

Little Wilbraham & Six Mile Bottom Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

St John's Church Little Wilbraham, Thursday 8th May 2025 at 7pm

PRESENT: Cllr Cody, Cllr Daunton, Cllr Gill, Cllr Lane, Cllr Rajendran, Clerk-Hayley Livermore
Graham Cone
John Williams
Matthew Morgan

AGENDA

1: Apologies for absence: Cllr McCubbin

2: The minutes of 7th May 2024 were approved.

3. The chair David Hill welcomed all to the meeting.

4. District Councillor's report
Cllrs Carla Hofman and John Williams

About Us

We are members of the ruling Liberal Democrat Group. The Liberal Democrats have controlled South Cambridgeshire District Council since May 2018. Carla has been a District Councillor since 2022, John a District Councillor since 2010. John has been a Cabinet member running the council since 2018. He is responsible for Finance and Staffing, which includes grants and the 4-day week trial. He is also a Joint Development Control Committee member which considers major planning applications fringing the boundary of South Cambs and the City. He also deputises for the Leader of the Council on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board.

About South Cambridgeshire Council

The council was formed in 1974. Currently the council has 45 councillors led by a Cabinet of eight councillors, representing over 157,000 people and a workforce of over 660. This includes all those employed in the planning and waste services which are shared with Cambridge City council and led by South Cambridgeshire. Its council offices are at Cambourne and it has a waste depot at Waterbeach.

The council has just adopted a new five-year Corporate Plan. Our vision is for South Cambridgeshire to be a fairer, kinder and greener place, where all residents will be equal partners in their communities. Our priorities are healthy and supported communities, sustainable homes and vibrant places, being green to our core, thriving businesses and being financially secure and fit for the future.

For 2024/25 the council is forecast to be on budget. It will have spent nearly £84m, of which £34m is met from local taxpayers (including business rates) and Government grants. The council also received £7.5m from investments (rents and interests on loans) and nearly £40m from fees and charges. The council has total reserves of over £130m and of this, £100m is invested in Ermine Street the council's housing company and £31.5m is earmarked for various projects. The council has its own social housing stock consisting in total of over 5,800 properties. 400 homes have been added since 2018.

The areas covered by council services include building control, business support, environmental health, housing, planning, waste collection and community well-being (including supporting refugees). Building control, planning, waste and IT are operated in partnership with other local authorities. The council provides grants principally for health and well-being, environmental and ecological projects and for local business support.

In 2024/25

- South Cambridgeshire District Council celebrated its 50th anniversary

- At £170 for a Band D property, continued to charge one of the lowest council tax rates in the country
- The 4-day week trial in its second year continued to increase productivity and reduce costs, while improving staff recruitment and retention
- The six free trees for Parish Councils delivered 750 trees across the district
- Nearly £60,000 for the Community Chest grant scheme for community activities
- Nearly £12,000 for Cost-of-Living crisis projects
- The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy was launched which continued the target of 40% affordable housing in new developments
- A Youth Enterprise Market Challenge was launched to help young entrepreneurs
- Worked with the Let's Cook Project to deliver free family cooking events
- Continued to fund the mobile food hub serving 7 locations
- The Zero Carbon Communities Grants scheme gave out £125,000, bringing the total of grants under this scheme to £500,000 over 6 years
- Small business grants totalled £100,000
- 19 projects across the district received £900,000 in Rural England grants
- The council received White Ribbon accreditation for being committed to ending violence against women and girls
- The Local Government Association praised South Cambridgeshire District Council for "strong ambition", "good leadership", "innovative approaches" and for being "financially sound"
- The council pledged £345,000 to support community led mobile warden schemes
- Launched the £200,000 Improving the High Street Scheme
- The council signed anti-racism charter with trades unions
- The council bought software to help it identify residents needing financial support and contacted hundreds who should be claiming Pension Credit
- The council received Menopause Friendly accreditation
- The £360,000 Net Zero Villages Grant Scheme was launched
- The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service showed that it is meeting the Government's new house building target to prevent speculative developments
- 60 empty homes brought back into occupation; 111 new council homes built.
- South Cambridgeshire received £8m from Government to improve the energy efficiency of its council homes
- The Disability Facilities Grants Top-Up was doubled to £30,000
- The council introduced Allotment Improvement Grants

