

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2022

AVIAN FLU

The compulsory housing requirement for poultry and captive birds ends on Monday 2 May. However, the remaining requirements of the national Avian Influenza Prevention Zone will remain in place for all captive birds, whether commercial or backyard flocks. There will be a continued onus on scrupulous biosecurity. Poultry gatherings will remain banned.

The exception is the current three-kilometre protection zone north of Ely—Pymoor, Little Downham, and Way Head in particular. This followed a confirmed case of bird flu last month. The extensive restrictions within the [Declaratory Order](#) will continue until further notice which includes the requirement to house birds.

Defra introduced the national measures on 29 November 2021 to control the spread of bird flu. The country has seen unprecedented numbers of cases this year, with over 100 cases confirmed, affecting much of the UK including Cambridgeshire.

Bird keepers in the rest of the county are being encouraged to start preparing outside areas now and Defra have produced guidance on preparatory steps [How to prepare for when your free-range birds can be let outside again \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

All bird keepers must:

- cleanse and disinfect clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- reduce the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept, to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products, and use effective vermin control
- thoroughly cleanse and disinfect housing on a continuous basis
- keep fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all farm and poultry housing entry and exit points
- minimise direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds

Defra is also encouraging all keepers, even those with fewer than 50 birds, to register their flocks so that they can be notified if a disease outbreak happens near them. For keepers of 50 or more birds, registration is compulsory. To register visit [Poultry \(including game birds\): registration rules and forms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

For further information about any of the restrictions or for further guidance visit [Avian influenza \(bird flu\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

FINANCES & COUNCIL ASSETS

This Land

The County Council is currently seeking a new Chair for its development company This Land. I took part in preliminary interviews recently.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Senior leaders respond well to COVID challenges, says Ofsted

Senior leaders in Children's Services at Cambridgeshire County Council have responded well to the challenges of COVID-19 and have ensured children stayed safe, according to Ofsted inspectors.

The inspectors also praised senior leaders at the authority for maintaining continuity throughout structural changes.

The team from Ofsted visited the Council in March. They acknowledged the challenges of social worker recruitment in the county, but added that leaders recognised this. They particularly praised the support from 'well-informed, committed' councillors, adding that with financial investment, action was being taken to strengthen services.

They found that most children in need and those with a child protection plan were supported well, and that children's practitioners held cases that were appropriate to their role, and received regular supervision.

Inspectors highlighted some areas for improvement, mostly related to capacity and staffing.

The full report is at [50181344 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

More children offered first choice primary school

The proportion of children in Cambridgeshire offered a place at their preferred primary school for this September has risen.

A total of 95.1 per cent were offered a place at their first choice school – up from 94.4 per cent last year.

The proportion offered a place at their second choice school was down slightly from 3.9 per cent in 2021 to 3.1 per cent this year. A total of 0.6 per cent were offered a place at their third choice school—the same as last year.

The Council's school admissions team received and processed more applications than last year—up from 6420 to 6568.

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION

Household Support Fund

During 2021/22 the Council administered the Household Support Fund scheme to support those most in need over the winter months, primarily with food and fuel costs. This used £2,457,158 of Government funding.

The Joint Administration's budget in February set aside £1M for a new Household Support Fund wider scheme for 2022/23. In March the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced further funding for the Household Support Fund nationally. We do not yet know how much of that is allocated to Cambridgeshire.

The £1M provided from Council funding will enable the 2022/23 offer to be more flexible, as it will not be limited by the Government rules that applied to last year's funding.

Community grants

The Committee has awarded grants to thirteen community organisations from its 'Innovate & Cultivate' Fund, now rebadged Cultivate Cambs. Included in these is £15,000 for Cambridge Re-Use, to support their scheme to offer donated furniture and home wares at very low cost to low-income families in Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire.

Ukraine Response Group

A Cambridgeshire Ukraine Response Group has been established to bring together a range of organisations in a co-ordinated response. The Group meets at least twice weekly.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Solar Together discount offers

Solar Together Cambridgeshire is a partnership between Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire's district councils, to offer homeowners high-quality solar PV panels through a group purchasing scheme.

The first round of the scheme in autumn 2020 saw just under 1,000 installations completed. The second round which has just taken place resulted in more than 9,000 registrations of interest. This is 59 per cent higher than the total registration figures in the autumn 2020 scheme.

Homeowners are able to secure average discounts of 34 per cent compared to typical market rates. Those taking up the scheme will also benefit from the recent removal of VAT for solar PV. The offer is valid until Friday 13 May.

Three winning bidders—Greenscape Energy, Green Energy Together UK, and Everyone's Energy—have been chosen to carry out the installations.

#LetsGetOutdoors

The County Council has launched a #LetsGetOutdoors campaign which is encouraging people to make use of Cambridgeshire's fantastic parks. The campaign is highlighting a new online map <https://www.cambsopenspace.co.uk/> which lists all the main green spaces across Cambridgeshire. I joined a member of the Friends of Wisbech Park to launch the campaign in Wisbech on ITV's regional news.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Local Highway Improvement bids

The Highways & Transport Committee met on 26 April and awarded funding to the successful Local Highway Improvement bids from parishes.

Here in East Cambridgeshire there were successful bids from Soham, Lode, Fordham, Burrough Green, Sutton, Cheveley, Chippenham, Woodditton, Haddenham, Wilburton, Isleham, and Wicken. The Sutton scheme is for a crossing on The Brook for those walking east-west along the High Street.

The Committee has set up a working group, of which I am a member, to review the Local Highway Improvement scheme process. Subject to that group's proposals, the provisional application window for next year's round will be October-November 2022, with approval of schemes in June 2023 and pricing and construction March-June 2024.

20MPH zones

I have been appointed to a Council working group on the implementation of 20MPH zones in Cambridgeshire, which is due to hold its first meeting soon.

Cycle stands

Some of the cycle stands agreed between the County and Parish Councils are set for installation imminently in Sutton and Mepal.

No Mow May

Cambridgeshire County Council will stop cutting grass on its road verges during May this year to support local biodiversity, with a particular focus on pollinators such as bees.

'No Mow May' is run by Plantlife, an organisation that promotes the maintenance and growth of wildflowers, plants and fungi. According to Plantlife, more than 700 species of wildflowers grow on road verges in the UK. Cutting the grass less often will help reduce carbon emissions, as well as providing habitats for pollinators, such as bees, to thrive. The Council is also encouraging all local parish councils that cut verges on its behalf to take part in No Mow May.

Road safety is a priority for Cambridgeshire County Council, so in agreement with Plantlife the Council will still cut grass where leaving it could cause danger, such as at junctions or bends.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Combined Authority's Bus Improvement Programme was snubbed by the Government, with no funding being awarded to Cambridgeshire & Peterborough at all for better bus provision.

Meet Your Councillor

Sutton ward district councillor Mark Inskip and I will be holding our virtual surgery via Zoom from 6:30 to 7:30PM on

- Tuesday 10 May 2022
- Tuesday 14 June 2022

Please contact Mark at mark@markinskip.org.uk to book your timeslot.

Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division