Cambridge Matters

Autumn 2026

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL'S MAGAZINE FOR RESIDENTS





Current affairs

How we're working to protect our waterways

Remember, remember...

Midsummer Common fireworks on 5 November

The Arbury Social

The café where community is on the menu

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Cambridge City Council *in numbers*

The council's vision, as agreed by our councillors, has six key themes which set out our ambitions for the city:

- Residents enjoy a high quality of life and exemplar public services
- Decarbonisation and sustainability are central to prosperity
- Innovation benefits people and planet
- Development is sustainable and inclusive
- Arts, sports, and culture are thriving
- Democratic accountability is genuine and accessible

Here are just a few of the things we've achieved during 2025-26 to work towards the council's vision:

Completed **126 new council homes** and submitted plans for almost 300 more.

Kept the city clean with more than **144,000 public bin collections** and cleaning 3,000 miles of our city streets, equivalent to travelling from Cambridge to Istanbul.

We were named one of the **world's top 120 cities** for climate action, with **'A' rating** for the third year running.

Planted **201 trees** and maintained **14 miles of waterways**.

Worked with more than **1,100 young people** and 29 schools through the Creative Futures programme, delivering **99 sessions** and providing **75 work experience placements**.

Facilitated over **1,600 hours** of free or low-cost fitness activities, with a total of more than **15,000 attendances** over the year.

Welcomed more than **180,000 people** to events at the Guildhall and the Corn Exchange, and **entertained over 45,500 people** at free events like Fireworks, Music in the Parks and the Out of the Ordinary festival.

Helped prevent or ease homelessness in 397 cases and supported 26 rough sleepers into accommodation.

Managed **1.9 million car park visits**, supporting around **3 million** visitors to the city.



Find out more about what the council did for residents and visitors in 2025-26 by reading our Annual Report.

How to contact Cambridge City Council

Website

Visit our website **cambridge.gov.uk** to report something to us using one of our online forms.

You can report many things this way, including issues with bins, noise, antisocial behaviour, food premises, parks and streets, trees, taxis and more.

Telephone

Contact us by telephone Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.15pm: **01223 457000**

Dial 18001 before the telephone number to use Test Relay (for people with hearing or speech difficulties).

Customer Service Centre appointments

Our customer Service Centre at Mandela House centre is open for appointments only, from 9am to 5.15pm, Wednesday to Friday. Please contact us to make an appointment.

EMERGENCIES Outside of office hours (9am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday) and on public holidays, you can phone us in an emergency on 0300 303 8389.

Cambridge Matters

Autumn 2026







What's on 8
Fireworks Night set to sparkle on Midsummer Common

Welcome to the Autumn issue of Cambridge Matters

The River Cam and our rare chalk streams are part of what makes Cambridge so special, but they are under real pressure from drought, pollution and growth. In 'the big story' *(pages 6–7)* you can read how we're working with partners to protect and restore them, from new wetlands to water-saving work in council buildings.

On our cover is The Arbury Social, the new community café at our Meadows Community Centre *(page 12)*. Run by Cambridge Sustainable Food in partnership with the council, it's not-for-profit, so every meal sold helps fund local food projects. Do pop in and say hello. And our free fireworks return to Midsummer Common on Thursday 5 November *(page 8)*. Please plan ahead and walk, cycle or use public transport if you can.



K Thornburrow

Cllr Katie Thornburrow
Leader, Cambridge City Council

Cllr Katie Thornburrow (centre) with Cllr Tim Bick, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, and Cllr Naomi Bennett, then Leader of the Green Group, pictured in May.

Cllr Katie Thornburrow has led the council's minority administration since May, working closely with opposition group leaders.

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On the cover: Cambridge Sustainable Food volunteers at the Arbury Social cafe

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News in brief

Catch up on the latest news and stories from around the city.



Three-day Folk Festival returns for 2027

The crowds flocked back to Cambridge Folk Festival earlier this year, for two days showcasing the best in folk and roots music at Cherry Hinton Hall, following a packed season of other folk-themed performances and events around the city.

Following the success of this first ever citywide event, 2027's festival will again feature events and performances across Cambridge. However, next year's festival will feature three days of music at the Cherry Hinton Hall site, after public demand for the reinstatement of live entertainment on the Friday too.

This means that next year's main festival will run from Friday 30 July to Sunday 1 August in 2027 and tickets are already on sale, with first announcements about next year's line-up coming soon.

For more information visit **cambridgefolkfestival.co.uk**





Millions unlocked for council to build new homes

Earlier this year the Government announced that Cambridge City Council had been successful in our bid for a £96.4m grant to accelerate the building of many more council homes in Cambridge.

This new 'Strategic Partnership' will finance 803 council homes, 723 to be offered at the very lowest level of rent, known as 'social rent'. Winning the bid has also unlocked a further £584m to deliver a bigger programme of nearly 3,000 new homes over the next decade. 1,400 of these will be new council homes.