Councillor Graham Cone

I have served as a District Councillor since 2015, initially representing Fulbourn and, since 2018, the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn ward. This ward covers eight villages: Fen Ditton, Fulbourn, Great Wilbraham, Horningsea, Little Wilbraham, Six Mile Bottom, Stow cum Quy, and Teversham.

At South Cambridgeshire District Council, I sit as an Opposition Councillor and currently serve as Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

I continue to support residents on a wide range of local issues, including housing, planning (both major developments and smaller applications), road safety, flooding, youth services, benefits, and local maintenance. I attend Parish Council meetings across all eight villages and regularly take part in community events, such as Patient Participation Group meetings, library coffee mornings, village markets, litter picks, and resident-led group discussions on local concerns.

Each month, I produce a report highlighting new consultations, grant opportunities, and other useful information for residents and Parish Councillors. These reports are available to any resident upon request. This past year has been another controversial one at the District Council. The ongoing implementation of the Council's "Four Day Week" remains a point of significant debate. Although the official trial ended in March 2024, staff continue to work four days a week while being paid for 37 hours (5 days)—a move that has not yet been formally approved by all councillors. Meanwhile, remote working has become so widespread that the Council offices are often nearly empty.

In its latest budget, the Council has allocated £3,211,000 for management, analysis, performance, and transformation activities. While the Council has multiple income streams, it plans to raise £12.2 million from

Council Tax in 2025–26. This means more than a quarter of the money collected from residents will go toward these internal functions.

At the same time, the Government has announced major reforms to local government structures in England. These include the potential abolition of District Councils, with the goal of creating new unitary authorities that combine both district and county functions and serve populations of at least 500,000. If this goes ahead, much of the current spending on internal restructuring and analysis at South Cambridgeshire may end up having been wasted.

Finance and Budget

The council held its budget meeting on 25 February, where the opposition scrutinised the administration's budget proposals for 2025/26 and proposed an alternative budget. It included proposals to bolster planning enforcement, environmental crime and tackling fraud, amongst other things.

In the alternative budget, the opposition called for a referendum on the 4-day week. In over two years of this 5 days' pay for 4 days' work scheme, residents have paid for over 104 extra days' holiday for council staff. The 4-day week consultation was open until Sunday 23rd March. However, the consultation failed to ask if residents are happy with paying their council not to work. This is why the opposition called for a referendum – to finally give residents a say. As an opposition, we were disappointed but not surprised that the administration rejected our calls for a referendum.

In scrutinising the administration's budget plans, the opposition opposed proposals to increase Council Tax by the legal maximum amount of £5.09 for a Band D household because we, the opposition group, do not feel it is right to raise taxes whilst residents must continue to pay for council staff not to work. The group opposed the 2.7% increase in affordable rent and the 4% increase in shared ownership rents for the same reason. How is it right that residents are being asked to dip into their pockets more and more, when council staff are only working 32 hours but being paid for 37 hours?

We expressed our concern at the £46 million increase in borrowing when interest rates – the cost of borrowing – remain incredibly high. Additionally, by our calculations, the administration's Transformation programme has cost over £10 million, yet only saved £1.7 million.

The things in the budget meeting that we did support were the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme to ensure there is support for those who are struggling. We supported the Housing capital budget which looks to increase the number of houses owned by the council. We were pleased to see indications that, while our alternative budget was voted down, it looks as if our proposals around fraud and envirocrime may be taken forward.

