

WINTER 2024

Cambridge Matters



CAMBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL

Cambridge City Council's magazine for residents

Christmas in Cambridge

Ice skating and festive shows

Changes to winter fuel payments

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Latest on proposals to upgrade the market square, Guildhall and Corn Exchange

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Front cover: The Guildhall in Market Square

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Get your skates on for Christmas in Cambridge

Parker's Piece is being transformed this festive season with the welcome arrival of the new 'Christmas in Cambridge' attraction, which is bringing an extra dash of seasonal spirit back to the heart of the city.



Christmas in Cambridge will be open throughout December and into the new year, featuring the largest outdoor ice rink seen in the city. Just book a slot, hire some skates and off you glide – if you prefer something a little more leisurely you can simply kick back and watch the skaters from one of the rinkside food and drink establishments or even reserve your own heated dome with friends. Entry to the site itself is

free seven days a week.

Besides ice skating, daredevils can enjoy the giant ferris wheel or the vintage carousel ride, get lost in the Christmas tree maze or enjoy fun and games from curling to shuffleboard and table

football. Add to the mix a whole host of gift ideas at the Christmas Market plus all your favourite festive nibbles and tipples – and it's clear there's going to be something for visitors of all ages to enjoy this Christmas in Cambridge.

📄 For booking and more information:
🌐 christmasincambridge.co.uk
Open seven days a week until 5 January (except Christmas Day), check website for opening times

Changes to council opening hours at Christmas

During the festive period, there will be some changes to when you will be able to speak to our Customer Services team. You can call us on 01223 457000 at the following times:

- Tuesday 24 December** 9am-2pm
- Wednesday 25 December** Closed
- Thursday 26 December** Closed
- Friday 27 December** 9am-5.15pm
- Monday 30 December** 9am-5.15pm
- Tuesday 31 December** 9am-4pm
- Wednesday 1 January** Closed

Outside of these hours, you can contact the council if it is an emergency on 0300 303 8389.

You can report non-emergency enquiries such as reporting a missed bin or to make a noise complaint throughout the festive period online at cambridge.gov.uk/report-it.

You can also check information without needing to speak to us: cambridge.gov.uk/online-accounts. Can't find the support you need? Complete our general enquiry form at: cambridge.gov.uk/contact-us

How to contact Cambridge City Council

It's often easier to contact us online, at a time that suits you. You can complete a short form to report things like flytipping – cambridge.gov.uk/report-flytipping, a missed bin collection – cambridge.gov.uk/report-a-missed-household-bin-collection, or a change in your circumstances affecting your benefits or Council Tax – cambridge.gov.uk/online-accounts.

📧 cambridge.gov.uk
 ☎ 01223 457000, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.15pm
 ☎ 0300 3038 389, for emergencies outside of office hours
 † Appointments are available for customers who have queries which cannot be resolved by telephone or online. Call us for help.

Appointments are available 9am to 5.15pm, Wednesday to Friday, at our Customer Service Centre at Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY.

Please note that we no longer operate customer services from the Guildhall.

Community-led projects up and running in Abbey ward

As you may have read previously in Cambridge Matters, we're taking a new approach to finding out what people think about proposals for their neighbourhoods across the city, so we can work more closely than ever with residents and other local organisations to help develop them.

In Abbey ward, in the northeast of Cambridge, local residents and organisations have so far come together for a number of community conversation events, as part of the Shaping Abbey project.

More than £100 million is proposed to be invested in Abbey in the coming years, in order to create new homes and community facilities alongside wider development for the area. Among the plans for the ward, which have been discussed at the Shaping Abbey sessions, are:

- the transformative new East Barnwell development at the heart of the ward
- emerging proposals for the redevelopment of ageing properties at the Ekin Road estate
- the 'Focus on Abbey' programme, which has funding earmarked for locally focused community projects
- further investment in sports and leisure facilities

Several community-led projects are now up and running in Abbey ward.

Here's a brief summary of what they're all about and who to contact to find out more.

- **Abbey in Action:** Ten residents with leadership potential are being supported to develop their voices, collaborative skills and personal networks, and to help build a community-led plan for a happy, healthy and safe Abbey.
- **Parent Power:** Parents are working collectively to campaign against educational inequalities and create positive change for their children and local community by being trained in community organisation skills.
- **Enterprise Facilitator:** Allia are placing an Enterprise Facilitator in key locations in the community to engage, inspire, coach and connect local people with entrepreneurial and business potential so that they can make tangible progress with their career.
- **CoFarm:** Work on implementing the full masterplan for the flagship CoFarm (Cambridge's community farm off Barnwell Road), including the creation of infrastructure such as a multifunctional Community Barn and training and learning experiences. Alongside this, increasing the subscription model roll-out and food distribution points.



- **Social Supermarket:** Enabling the transition of Abbey Food Hub away from emergency food distribution towards a healthy and affordable food provision (Social Supermarket) for residents.
- **Food Skills:** With Cambridge Sustainable Food, this project aims to boost the community's understanding of healthy food opportunities including through a food skills kitchen. Look out for more information coming soon about similar approaches being launched in other parts of the city, starting with Coleridge ward.

For more information about Shaping Abbey
cambridge.gov.uk/shaping-abbey
shapingabbey@cambridge.gov.uk

Celebrate at Cambridge Corn Exchange this Christmas

What better way to enjoy the festive season and make it even more special, than a night out in the heart of the city at the Corn Exchange?