The council has delivered nearly 900 much-needed council homes in Cambridge over the last eight years and has been a top ten council home builder for two of the last four years.

Milton Recycling Centre to close during upgrade programme

Early in 2027, work is planned to begin on the modernisation and upgrade of the Milton Household Recycling Centre (HRC), run by the county council, which is the nearest large recycling site for many residents. Work is expected to start in January 2027 and last for 15 months. While it takes place, the current Milton site will close and a booking system will be introduced for the other three closest sites in Cambridgeshire – at Thriplow, Witchford and Bluntisham.



For more details of the Milton project, visit the county council's website: **cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling**

Out and about with the Mayor

The Mayor of Cambridge, Cllr Maria Cleminson, has been representing the city at a huge variety of events during the civic year so far. Here she is pictured with members of the community at an event to mark India Day in the city.

The Mayor's role is ceremonial, dating back to 1207 and duties include chairing full council meetings and attending hundreds of events and civic engagements on behalf of the city.



New web service takes the strain out of planning permission

People in Cambridge can now access a new online tool to help them decide if they are likely to need planning permission before carrying out building work or making changes to a property.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning - the planning service shared by Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils - has launched a free 'Do I need planning permission?' service. It prompts users to answer a series of questions about their proposed project, and provides tailored guidance based on planning legislation and local constraints. To use it, all people need is the address of the property and details of the changes they are considering.

Planning permission may be required for a wide range of developments, but some proposals can be carried out without the need for a formal planning application. The new service has been introduced to help residents access clear guidance before starting a project, at a time that suits them.

For more information visit **greatercambridge planning.org**





Punt touting restrictions renewed in boost to city centre

Punting along the Cam is an iconic Cambridge activity – enjoyed by thousands of visitors and residents alike each year.

Back in 2016 we brought in a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in response to an increasing number of complaints that were being received about inappropriate touting for punt tours. Since introducing the PSPO, the number of complaints has decreased significantly – making visiting the historic city centre an even more positive experience – so this year, we've renewed it for a further three years.

This means that punt tour operators will continue to be prevented from touting for customers, either by speaking to people directly or through other means like displaying advertising signs, in most parts of the city centre apart from in six designated areas.

It's hoped that the renewal of the PSPO will continue to help make visiting Cambridge a great experience for everyone.

Current affairs

How we're working to help enhance and restore the city's waterways



One of the many special things about living in or visiting Cambridge is its unique relationship with the River Cam and its streams and tributaries.

From Byron's Pool and Grantchester Meadows in the south-west of the city, through the historic university colleges of the city centre, past boathouses, houseboats, back gardens and bridges, and onwards along Midsummer and Stourbridge Commons – the river helps give Cambridge a crucial part of its character.

But the Cam, along with its streams and tributaries, and like many other rivers around the world, is under strain due to a number of factors – including the effects of climate change, pollution entering its watercourse and increased water need as our city grows.

It's a complex picture. In Cambridge and beyond, many different organisations, including the council, have shared responsibility for the protection and enhancement of the river, the important habitats it sustains and the part it plays in the region's life. That's why in October, Cambridge City Council formally approved a programme to protect and improve the River Cam and local chalk streams, to reflect current pressures and opportunities.

Protecting our rare chalk streams

One of the most important ways we are already working in partnership to monitor and improve the health of the watercourses in the city is through the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project. We fund this project with Anglian Water, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Hobson's Conduit Trust and South Staffordshire Water/Cambridge Water. Throughout this year we have been overseeing work to prepare case study sites at five locations in the city – Cherry Hinton Brook, Coldham's Brook, Hobson's Brook, Giant's Grave and Nine Wells – which will provide vital evidence to help the Chalk Stream Project's goal to protect, restore and enhance the network of internationally important chalk streams found in Cambridge and beyond.

Enhancing nature and habitats

The River Cam and its connected streams, wetlands and other habitats, including within council-managed open spaces and local nature reserves, form part of the wider Cambridge Nature Network in and around the city. We work with partners to protect and enhance these natural 'corridors' which can help habitats and species become more resilient to the effects of climate change and help make Cambridge a city where people and nature live side by side. In recent years partners have overseen the creation of a new wetland at Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve, and a fish pass at Sheep's Green. A new project at Sheep's Green will soon see the restoration of some old watercourses and the creation of new ones there. These partnership projects are all aimed at making habitats more connected, boosting biodiversity, and strengthening the resilience of the Cam.





We work with partners to protect and enhance these natural corridors which can help habitats and species become more resilient.