Following a question asked at the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, the following figures have been provided for the upcoming year's budget for management and 'transformation' related activities:

Corporate Management	£737,000	CEO salary, subscriptions, Annual Accounts + audit, peer review
Data Team	£188,000	Support, co-ordination and implementation of data strategy initiatives
Policy and Performance	£241,000	Plan production and monitoring, KPIs, surveys and consultations
Central Support Services	£122,000	Central expenses including printing and postage
Digital Transformation	£804,000	*
Transformation	£1,119,000	**
Total	£3,211,000	

* "This service specifically deals with the move to enable residents to interact with the Council using the online portal on a 24/7 basis. Digital transformation aims to create and improve services for its local individuals and communities, by utilising technology and improving processes."

** "The costs of staffing and related items deal with service reviews and efficiencies. The transformation team offers tools, resources, and support to services at every stage of the transformation activity to fundamentally change systems and processes to achieve measurable improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and resident satisfaction in a modern society."

Housing

The District Council owns and maintains around 5,700 council houses. There are a further 6,100 council houses or houses managed by registered social housing providers in Cambridge City. Last year, the two councils adopted a Greater Cambridgeshire Housing Strategy for 2024 to 2029. This focuses on addressing demographic changes, tackling homelessness, and supporting first-time buyers through initiatives like First Homes.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has recently carried out a stock condition survey which will enable the council to undertake a costed 5, 10 & 15 year plan in terms of prioritising works. To date, the council has fitted a number of solar panels to its homes as well as ongoing insulation works and is committed to bringing all council houses up to a minimum Energy Performance Certificate rating of Band C by 2030. The councils will be

implementing requirements arising from the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act and the new regulatory consumer standards that came into force in April 2024.

People wishing to rent council homes can apply through the Home-Link website www.home-link.org.uk, the choice-based lettings scheme for all council and housing association homes in Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. Other types of properties such as extra care and equity share properties may also be advertised there. Decisions are made impartially by officers using objective criteria, and councillors can provide advice but can't influence a decision in favour of any applicant.

Last year's annual report to tenants and leaseholders was published recently and has concerning for our tenants and leaseholders within South Cambridgeshire. In several areas, South Cambs District Council is bottom of the pile compared to other local authorities when it comes to the people for whom the services exist – our residents.

This report can be found on the council's website at www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/information-for-council-tenants/tenant-news-and-involvement/tenant-and-leaseholder-news.

This news is particularly alarming, especially when you consider this report was compiled under the umbrella of a 4-day working week. To rank so low for resident feedback is disappointing.

Improving Complaint Handling

Effective complaint handling is crucial for any organisation, particularly in public services like housing management. Recent survey results reveal that South Cambridgeshire's approach to managing complaints is falling behind compared to other organisations, with a satisfaction rate of just 29%. This puts the local authority among the lowest scorers, with the lowest satisfaction rate across other organisations being 28%.

Resident Involvement

When it comes to whether the landlord listens to tenants' views, only 54% of residents were satisfied. Unfortunately, when compared to similar organisations, South Cambridgeshire ranks among the lowest in tenant satisfaction related to the landlord's responsiveness and follow-through on tenant feedback.

Planning

SCDC oversees planning policies and development projects through the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, guiding growth until 2031. This plan ensures housing, commercial development, and infrastructure projects align with sustainability goals and community needs. The council collaborates with Cambridge City Council through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, managing planning applications and large-scale strategic developments. Key planning priorities include ensuring new developments incorporate public transport provisions, green spaces, and sustainable building practices.

The council has faced challenges in balancing housing expansion with the provision of amenities. Cambourne's situation has highlighted concerns regarding developers not delivering agreed-upon community infrastructure. In Northstowe, the situation is even more difficult with the GP's surgery still many years away and not a single shop in operation within the development.

Environment and Waste

SCDC is committed to environmental protection and sustainability. The council's Zero Carbon Action Plan aims to reduce carbon emissions, promote renewable energy, and enhance biodiversity across the district. Initiatives include tree planting schemes, sustainable drainage projects, and incentives for homeowners to improve energy efficiency. The council also enforces environmental regulations to reduce pollution and protect natural habitats.

