEY BEE HAVEN
THIS HERBICIDE FREE
POLLINATOR PATCH
IS SAFE FOR KIDS
PETS AND BEES**

When maintaining the green spaces on your estates, the Council always looks for best value for money for residents. But nowadays we also look to add value by promoting the health, safety and biodiversity of the environment around your home.

So the way we maintain your estates is changing. In the past we, like other public services, used to do a large programme of weed-spraying to maintain communal green areas. Residents started raising the alarm about the harm herbicide poisons can cause to humans as well as wildlife, for instance to children and animals playing or walking nearby.

Citizen-led organisations like *Pesticide Free Cambridge* also worked to

influence the Council (visit www.pesticidefreecambridge.org).

Recognising these concerns, we and many other public organisations are now phasing herbicides out. Instead, grass is being left to grow long around trees and street furniture, rather than being sprayed with toxic herbicides. Much safer for humans and animals, it also gives bees, butterflies, other insects and birds the life-line of nourishment they so desperately need now to survive.

Areas sprayed with herbicide never looked good anyway: it used to leave unsightly, barren, muddy patches where nothing could grow. Those are being replaced now with beautiful tall grasses and wildflowers, so much safer both for wildlife and for human health.

English Heritage properties and some of the Cambridge Colleges are doing the same. It is a different look, and its appeal can take a while to get used to at first, but the benefits for all are clear.

So please support this phasing out of harmful chemicals from the grounds maintenance of your estates. For more information see www.cambridge.gov.uk/reduced-use-of-herbicides

'Adopt' Your Street!

The *Happy Bee Streets* scheme is a way for you to keep your street herbicide-free and improve its biodiversity through community weeding.

The City Council is supporting groups of residents, giving them tools and advice, to let them manage their own pavements in the ways that best support wildlife and public health. Their street is then no longer sprayed with herbicide by the Council.

Groups of residents in Ascham Road, Atherton Close and Gurney Way in West Chesterton, and in Sedgwick Street in Romsey, are already doing it, after 'adopting' their streets and turning them into *Happy Bee Streets* (that also have happy butterflies, birds and wildflowers, and safer kids and pets!).

For details, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/happy-bee-scheme-help-improve-biodiversity-on-your-street or email Happybeestreet@cambridge.gov.uk



Ways to have your say

On pages 4-5 of this edition, you saw the opportunities coming up to stand for election as a resident representative on the Council's *Housing Scrutiny Committee*. But if you'd prefer a more low-key role that's local to you and takes little time, try one of the following ways to have your say on your housing and services.

Attend the Residents' Panel

Our *Residents' Panel* meetings are held online four times a year, in the evening at 5.30-6.30pm. It's an opportunity for all tenants and leaseholders to input into the Council's services and policies, have your say on your housing, and help shape future services. It's an engagement opportunity for all. To request the link to attend, just email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk

Become a Resident Inspector

Join our *Resident Inspector* volunteers

who help monitor the standard of our estate services. You don't need any previous experience or training - only that you're willing to give a little time to go out and do some inspections near you, and report your findings back to us.

You can receive *Time Credit* rewards (they're like gift vouchers) for this volunteering. Free training is provided, and this will also enhance your CV! Email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457343.

Attend the Leaseholder Forum

If you are a leaseholder, why not join this online meeting to have your views heard? There will be a *Leaseholder Forum* meeting online via Microsoft Teams on an evening in November 2023. To request updates and the link to attend, just email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk For more information, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders

Receive the Resident Involvement E-Newsletter

Every few months we send an emailed *Resident Involvement Newsletter* to tenants and leaseholders who have subscribed to it.

It includes lively updates on things you need to know, and opportunities to have your say or give feedback on your services.

Importantly, it also lets you know about the latest support and offers that are available to you.

To join the mailing list, just email resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk



www.facebook.com/camcitco



www.facebook.com/CamCitCoRI



cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement

Leaseholders

Stand as a leasehold rep

Every four years, a leaseholder is elected by you to represent leaseholders' interests on the *Housing Scrutiny Committee*, where they debate and vote alongside City Councillors. In early 2024, council leaseholders will receive a pack to vote. It's a significant voice for leaseholders on the *Scrutiny Committee*. Why not stand as a candidate? No prior experience or qualifications are needed.