The council also recently:

- Invested in essential repairs to part of the river wall at Jesus Green, working alongside the Conservators of the River Cam, the statutory navigation authority for the river responsible for the locks, weirs and sluices that hold up the water level of the Cam
- Agreed to continue with its programme of herbicide-free weed management in the city, reducing chemical treatments and supporting biodiversity
- Secured grant funding of up to £1.9m from Cambridge Water to support the development and delivery of restoration work for our chalk streams

Water scarcity

Water supply is one of the major pressures facing the Cambridge area as it grows. It is often extracted from the chalk aquifer – the underlying water stores that feed our streams and rivers. Excessive extraction can have knock-on effects on their health and sustainability.

Earlier this year our planning service – shared with South Cambridgeshire District Council – was given funding of more than £5m to help address water scarcity locally, as part of the Government's commitment to ensuring there is adequate water supply and wastewater capacity for sustainable growth in Greater Cambridge. The Government's Water Efficiency Programme aims to deliver water saving initiatives and ensure sustainable development can proceed in the short-term, while water companies work to deliver major infrastructure improvements such as the Grafham Water pipeline and Fens reservoir projects.

The councils are using this funding to drive down demand for water in the area and offset new development by installing water saving devices in existing council-owned buildings through a programme of retrofit work.

Alongside this, the councils are investigating opportunities to install water saving devices and identify leaks in council homes, as well as properties maintained by the councils such as at our swimming pools.



Q&A with...

Rob Martyr

Rob Martyr is the council's lead officer on the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project.

So Rob, why are chalk streams so special in our area?

"There are only about 220-230 chalk streams in the world. Many of them are in East Anglia – in Cambridge alone we've got Hobson's Brook, Cherry Hinton Brook, Coldham's Brook, Vicar's Brook. They're fed by ground water springs – the aquifer beneath our feet, which is essentially a giant reservoir of fresh water, and there are particular species of plants and animals which are specialists at living in that groundwater-fed system."

What are some of the threats to chalk streams?

"Chalk streams are under multiple pressures. We're in an area where a tremendous amount of growth is happening, so demand on water is a major issue, particularly during droughts like this summer. Other issues include pollution – within the aquifer itself and also surface water pollution from things like tyre rubber and microplastics. One of the other major issues is climate change, so with all these things happening at once chalk streams are struggling."

What are the basic aims of the project?

"In a nutshell, what we're trying to do is create a resilient system. We want to improve our channels to make them more sinuous and wiggly, increase the flow where we can, and reduce the amount of sediment – which is particularly harmful at critical life stages such as when we have fish spawning."

Find out more and watch a full interview with Rob at **cambridge.gov.uk/chalk-streams** or by scanning the QR code here.

The main event

A look at what's happening across Cambridge.

Fireworks Night set to sparkle on Midsummer Common

One of the biggest free annual fireworks displays in the region returns – with a bang – to Midsummer Common this year on Thursday 5 November.

The event, which is put on each year by the council, is one of the city's longest running and best loved community events and always attracts thousands of spectators to enjoy the spectacle in the centre of Cambridge.

The first fireworks are due to go up at 7pm – but before the main event lights up the sky above the city, the crowds will be entertained from 6pm by a live DJ plus exciting walkabout performers, and can also enjoy something to eat and drink from an array of street food vans.

The fireworks display will once again be brought to the city by Pains Fireworks, a multi award-winning fireworks display company, and one of the longest-established in the UK.

The annual fireworks is able to be free to the public each year thanks to the support of local businesses and organisations. In addition to this support people attending the Midsummer Common Fireworks can contribute by putting some money into a collection bucket on the night, or by donating online.

Large numbers of people are expected to attend, so please leave plenty of time for your journey, arrive early if you can and wherever possible walk, cycle, or use public transport. Additional Park & Ride services will be available on the evening.

For more free events visit **camcityevents.co.uk**

Thank you to principal sponsors RBC Brewin Dolphin, Cambridge BID and AstraZeneca and community sponsors Redgate Software, Peasgood and Skeates and Jesus College, for their generous support of this event.

Festive music, laughter and dance at the Corn Exchange

There are few better ways to get into the Christmas spirit than sharing a night of festive entertainment with friends and family. So this year, why not head to the Corn Exchange where there's a packed programme of seasonal shows to enjoy?

Highlights include The Nutcracker and Swan Lake (27-31 Dec) from the Margaliyev Classic Ballet; Live at Christmas featuring top comedians including Nina Conti, Bridget Christie, and Jen Brister (3 Dec); Christmas with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (6 Dec); folk legend Kate Rusby at Christmas (17 Dec); Xmas on the Dancefloor with Gorka Marquez (18 Dec) and a host of other Yuletide delights.

And all this alongside other exciting shows from the likes of Shed Seven, The Unthanks, Sam Campbell, Del Amitri, Susan Calman, Professor Alice Roberts and more!

For the full Winter and Christmas line-up at the Corn Exchange visit **cornex.co.uk**



Residents' views

Sponsor a new tree and help our urban forest thrive

Did you know that Cambridge residents and businesses can donate and sponsor the planting of a new tree in their street or favourite park?