SCDC has awarded over £360,000 to nine local organizations as part of its Net Zero Villages scheme. These funds support climate-friendly initiatives such as community solar panels, electric vehicle charging points, and energy efficiency improvements in public buildings. The council continues to monitor air quality and promote green infrastructure projects to enhance sustainability within new developments.

Waste collection SCDC operates a joint waste collection service with Cambridge City Council, ensuring efficient and sustainable waste management. Residents receive kerbside collection services for general waste, recycling, and garden waste. The council promotes recycling initiatives and provides guidance on waste reduction.

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

5: County Councillor's report

Annual Report from County Councillor Claire Daunton for the Fulbourn Division in 2024-2025

Communities represented include: Fen Ditton East, Fulbourn, Great Wilbraham, Little Wilbraham, Quy, Six Mile Bottom, Teversham

This year, as in previous years as county councillor, I have served on four major service committees the council: Adults and Health; Children and Young People; Communities and Social Inclusion; Highways and Transport.

I have also served on the following working groups: cross-party group on libraries; chaired 'The Library Presents' group bringing art, music and performance to library settings; the County Archives and Local Studies group; the cross-party liaison group with the Cambridge and Peterborough NHS Trust.

As a county-council appointee, I have been a governor of the Cambridge and Peterborough NHS Trust which includes community health services and two mental health hospitals, Fulbourn Hospital and the Cavell Hospital in Peterborough.

As a county-council appointee I have served as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Assembly.

I am also a co-opted governor of Great Wilbraham Primary School

I list below the work carried out by me in collaboration with officers, parish council members, community group members, in Great Wilbraham. I want to thank, most sincerely, county officer colleagues, district councillor colleagues, local parish councillors, community group leaders and residents who have worked alongside me, constructively, helpfully and cheerfully, during a very busy year.

Local Work in Little Wilbraham and Six Mile Bottom

1. Drainage investigative work undertaken in High Street, with design work to follow, to deal with the problems;
2. Funds for cycling improvements for both our parishes secured, with detailed work now started;
3. Worked with the parish council and on the LHI application for safety improvements at junctions in Little Wilbraham.
4. Liaison with county officers, parish council and residents and businesses on road works and closures throughout the year to mitigate problems and inconveniences;
5. Worked with the parish council, residents and Anglian Water on issues concerning the pumping station in Little Wilbraham;
6. Worked with both parish councils, district colleagues and others on the proposed new bus service;
7. Worked with both parish councils (also WEG) on the proposed solar farm in Bottisham/Six Mile Bottom;
8. Working with parish councils, district councillor colleagues and others on the newly-proposed solar farm to be situated in villages to the east but with likely effects on both Wilbrahams and on Six Mile Bottom
9. Answered and dealt with queries from residents on a wide range of issues, including: potholes, hedges, trees, Fen boardwalk, ditches etc.

County Committees and their Work over the year:

Strategy, Resources & Performance

The Council set a balanced budget in February 2025, though this is becoming increasingly difficult for councils across the country. An increasing number of local authorities are issuing 'Section 114' notices—the nearest council equivalent to bankruptcy. This is not the case in Cambridgeshire.

Councillors acknowledged the challenges the council is facing with the demand for services, increasing complexity of need, inflation and market failures. Despite this, the business plan and budget process has been about listening to residents which is why more than £56m is being invested into highways maintenance. The county council had to close a gap of £35.1m – with 73% of the Council's net spend now being funded from Council Tax.

The council has prioritised several key areas, based on resident feedback through its Quality-of-Life survey, and are aligned to its vision to make Cambridgeshire greener, fairer and more caring: investment of more than £56m in highways maintenance; sustaining critical adults and children's social care; continuing to support vulnerable communities.

The Council increased its portion of council tax by 4.99% in total— 2 % for adult social services. This increase will raise £20m of local income to help maintain and protect critical services for the most vulnerable communities. For most of our residents in Bands A-D properties that will mean between an extra £1.04 pence to £1.55 a week.

