

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 167

8 May 2020



## This week's news from around the Council.

- **Please celebrate the 75th anniversary of #VEDay75 at home**

Today is the 75th Anniversary of VE Day and at 11am a national two-minute silence will take place to remember the sacrifices of those who fought in the war. Please commemorate this anniversary safely over the upcoming bank holiday weekend. We know it's difficult but please continue to stay at home and follow the Government advice and social distancing measures and regulations that have been put in place to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus. Right now, the safest place to be is at home.

- Wash your hands more often.
- Use soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Or use hand sanitiser.

Follow official NHS advice at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

- **West Midlands Interchange decision**

On Monday 4 May 2020, the Secretary of State for Transport the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP granted a Development Consent Order (DCO) to construct a new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) with warehousing and other associated development on land west of Junction 12 of the M6 motorway at Four Ashes in South Staffordshire. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **i54 western extension enters new phase of works**

The expansion of the i54 South Staffordshire has moved into the next phase following the early completion of works to create an access road. Click [here](#) to read more.

- **Garden waste collection service**

This week, online registration opened for the Council's new garden waste collection service, which is scheduled to start on Monday 29 June 2020. The Council is introducing an annual charge for collecting garden waste and 1,500 residents have signed up already. Residents can sign up now at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/gardenwaste) or from Monday 18 May 2020 by calling **01902 696000**. Click [here](#) to find out more.

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- **Household Recycling Centres to reopen next week**

Next week on Thursday 14 May 2020, the Household Recycling Centres run by Staffordshire County Council will reopen to the public. The centres will be open for essential use only and the numbers of vehicles allowed on a site at any one time will have to be restricted to comply with Government guidance on social distancing. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **South Staffordshire Review Magazine**

The next issue of the South Staffordshire Review Magazine will start to be delivered to all households in district from next Wednesday and includes information and advice about coronavirus and where you can get support if you need it. Click [here](#) to download a digital copy.

- **Staffordshire Day**

Despite the coronavirus lockdown restrictions, Staffordshire Day went ahead last Friday with a series of activities live-streamed and broadcast on social media. In case you haven't had chance to watch it yet, click [here](#) to view the mass online singalong of Robbie Williams' iconic 'Angels' hit song.

- **Update on Council services**

Here's an update on council services along with an overview of some of the important work being carried out by our teams.

- Nearly 1,200 applications for Business Grant payments have now been processed, providing £14.685 million of welcome relief for businesses in the district. For more information about business support and how to apply for a small business grant, click [here](#).
- All Street Scene work and scheduled waste and recycling collections are continuing to take place as normal. The Council's bulky waste collection service is also available and can help you get rid of your bulky waste items including sofas, beds, wardrobes and white goods such as fridges, freezers and washing machines. Click [here](#) to book online 24/7.
- The South Staffordshire COVID-19 helpline is open seven days a week, from 9am to 5pm. This helpline is available to all residents in the district, providing an essential service for some of our most vulnerable residents and prioritising those over 70 or under 70 with

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underlying health conditions, self-isolating but with no friends, family or neighbours to help. Please contact the helpline if you need help with collecting prescriptions, shopping, topping up gas or electricity meters, dog walking, or if you're feeling anxious or lonely and need to talk to someone.

The helpline is open daily, including weekdays, 9am to 5pm.

Tel: **01902 696499**

Email: **Covid-19@sstaffs.gov.uk**

- Our Environmental Health and Licensing team continues to monitor businesses and compliance with COVID-19 regulations. Over 300 site visits to premises have taken place since the lockdown.
- Baggeridge Country Park remains open and we are monitoring it on a daily basis. All amenities on site are closed and visitors are asked to abide by the recommended social distancing guidelines and keep at least two metres (six ft) away from other people. Car parking capacity has been reduced to 30 cars at any one time.
- Strawberry Lane and Sytch Lane Cemeteries remain open on a daily basis from 9am to 8pm. Again, visitors are asked to abide by the recommended social distancing guidelines. If you have any queries relating to our cemeteries and funerals please contact us on **01902 696405**.
- The Leisure Centres in Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Penkridge and Wombourne are closed but our team of staff are still helping residents stay active via the internet and social media and sending their best wishes to customers. Click [here](#) to see Carol from Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre with her rainbow, click [here](#) to see Sue from Codsall Leisure Centre and click [here](#) to see Nikki from Wombourne Leisure Centre, working hard answering calls to the COVID-19 helpline.