Stand-up comedy continues to draw sell-out audiences at the Corn Exchange, so what better than a Christmas bill to lift your spirits headlined by multi-award winning, Sara Pascoe featuring some of the country's best comedians? Joining Sara for **Live At Christmas** (21 December) is a spectacular line-up with Never Mind The Buzzcocks and Viceland's Jamali Maddix, bumbling charmster Ivo Graham, master character comic Steen Raskopoulos, and Live at The Apollo's Suzi Ruffell as host.



It's 37 years since Shane MacGowan and Kirsty MacColl's stirring song began life, going on to become one of the most well-loved Christmas classics ever. **Fairytale of New York** (17-18 December) is bringing that festive Irish spirit on tour, stopping in Cambridge for two nights. Singers, musicians and dancers perform a world class concert featuring all the festive favourites including

Driving Home for Christmas, Step Into Christmas, Oh Holy Night and, of course, The Fairytale of New York alongside the greatest Irish sing-a-long songs of all time including The Galway Girl, The Irish Rover, Dirty Old Town and The Black Velvet Band.

The festive holiday spirit continues after Christmas Day, as the venue opens its doors for four days of that most magical seasonal ballet, **The Nutcracker!** (27-30 December). A live orchestra performing Tchaikovsky's world-famous score adds the finishing touch to this joyous spectacle, making it the perfect introduction to classical ballet.

For more details of these and other Corn Exchange shows go to www.cornex.co.uk



Are you eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment?

The Winter Fuel Payment, sometimes known as the Winter Fuel Allowance, is an annual tax-free payment of between £100 and £300 made during the winter months.

Who is eligible?

In past years, the Winter Fuel Payment was made to all UK residents above the state pension age and was not means-tested. Changes have been made this year (2024/25) which mean that residents over the state pension age will no longer automatically receive the payment.

Residents can get a Winter Fuel Payment for Winter 2024 to 2025 if they live in England or Wales and get one of the following:

- Working Tax Credit
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit

If you think you could be entitled to one of the above benefits it is important that you claim these benefits as soon as possible.

The council is working to identify households who could be entitled to Pension Credit and encourage them to apply for it. If you have received a letter from us, please contact the Department for Work and Pensions to **make an application by 21 December 2024** as entitlement to Pension Credit means that the household would continue to receive the Winter Fuel Allowance payments. For more information visit **cambridge.gov.uk/benefits** or phone 01223 457000.

Energy efficiency support Grant funding could also be available to your household to



improve the energy efficiency of your property for the long term. Residents with an income of under £36,000 could potentially access funding for insulation and clean heat.

Pension Credit is a qualifying benefit for this scheme, but the income threshold also means that those who are not eligible for Pension Credit (and

therefore this year's winter fuel payment) can still benefit from energy efficiency support through other Government funding available through Action on Energy Cambridgeshire.

Please do get in touch if you think you may qualify, see our webpage for details **cambridge.gov.uk/home-energy**

Safe and warm places for rough sleepers across the winter months

Once again this winter, we're working with partners to provide safe and welcoming accommodation and support for people who may otherwise be sleeping rough in Cambridge.

Twenty ensuite rooms are available through the Cambridge charity It Takes A City, for some of the city's most disadvantaged rough sleepers over the coldest months of the year.

The rooms are available to people who have been verified as sleeping rough by the street outreach team, and who have local connections to Cambridge.

During their stay, residents also have access to a communal lounge, dining and kitchen area. There is a small staff team on site during the day, supported by trained volunteers to provide practical help, with

things like meals, cleaning and laundry.

Residents can also benefit from a range of other support services from volunteers and partner agencies, and are helped to find longer term housing before this accommodation offer closes at the end of the winter.

Many of the rough sleepers the council works with have significant physical and mental health challenges, or long-standing problems with trauma or addiction. Nobody can be compelled to accept or remain in accommodation offered to them, with some people used to being part of a street-based community finding it difficult to remain in accommodation off the streets.

However, rough sleepers in Cambridge do not need to beg for money to access a



place to sleep, meals or bathroom facilities at any time of year – an offer of support is there for everyone once they have been verified by the local street outreach team and they are ready to access it.

For more information visit:

📄 cambridge.gov.uk/services-for-rough-sleepers



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as
DANDINI



CINDERELLA

Directed by
MICHAEL GATRELL
Written by
AL JOCKHART-MORLEY

**HARRY
HOWLE**
as
WICKED
STEPSISTER



**STEVEN
ROBERTS**
as
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Latest proposals for a 21st century civic quarter in city centre

We recently published the latest proposals for Cambridge’s civic quarter – the area consisting of the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, Market Square and surrounding public spaces in central Cambridge – after asking residents and visitors what they currently like, dislike, and would like to see in the area.

As custodian of these historic sites, we need to invest in their upkeep, and we plan to do so in a way that will generate income and reduce operational costs as part of wider plans for balancing our budget.

The ambition is to ensure that prominent city centre civic buildings and attractions are fit for the future and offer a focal point that residents can be proud of, while making the heritage buildings net zero and accessible and improving biodiversity, water efficiency and accessibility across the civic quarter area. Here are some of the highlights of the latest proposals.

Guildhall

Opening up the Guildhall with a shared ground floor lobby with improved natural lighting and a café for the public, council staff and commercial tenants; increasing the use of the civic halls; and creating space for a cultural attraction – with the Museum of Cambridge considering a potential relocation to the Guildhall. The council’s office spaces will be consolidated, moving staff from Mandela House into the Guildhall, with commercial office space being provided on the upper floors to support the council’s plan to generate income.