For the second year, the county council commissioned the Quality of Life Survey involving more than 5,500 residents. We asked our residents to tell us what it is like for them living in Cambridgeshire and what concerns them most and we were delighted that so many people have been willing to participate.

We heard residents continue to feel happy, safe and to belong: this is heartening. However, residents have given a clear message about the challenges they are facing in relation to the cost of living crisis. It is particularly concerning that residents are telling us that they are having to cut back on heating and nutritious food. Whilst work to tackle poverty is still ongoing, we clearly need to keep looking at what we can do to support our residents further if we want to deliver on our vision to be a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire. The survey also tells us that fewer people are struggling with mental and physical health this year which is a positive change for our residents.

Adults & Health

The Adults and Health Committee has a significant role in ensuring 'health inequalities are reduced' and 'people enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs', as part of our Strategic Framework

We have confirmed our commitment to ensuring ongoing support for people with learning disabilities and their families, following changes to how the council works with the NHS in Cambridgeshire. The Learning Disability Partnership (LDP), which has provided integrated health and social care support for adults with learning disabilities in Cambridgeshire, will be formally dissolved from 1 April 2025.

The Council and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) are continuing discussions on how to work together to maintain services across the county. However, discussions are ongoing about payments owed for the services provided by the council, including historical debts. There remains an opportunity to reach an agreement before entering formal legal mediation, and the council hopes for a constructive resolution that benefits all involved, particularly those who rely on these important services. County councillors have raised concerns about this service separation and the associated financial issues, which has been formally escalated as a corporate risk by the council. Reports presented to the Adults and Health Committee, have highlighted the potential impact of these unresolved issues, and the council continues to press for a resolution.

Children & Young People

In Cambridgeshire, between 2020 and 2024, there was a 70% increase in children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), cost increases in home to school transport and in autism services over the same period. The council is facing significant pressures to meet the demand and costs of supporting children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. Currently we do not receive adequate funding from Government to meet the need. We are doing all we can locally to manage the increased pressures on funding

as result of this rising demand. We have recently submitted a revised Safety Valve proposal to the Department for Education to help the council to manage these dual pressures of rising demand and costs.

The Council endorsed a motion for an urgent national review of the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system at the March Full Council meeting. The motion called on the council's Chief Executive to write to Secretary of State for Education and the Minister for Schools to take assertive action to address the SEND crisis recognising that for the lowest funded Local Authority areas, like Cambridgeshire, children and young people are the most impacted because the funding received is not sufficient to meet the existing needs. A recent report from the Local Government Association and the County Councils Network, stated that reform was necessary, essential, and unavoidable, which was an honest and thorough assessment of the SEND crisis.

COSMIC

COSMIC (Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee) has continued to oversee the Household Support Fund, which supports people experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for essential items. An increasing number of families are struggling financially at the moment.

COSMIC unanimously approved the renewal of a scheme which helps survivors of domestic abuse to feel safer and more secure in their homes. This is key to the delivery of Cambridgeshire's Safe Accommodation Strategy, and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, and is provided in conjunction with working with a domestic abuse specialist. The survivor will be given a bespoke safety and support plan focused on their individual needs.

The Council has received Council of Sanctuary status, reaffirming the Council's commitments to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for people seeking sanctuary in Cambridgeshire. We are amongst one of the first county councils in the UK to receive this national award.

Poverty affects us all – either through personal experience or through the impact on those around us, family, friends and communities. No single organisation can tackle poverty alone and a new commission involving organisations from across Cambridgeshire has been launched to tackle poverty in the county. The Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission brings together a group of independent commissioners who have extensive professional experience supporting residents. This independent body is concluding its work and COSMIC committee will ensure the council responds to its recommendations with our partners.