Through our partnership with the charity Trees for Streets, more than 200 trees have been planted across the city since the scheme started here five years ago.

The application process is simple – just go to the Trees for Streets website (details below); tell us what tree you would like (subject to availability), where you'd like it planted, and our officers will go out to survey the area to make sure it is suitable for the tree to be planted. Your donation is just a fraction of the overall cost, the council covers the rest.

We spoke to Vivienne, John, Ellen and Andrea – Cambridge residents who have chosen to sponsor a tree where they live, to mark notable moments and people in their lives.

Vivienne

Oriental plane tree, Midsummer Common

How did you find out about the scheme?

I actually saw a tree on Jesus Green that had a scan code on it saying it has been sponsored. At the time my husband, David, was very unwell and I thought it would be a lovely thing to do in his memory. I noticed that a large tree had come down directly opposite the boat club that he was president of for many years and so approached you to see if we could replace it with one for him.

Why did you choose Midsummer Common?

David spent many years coaching and was always cycling along Midsummer Common so it seemed like a very fitting place. I recently met a young man by the tree who said that it now holds special memories for him, because he and his wife celebrated next to the tree when they found out they were expecting their first baby – so I hope that in years to come it will become special for a lot of people.

What do you think about the Trees for Streets sponsorship scheme?

I think it's lovely that more trees have been planted on Midsummer Common and Jesus Green because I think we're going to need more and more shade and help with improving our air quality. I think a long-term wish would be that we could plant more fruit trees so that people who don't have gardens could help themselves.

John and Ellen

Horse chestnut tree, Midsummer Common

John, how did you find out about the scheme?

It was from Cambridge Matters. I was looking for a 40th birthday present for Ellen and which would also benefit our local community.

Photos by Diana Hagues dianahaguesphotography.co.uk







Andrea

Hornbeam tree, Logan's Meadow

Andrea's hornbeam tree is part of Logan's Meadow local Nature Reserve, helping create a sanctuary for wildlife and reducing the impact of urban heat island effect by lowering local air temperature. She is pictured here surrounded by the nature reserve, which was still green at the end of August despite the heatwaves.

Andrea said: "I decided to sponsor the tree as a 50 years old celebration for my best friend and the tree is planted near the coffee place we used to go each Saturday for years, so it's a nice story to tell (and the tree is great!)"

Ellen, how did you feel receiving the sponsored tree as a gift?

I loved it! It was a really special and unique present – I love that our whole family feel such a connection to it and enjoy saying hello and checking on it as we walk past. It is very satisfying to see it grow and change with the seasons.

What benefits do you think your sponsored tree will provide in the years to come?

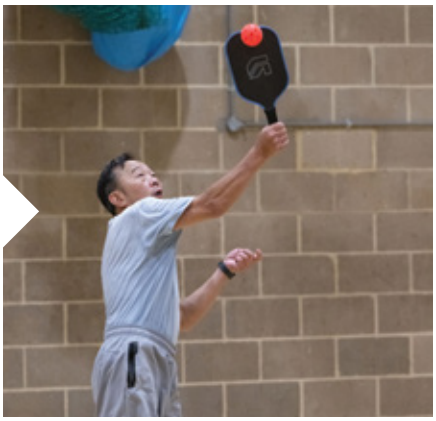
Trees provide so many benefits. In terms of the environment, they provide shade and a home for birds and insects and of course help mitigate climate change. For residents and visitors, they look beautiful, support mental health and wellbeing and improve air quality. In practical terms, trees also reduce flood risk, which is particularly important in this area since it's a flood risk zone.

Visit **treesforstreets.org/Cambridge**, choose a location on a map, make a donation and Trees for Streets does the rest.

Get active, keep active

Healthy activities and opportunities for people of all ages.

Pickleball a big hit in the city





This year our informal pickleball sessions at different venues across the city have proved very popular with adults looking for a fun and sociable regular activity. Some of our sessions are currently full up – but if you're interested in giving the sport a go you can still join sessions for a small fee at Cherry Hinton Village Centre (Fridays 2.15pm) and David Lloyd Sports Centre (Wednesdays 1.45pm). Check for availability or sign up at **bookwhen.com/camsport**

What is pickleball?

Pickleball is a fun sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis, and table tennis. Two or four players use solid paddles to hit a perforated ball over the net. As well as the hosted sessions mentioned above, the council manages 18 tennis courts around the city, 10 of which also have pickleball markings.

Future Champions programme helps young sportspeople aim for the top



Do you know a talented young sportsperson who could benefit from a grant to help them achieve their goals?

Future sports stars in the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire area could be eligible for grants of up to £200 in this year's Sir Arthur Marshall Future Champions Programme, to support them with the expenses of competing.

The Future Champions programme, which is run by the council and sponsored by Marshall of Cambridge, is open to people aged 11-25 and can help towards things like coaching fees, equipment, travel and competition entries. Applicants need to live in Cambridge or South Cambridgeshire, compete at county or regional level, and do most of their training in the city.