Market Square

Market Square

For the Market Square, the proposals include introducing an accessible shared surface to promote and prioritise pedestrians; and a commitment to water efficiency and renewable energy. A lightweight canopy is also proposed to cover approximately half of the market, providing storage for permanent traders and offering covered seating for the general public. The other half would be available for additional trading during weekends and busier months, with demountable stalls, providing flexible space for occasional events.

the Parson’s Court passageway next to the Corn Exchange into a pedestrianised breakout space with food and drink offerings; add lifts to ensure full accessibility; improve back of house, Audio Visual and temperature control systems; and to get as close to net zero as possible within the building’s heritage constraints, including introducing air source heat pumps and solar panels.

This project is still at an early stage, and councillors are grateful to all those who contributed to these designs – which are indicative and will continue to evolve depending on feedback from the public, market traders, council staff and local stakeholders, and financial constraints. A second public consultation is planned for the spring of 2025.

Corn Exchange

For the Corn Exchange, the proposal is to increase event capacity to 2,000; transform



Guildhall



Corn Exchange

For more information on the Civic Quarter project:
[cambridgecivicquarter.co.uk](https://www.cambridgecivicquarter.co.uk)
info@cambridgecivicquarter.co.uk

Regular exercise has a positive effect on children's mental health. **Fact!***

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We offer a variety of daytime sports for children who are out of school or home educated, plus after school netball for everyone. Visit our website for more info at: www.gkfit.co.uk

Get Physically Fit
Get Mentally Fit
Get GK Fit



*www.sportengland.org/news-and-inspiration/new-findings-show-impact-exercise-childrens-mental-health-conditions

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Reduce condensation and prevent mould in your home

When moisture builds up in your home it can cause damp and mould problems, which can be a particular problem during winter.

Condensation occurs when moist, warm air – for example from showers, tumble driers, cooking or even just from people breathing – meets a cold surface like a window or external wall. Dampness caused by too much condensation can lead to mould growth around the home.

If you notice mould starting to grow, you can treat it with an antimould cleaner or anti-fungal



wash. You can then address the cause of the dampness that led to the mould growing and to reduce the amount of moisture you add to the air. This could include:

- Wiping down windows and sills and keeping surfaces in dry
- Keeping room temperatures higher to prevent condensation forming on external walls.
- Cooking with pan lids on and the extractor fan on.
- Reducing steam from baths by running cold water first
- Opening windows and vents, especially when cooking or washing up
- Using an extractor fan or opening a window for 20 minutes after showering or bathing
- Leaving bedroom windows open at night, even if only slightly.

You can also try to improve ventilation, to let moist air circulate and escape outside by:

- Opening windows and vents, especially when cooking or washing up
- Using an extractor fan or opening a window for 20 minutes after showering or bathing
- Leaving bedroom windows open at night, even if only slightly.

If you can, improve your home's insulation and draught proofing to keep surfaces warmer. This can also help to reduce your fuel bills.

With the cost of living remaining high, you might feel

less able to heat your home properly, but it's important to try and keep your home warm enough to keep you well over the winter. There is support

available if you are unable to put the heating on. Please contact us if so, and we will talk to you about what support is available.

For more information visit:
[cambridge.gov.uk/reduce-condensation](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/reduce-condensation)
 01223 457060
If you are a council tenant and cannot stop mould in your home email us at condensation@cambridge.gov.uk or contact us through our website, so we can visit and help fix the problem.

Dealing with frozen pipes on gas boilers

If your gas boiler stops working in cold weather, it is likely to be caused by a frozen condensate pipe. The condensate pipe is usually a plastic pipe that comes out below the boiler and runs to the outside of your home.

To thaw the pipe and fix the problem, pour lukewarm water over it. Do not use boiling water or the pipe might crack. You might need to do this several times. Take care, as if the water freezes

on the ground it could cause a slip hazard.

To check if the pipe has thawed, press the reset button on the front of the boiler, or turn it back on if you had turned it off. If it starts, the pipe has thawed. If it does not, try pouring more warm water on the pipe.



Getting an online immigration status (eVisa)

The Government is urging all those across the UK who use a physical immigration document to take immediate action to transition to an eVisa as part of plans to digitise the UK border and immigration system. All visa holders who live in the UK and use a physical immigration document, such as a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), to prove their rights are being urged to take action before the end of this year.

Most physical immigration documents are being replaced by eVisas. This includes:

- biometric residence cards (BRCs)
 - stamps in passports
 - 'vignette' stickers in passports
- Getting an eVisa is free and won't change your permission to live in the UK, but you'll need to create a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account before the end of 2024 to access your eVisa.
- You should create an account for each person who has permission to stay in the UK – this includes your children and dependants.
- British or Irish citizens who hold a British or Irish passport are not affected and do not need to apply for an eVisa.**



For more information phone 0300 790 6268 or visit [eVisa gov.uk/evisa](https://www.gov.uk/evisa). Help available locally from Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum on 01223 655241.655241



For that early morning cuppa.
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We have worked to reduce our carbon emissions by another 10%

We have achieved a reduction of 10.8% in our own emissions – a reduction of approximately 500 tonnes of CO₂ since 2022-23. We have been building on our actions from previous years in order to achieve the objectives of our Climate Change Strategy 2021-26, which aims to reduce emissions and help the city to adapt to climate change.

In order to achieve this we have been undertaking a series of projects such as:

- Investing in leisure centres and swimming pools to make them more energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions by installing heat pumps and solar panels. £1.7m was awarded to us which was used at Parkside and Abbey Pools.
- Using hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) instead of diesel to power generators at events we organise in the city's parks, such as the Cambridge Folk Festival. This significantly reduces the carbon emissions produced by events
- Introducing our fourth electric refuse collection vehicle in June 2024. This is part of our plan to progressively replace vehicles with electric or low carbon alternatives at the point when they are due for replacement.