The elected leaseholder receives an allowance for their time, and full support and training. See pages 4-5 of this edition for more about the role, and how to apply to stand as a candidate. The window for applications will be open **from 1st November 2023 to 31st January 2024**. Application forms and information will be available online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement or can be posted to you if you phone 01223-457343.

Below is an interview with current rep, Diane Best. She explains her activities for leaseholders, why it's important to vote in the election, and why you should consider standing as a candidate.

Leaseholders' Consultation Forum

Wed 12 July, 6.30-7.30pm

Room 1, Meadows Community Centre,
299 Arbury Road, CB4 2JL
(drop-in from 5.30pm)

Receive updates from the City Council and raise any issues. Diane Best (pictured below) will also give an update. Topics will include planned works, areas to be redeveloped, and a Q&A with the audience. For more information, email leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk or resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-458323.



Hi Diane, Tell us please what the Housing Scrutiny Committee does for leaseholders...

Well, it makes the big decisions about our homes. And

remember, we leaseholders pay charges to the City Council for services, repairs and planned maintenance. So I do encourage people to stand for election to this role!

Why is it important to elect a leaseholder onto the Committee?

To advocate for the interests of leaseholders, particularly when the financial decisions are being made. As the elected rep, I speak, ask questions and vote on the issues about how council properties are managed.

What topics concerning leaseholders came up recently at the Committee?

Examples included the setting of the Housing Budget, which includes setting service charges; discussing which of the Council's estates or flat blocks may be redeveloped; the redevelopment of Hanover and Princess Courts...

How do you prepare for these Scrutiny Committee meetings?

I receive the papers 10 days beforehand, and I attend a pre-briefing given by council staff, which is very helpful. I also go to a briefing on *Housing Development Agency* projects.

What support do you get?

I meet every 6 weeks with the Council's *Resident Engagement Manager*, and a *Committee Manager* supports us with council protocols and procedures.



How do you keep in touch with leaseholders?

I give them a report at the online *Leaseholders' Forum*. And leaseholders can email me any time at hsc.residents@gmail.com or leave me a phone message at 01223-457343.

What kinds of issues do leaseholders contact you about?

Typical issues include:

- notices from the Council about planned maintenance or major repairs
- leasehold sales
- issues with building cleaning, grounds maintenance or fly tipping
- problems with communal lighting

What else do you do for leaseholders?

I'm active on a range of issues affecting leasehold homes, such as:

- pressing for the *Engagement, Education & Enforcement* staff role that helps keep our communal areas clear
- being on the *Consultation Working Group* that ensures leaseholders are kept fully informed in areas proposed for redevelopment

What do you gain from your role?

Lots of insight on how the Council works and leaseholds are managed! I also love communicating with people citywide, developing new skills, and making some very good friends along the way.



Caring for your estates

Your grounds staff



"Hi,
I'm Will Beavitt, the *Estate Champion Team Leader* who manages your *Estate Services* team. We look after the

communal areas of flat blocks for the Council's tenants and leaseholders.

Our team includes your:

- *Estate Champions*
- *Estate Caretakers*
- *Engagement, Education & Enforcement Officer*, who promotes fire safety by preventing any items from being left in communal areas

Our work includes:

- doing the replanting of your estates' shrub-beds
- commissioning work on trees
- planting kilometres of spring bulbs and wildflower meadows on council estates
- working closely with local resident reps on the estates

We also help deliver the Council's *Estate Improvement Scheme*, which is investing £5 million over 5 years into improvement projects on estates, very many of them suggested by residents.

Typical projects have included bike racks and stores, fencing, security, railings, new parking spaces, waterbutts and compost facilities, and many fire-safety adaptations...

We also have a large team of contractors delivering ongoing:

- *Building Cleaning*, contactable by emailing cs@goshenmultiservices.com
- *Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleansing*, contactable by emailing streets&openspacesoperations@cambridge.gov.uk
- *Window Cleaning*, contactable by emailing helpdesk@hispecservices.co.uk

We help get repairs ordered for communal areas when they are needed. But if you yourself spot something that needs repairing in your estate's communal areas, please do report it at <https://housing.cambridge.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard>

On there, you can also opt to be kept informed of progress on your request.