The closing date for applying is 20 November. After that a panel meets to award the grants, and a ceremony for successful applicants will then be held in February 2027.

Find out more at **cambridge.gov.uk/future-champions-grants**

Helping you stay stronger for longer

As we age, regular activity is important to maintaining good physical health and mental wellbeing.

The council's programme for older adults is open to residents across Cambridge and offers a wealth of fun and sociable activities to keep you moving.

Our guided sessions range from seated strength and balance to standing circuit and t'ai chi classes, and cater for a range of abilities, no matter current fitness level. Many of our classes are open to those who use walking aids or who struggle to stand independently for prolonged periods.

Classes cost between £3.50-£4.50 with subsidised access available at just £2 for those in receipt of some benefits. The subsidised rate is available at circuit and small-gym based classes from November and at strength and balance classes from January.

Our programme of physical activity for older adults is offered thanks to funding from Cambridgeshire County Council's Public Health team and the National Lottery.

Check your eligibility and apply for subsidised rate access to classes by scanning the QR code.



To view our entire list of older adult sessions, visit **cambridge.gov.uk/physical-activities-for-older-adults** or call **01223 458637**. You can book some classes and sessions in advance at **bookwhen.com/camsport**

Building for the future

Community spaces and housing for residents.





New council homes and community facilities taking shape

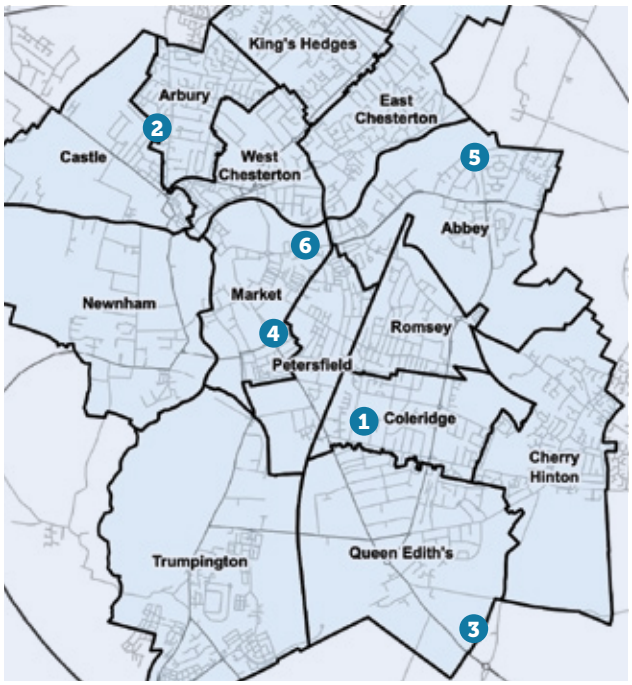
If you've been past the corner of Barnwell Road and Newmarket Road in Abbey ward recently, you may have noticed that the landmark new development there – Barnwell Square – is nearing completion.

This is the first phase of the wider East Barnwell project, which is transforming the area on both sides of Barnwell Road. In total, there will be 120 council homes built by Cambridge Investment Partnership (the partnership between Cambridge City Council and the Hill Group) plus new commercial units and community facilities. This first phase, due to finish in December, will see 54 new council homes alongside a brand new community centre, 'The Nest', run by local group Abbey People, a public library, a pre-school, the first commercial unit and new landscaped open spaces. The community centre incorporating the library is expected to open to the public in early 2027. Look out for details of some special events to mark the opening of Barnwell Square coming soon!

To find out more about how the council is building new much-needed council homes visit **cambridge.gov.uk/building-council-houses**

Where we're building new council homes for Cambridge

Through Cambridge Investment Partnership, our partnership with The Hill Group, the council has been a top ten council house builder for two of the last four years, with nearly 900 new council homes built since 2018. With more new homes on the way at:



1 City Reach, Fanshawe Road
84 new homes with 45 council homes, including four wheelchair-accessible council homes and 39 market sale homes. First phase due for completion early 2027.

2 Fitzwilliam Gate, Histon Road
28 new council homes and 42 private sale homes. 21 of the council homes will be let at 60% of market rent and seven will be 80% of the market rent.

3 Newbury Farm, Babraham Road
150 new homes including 60 council homes, ranging from one-bedroom apartments to five-bedroom homes set in landscaped green spaces.

4 Hanover Court and Princess Court, off Hills Road
72 new council homes to be built as part of the 165 new homes planned to replace ageing blocks of flats, with start on site expected 2027.

5 Ekin Road
134 high quality homes, 78 new council homes and 56 private sale homes including much-needed five-bedroom council homes.

6 Stanton House, Christchurch/Napier Street
Planning has been submitted for the redevelopment of the council-owned site to provide 29 high-quality council homes, including 12 one-bedroom homes for people with learning difficulties.

cambridge.gov.uk/building-council-houses









The Arbury Social

The café where community is on the menu!