The council has also been supporting residents, businesses and organisations to reduce their emissions. For example:

- A pilot programme to retrofit 50 council owned homes on Ross Street and Coldham's Grove to net zero standards is currently underway. Once retrofitted, the homes will all be in line with the very latest



Cambridge Folk Festival

in sustainable design. This project will help to significantly reduce energy consumption, carbon emissions and energy bills, whilst improving home comfort for the residents

- The council, in collaboration with other local councils, is supporting small and medium businesses (SMEs) by offering access to expert advice to develop a practical, tailored, net zero road map. As part of this Green Business Programme, businesses are able to apply for a capital grant of up to £5,000 to part-fund investment in carbon-saving technology, equipment or improvements needed to start implementing it. See [cambridge.gov.uk/green-business-programme](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/green-business-programme)

As a result of the wide range of actions the council is taking, the council has been ranked as an "A" rated city by the Carbon Disclosure Project, marking it as one of the leading cities in acting on climate change across the world. Cambridge has also been ranked as the second greenest city in the UK recently by the ENDS Green Cities Index, through action being taken on energy, waste, housing, planning, electric vehicle infrastructure and more.

For more information:

- 📄 [cambridge.gov.uk/climate-change-and-sustainability](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/climate-change-and-sustainability)
- ✉ sustainablecity@cambridge.gov.uk

Find out if your home is losing heat

Is your home losing heat and costing you money across the winter months?

You can take steps to identify how and where your property could be losing heat by signing up with local charitable organisation Cambridge Carbon Footprint (CCF), for a free training session and to borrow a thermal imaging camera.

From November to March, the use of thermal imaging cameras can help to reveal where your home is leaking

heat. This can show problems with insulation, draughts, damp and more. Some of the problems revealed are easy for householders to fix, by draught-proofing for example, while some, like faulty insulation or heating problems, may need professional help.

CCF are holding online sessions demonstrating how to use the thermal imaging camera on 11 December, 14 January and 12 February.



For more information and to sign up visit:

- 📄 [cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/thermal-imaging](https://www.cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/thermal-imaging)

Have yourself a calmer little Christmas

Have you noticed how more food gets thrown away when we're busy or stressed? No wonder 30% more food is wasted over Christmas than at other times of year. Do your future self a favour and prepare now for a calmer, cheaper, less wasteful festive period.

- **Use up frozen foods now** – No one wants to run out of food at Christmas, so we buy more than we need. Ensure there's space in your freezer for any surplus by eating up what's in there now. Stock up on freezer bags or containers as well.
- **Gifting food** – Food can make great gifts, but only if it's eaten and not thrown away! Unless you know their tastes well opt for classics like shortbread and avoid the likes of Christmas pudding flavour fudge.
- **Plan ahead** – Use the portion calculator at lovefoodhatewaste.com to work out how much to buy and cook. Serve smaller portions, with a 'spares' dish for second helpings - leftovers can be easily saved instead of getting soggy with gravy and being binned.
- **Embrace leftovers** – We do love leftovers on Boxing Day, with almost half of us using up turkey. But other foods are left out, which is a shame as we could be putting our feet up instead of cooking more! Whatever food you have left over there's a use for it – just cover it and pop in the fridge while you browse recipes.
- **Freeze** – Work out whether leftovers can be eaten within two days – if not then freeze. If you can, freeze things like roast potatoes on a tray first, before transferring to a bag, so they won't stick together. Remember to label and date everything!
- **Compost** – Any food that has gone bad or scraps from food preparation can be added to your green bin along with garden waste so it can be composted. Use a kitchen caddy or any container with a lid and make sure the food is wrapped in newspaper or in paper liners. You can buy paper caddy liners in most supermarkets.



Recycle your Christmas tree

Arthur Rank Hospice Charity's team of volunteers will collect your real tree in January, hassle-free. Trees are chipped and used for mulch or composted.

Residents of postcode areas CB1, CB2, CB3, CB4, CB5, CB21, CB22, CB23, CB24, CB25, SG8

and SG19 3 can register for a collection at arhc.org.uk/tree-recycling. Collections will be carried out between 9-11 January, and you can register up to 10am on 5 January. Last year the Hospice's volunteers collected a record 3,600 trees and raised over £65,000 for the charity!

Never bin batteries or vapes!

They cause fires in our bin lorries, and must be recycled separately.

Vapes can be taken back to vape shops, supermarkets, or to the large Household Recycling Centres (eg at Milton or Thriplow).

Small household batteries can be put in a small plastic bag, tied shut and left on the top of your bin on collection day.

Larger batteries such as e-bike batteries should be taken to Household Recycling Centres.

cambridge.gov.uk/bins



'Tis the season to dress up

In our last issue we looked at the need to revolutionise fashion and stop over-buying new clothes. This time we're taking a deep dive into festive fashion tips...

Party on

Whether you're going to a party, dinner, or just dressing up for Christmas Day, you'll get all the fun of choosing new outfits without a bulging wardrobe or even laundry (reason enough alone, surely) by hiring clothes. Some high street shops like John Lewis now offer hire options. Online rental company Hirestreet offers flexible hire from one-off hires right up to a monthly subscription service. After wearing, clothes are simply popped back in the post to be cleaned by them. For fancy dress parties,



Cambridge's Wardrobe on Cromwell Road is the place to hire your outfit.