We continue to recognise the importance of our libraries which are at the heart of our communities. Libraries are where many of the council's resident facing interactions take place and they have an essential role in our communities as places of sanctuary, knowledge and community. We have planned further improvements for our Libraries through £1.3m committed for the Libraries Plus programme, creating more flexible spaces and expanding the range of services available to our residents.

Environment

The Environment and Green Investment Committee discussed Anglian Water's proposals for the two new reservoirs and the Council will be involved as a statutory consultee on these proposals. We want to ensure ambitions for much needed growth are balanced with the significant pressures it creates on local services and infrastructure, and we will continue to work with our mayor and central government to deliver for local residents, communities and businesses.

Through the committee's stewardship, the council has reduced its direct carbon emissions by 42% and developed several major energy projects that will not only provide income but also provide renewable energy sources for the council and some of our communities.

The Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Partnership (CERP) has won a national award for its success in promoting environmental best practice and quality retrofit programmes.

The CERP partnership has been awarded bronze for its contribution to 'Green Public Service', these awards recognise, reward and promote environmental best practice across the public sector in the UK.

Also known as Action on Energy Cambridgeshire, CERP is a partnership between Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Highways & Transport

The condition of our roads and pavements is still a huge challenge, in Cambridgeshire as it is nationwide—a mixture of inadequate Government funding, past neglect, extreme weather, and in some cases poor standards of repair.

The Highways and Transport Committee agreed a £59m highways maintenance and improvement programme for 2025/26.

The county's roads need more than £400m worth of maintenance to address all the issues, and that does not include soil impacted roads, which is roughly an additional £530m.

However, the council's business plan, has enabled an additional £20m in 2025/26 to address our highway issues; a further £20m is allocated for 2026/27.

This funding, along with an additional £8m from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, will prioritise increased funding for Local Highway Improvements (LHIs), trees, weeds and vegetation, drainage maintenance, road safety, active travel, soil affected roads, highways maintenance including potholes, lining and signs, street lighting and bus- shelter enhancements.

The programme, which has been produced using a new prioritisation process already agreed by the committee, means each scheme is scored against a set criterion such as: the type of road, does it have active travel links, is it a public transport route, the condition, is it near a school or a care home and how many people use it. This means that the schemes are designed to apply the right treatment suitable to that location.

Improvements include more than £30m worth of carriageway maintenance, an additional £2m on soil-affected roads, more than £7m on footpath and cycleway maintenance, £1m on active travel and £4m on drainage.

Following approval given at committee, the programme will now go through design and development work before delivery begins this April, running through to March 2026.

Staffing and Appeals

Cambridgeshire has become the first County Council to be awarded 'Gold' membership of The 5% Club's 2024-25 Employer Audit Scheme. The 5% Club works with UK employers to drive positive action towards accessible workplace learning, by looking at numbers of apprentices, sponsored students and graduates employed. The goal is to increase employment and career prospects for young people and equip them with the skills they need to become an integral part of the workforce, and of society.

The council has been shortlisted as a finalist in four categories of the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards. The LGC Awards celebrate the very best in local government, highlighting councils across the country that demonstrate outstanding leadership, creativity, and impact in serving their communities.

Combined Authority

The county council has reaffirmed its commitment to improving public transport accessibility and affordability by endorsing the Tiger bus fare scheme and the Mayor's recent decision to franchise bus routes, providing a more reliable, integrated service for residents. We have a growing county but a transport network model not fit for purpose. We want to expand the Cambridgeshire bus network, with more routes, more destinations; and the local authority to be accountable for bus services.

The Combined Authority approved its spending plans from 2025/26, funding improvements to transport, skills and business growth. The Mayor's budget was also approved and confirmed that the Mayoral precept portion of council tax bills will be frozen for 2025/26. Included in the approved budget is the extension of the £2 bus fare cap to 30 June 2025, moving to a £2.50 fare cap from July to December 2025. This aims to maintain affordable, accessible travel reduce road congestion, and ease cost-of-living pressures

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government published the English Devolution White Paper in December, which set out their programme to achieve greater devolvement of powers and their intent to undertake a major reorganisation of local

government. On 5 February 2025, the Government issued an invitation to every council leader in two-tier areas of local government and neighbouring unitary authorities. The invitation asked for an interim update to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025.

