

District Councillor report to Parish Councils February 2026

Elections Going Ahead in May 2026

Council leaders had until 15th January to request a postponement of this May's District Council elections. I made my position clear that democracy should not be delayed. Residents deserve their right to vote, especially at a time of major decisions affecting the future of local government. The government has now decided that local elections at SCDC will go ahead.

There are some important deadlines I would like residents to be aware of:

- The deadline to register to vote is 20 April. If you are not already registered, you can apply on the government website.
- The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on 21 April. Applications can be made on the government website.
- The deadline to apply for a proxy vote is 5pm on 28 April. Applications can be made on the government website.
- Photo ID is now required when voting at polling stations. If you do not have photo ID, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate. The deadline to apply for this is 5pm on 28 April, via the government website.

A Responsible Alternative Budget

At this month's Scrutiny and Overview meeting, the administration presented its budget. In my view, it reflects misplaced priorities, limited long-term planning, and a reluctance to reconsider existing approaches.

The Conservative group put forward fully costed alternative proposals which will be presented at Full Council next month.

These budget amendments demonstrate that the council can freeze council tax, end the four-day working week, and still deliver savings if different choices are made. There are also proposals to restructure the senior leadership team to improve capacity, strengthen frontline services, and deliver better value for money.

These proposals include making better use of modern technology. For example, they have suggested installing AI software and cameras on bin lorries, which already travel every road each week, to automatically identify road defects and potholes. While not a complete solution, this could help problems be identified and addressed more quickly rather than waiting for significant deterioration.

While the administration continues to support current working practices and spending levels, I believe residents would benefit from a council that operates five days a week and focuses on delivering value for taxpayers.

Incomplete Audits and Governance Concerns

At the Audit and Corporate Governance meeting this month, I was disappointed and concerned to hear that audit reports remain incomplete due to staffing shortages and sickness. This raises serious concerns about how core governance processes are being supported.

I believe robust and timely audits are essential for accountability, risk management, and maintaining public trust. Allowing these delays to continue suggests underlying issues with capacity and workforce planning, and I find it frustrating that such fundamental council responsibilities are not being given the attention they require.

Reporting Local Issues

The condition of rural roads remains a concern for many residents, and a number of people have raised this with me. While highways are the responsibility of the County Council, I have directed residents to the County Council reporting page and assisted where help has been needed.

In addition to highways issues, I would stress the importance of reporting incidents of fly-tipping. Dumped waste has a negative impact on the countryside and is a criminal offence.

I believe reporting problems makes a difference, and the more reports that are received, the better.

Potholes can be reported at:

[Report a highways fault | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Fly-tipping can be reported at:

[Report a fly-tip \(South Cambs\) - Greater Cambridge Shared Waste](#)

Grants for Community Groups and Parish Councils

Local community groups and Parish Councils may be eligible for a range of council grant schemes. I would encourage groups to explore the funding opportunities available. Further information on grants for community projects can be found at: [Grants and Funding - South Cambs District Council](#).

The Tiger Bus Pass

Young people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will continue to benefit from £1 bus fares after the Combined Authority Board backed the Mayor's plan to retain the Tiger Bus Pass in its current form. This is dependent on the national bus fare cap remaining in place.

I welcome this decision as it provides certainty for under-25s, parents, schools, and employers that the Tiger Pass will remain available.

In January 2025, the government increased bus fares from a £2 cap to a £3 national bus fare cap. This has meant that the subsidy required to keep £1 fares for young people has doubled.

I believe that since its introduction, the Tiger Pass has helped many young people with day-to-day travel, supporting journeys to education, work, sports, and social activities. Use of the pass has grown steadily, with more than 60,000 young people now relying on it as part of their everyday lives.

*Thank you for taking the time to read my report; if you have any questions or want to discuss any of the issues raised email me on graham.cone@councillor.online or ring 07595 361 285 (please leave a voicemail if I am unavailable) **Councillor Graham Cone***