A vibrant new community café – The Arbury Social – opened at the Meadows Community Centre on Arbury Road recently, bringing together great food, community connection and a shared ambition to create a fairer and more sustainable local food system.

It is now open five days a week, serving up delicious, freshly prepared meals made from scratch using seasonal, surplus and locally sourced ingredients. This approach helps reduce food waste and lower emissions while providing fresh, affordable food for customers.

But the initiative behind The Arbury Social is about much more than just the café itself. It's run by Cambridge Sustainable Food, in partnership with Cambridge City Council, on a not-for-profit basis, meaning every meal sold helps fund food projects in the local area. These include holiday lunch programmes for local children, meals for local food hubs, community food events and the redistribution of surplus food to people in the nearby community who need it most.

Alongside its café, The Arbury Social will host shared meals, cookery sessions, pop-up events, volunteering opportunities and a pay-it-forward scheme, creating new ways for people to come together, learn new skills and build community connections through good food.

The refurbishment works to the previous kitchen at The Meadows were carried out by New Meaning Foundation, an award-winning local social enterprise that helps young people gain skills, training and employment opportunities. Their involvement reflects the commitment of everyone involved in The Arbury Social to creating opportunities for local people, helping them develop skills, gain confidence and build pathways into employment.

Sam Dyer of Cambridge Sustainable Food, said: "We'd love to see the cafe become a lively hub for the local community, where people can not only eat well but connect with others and feel part of something really positive. The Arbury Social does this in a way that also supports local growers and businesses and helps create a fairer and more sustainable food system in Cambridge. We're really excited to be able to offer this new community space and can't wait to welcome everyone in".

The Arbury Social is at Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Road CB4 2JL.

For more information about The Arbury Social visit **cambridge.gov.uk/meadows-community-centre**

Ready-meal project

The launch of the café also marks the start of a new ready-meal project, being developed by Cambridge Sustainable Food as part of a joint DEFRA-funded programme with Cambridge City Council to assess and strengthen Cambridge's community food system.

Using locally grown, seasonal and surplus ingredients, the project will create a range of nutritious, cooked from scratch affordable meals for distribution through local food hubs and social supermarkets.

The initiative is also funded by Illumina, through its ongoing partnership with Cambridge Sustainable Food, and supported by ibis Hotels Cambridge, bringing together public, community and business partners to increase access to good food while reducing waste and supporting a more sustainable local food system.

Cosy homes: Six ways to help get your home winter-ready



As the weather gets colder, and evenings grow longer, it's time to think about keeping our homes cosy and warm, while trying to ensure we don't waste energy. Well-insulated homes and low carbon heating can have a positive impact on the environment, and on our utility bills. There are some simple steps you can take to ensure your home is ready for winter.

1. Book a service

Book an annual service for your gas boiler – and find out what to do if your boiler's pipes freeze up in very cold weather at **cambridge.gov.uk/frozen-pipes**

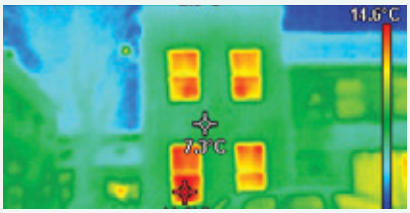


Photo by he gong on Unsplash

2. Bleed radiators

Bleed radiators to remove any air trapped in the system and make sure any draughts, leaks or gaps in your home are addressed, to prevent cold air coming in and heat leaking out.

If you want to take your comfort and energy saving to the next stage, there is also support available to Cambridge residents...



3. Where heat is escaping

Cambridge Carbon Footprint run a thermal imaging scheme, with 16 cameras available to borrow for free – from November. Find out more and sign up at **cambridgecarbonfootprint.org**

4. Home improvement advice

Each home in Cambridge is different, which is why we helped create 'Your Home Energy Upgrade Guide', with tailored guidance on home improvements for energy efficiency for different types of houses found in the city, as well as low- and no-cost actions to take. **actiononenergycambs.org/guidance-and-installation**

5. Visit a heat pump near you

If you're looking to replace your boiler, you may want to consider a heat pump. If you're wondering whether a heat pump would work in a home like yours, 'Visit a Heat Pump' is a free service from the charity Nesta that connects you with people near you who already have one. See and hear the unit for yourself, and ask an owner anything: **visitaheatpump.com**

6. Funding available

You may be eligible for funding via the Warm Homes Local Grant or a Boiler Upgrade scheme to support with the cost of retrofitting to reduce carbon emissions, improve comfort, and help reduce your energy bills. More details can be found on the Action on Energy website **actiononenergycambs.org/funding**

For more tips and inspiration, contact us to join our new newsletter mailing list: **SustainableCity@cambridge.gov.uk**