We issued a response to the Minister outlining our position. The letter is available for you to read.

6: Annual reports

Great Wilbraham Primary School

No report sent

Johnson Bede & Lane Charitable Trust

No report sent

Warbler Magazine report

The warbler is at present costing 17p per copy which is down due to an increase in back page advertising. The quality of the paper it is printed on has been upgraded and pictures and text are better. It is usually between 64 and 72 pages long. The core group of volunteers that deliver the warbler to homes remains much the same.

Wilbrahams' Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall and the surrounding facilities (play area, recreation ground and sports and social club) are fundamental in enabling the residents of Gt, Lt Wilbraham & Six Mile Bottom to gather / socialise / debate / learn / exercise / play, and without them, our communities would be a poorer place. We work hard to maintain and resource these facilities for our residents in a sustainable way.

The Memorial Hall is a registered charity and is completely independent of the Parish Councils. The charity is run by a group of 7 resident 'Trustees', together with up to 7 committee members who represent major village groups or institutions, eg The 2 Parish Councils, the Church; School; Over 60's; Wellbrahams; Sports & Social Club. The committee is assisted by our amazingly hard-working booking secretary, Shirley Morley. In the last year we have welcomed Tony Goryn as our President, replacing Ray Tilbrook of Lt Wilbraham who held this role since 2011. We have also welcomed Becca Clarke of Little Wilbraham as a Trustee and said a sad goodbye to Ruth Sinclair of Little Wilbraham who had been an active and inspiring Trustee since 2015. We now have one vacancy for a Trustee if there is anyone who would like to get involved – it is a very satisfying role to have – our actions have a big impact on the lives of our neighbours, positive we hope! If the new Trustee could be a 'younger' member of the community, that would be great – we are gradually reducing the average age of the committee, and we would like members who represent all age groups.

This last year has been dominated by our project to install 60 solar panels on the hall roof, together with 23kw battery storage inside. We were delighted with the overwhelming support shown by the community and that the whole project was entirely grant funded. We are grateful for the contributions from: County Council's Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund (£25k); Wadlow Wind Farm Community Fund (£10k); Ridge Clean Energy (£5k) Great Wilbraham Parish Council (£2k); The Drapers' Company (£1k). The panels were installed in early August 2024 by Greenscape Ltd and the whole process has been managed brilliantly by our vice chair, Paul Lambton, who monitors generation and consumption daily! Our aim was to reduce the eye watering electricity bills and to export clean energy to the grid. Clearly this is 'weather dependent' but it is looking like we will reduce our annual electricity bills by 60-75%. We are exporting around 70% of the energy we produce. Since the installation in August, our exports would typically run 2-3 UK households for a year.

Although this is helping to keep costs and rental rates down, we still rely on fundraising to meet the running and maintenance costs of the facilities.

To boost this, last year we established a '100+ Club' a private small lottery that draws tickets from its members 4 times a year. In the first year we had 131 members, all paying £20 for their annual ticket. We retain 50% of ticket sales for hall funds and distribute the other 50% as prizes. It has been a great success, and we hope we can retain and even attract more members this year to enjoy a flutter and support the hall in the process.

Other important fund-raising events are the annual Flower & Produce Show (run by Rosie White and her team), the Farmer's Markets and the Annual Feast. Altogether these initiatives raise around £6,000 annually. We hope you enjoy these events, and we are grateful to all those who muck in and help on the day. We would always welcome ideas and volunteers for other opportunities if you would like to suggest things and get involved.