Christmas Jumper Day

Christmas jumpers are the ultimate 'one-trick-pony' of the clothing world, it being acceptable to be seen in one for just a brief window each December. If you have one, do dig it out and wear it again this year. If you don't, and you want one, consider the following options:

- Organise a jumper swap at work, school or with friends. This could also be a fundraiser – for example some schools hold a jumper 'amnesty' and then a sale
- Buy one second-hand from a charity shop
- 'Festivize' an existing jumper – pin on tinsel, battery-powered fairy lights and other decorations that you can remove and return the jumper to normal service

- Choose carefully – unless you really want super kitsch, choose a 'winter' look like a Nordic or Fairisle jumper that you can wear all season

What's on your wish-list?

If you're hoping to receive clothes as gifts, why not ask for second-hand or vintage items? Let your family know that you'd be delighted to

receive pre-loved clothing as a gift, and your favourite places to find it. Alternatively, request a repair. Ask your loved-one to organise getting your favourite boots re-soled, arrange for those moth-holes in your beloved sweater to be beautifully darned, or send off your damaged wetsuit to be repaired. Sneaking your partner's torn clothes away and gifting them back repaired also makes a really lovely surprise gift.

Recirculate

Don't forget if you receive unwanted clothing gifts or just have a wardrobe clear-out then there are so many ways to give your clothes a new life – sell, give away, swap, 'shwop' at stores for vouchers, donate or drop off at clothing collection banks.



Christmas and New Year bin day changes

Usual collection day	Revised collection day
Tuesday 24 December	Tuesday 24 December (No change)
Wednesday 25 December	Monday 23 December (2 days early)
Thursday 26 December	Friday 27 December (1 day late)
Friday 27 December	Saturday 28 December (1 day late)
Tuesday 31 December	Tuesday 31 December (No change)
Wednesday 1 January	Monday 30 December (2 days early)
Thursday 2 January	Thursday 2 January (No change)
Friday 3 January	Friday 3 January (No change)



Protecting chalk streams for future generations

Chalk streams have been described as ‘England’s Great Barrier Reef’ of freshwater ecosystems, and are among the rarest and most fragile habitats on Earth. Around 85% of these streams are located in England, so their preservation is not just a national priority but a global responsibility. In Cambridgeshire, these streams play a crucial role in supporting diverse wildlife, local agriculture, and the wellbeing of communities.



For Cambridge City Council, protecting these ecosystems means safeguarding a precious natural heritage for future generations. Chalk streams are special because of their crystal-clear, alkaline waters that support a wide variety of plants and animals. The plants also play an important role by regulating water flow and stabilising banks, which helps maintain the stream’s health.

One of the greatest threats to chalk streams is pollution. Agricultural runoff introduces harmful levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, leading to a

process where excessive nutrients trigger the growth of algae, blocking sunlight and depleting oxygen levels. As nutrient levels rise, sensitive species like water crowfoot are replaced by invasive plants. Urban life also contributes to the problem. Roads, pavements, and construction can funnel pollutants into streams via storm drains.

To protect these rare ecosystems, we need to understand the full scope of their ecology and the challenges they face. That’s why the Greater Cambridge Chalk

Stream Project, with funding from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, has been established to gather critical data about the streams and develop strategies to protect and restore these ecosystems.

Without urgent action, we could see the disappearance of entire ecosystems that depend on chalk streams. As pollution and habitat degradation increase, species could vanish, leading to a ripple effect throughout the food chain.

The council is committed to ensuring these remarkable

ecosystems continue to thrive for generations to come. Protecting chalk streams is about more than safeguarding water quality—it’s about preserving a natural treasure that has supported life, culture, and communities for hundreds of years. By investing in research, education, and restoration, we can help restore the balance of these fragile habitats. With the help of local communities and informed action, we can ensure chalk streams remain a vibrant part of our landscape for many years to come.

- **Pollution Watch Community Toolkit** - A new pollution watch community toolkit, with information and messages to support groups in reporting pollutions is available from customerengagement@anglianwater.co.uk

For more information:
cambridge.gov.uk/chalk-streams
rivercam.org.uk/our-catchment/cambridge-city-bin-brook

Trees in Cambridge benefit city to the tune of £1 billion

Did you know that there are more than 200,000 trees in Cambridge? As part of our work to grow and enhance our ‘urban forest’ we undertook a groundbreaking study with the help of residents and volunteers to assess the benefits that trees bring to the city.

The Cambridge i-Tree Eco Study found that the city’s trees:

- Capture about 2,040 tonnes of carbon every year, valued at £524,000

- Store about 88,000 tonnes of carbon, valued at £22,500
- Remove about 22.2 tonnes of pollution every year, valued at £990,000
- Prevent about 97,600m³ of stormwater runoff every year, valued at £153,000
- Cover about 20.1% of the city, are valued at about £1.03 billion and would cost about £172 million to replace.

The study will help the council target parts of the



city with less tree cover, to help spread the benefits and shows in real terms how trees can help reduce some of the risks of climate change.

For more information:
cambridge.gov.uk/cambridge-canopy-project
 01223 457000

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Are your voter registration details up to date?

Since September, every household in the city has been asked to confirm who is living at their address so that the information in the register of electors can be updated.

We are required by law to undertake an annual canvass every year, so even if you have only recently registered to vote, are not eligible to vote or had other contact with the council you must still respond to our enquiry.

Emails and letters have been sent to residents, and only 65% of households have so far responded. Anyone who has not yet replied is being encouraged to respond as soon as possible, as this will save us sending further letters or making a personal call to your address.

Our canvassing staff are out and about across the city between 29 November and 12 January, trying to contact households who have not responded.

Voting is the main purpose of the register, and there are elections across the city on 1 May 2025 for both Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor.

