

Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 162

3 April 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

• **Coronavirus and Supporting Our Communities**

South Staffordshire's community support call centre went live on 30 March. The helpline has been set up to support vulnerable residents and identify their immediate needs and concerns relating to the Coronavirus outbreak. Residents will get help to ensure they receive the right package of support, whether this be food supplies, help with getting prescriptions, or other needs. To date we have:

- supported 4 residents to register to the NHS and 4 to register with the county.
- referred 2 residents for urgent food parcels and given out the Co-op's details to 7.
- referred 10 residents to local support organisations.

Approximately 70 calls have been received so far and calls are expected to increase over the coming months. The team can be contacted on **01902 696499** 7 days a week, so please direct any vulnerable residents to this helpline.

• **Businesses in South Staffordshire benefit**

The business rates reliefs announced by the Chancellor over the last couple of weeks have now been implemented. Eligible businesses have been billed but crucially won't have to pay their first instalment until May. The reliefs have gone to retail, leisure, hospitality and nurseries. There are some 420 businesses who have benefitted to the value of £4.7m.

• **Welfare Services**

There has been a surge in welfare claims such as Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments and notifications from the DWP of changes in Universal Credit due to the current COVID-19 situation. The Team are working hard to process these claims and expect the number to increase further over the coming months. The Housing Team have also provided support to residents who have been left vulnerable because of the outbreak. The newly created Community Support helpline went live this week and are helping vulnerable residents with requests for food parcels, help with shopping and collection of medicine.

• **Business as Usual for Planning Services**

Work is continuing on the representations received to the last Local Plan consultation in November 2019, as well as the preparation of a number of Evidence Base documents with specialist consultants in order to draft the next iteration of the Local Plan for consultation. Both

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Planning and Planning Enforcement are continuing to deal with cases albeit with reduced visiting.

- **Thank you to our Bin Men**

Bin crews have been out and working extra hard during these difficult times. Despite staff shortages and having to collect an unprecedented amount of waste and recycling, the crews have continued to deliver an excellent service. Residents have been overwhelmingly supporting our crews with many waving through their windows, cheering our bin men on – they have even left thank you notes on their bins.

<https://www.facebook.com/southstaffs/posts/1495928677234529>

Regular information

- **South Staffordshire Connect service now available**

The South Staffordshire Connect dial-a-ride bus service is now available. This local, bookable bus service is once again helping many people who struggle to get out and about and it is aimed at residents who live away from regular bus routes or who find it difficult to use a standard bus. The new Connect service operates between 10am and 3pm to three zones. For more information, please click on the following for more information - [Zone 1](#), [Zone 2](#) and [Zone 3](#).



- **Together we win!**

Good causes in South Staffordshire need your support and one way you can help is by buying a lottery ticket in our weekly Community Lottery. As well as supporting a good cause you might even win a cash prize ranging from £25 up to a jackpot of £25,000. To buy a lottery ticket, simply register on the website (www.southstaffslottery.co.uk) or telephone **01902 213777**.