

Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 173

19 June 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

- **South Staffordshire is #openforbusiness**

This week, shops selling non-essential goods started to reopen throughout the district following the relaxation of lockdown restrictions. For everyone the shopping experience is likely to be very different so remember to shop responsibly and observe social distancing guidelines to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus. Shops are limiting the number of people allowed into their stores so sometimes you will have to queue, with posters and markings acting as reminders for everyone to maintain appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures to protect customers and retail staff.

Advice for shoppers:

- Do not come to shopping centres only to meet or socialise with others.
- If you are suffering with coronavirus symptoms, please self-isolate.
- Please wear a face covering and carry hand sanitiser with you whenever you go out.
- Use contactless payment whenever possible.
- Be respectful of shop staff and other shoppers #BeKind.
- Stay at least two metres away from other people.
- Only shop in twos if you are a carer for the other person.
- Only take children with you if absolutely necessary and ensure they keep close to you at all times.
- Do not touch any items that you are not purchasing.
- When you have finished your shopping go straight home.
- Wash your hands when you get home.

Safety is of paramount importance and over the last few weeks the Council has been advising local retailers about how they can go about reopening safely. The work is supported by the European Regional Development Fund and the Council has visited high streets to help prepare for the reopening, run a series of online webinars and produced a number of helpful resources including a bank of posters and signs to help businesses (www.sstaffs.gov.uk/openforbusiness).

We're also sharing pics of local businesses in an #openforbusiness campaign on social media. Click [here](#) to see the first one promoting Essington Farm Shop.

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- **Local zoo reopening**

One local organisation gearing up for reopening is Wild Zoological Park at Halfpenny Green. During the pandemic they have relied on the donations of the public to survive and have raised over £10,000 to help with the feeding and upkeep of the animals. The good news is that they will opening their doors for a 'soft' opening on Saturday 20 June 2020 and a general reopening on Saturday 27 June 2020. The number of people onsite each day is restricted and you must book online. For more information, follow them on Facebook or visit www.wildzoo.co.uk.

- **Next virtual business support session**

Is your restaurant, pub or bar ready to re-open safely? The Council's next virtual business support session on Microsoft Teams is all about the reopening of the hospitality sector so don't miss this great opportunity to get answers to any of your questions about reopening your hospitality business. This free 30-minute session takes place on Wednesday 24 June 2020 from 8.30am to 9am - click [here](#) to register. Please email your questions in advance to h.cooper@sstaffs.gov.uk.

- **New garden waste collection service starting soon**

With just over a week to go, 24,561 permits have now been requested, a sign-up rate of 55.19% of eligible properties in the district. The Council's new garden waste collection service is scheduled to start on Monday 29 June 2020. You can sign up now at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/gardenwaste or by calling **01902 696000**. Click [here](#) to find out more.

- **Warning over test and trace scam**

NHS scams have been on the rise during the Coronavirus pandemic and a scam which seeks to exploit the NHS test and trace scheme is the latest in a long line of schemes to target unsuspecting people. The NHS test and trace service seeks to identify those who have developed symptoms of COVID-19, providing them with a test, and reaching out to anyone who may have been in contact with them. The service then aims to notify relevant people that they must self-isolate at home to stop the spread of the virus.

These scam messages prompt a person to click a link, before potentially asking them for personal information, or even downloading dangerous viruses to infiltrate their device.

Click [here](#) to view an example scam message.

Click [here](#) for accurate information about the NHS test and trace service.

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- **Loneliness Awareness Week**

This week is Loneliness Awareness Week and Every Mind Matters has put together some simple tips to help you if you're feeling lonely during the coronavirus outbreak. Click [here](#) to find out more.

- **Food hygiene ratings news**

From Monday 15 June 2020, the Council is no longer using the 'Rate My Place' website for displaying the food hygiene ratings of local food businesses. Ratings will now be displayed on the Food Standards Agency website at www.food.gov.uk. Click [here](#) to go directly to the food hygiene ratings page to find the rating for your favourite food eatery.

- **Drowning Prevention Week (12-19 June 2020)**

This week was Drowning Prevention Week, an annual campaign run by the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS) to raise awareness of water safety and give individuals and families the skills and knowledge they required to enjoy the water safely. Every year during the summer months there is a spike in fatal drowning accidents and this year the charity is also concerned about the impact of COVID-19, which has resulted in reduced beach lifeguard services and supervised venues. Click [here](#) to access water safety resources on their website and find out how you can recognise the risks and learn what to do to minimise the chance of an accident.

Two useful videos to watch feature our Leisure Centres. In 2016, Wombourne Leisure Centre featured on the RLSS website campaign for Rookie Lifeguards (click [here](#) to view) and Penkridge Leisure Centre featured on the Swimming Teachers Association promotion for Junior Lifeguard Programme in 2015 (click [here](#) to view). If you or your child are interested in either of the programmes mentioned in the videos please email swimcoordinator@sstaffs.gov.uk and when the Council's swimming pools are allowed to open again we can send you the full details.

- **Stay Alert, Control the Virus, Save Lives**

- Click [here](#) for updated guidance on walking, cycling, and travelling in vehicles or on public transport during the coronavirus outbreak.
- Click [here](#) for updated guidance about meeting people from outside your household. Single adult households - adults living alone or single parents with children under 18 - are allowed to form a "support bubble" with one other household. All those in a support bubble will be able to act as if they live in the same household - meaning they can spend time together inside each other's homes and do not need to stay two metres apart. If any member of the

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support bubble develops symptoms, all members of the bubble will need to follow the normal advice on household isolation.

- Track and trace is now underway and anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted to help trace any close recent contacts. Any of those contacts deemed at risk of catching the virus will be instructed by the NHS to go into isolation for 14 days. Click [here](#) to find out more.

Remember...

- Keep your distance from people outside your household and keep two metres apart from others at all times.
- Keep your hands and face as clean as possible and avoid touching your face.
- Work from home if you can.
- Avoid being face-to-face with people if they are outside your household - you can lower the risk of infection if you stay side-to-side rather than facing someone.
- Reduce the number of people you spend time with in a work setting.
- Avoid crowds.
- If you have to travel (for example, to work or school), think about how and when you travel.
- Wash your clothes regularly.
- Keep indoor places well ventilated.
- If you can, wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. From Monday 15 June all passengers on public transport in England must wear a face covering.
- Please remember to dispose of your face coverings and disposable gloves responsibly. Worryingly, a growing number of single use PPE items are being littered in parks and dropped on pavements. Please take your rubbish home.
- You can book a test by visiting www.nhs.uk/coronavirus and those unable to access the internet can call **119** in England and Wales to book an appointment for a coronavirus test.
- While you are at home, it's still easy to get NHS help using your smartphone, tablet or computer at <https://www.nhs.uk/health-at-home/>
- Domestic abuse can often get worse during times of stress and uncertainty. If you are in an abusive relationship and need help, click [here](#) for some useful telephone numbers.

Click [here](#) to view frequently asked questions.

Everyone is encouraged to submit news items, please email: comms@sstaffs.gov.uk