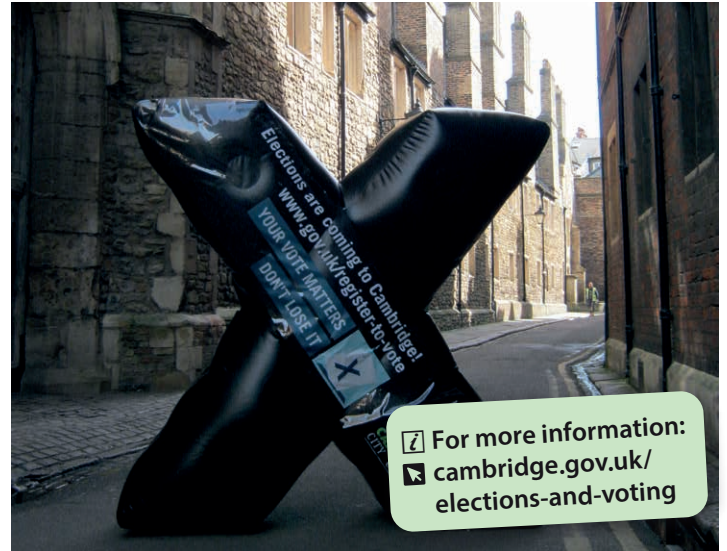
While there are very strict rules around how data in the register can be used, it is used in other important areas of life.

If you have ever been called for jury service, then your name will have been taken from the register. If you have ever applied for a mortgage, loan or any form of credit, the register will have been used as a way of making

sure you are who you say you are.

The electoral register and elections are legally separate from the rest of the council, so your information can't be taken

from other service areas. Please respond to the enquiry letter as soon as you can, so the details for your property are correct and up to date.



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How we're building more new homes and helping people settle in

Through the equal partnership between Cambridge City Council and award-winning housebuilder, The Hill Group, Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) is committed to improving accommodation standards for people living in existing council homes and building additional council homes and much needed private homes. This includes larger family homes as well as homes for local workers.

We will soon be marking the completion of the 1000th new home in Cambridge built by the partnership since 2018 – over 650 new council homes and more than 350 new market homes,

which are just as badly needed in the city and help us afford to build more council homes. Last year we built more council homes per capita than almost any other local council in the country, as well as completing new community centres, commercial premises and parks.

The ambition for our 10-year housebuilding programme is to expand upon the 1,000 homes already completed, to deliver at least 1,000 more council homes and 1,000 more new market homes by 2030.

Beyond providing housing, CIP focuses on ensuring that tenants are offered tailored support and guidance, so they can fully

benefit from their new homes. Once tenants have had a few weeks to settle into their homes, our Housing Development Team hold one-on-one surgery sessions, offering them the opportunity to ask any questions about their home's systems, such as the air source heating or mechanical ventilation system. We also provide energy saving tips and advice on maintaining a comfortable and sustainable living environment.

'Surgery' sessions have proven especially valuable for residents of CIP's 21 Passivhaus-certified (ultra-low emission) council homes at Fen Road, Ditton Fields and Borrowdale. An engineer from Panasonic joined the council's Housing Development Team to provide a detailed explanation of the homes' heating system, including how to operate them and troubleshoot any issues. Any concerns were promptly addressed and resolved on-site.

Not only are the new homes we're building an essential part of our vision for a Cambridge where everyone has a warm, safe, and affordable home, but our programme has also delivered an economic impact of over £700



million in the local economy. Oxford Economics modelled for the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) that this would be multiplied by 2.9 in the Cambridge area's economy. This indicates investment in the local community of over £700m.

- Cambridge City Council joined a coalition of over 100 other council landlords this year, to publish five solutions for the government to 'secure the future of England's council housing'. The group warned that England's council housing system is broken and that urgent action is needed for the government to deliver its housing promises.

For more information visit: ip-cambridge.co.uk



New Passivhaus-certified council homes at Fen Road

Fund your community activity

Do you have an idea for an activity that will take place between April 2025 and March 2026 and help to reduce inequality in Cambridge?

Voluntary or community organisations, or groups of local residents, could be eligible for a '£5,000 and under Community Grant' from the council, a grant scheme which has replaced the previous Area Committee Grants.

The funding is available for activities that reduce social or economic inequality for disadvantaged residents. Activities can be open to all city residents or targeted at residents living in a

particular area of the city.

We want these grants to make a difference to the lives of city residents with the highest needs.

There will be two funding rounds:

- Round 1: launched on 26 November 2024 - apply by midday on 14 January 2025 (for activities taking place between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026).
- Round 2: launches on 23 April 2025 - apply by midday on 3 June 2025 (for activities taking place between July 2025 and 31 March 2026).

Please note you can only apply to one round.



More information including the guidelines and online application form can be found on our website or by emailing the grants team: cambridge.gov.uk/grants-and-funding, grants@cambridge.gov.uk, 01223 457875

Consultations launched on new development guidance documents

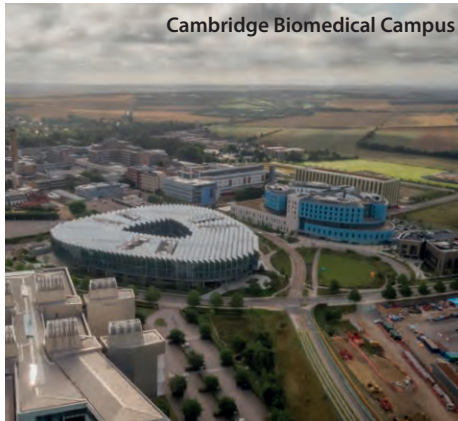
Members of the public in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire' and in the same sentence change to 'our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) service.