Other plans / challenges for the year ahead:

- 1 Setting up a digital booking system to reduce the administrative burden on the Booking Secretary.
- 2 With advice from Cambridgeshire ACRE, regularise our Trust Deed so it reflects the organisations represented on the Committee (it dates from 1949) and then complete our application for the Hallmark scheme for Village Halls.
- 3 Decide on next projects and apply for grants. This could be the link to the social club, and / or replacement doors (our timber ones are warping).
- 4 Increasing / reinstating Youth and Exercise activities within the hall calendar.
- 5 Setting up a practical (DIY) volunteer group / email list for small maintenance tasks.

Emma Adams
Chair of Wilbrahams' Memorial Hall Trustees.
18.4.2025

Wellbrahams report

No report sent

WEG report

Wilbrahams Environment Group Brief Report for 2024

We are a volunteer group whose aim, briefly, is to Promote Maintain and Improve the Natural Environment of the Wilbrahams and Six Mile Bottom for the people of the villages by:-

- (a) Working with individuals and existing organisations in the villages
- (b) Ourselves organising and carrying out projects in the villages with voluntary labour and local expertise.

We do not have a membership fee. We have more than 90 members/supporters registered on our database and we aim to make our events free to all. We promote ourselves through regular member newsletters, articles in the Warbler, postings on the Village Website, the Villages Community Facebook page and our own Facebook page.

Our small Committee (six in number) worked hard during the year on many ideas and projects. In the year 2024 we worked with both of our Parish Councils, the Wilbraham River Protection Society and the Wildlife Trusts BCN. Here are details of just some of our activities:-

- Solar Farm - Ridge Clean Energy. We have always supported this project which was granted Planning Consent late in 2023 for land between the A11 and A14. During 2024 we worked hard with our two parish councils and that of Bottisham to negotiate the detail of a Community Benefits agreement – and we took the leading role in documenting the Agreement. A cabling route to avoid our village settlements has just been agreed, subject to planning & other consents
- Liaison with Farmers. We have continued to foster relationships with more local farmers so that we and residents generally have a better understanding of their practices as they move towards more sustainable, regenerative use of their land.

- Open Evenings. We showed two inspiring films: “Pure Clean Water” about Cambridge’s water supply and threats to it; and “Six Inches of Soil” about transition to regenerative farming. We ran a presentation with the Wildlife Trusts entitled “Gardening with Wildlife in Mind”. Finally the owners of the Quy Hall Estate gave a brilliant presentation of their own transition to nature-friendly farming on their land in Little Wilbraham
- Thermal Imaging. We borrowed a thermal camera from Cambridge Carbon Footprint and used it to help a small number of homeowners to identify areas in their homes which would benefit by more insulation.
- Helping Great Wilbraham PC. We organised a litter pick in Great Wilbraham; we planted more trees; we helped draw up a new Maintenance regime for the grass verges in Great Wilbraham; we were a member of the Cemetery & Orchard Working Group and participated in a major work party to improve the site; we assisted re the Community Benefits Agreement mentioned above
- Little Wilbraham River. The Wilbraham River Protection Society is now represented on our Committee. WEG is a member of the Dungate Farm Augmentation Scheme Stakeholders group which is lobbying the Environment Agency to improve the augmentation scheme
- Nature Recovery Plan. Cambridgeshire is recognised as a nature-depleted area and, as part of an area-wide push to change this and working with the Wildlife Trusts, we aim to record all aspects of Nature and land use locally and to suggest changes, many of them small, which could make a big difference. During 2024 we used grants from the two parish councils to acquire existing data and load it into “Parish Online” software. Rather slowly we have been acquiring more information from major local landowners and we expect to make significant progress in 2025, leading to proposals to help nature within our parishes.

In 2025 we have already organised a Litter Pick and hosted for a large audience another film show “Fugolburna” about Fulbourn Fen and the Little Wilbraham river. We are planning more Open Events. Our objective is to engage with, educate and inform everyone in our communities on environmental issues and to involve people in practical action. We would like opportunities to be more active in Little Wilbraham!

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7. Discussion

Next year is the 125th anniversary of the Mary Layton Alms Houses. The celebrations for this will be combined with the feast in 2026.