We also coordinate a large, very popular programme of *Neighbourhood Clean-Up Days* across your estates.

Providing free skips for residents to clear out their homes and gardens, these events help avoid flytipping, and are much appreciated by residents.

Forthcoming dates include 15th July at Ditton Fields and 16th September at Wulfstan Way. For more information, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhoodclean-up-events, email housing.officer@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223-457000 or 01223-458084.

Towards safer, more nature-friendly estates

An important part of our work in recent years has been in helping to reduce the use of herbicides across your council estates, and aiming to phase them out entirely soon. On page 12 of this edition you can read all about the trials we're gradually extending across the city to achieve this, to stop the harm that herbicides do to bees, butterflies, birds and the wildflowers they depend on.

But success depends on residents accepting and supporting this change. So please do support us to make this simple but transformative change on your estate. You could email the Council to let them know you approve, and want the Council to stop spraying herbicide on your estate.

Or as you see in the green box on page 12, the *Happy Bee Streets* scheme lets you and a few neighbours be supported by the Council to take control of your own street's weeding, to avoid herbicides ever being sprayed there again. Some of the other nature-friendly measures we are overseeing on estates include:

- some of our new street lamps are solar-powered
- we have started installing electric chargers on estates
- the fleet of Building Cleaning vehicles produces zero carbon emissions
- we are trialling Green Roofs (a technology for plant-covered roofing) on old shed blocks

We also help run the annual *Residents' Garden Competition*, which favours environmentally friendly gardens. You will see some of the winning gardens featured in the Autumn edition of *Open Door*. To enter next year's competition, visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/tenant-and-leaseholder-garden-competition



Investing in estates' future

Retrofitted homes, much lower energy bills

The City Council is running an ambitious pilot scheme to 'retrofit' a sample of its council homes to the highest ecological standards, so that they will produce 'net zero' carbon emissions.

The £5 million project will radically improve the energy efficiency of 50 council homes on Ross Steet and Coldham's Grove, with cutting-edge sustainable design. Works will involve:

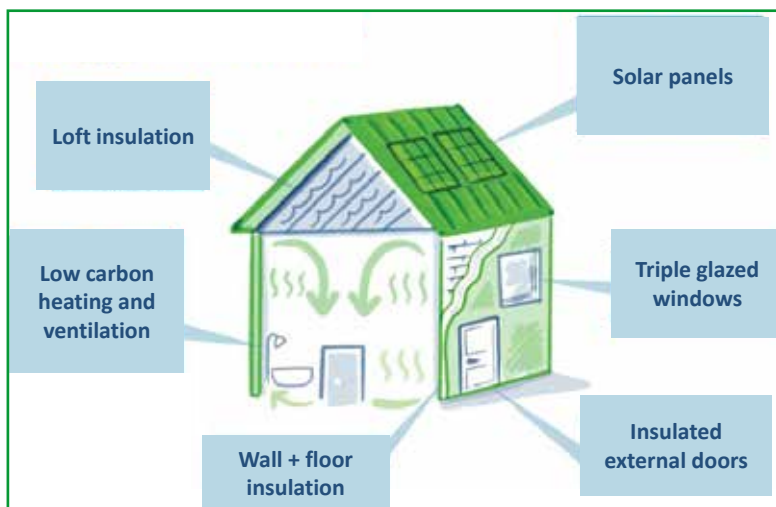
- insulating and making external walls, roofs and ground floors airtight
- new triple-glazed windows and insulated doors
- replacing gas boilers with low carbon air-source heat pumps and solar panels
- improved ventilation and water saving throughout the homes

With the current high energy prices, residents have keenly welcomed this chance to make their homes so much warmer, cheaper and easier to heat, with a new, refreshed appearance as an added bonus. So resident buy-in has been excellent, with all 50 available slots filled. Ross Steet and Coldham's Grove were chosen for their high concentration of older, uninsulated homes. They include typical semi-detached, flat block and

terraced homes, which will let us test the practicalities of retrofitting these varied homes to the new standards. Outcomes will be closely monitored to inform future projects for energy efficiency and 'net zero carbon'.

In 2020, 31% of the city's carbon emissions were from domestic emissions such as homes. So this project will help towards the Council's aspiration for the city to be net zero carbon by 2030.