These documents, known as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), are intended to provide further information and detailed guidance on some of the policies in the councils' current Local Plans (2018). These guidance documents provide developers with clearer expectations on design and technical information required for their projects. This aims to streamline the planning process and ultimately lead to higher quality developments across Greater Cambridge.

Cambridge Biomedical Campus SPD

The Cambridge Biomedical Campus, including Addenbrooke's Hospital, is an international centre of excellence for patient care, biomedical research and healthcare education and plays an important local, regional and national role in providing medical facilities and research. Following the recent permissions for the Cambridge Children's Hospital and Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital, the campus will be home to four hospitals, including also the established Addenbrooke's and Royal Papworth. It is also home to a growing number of commercial life science companies including AstraZeneca.

While the quality of new developments has improved the look and feel of the



campus, it is important that development is joined up across the campus, therefore the councils have prepared a draft Cambridge Biomedical Campus SPD. The SPD outlines the councils' ambitions for the campus and sets high-level development principles for future projects. These principles aim to create a well-integrated campus that benefits not only those working and receiving care there, but also the surrounding communities.

Planning Obligations SPD

This SPD focuses on planning obligations, also known as section 106 contributions. These are financial contributions towards infrastructure that mitigates the impact of new development for local communities. Examples include building new schools and roads, upgrading playgrounds, or providing additional waste collection vehicles. This varies depending on the nature of the development, its location, and the scale of its local and wider


impacts. The draft SPD sets out the councils' proposed approach and clarifies this process for both developers and local communities, ultimately aiming to reduce delays in securing necessary infrastructure.

Health Impact Assessment SPD

The planning and design of where we live, work and socialise has a major influence on our health and wellbeing. From the design of our villages, towns and cities to access to the wider countryside, the built and natural environment affects our health and quality of life. This SPD provides an updated method for testing the impact of development on health and wellbeing. It helps developers show how they have considered health in the design of new places and helps us to consider whether developments have met our quality requirements. Whilst every development is unique in terms its purpose, scale, nature, and location, the draft guidance document outlines the different types of assessments that should be undertaken and how issues like safety, inequality, design, green spaces and climate should be designed into schemes from the earliest stages.

Have your say

Members of the public are encouraged to participate in online or in-person consultation events during the consultations that run until Friday 24 January 2025.

 **More information can be found at:**
[greatercambridgeplanning.org](https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org)

Local schoolkids learn about planning

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Youth Engagement Service (YES) recently held some successful workshops with schoolchildren at St Alban's Primary School and St Bede's School in Cambridge. The workshops asked local children for ideas for the outdoor spaces at the nearby Paddocks site, which is being redeveloped on Cherry Hinton Road, and also introduced them to careers in planning.

Secondary school students from St Bede's told the Planning team their top three priorities for how the community could benefit from the proposals, and

discussed how the proposals address the 'Four Cs' of Community, Character, Climate Change and Connectivity from the the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth policy framework.

Primary schoolchildren from St Alban's took part in a guided walkabout to the site to understand the context and to assess how best to improve the walking and cycling experience around the site, and how public areas could meet the needs of local children. The children's design ideas will now be reflected in proposals for landscaping at The Paddocks.





Sister Act, November 2024 (Photo by Paul Ashley)

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Support for people living with dementia at your local library

**Dementia Social Group at Arbury Court Library (from January 2025)
Last Monday of the month, 10am-11.30am**

A free monthly social event for people living with dementia and their carers. Free drop-in, just come along. An opportunity to meet other families and have a chat about how to support each other in a friendly and supportive environment. Refreshments and activities will be provided.

Dementia resources

We have memory boxes to facilitate reminiscence activities, dementia-friendly jigsaw puzzles and games, as well as picture books and a 'Reading Well for Dementia' book list. We also have sets of Snakes & Ladders, Ludo and Musical Bingo. If you are a library member, you can borrow these resources on your library card. Ask at your local library to find out more.

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Your library offers more than you might think. We welcome you to browse and borrow our collection, access our PCs and Wi-Fi for free and use our space to study, meet, share or just relax. Don't miss out! Anyone who lives, works or studies in Cambridgeshire can join Cambridgeshire Libraries.

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How Are You Cambridge?

www.HAYCambridge.co.uk

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- Local things to do with information about what to expect when you get there.
- Opportunities to connect, be active, learn, get creative, explore the outdoors, volunteer and more!
- Places to get a wide range of support.

@HowAreYouCambridge

Looking for something to do?

From yoga to singing, sports clubs to art groups, there is something for all ages and interests on the How Are You Cambridgeshire & Peterborough websites.

H.A.Y. is all about helping you look after you. We know that often the hardest part is getting started, so we include videos and information to help you know what to expect the first time you go.

@HowAreYouCambsPboro

Support looks different for all of us. Whatever challenges you may be facing, the H.A.Y. websites have information from a wide range of organisations that may be able to help you - from the NHS and council services to local community groups.

Needing support?

If you are in a mental health crisis, call 111 and select the mental health option.

Point the camera on your phone here for support and activity ideas



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

Council budget latest

Since October we've been asking you for your views on what you think our budget priorities should be for the financial year 2025-26.

Operating costs for the council are rising and income is not keeping up, mainly due to external factors like years of government austerity and rising inflation. This means we need to reduce our net spending by £6 million per year by April 2026.

Across the autumn we have been asking

people whether we should increase some fees and charges, or start charging for some services which are free, or make changes to some of the discretionary services we offer. We are now starting to analyse the many hundreds of responses we received, and the feedback will help inform councillors with the budget-setting process in February.