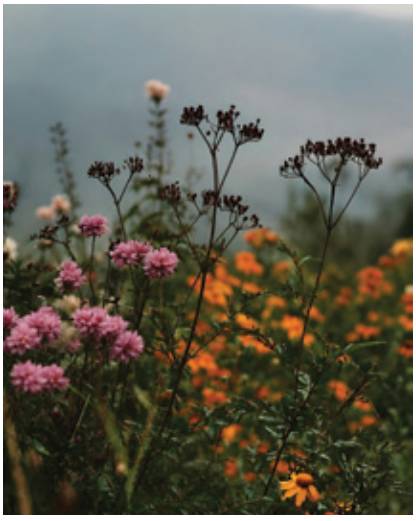
Renewable energy network set to provide boost for nature

You may have read previously in Cambridge Matters about the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network – the pioneering renewable energy solar park which will help power electric bin lorries and other vehicles for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

As well as helping us significantly reduce carbon emissions from our waste vehicles, the five-acre site itself will create new habitats and improve existing ones for wildlife through a number of measures including:

- New wildflower and other areas to provide a range of habitats for insects and invertebrates.
- A 280m length of mixed shrubby native hedge being planted and existing hedgerows being coppiced, to regenerate growth.
- A new drainage pond feature being seeded with native species to encourage biodiversity.

The site is located right next to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire's shared waste fleet depot near Waterbeach, on land that was previously part of a wider landfill site. It is due to be complete and start generating renewable energy from the end of this year.





A bin lorry fire caused by incorrect disposal of batteries

Help prevent fires:
Recycle batteries, vapes & electrical items safely

- **Small household batteries:** Simply put small batteries into a bag, tie or seal it and leave it on top of the lid of your green, blue or black bin on collection day. If you live in a flat with large shared bins, please take batteries to recycling points inside local shops.
- **Larger batteries:** Batteries from items like laptops, power tools, car batteries or e-bikes can be taken to some shops such as Halfords, B&Q or Screwfix and to the large Recycling Centres near Milton and Thriplow.
- **Vapes**: Please take vapes to recycling points inside shops. All shops which sell vapes have these. You can also take them to large Household Recycling Centres.
- **Small electrical items:** All shops which sell a significant amount of electrical items must accept them back for recycling if you are buying a replacement. You can do this with a receipt within 28 days. Some shops will accept items for recycling without a purchase, this includes Currys and B&Q. John Lewis also accepts small items under 25cm in their longest dimension. You can also take any electrical item to large Household Recycling Centres.

Find your closest recycling facilities for all of these items at **recycleyourelectricals.org.uk**

It's a **wrap(per)!!**

How to recycle your bags, wrappers and films

Did you know that as well as recycling plastics such as bottles, margarine tubs, yoghurt pots and microwave meal trays in your blue bin, you can also recycle many plastic bags, wrappers and films?

These types of plastic film are often labelled 'Not yet recycled' or 'Recycle at larger supermarkets' because most councils don't currently accept them. We can recycle these.

After sorting, plastic films are sent to a specialist recycling plant in Spain where they are made into pellets to supply plastic product manufacturers. They are then used in making things like new plastic bags and bin liners, plastic pipes and plastic decking. **Here's a quick guide to what can be recycled in your blue bin – it might be more than you think!**

What kinds of wrapping can be recycled?

✓ YES ✓

- CLEAN packaging from food and household products, up to the size of a bin bag
- Plastics which are not metallic (ie not those with silver or gold coating inside)

Examples:

- Carrier bags
- Cling film
- Bags or wrappers from foods e.g:
  - Bread and baked goods
  - Cereal and porridge
  - Dried goods – dried fruit, pasta, rice, sugar, pulses, etc
  - Frozen foods and ice cubes
  - Fresh fruit and veg
  - Grated cheese
  - Non-metallic crisp multipack outer bags
  - Pizza wrap
- Other packaging e.g:
  - Bags or wrappers from new clothing
  - Plastic mailing envelopes

✗ NO ✗

- Packaging from industrial uses or large items
- Dirty packaging – e.g. with food or compost on it
- Metallic wrappers
- Items smaller than a business card
- Black bin bags

Examples:

- Metallic plastics:
  - Silver or gold tea or coffee packets
  - Pet food pouches
  - Drinks pouches
  - Sweets bags and wrappers
  - Crisp packets
- Small items:
  - Sauce sachets
  - Small corners torn off packets
- Large items:
  - Long lengths of bubble wrap
  - Pallet wrap
- Dirty items:
  - Items covered in food or soil



What goes in which bin?
Scan the QR code for more help and information or go to:
greatercambridgewaste.org

Your council

Assistance, advice and updates from Cambridge City Council

Financial advice and cost of living: How we can help

If you're trying to make savings on your bills, need help to organise your finances, or are unsure whether you are entitled to benefits, the council may be able to help you.

