

Parish e-bulletin: Issue 2 – 3 November 2015

Welcome to the second edition of our parish e-bulletin. It includes information and news from across Cambridgeshire County Council that as Parish Council's you may want to discuss and pass on to your residents. Please also feel free to pass this onto editors of your village newsletter.

Tough choices for Cambridgeshire to meet £41 million savings

This month Service Committees will look at proposals to meet the major financial challenge of £41 million savings this year and more than £100 million over the next five years. This follows cumulative savings of £218 million since 2009.

The scale of savings means that proposals will have an impact on all services, from how the Council looks after roads, manages libraries and cares for the most vulnerable.

Councillors will be looking at initial proposals of how these savings may be achieved and, with officers, will be working to change or mitigate these options to reduce the impact on communities. Service Committees will comment on the proposals which will then go to the General Purpose Committee for consideration before the business plan is discussed by Full Council early next year. For more information see our website

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/article/373/tough_choices_for_cambridgeshire_to_meet_41_million_savings

There is also a link on our website to have your say www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/challenge

Streetlight consultation

We are urging residents to have their say on proposals to further dim or turn off some streetlights at certain times to meet tough saving targets. We're looking to follow the lead of more than 60 councils across the country, which have already turned off or dimmed street lights, which should save around £272,000 from an annual cost of over £1.4m a year. The savings made would help reduce the impact of £41 million of cuts on other frontline services.

For more details please visit

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CambridgeshireStreetlightConsultation/ or contact research.performance@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. The closing date for responses is 11 December 2015, paper copies are available.

We've already been talking to parish, town, district and city councils to explain the proposals for their areas. This has also included looking at any concerns they may have as well as local solutions they may wish to propose, including funding for some lights. A recent report shows that where this approach of dimming or turning off streetlights has been taken elsewhere, there is no evidence to suggest a link with increases in crime or detrimental impact on safety.

Scams in our county

We've unfortunately had reports of two particular types of scams that residents in our county are being targeted by – both claim to be from Cambridgeshire County Council.

In the first, someone is phoning residents claiming to be from Cambridgeshire County Council and asking about their recent fall. The person calling tries to engage the resident in conversation with the aim of finding out personal details.

If you ever receive a call from someone you don't know saying they work for us, get their name and tell them you will call them back. Phone our General Enquiries line 0345 045 5200 and ask to be put through to that named officer.

The second is a rogue trader scam from someone claiming to work for our Highways or Streetworks Team. They are approaching residents to say they are doing safety markings in the area and are offering their surplus thermoplastic paint to refresh any markings you may have (for example parish council owned recreation car parks) for a fee. Our officers would never do this. If you receive any approaches of this sort please decline the work, you can always check the authenticity of one of our officers by calling our telephone number above.

For further advice and guidance on scams and rogue traders please see our website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/scams

Loan Sharks

A loan shark is someone who lends money without the permission required by the Financial Services & Markets Act 2000. It may be tempting to borrow from rogue money lenders who won't ask questions about your financial situation. These people may call at your door or you may hear about them from others, and it might seem like an easy and quick way to borrow money. At first they will seem very friendly and trustworthy. They will charge you a huge rate of interest, meaning you have to pay back far more money than you borrowed and that you can afford. They often keep increasing the amount you owe and may ask for security on the debt such as your passport, bank card or driving licence.

Victims of loan sharks are not only charged astronomical rates of interest, but very often face violence, intimidation or blackmail if they fall behind with their payments. The average cost of borrowing from a loan shark is three times the price of the highest cost of legal credit. The highest interest rate the team have come across so far was 131,000% APR.

If you or someone you know is a victim contact Trading Standards Illegal Money Lending Team in strictest confidence, 0300 555 2222, reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk or text 'loan shark + your message' to 60003. For more information visit www.gov.uk/stoploansharks

You don't have to give your name or sign an official statement if you don't want to.

Library Meeting Rooms for Hire

Looking for a venue to host your next community event or meeting? With prices starting from less than £4 per hour, why not consider your local library meeting room? Meeting rooms are available throughout the county. Venues include Central Library, Cherry Hinton, Chatteris, Ely, Huntingdon, March, Milton Road, Ramsey, Rock Road, Soham, St Neots, Wisbech and Whittlesey Library.

Our rooms are extremely versatile offering space for 2-70 people, with free WiFi at all locations. We also offer some meeting venues and local libraries to hire out of normal opening hours. To find out more about our meeting rooms or to see if your local library is available to hire contact 0345 045 5225 or visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/library

Give sport a try, join Sport England's Stepping Stone project

Over the last two years, Stepping Stone has helped nearly 130 disabled people and those with long term health needs to take part in over 2000 activity sessions in 23 different sports including golf, paddle boarding, boxing, archery, shooting and trampolining.

Do you fancy giving sport a try? There's an opportunity to join the growing success of Stepping Stone which supports and encourages regular sports participation, coaching, refereeing or officiating for adults and young people aged over 14.

Funding by Sport England for the project, delivered by Living Sport, has recently been extended and direct financial support for individuals is still available.

For more information contact Rebecca Gilbertson, 01487 849929, rebecca.gilbertson@livingsport.co.uk

Youth Grants

Legally constituted organisations with an income of less than £75,000 a year can apply for up to £3,000 to fund projects that benefit young people, aged 10 – 18 years and living in Cambridgeshire or up to 25 years if a young person has a special educational need or is disabled.

Projects should contribute to at least one of the Area Partnership Priorities (improve emotional health & wellbeing, increase work readiness or reduce the number of young people who are not in education employment or training, support new communities, reduce the impact of child poverty, encourage young people to be involved in decision making, raise awareness of or reduce incidents of child sexual exploitation) and do one or more of the following: help young people: develop their own initiatives, participate in their community, motivate other young people to take part, develop opportunities for young people to explore, be creative and play.

The deadline is Thursday 31 December 2015. For a grant form contact Amanda.Silvester@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (Cambridge City & South Cambs), Donna.barnes@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (Fenland & East Cambs) or Alison.preece@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (Huntingdonshire).

Are your items going in the right bin?

Your green bin is for compostable food and garden waste only. If you put food waste into your green bin make sure you put it in loose or wrap it in newspaper or use paper caddy liners. We create over 23,000 tonnes a year of compost which is then used on farmer's fields for crops or by residents on their gardens. That is enough to spread compost over four football pitches every day in the year. Don't use plastic or bio-degradable plastic bags because they don't break down and this means the material can go to waste, costing money and filling up landfill sites. To find out more and to see our new videos on recycling visit www.recap.co.uk