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**FOR INFORMATION ONLY – THESE DECISIONS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN**



**EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL – 25 MAY 2023 – DECISION LIST**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting:

Prayers were led by Canon James Garrard of Ely Cathedral.

A tribute was given and a minute's silence was held as a mark of respect following the passing of former Councillor Walter Bebbington (Independent District Councillor for the Ely North Ward, 1991-1999).

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Report Ref.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Action by</b>
1.	-	Public Question Time	To answer questions from members of the public.	Public questions were received and responded to as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
2.	-	Election of Chairman 2023/24	To elect a Chairman of the Council for the 2023/24 municipal year.	It was resolved: That Cllr Mark Goldsack be elected as Chairman of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2023/24.	
3.	-	Vote of Thanks to Outgoing Chairman and Presentation of Past Chairman's Medallion and Scroll	To give a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman.	Cllrs Anna Bailey, Bill Hunt and Mark Goldsack thanked Cllr Alan Sharp for his scrupulously fair chairmanship conducted with tolerance and humour. Cllr Sharp was presented with a past Chairman's scroll and medallion and a bouquet of flowers. Cllr Sharp thanked Lynne Smart and Susan Lee for managing his diary of appointments throughout his term of office, the Chief Executive and wider team for their help and advice in conducting meetings, his predecessor former Cllr Lis Every, and all Council Members for their support.	

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Report Ref.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Action by</b>
4.	-	Apologies for Absence	To receive apologies for absence from Members.	There were no apologies for absence.	-
5.	-	Election of Vice-Chairman 2023/24	To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2023/24 municipal year.	It was resolved: That Cllr David Brown be elected as Vice-Chairman of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2023/24.	-
6.	-	Declarations of Interests	To receive declarations of interests from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.	No Declarations of Interests were made.	-
7.	-	Minutes – 21 February 2023	To receive the Minutes of the last Council meeting.	It was resolved: That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.	Democratic Services Manager
8.	Y1	District Council Election Results	To receive the results of the District Council elections held on 4 May 2023.	It was resolved: That the election results be noted.	-
9.	-	Chairman's Announcements	Announcement of items of interest.	The Chairman reminded all Members to remain in the Chamber for the meetings to appoint Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs after the close of the Council meeting.	-
10.	-	To Receive Petitions	To receive public petitions.	No public petitions had been received.	-
11.	-	Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10	To receive and consider Motions with Notice.	No Motions had been received.	-

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Report Ref.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Action by</b>
12.	-	To answer Questions from Members	To receive questions from Members of Council.	Five questions from Members were received and responses given as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
13.	Y2	Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders	To receive details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council; Political Groups; and Group Leaders and Deputies for the 2023/24 municipal year.	It was resolved: That the details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council; Political Groups; and Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming municipal year, as detailed in paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 of the Officer's report, with the addition of Cllr Julia Huffer as Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group and of the Council, be noted.	Democratic Services Manager
14.	Y3	Political Proportionality	To receive details of the political balance of the Council and the implications for the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies.	It was resolved: That the political balance, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, be noted, and the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.	Democratic Services Manager
15.	Y4	Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees (including substitutes) and other Member Bodies 2023/24	To consider the appointment of Members and substitutes to Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies for 2023/24.	It was resolved: That the membership of Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies for 2023/24, as detailed in revised Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, be approved.	Democratic Services Manager

16.	-	<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority</p> <p>a) Appointments to the Combined Authority</p> <p>b) Update reports</p>	<p>a) To consider the appointments to be made to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2023/24.</p> <p>b) To receive the reports from the Constituent Council representatives on the Combined Authority:</p> <p>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee (20/3/23)</p> <p>Combined Authority Board (22/3/23)</p> <p>Audit &amp; Governance Committee (24/3/23)</p>	<p>a) It was resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the following appointments and nominations to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2023/24 be approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) That Cllr Anna Bailey be appointed as the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority with Cllr Julia Huffer appointed as the substitute member;</li> <li>ii) That Cllrs David Brown and Lorna Dupré be nominated as Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with Cllrs Keith Horgan and Charlotte Cane nominated as their respective substitutes;</li> <li>iii) That Cllr Mark Inskip be nominated as Member of the Audit &amp; Governance Committee, with Cllr Caroline Shepherd nominated as the substitute member.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. That the Chief Executive be authorised to make any amendments to the appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee, in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, if the political balance is amended by the Combined Authority between now and the next Council meeting.</li> </ol> <p>b) It was resolved:</p> <p>That the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's representatives be noted.</p>	Democratic Services Manager
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17.	Y5	Action taken by the Chief Executive on the Grounds of Urgency	To note action taken on the grounds of urgency in relation to the Council's contribution to the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme	It was resolved: That the action taken on the grounds of urgency be noted.	Chief Executive
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## 1. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

### i) Question from Peter Bates (read aloud by the Chairman):

“East Cambs Climate Action Network is pleased to see that finally two of the planned 24 Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging points in Ely and Soham are now working, but is concerned that East Cambridgeshire District Council is not installing them fast enough!!