The team includes ECD Architects, industry-leaders in retrofitting and 'Passivhaus' homes. Engineers Greengauge worked on a Norwich City Council project that won the Stirling Prize. Starting in the autumn, the project



Above: The 6 main eco-features of the retro-fitted homes

has drawn interest from Cambridge University and other institutions.

Alongside this net zero pilot, the Council is also working towards targets for all its council housing to reach Energy Performance Rating 'C' by 2035 via the external wall insulation programme in the article below.

Over £40 million on insulating your homes



A Cambridge council home, before and after the new external wall insulation programme

The City Council has committed £3.6 million per year for the next 12 years to improve energy efficiency in council homes through external wall insulation. It also recently won £2.3 million of Social Housing Decarbonisation funding to help insulate 185 further homes in the next two years.

The Council has a target for all its council homes to achieve energy performance rating 'C' by 2035. The budget will mainly

be spent on external wall insulation of older, solid-walled, uninsulated homes. It will also be used to replace failed cavity wall insulation on flat blocks. Depending on need, some works may be combined with other planned maintenance such as replacement of windows, roofs, or topping up of loft insulation.

This insulation programme will make these Cambridge council homes warmer and easier to heat in winter. It will improve thermal comfort, making heating bills cheaper than in a non-retrofitted home. And it will provide the fresh new appearance seen in the picture here on the left.

The works are being planned and delivered using a street-by-street approach starting with the poorest performing homes.

Over the last three years, similar energy efficiency works have already been completed on around 260 properties, including on Bateson Road, Darwin Drive, Stretton Avenue, Fairfax Road and Glebe Road. It is hoped that around 300 further homes will be insulated over the next two years.

Guidance for future participating households

If your street and home are selected for these works, you will be notified by letter and a phone call.

The majority of external wall insulation work can be done from the outside, though scaffolding will be required. However, access to the inside of your home will be required for surveys before the work starts and during the insulation work itself.

If your home qualifies for external wall insulation, it is very likely that the ventilation in your kitchen and bathroom will also need upgrading. This is critical to reduce the risks of condensation and mould. It will help maintain healthy indoor air quality after your insulation work is completed.

The contractor has a Resident Liaison Officer who can discuss the work with you. And you will have opportunities to ask questions about the works as soon as you have been invited to take part in the insulation programme.

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

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, 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... Cambridge Online may be able to help for free. You can phone them at 01223-300407.

£1,500 for local groups

The Cambridge *Good Life Fund* is giving grants of up to £1,500 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 their information video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3HrFZft6I0 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



Register for your personal **Housing Services account** at www.cambridge.gov.uk/online-accounts

Cambridge Virtual Community

For support, inspiration & activities visit www.facebook.com/cambridgevcc

Domestic Abuse 24-hour Helpline

Tel: Freephone 0808-2000-247
Visit www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Make council payments by phone

Tel: 01223-457000, with bank card

Homelessness & temporary accommodation, outside office hours

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

Rents, tenancies, lettings, renting a council garage

Tel: 01223-457000
Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants

Repairs

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

Contact Council in Sign Language

Register at <https://signlive.co.uk>, then dial 01223-457000 for a live interpreter

Council Tax

Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk
Tel: 01223-457000

Housing for Older People and Visiting Support Service

E: independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk
Tel: 01223-457000

Home-Link lettings

Visit www.home-link.org.uk
Tel: 01223-457000

Housing & Council Tax Benefits

Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk
Tel: 01223-457000

Bins, recycling, street-cleaning

Visit 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 tenancy fraud

E: fightfraud@cambridge.gov.uk

Report anti-social behaviour

E: asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk
Tel: 01223-457000

Noise complaints

E: env.health@cambridge.gov.uk
Tel: 01223-457000

Council emergencies out of hours

Tel: 0300-3038389

To complain about council services

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

Council's contractors on estates

TSG Services

E: enquiries@tsgplc.co.uk
Tel: 01223-828777
For gas or hot water, tel. 0800-111-4044

Foster Property Maintenance

E: info@fpm-ltd.co.uk
Tel: 01945-586999

Goshen communal cleaning

E: cs@goshenmultiservices.com
Tel: 0754-2826553

Hi-Spec window cleaning

E: helpdesk@hispecservices.co.uk

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.