1. Claiming benefits

Make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are eligible for. You can use our online benefit calculator at **cambridge.entitledto.co.uk** to check your entitlement.

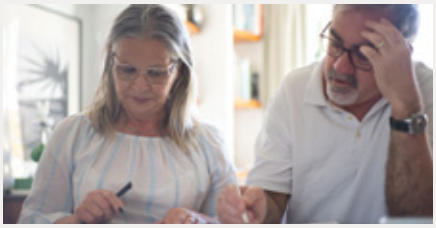
If you rent your home and receive a pension or are on a low income, you might be entitled to receive Housing Benefit. If you receive Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and it does not cover the full cost of your rent, contact us to ask about a Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payment.

2. Discounts on council tax bills

Various discounts, reductions and exemptions to your Council Tax bill are available, including spreading payment over 12 months rather than the usual 10. For details of all discounts, including the Council Tax Reduction scheme for people on lower incomes, visit **cambridge.gov.uk/council-tax**

3. Advice on housing, rent and mortgages

Our Housing Advice service provides free, confidential advice to anyone who lives in Cambridge. We can provide advice on a wide range of housing



issues, from landlord disputes to homelessness. Visit **cambridge.gov.uk/housing-advice**

If you live in a rented council property and are struggling to pay your rent, contact us as soon as possible. We can offer different payment methods, provide advice and, if necessary, refer you to external agencies for support.

If you are homeless or threatened with becoming homeless, our Access Scheme could help you afford the up-front costs of getting into private rented accommodation. In some circumstances, we can offer small interest-free loans to help you avoid losing your home.

We also provide plenty of advice for people living in private rented accommodation in Cambridge, as well as to landlords. Visit **cambridge.gov.uk/private-rented-accommodation**

Are your voter registration details up to date?

The council is currently conducting an annual canvass of the Electoral Register to ensure that it is up to date, so all eligible residents can exercise their right to vote. During August, every household in the city received an email, letter or text confirming who is currently registered to vote at their address.

If your household's information is not accurate, or the instructions state a response is legally required, please respond using the online service. You can complete your response at **elecreg.co.uk/cambridge**, using the two-part security code on the enquiry form to log in.

The next scheduled elections in Cambridge are on Thursday 6 May 2027.

For more information visit **cambridge.gov.uk/elections**, email **elections@cambridge.gov.uk** or phone **01223 457048**



Meet your councillors

In every issue we'll meet one of the 42 councillors elected to represent you on Cambridge City Council.

Cllr Katie Porrer has represented Market ward, which covers much of Cambridge's historic city centre, as a Liberal Democrat councillor since 2019. She chairs the council's Planning Committee, which makes decisions on some of the most significant planning applications in the city, from new homes to changes to listed buildings and city-centre businesses.

"I have lived in Cambridge for nearly 20 years with my family and I wanted to try and do something positive to contribute to our city, its future development and our communities. I also felt strongly that we needed more women and working parents in politics to ensure that local residents are better represented in decision making. This is what motivated me to stand in 2019 and ever since.

"Market ward is a great ward to represent with its open spaces, thriving local businesses and residents living in all kinds of different types of housing. I will always do my best to resolve issues brought to me, and to make our city a better place for everyone, whether resident, visitor or employed here."

To contact Cllr Porrer or to find details of the councillors representing your ward visit: **cambridge.gov.uk/councillors-and-committees**



Send us your pictures!

Cambridge is surely one of the most photogenic cities in the country – if not the world.

So we're inviting readers of Cambridge Matters to send us pictures which celebrate the real life of the city, not just of the famous historic areas (although they'll be gratefully received too), but also the less well-known corners of the city near where you live, and perhaps which mean something special to you.

It could be a favourite building, a local open space, a street, a treasured view, or even an activity you and your family and friends have taken part in recently in the city. Whatever they are, we'd love to see your pictures – just send them to **cambridgematters@cambridge.gov.uk** with the title 'Cambridge Matters pictures' and we'll print a selection of our favourites in forthcoming issues.

If we print yours, we'll also send you a £10 voucher to spend in the city – and we might even use some for future magazine covers (with your permission of course).











Top to bottom: *Cattle on Midsummer Common, Autumn on Jesus Green, Jesus Green Lido, Cambridge Folk Festival, Coldham's Common*

Readers' survey winner!

Thanks to everyone who took part in the readers' survey in the summer issue of Cambridge Matters. Your comments and ideas have helped shape the refreshed look and feel of the magazine and will continue to do so in the future.

People who took part in the survey had the chance to win a £50 Love Cambridge gift card, which can be used at a wide variety of businesses across the city, including shops, restaurants, bars, beauty salons, and many more.

The Cambridge Matters reader who won the voucher was Kim Brinnen. Congratulations and thanks again for getting involved!



Do you have any thoughts, comments or ideas about Cambridge Matters magazine? Let us know by emailing **cambridgematters@cambridge.gov.uk**