1. What is now the revised deadline for all 24 EV Charging Points to be fully operational and all appropriate signage fully installed? (According to an ECDC Press Release they were going to be installed by last March)
2. Is the Council going to work with the supplier to ensure that local residents and visitors will be able to reserve a charging slot to ensure that the limited number of EV charging points that are available will be used efficiently? (The labelling on the EV charging points seems to suggest that this is possible)
3. As there is now a 40% increase in EV registered vehicles in 2022 compared to 2021 across the UK, what plans does the Council have to increase the number EV Charging points across the District and will its plans include rapid EV Charging points (25-99kWh) and ultra-rapid EV charging points (100kWh+) that would encourage tourists and business people to stop-off in the district and spend money with local businesses? (It is noted that West Suffolk has plans for 100 EV Charging points and Cambridge City with plans for about 360 on top of their existing EV Charging points)
4. East Cambs Climate Action Network is concerned that there appears to be significant delays in getting the Commercial EV Points becoming operational at the Service Station north of Soham (CB7 5ED). They have been installed for more than two years but are still not working. Local EV car owners are being told that the Service Station owners are still waiting for ECDC to give them permission. Can the Council investigate this to find out whether this is the case or not and why this commercial company is failing to deliver its EV charging service which would be useful for local residents and visitors to the area.?

5. Can the Council provide full details of how it is taking advantage of all the UK Government and Combined Authority funds that are currently available so as to help develop the EV infrastructure across the district?"

**Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey:**

"1. The Barton Road and Newnham Street charging points are due to be fully operational by the end of June. In the Clay Street charging points in Soham we're unfortunately still waiting for UK Power Networks to re-connect the points due to the incorrect single phase supply having been installed, we do not yet have a date for this, we're at the mercy of UKPN, but once this has been done the remaining works can then be completed.

2. Residents and visitors will be able to see if the charging point is available by using the App.

3. One of the proposed actions that we have in the forthcoming Environment Plan which is coming to committee very soon on 19<sup>th</sup> June is that the Council will undertake a programme of Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) initiatives. That will include improving information on our website about EVC in the District; assisting parish councils and residents to find grants to help install EVC points themselves; and obviously bidding for grants to install more EVCs in our own public car parks.

4. Planning permission for the installation of EV charging bays and associated power connections at Soham BP at The Shade was granted on 2 October 2020.

5. The Council has been working regularly with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to produce an Alternative Fuels Strategy to speed up the switch to electric, hydrogen and other renewable fuelled vehicles. The AFS is planned to be formally adopted as part of the Combined Authority's overall strategy at the Board meeting coming up on 31st May. As mentioned above, Officers will continue to work with and start working with parish councils and residents to find grants and to help install charging points and bid for grants to install more charging points in our own public car parks."

**ii) Statement from Stephen Thompson, Chair of Haddenham Parish Council:**

Parish Cllr Thompson informed the Council about various initiatives underway at Haddenham Parish Council and provided feedback about the running of District Council meetings, based on his attendance on several previous occasions.

**Response from the Chairman of Council, Cllr Alan Sharp:**

The Chairman commented that no question had been asked and thanked the contributor for their involvement.

## 12. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

### i) Question to the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group from Cllr Lucius Vellacott:

"I can tell the Council with confidence that residents in Soham South voted rather overwhelmingly to oppose the Cambridge Congestion Charge, which the Liberal Democrat campaign refused to oppose outright, and for our other common-sense plans like keeping council tax low and car parking free. However, I note with concern that Cllr Dupré's Liberal Democrat group, to my knowledge and that of many residents, conducted no district council campaign activities in Soham South or Wicken, but did conduct a great deal in Soham North.

Can Cllr Dupré confirm to my residents why her group sought to listen to the views of one half of our town, but not the other?"

### Response from the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Cllr Lorna Dupré:

"I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Cllr Vellacott to the Council, and to thank him for his question.

I'm not certain that Members' Questions is the place to discuss how local parties conduct their election campaigns. And I need to remind Cllr Vellacott that in my ward his own party failed to muster a full complement of candidates for the local elections on 4 May, denying Conservative voters the chance to cast both their votes for their chosen party.