Click [here](#) to see dance fitness instructor Dawn from Codsall Leisure Centre together with her daughter Izzy doing a dance fitness routine. Wombourne Leisure Centre is also encouraging the local community to show their support for the NHS by posting positive messages and drawings on the gates of the Leisure Centre.

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- The Council Offices remain closed. If you have any queries, please email [info@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:info@sstaffs.gov.uk) or telephone **01902 696000**.

- **South Staffordshire Connect service**

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Connect dial-a-ride service is now focusing on providing shopping services for vulnerable residents. This shopping service covers all five localities in the district and is offered to residents registered with Connect as well as other vulnerable residents who are struggling to access essential supplies.



For more information, please call **01902 910263**.

[www.sstaffs.gov.uk/connectbus](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/connectbus)

- **Financial advice and assistance**

We appreciate that this is a difficult time for many of our residents. If your income has dropped or ceased due to the coronavirus pandemic, you can apply for Universal Credit and other support options such as our Council Tax Support Scheme.

To claim Universal Credit and other benefits, visit [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit) and apply online. The telephone number for the Universal Credit Helpline is **0800 328 5644**.

If changes in your income mean you are struggling to pay your Council Tax, then please contact the Council and ask about our special payment plan and Council Tax Support Scheme. This scheme applies a discount directly to your Council Tax account. The amount of support you can get will depend on your income and your personal circumstances and you can apply for support whether you own your own home, rent from a social or private landlord, are unemployed or are working.

Tel: **01902 696668** Email [benefits@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@sstaffs.gov.uk)

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- **Beware of fraud and cybercrime**

We're continuing to see an escalation in cybercrime and fraud in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police and taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe. Please be on your guard and don't click on links or attachments in suspicious email or text messages. Click [here](#) for more information or visit [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

- **Every Mind Matters**

For expert tips and advice about how to deal with stress and feel more on top of things, visit: [www.everymindmatters.co.uk](http://www.everymindmatters.co.uk).

- **#YouAreNotAlone**

Domestic abuse can often get worse during times of stress and uncertainty. If you are in an abusive relationship and need help, there are a number of organisations who can help and here are some useful telephone numbers.

Call **999** if in immediate danger. If you can't speak, listen to the operator and, when prompted, dial **55** to connect to the police, who will help.

National Domestic Violence Helpline: **0808 2000 3778** (24 hours)

New Era, a domestic violence abuse service offering help to all those affected by domestic abuse in Staffordshire

Tel: **0300 303 3778**

<http://www.new-era.uk>

Find support at [www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse](http://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

Useful apps include **Hollie Guard**, which turns your smartphone into an advanced personal safety device, and **Bright Sky**, which provides support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

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- **Manage your health and wellbeing at home**

While you are at home it's still easy to get NHS help using your smartphone, tablet or computer and there's a new Health at Home webpage at <https://www.nhs.uk/health-at-home/>

This webpage contains information about how to:

- Contact your GP.
- Order repeat prescriptions.
- Manage long-term conditions.
- Maintain your mental and physical wellbeing.

If you need to contact your GP, click [here](#) to view a useful video.

- **What to do if you have symptoms?**

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that can affect your lungs and airways. Symptoms include a new, continuous cough, a high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher) and shortness of breath. These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness and the symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common such as cold and flu.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate at home immediately and **do not** go directly to your GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. If you live alone, self-isolate for seven days and for those with a family it is 14 days. For most people COVID-19 will be a mild illness but there is a need to protect others in your community while you are infectious as older people and others with weakened immune systems or with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease may experience severe illness.

To relieve your symptoms, doctors are advising stay-at-home COVID-19 patients to take whatever they would for a cold such as paracetamol, eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables and drink lots of fluids. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after seven days, contact the NHS online coronavirus service at <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> or call **111** if you cannot get help online.

Everyone is encouraged to submit news items, please email: [comms@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:comms@sstaffs.gov.uk)