 For more information visit:
 cambridge.gov.uk/budget



Councillors set to consider next steps on future of local government

Earlier this year we asked people for their opinions about the current structure of local government in the Cambridge area, and how it might be improved.

This included questions about current arrangements, potential improvements, and whether a 'unitary authority' responsible for all services provided by the city and county councils should be considered. We received over 500 survey responses and hosted two public events last summer for around 60 people to discuss the issues in more detail.

Just over half of respondents had a good

or full understanding of which council is responsible for different services. Almost half agreed or strongly agreed that current arrangements could be improved, and nearly 83% thought that options for a unitary council for the Cambridge area should be explored.

After analysing the responses a report was prepared, which was due to be discussed by city councillors just after this issue of Cambridge Matters went to print. They were due to consider whether fuller discussions should now take place with other councils and with the government on



any potential changes to the current system.

To find out more about the report, and what councillors recommended the next steps should be – take a look at the council website cambridge.gov.uk/news or the next issue of Cambridge Matters.

New Changing Places facilities at refurbished public toilets

We recently re-opened a fully-refurbished public toilet block at Cherry Hinton Hall park. The block includes the city's newest fully accessible Changing Places facility with a height-adjustable changing bench and hoist – and loads of room inside for wheelchair users, people with limited mobility and their carers.

The Cherry Hinton Hall block, which is open every day from 8am-7pm, also has a self-contained baby-changing facility among four other renovated, self-contained unisex toilets including another accessible unit for disabled visitors.

These refurbished toilet facilities follow on from the

council's other recently refurbished public toilets at Drummer Street in Cambridge city centre, which opened earlier in the autumn and also contains a new Changing Places facility.

In addition to the new toilets, council-run Changing Places facilities are also available at Grand Arcade, Meadows Community Centre in King's Hedges and the Clay Farm Centre in Trumpington.



The Haven opens its doors for women

The Haven, a new overnight drop-in space for homeless and vulnerable women in Cambridge, has been open for several months now, offering respite and a supportive space for women in need.

The Haven is being run by It Takes A City, a homelessness charity, in partnership with the city council and local support services, providing holistic support for women accessing the service. It welcomes women who are homeless, vulnerably housed or otherwise need a safe space.

At The Haven, which is currently open two evenings a week as a pilot scheme, women can relax, have hot food and drinks, take a shower, or use the laundry service while experienced female support staff can connect them up with services to help provide



solutions to issues affecting them.

The number of women being welcomed into The Haven has risen steadily since it opened earlier this year and a network of volunteers there work with full-time staff to provide respite and support.

Cambridge's second homeless women's census took place in September to better identify the number of women rough sleeping here. More than 20 questionnaires were completed by women who had slept rough at some time during the previous three months. haven-info@itac.org.uk

Purple Flag – helping city’s nightlife thrive at Christmas and throughout the year

As the festive season approaches, Cambridge is once again preparing to ensure a well-managed night-time experience under its Purple Flag status.

Throughout December, the city will be bustling with Christmas cheer and enhanced safety measures will be in place to protect residents and visitors alike.

Since 2019, Cambridge has proudly held the Purple Flag status, an accreditation that recognises the city’s excellence in managing its evening and night-time economy. Much like the Blue Flag for outstanding beaches, it signifies that Cambridge is not only a vibrant and thriving destination after dark but also a safe, welcoming, and well-organised environment for residents, students, and visitors alike.

This Christmas season, Taxi Marshals and Open Space Guardians will be on duty every weekend on Fridays and Saturdays in December, helping ensure safe journeys home and supporting those in public spaces.

On Saturdays, Street Pastors will provide care and assistance to those in need, and Nightlite will offer a welcoming safe space in the city centre for anyone feeling unwell or seeking a place to rest. As throughout the year CAMBAC (Cambridge Business Against Crime) venues will be linked up to the city’s CCTV control room and the police if needed. Also,

look out for licensed Cambridge taxis – many of them a distinctive silver colour with a green stripe on the side – to get you where you’re going safely.

To provide additional medical support during the busiest nights of the festive season, St John Ambulance, funded by Cambridge City Council, will be on standby on 20 and 21 December and New Year’s Eve (31 December). The presence of St John Ambulance proved critical last year, with Nightlite and St John Ambulance treating individuals and providing much-needed assistance. New Year’s Eve 2023 saw the lowest ever recorded hospital admissions linked to alcohol and the night-time economy in the city centre.

Cambridge’s Purple Flag status continues to symbolise the city’s dedication to a well-managed, secure, and lively night-time economy, making it the perfect place to celebrate the holidays and New Year with peace of mind.

- Purple Flag is led by Cambridge BID and CAMBAC and works in partnership with Cambridge City Council, the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), Cambridgeshire Police, and key city venues such as The Regal (Wetherspoon), MASH, KiKi and more. Head to the website cambridgebid.co.uk/purple-flag to find out more.



Ask for Angela

Ask for Angela is a customer safety campaign, which has been widely adopted across the UK. Many Cambridge venues support the scheme (look out for posters in toilets and public areas) and their staff have been trained to respond in the appropriate way.

Ask for Angela means a customer can ‘ask’ a staff

member for Angela (a code word they’re trained to recognise) if they feel unsafe, and expect to be supported discreetly with next steps, e.g. taking them to a safe space, helping them locate friends and further interventions if necessary.

For more information visit:
askforangela.co.uk



You can recognise licensed Cambridge taxis by these silver and green colours



Street pastors on patrol in Sidney Street

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