But I'm grateful for his encouragement for the Liberal Democrats to campaign even more energetically against the Conservatives in his ward, and glad that we have quickly found a proposal on which we can both agree.

Cllr Vellacott's party took 49.8 per cent of all votes cast in the district council elections in Soham South on 4 May—hardly overwhelming, and certainly less than half. In fact, across East Cambridgeshire:

- Fewer people voted Conservative in May 2023 than in May 2019;
- More people voted Liberal Democrat in May 2023 than in May 2019; and
- More people voted Liberal Democrat in May 2023 than voted Conservative.

Residents in East Cambridgeshire voted by a majority against the Conservative Government: the scandals, the infighting, the sewage in our rivers, the unaffordable increases in the cost of living, the collapse of our NHS. They also voted against the effects of Conservative policies locally in our district. The continued unlawful and dangerous parking. The unswept streets. The chaos with the bins. The low level of ambition for environmental action. The lack of independent advice services. The unwanted crematorium at Mepal. The failure to work collaboratively with neighbours and other tiers of local government in the best interests of East Cambridgeshire.

And despite the attempt by the Conservatives to confuse residents about their having a say through these elections on the congestion charge, most residents were not fooled. They understood full well that the councillors whom they were electing to East

Cambridgeshire District Council on 4 May will have no say in any decisions about arrangements for sustainable travel in Cambridge.”

**ii) Question to the Leader of Council from Cllr Mark Inskip:**

“On 15 May former Leader of the House of Commons, Jacob Rees-Mogg said:

“Parties that try and gerrymander end up finding their clever scheme comes back to bite them, as dare I say we found by insisting on voter ID for elections.

We found the people who didn't have ID were elderly and they by and large voted Conservative, so we made it hard for our own voters and we upset a system that worked perfectly well.”

What data does the council hold on the impact of Voter ID in East Cambridgeshire?

In particular how many individuals were turned away because they didn't have a valid ID?

How many others does the council estimate were deterred from turning out to vote on 4 May by the voter ID requirement?

And did Voter ID contribute to fewer people voting Conservative in May 2023 than in May 2019?”

**Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey:**

“14 people across the district were unable to vote at the polling station because they did not have ID - that's 0.03% of the votes that were cast in the District Council election. I honestly feel it would be absolute folly to try to estimate the numbers that might have been deterred from voting because of it, no one can possibly know the answer to that question. Certainly my own experience on the doorstep was that Voter ID was not the issue that was exercising people in these elections.

In East Cambs the data suggest that actually Voter ID wasn't a material factor in turnout because, in fact:

- Turnout was up in 2023 compared with 2019, not by much but it was increased
- Turnout was up in 79% of Wards (11 out of 14)

And actually:

- The average number of Conservative votes per Candidate increased by 3% in 2023 over 2019 so we actually increased our average number of votes compared with last time round so I don't think it is right that the Voter ID issue affected Conservative voters as his question suggests.

It is clear to me from the data, if you look at it really carefully, that the most important factor in voter turnout is the level of activity and engagement by Candidates, as well as something about the local issues that people care passionately about, and that was clear to see.

I particularly want to thank the Comms team for their successful awareness raising campaign which in my view resulted in very high levels of awareness of the need for Voter ID, and did result in that very low number of people who weren't able to vote in the end – 14 across the district. And it is a matter of indisputable fact that voter turnout increased so I thank them for the job that they did and we certainly took part in trying to make sure that people were aware of the need for Voter ID.

Grateful though I am for their concern, I think the Lib Dems would do well to analyse their own election performance rather than worrying about the Conservatives.

- Looking at the seats where votes were lost and comparing 2019 with 2023, the Liberal Democrats lost a total of 1139 votes in seats they stood Candidates whereas the Conservatives lost 770.
- The Lib Dem vote share decreased in 2023 compared with 2019.”

**iii) Question to the Chair of the Operational Services Committee from Cllr Caroline Shepherd:**

“In the Environment Plan adopted nearly two years ago by the council's Operational Services Committee on 14th June 2021, the action plan states: The Council has engaged with two national electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure companies, looking to determine potential for additional EV charge points on our own land (e.g. car parks). Barton Road and Newnham Street car parks appear the most viable, and investigations continue.

On Saturday 20th May all parking spaces for EV charging in Barton Road car park were occupied by petrol or diesel fuelled machines, meanwhile the chargers in Newnham Street car park have still not been commissioned. This left no council car parks where EV drivers visiting Ely could charge their vehicles.

It is three and half years since the council declared a Climate Emergency, why therefore is Ely still so unwelcoming to EV drivers because they are concerned about the climate, and I include myself amongst them.”

**Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey, on behalf of the Chair of the Operational Services Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer:**

“I think Ely is a very welcoming city. We offer free car parking. That welcomes people into our city from far and wide – from local villages and from further away. That is a very welcoming environment and I often get complimented for it and asked about it, people turn up looking for how to pay for car parking charges and they're very pleased to find that that doesn't have to happen. So

we are an open, welcoming, engaging city that is for sure. And of course Soham and Littleport where we also offer the free car parking.

But as the questioner is aware, the Electric Vehicle Charging points are not yet fully operational and the marking of the bays and signage to indicate that the bays are EV charging points will be completed before the charge points are fully operational. And the completion for both Barton Road and Newnham Street is by the end of June and I mentioned the issues that we've got with Clay Street in Soham earlier.

The Council installed two dual 50kw fast chargers at the Council-owned car park at The Hive in Ely in 2018 and as I mentioned earlier we'll be looking to do more through the Environment Plan and the environment work. And I really just say again that Ely is an incredibly welcoming city and a lovely place to be which is why so many people frequent it."

**iv) Question to the Leader of Council from Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann:**

"This council has declared a climate emergency in 2019. The built environment is responsible for 25% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. It is clear that decarbonising construction plays a crucial role in reaching net zero.

However, the council's local plan, which has been created in 2015 and has had only a single-issue review in 2020, does still not address upfront emissions from new developments. It does not set appropriate standards for operational efficiency let alone biodiversity and conservation targets. When is the council going to start developing a new local plan that addresses these issues?"

**Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey:**

"This Council did declare a climate emergency back in 2019, I think we were one of the first in Cambridgeshire to do so. Tackling emissions from new development is clearly an important step towards net zero, which we're going for by 2040 for direct emissions from this place. That's why by February 2021, following public consultation over the previous year in 2020, the Council adopted a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document which helps guide planning and planning decisions in this authority. We were even quicker to consult and adopt a Supplementary Planning Document on the Natural Environment, which we did so by September 2020. Both documents are available on our website, and we are advised prove very useful to persuade developers to make significant improvements to their development proposals for the benefit of both nature and our climate.

After declaring a climate emergency, we therefore reacted quickly to put climate and nature related planning policies in place. However, having policies in our Local Plan could provide even greater teeth to require the more reluctant developers to take action. I'm pleased to confirm, therefore, that our forthcoming Environment Plan to be considered by Operational Services Committee on 19 June will indeed include a commitment to commence preliminary consultation on what a climate related chapter for a new Local Plan should contain. This is going to put us in an excellent position to insert a climate change chapter in our Local Plan, as and when the Government finalises the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. It is that Bill that will enable Councils like East

Cambridgeshire to start the new style Local Plan which I believe on current timing is some time late 2024. Commencing an old style Local Plan in advance of the new legislation coming would honestly be a waste of time and money, but work is progressing.”

**v) Question to the Chair of the Operational Services Committee from Cllr Mary Wade:**

“On 1 June last year, the council announced that it had opened the county’s largest-ever tree maze with the opening of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee maze in Ely Country Park. The council’s press release highlighted the intricate walkways planted up with more than 5000 native hornbeam saplings.

Today many of those saplings are dead and the maze is overgrown by metre high weeds including stinging nettles making it completely unusable for visitors.

How many of the 5000 saplings planted last year have died and how many have survived?

Why was an adequate maintenance plan not put in place when the maze was opened?

Have any lessons been learnt from this failure?”

**Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey, on behalf of the Chair of the Operational Services Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer:**

“It is estimated that sadly around half of the saplings, only, have survived.

In fact, adequate maintenance plans were in place at the time of planting, however I would remind everybody that we experienced an unprecedented hot summer and a colder than anticipated winter and spring which did mean that a different maintenance regime needs to be considered and this will need to be balanced with the biodiversity on the site.

The Open Spaces & Facilities Manager is currently assessing the options available to deal with the issue in the short and medium term that reflects the flowering season and the biodiversity that is on the site because one man’s weed is another man’s flower and there is a lot of flowering that is currently taking place on that site and you wouldn’t want to go immediately and chop it all down. Clearly we need a new management plan so any future scheme maintenance plans will incorporate the likelihood of changing seasons as it is evident that these changes have an impact on set management plans and that is getting more and more difficult.

And I would just add from myself that our Open Spaces & Facilities Manager moved heaven and earth to try and make sure that those saplings got through the very difficult summer. We were taking large quantities of water on a very regular basis but sadly, as you’ve seen, half of them didn’t make it through, but we will get it sorted out.”