

Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 175

3 July 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

- **Lockdown restrictions easing - 'Super Saturday'**

Further measures easing lockdown restrictions in England from Saturday 4 July mean that pubs, restaurants, cinemas, hotels, hairdressers and museums can reopen as long as they adhere to government guidelines. Click [here](#) for more information.

From Saturday 4 July 2020:

- There will be a new 'one metre plus' social distancing rule. This means that where it is not possible for people to stay two metres apart, they should stay one metre apart and take additional measures to protect themselves such as wearing a face covering, increased use of hand sanitiser, sitting side by side rather than face to face, or meeting outdoors to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Two households will be able to meet up in any setting with social distancing measures, and people will be able to enjoy staycations in England with the reopening of hotels, hostels, bed and breakfast accommodation and holiday apartments.
- Indoor gatherings of any two households will be allowed and people will be able to visit someone's house for a dinner party or to stay over with grandparents as long as social distancing is observed.
- More businesses will be allowed to open provided they adhere to COVID Secure guidelines. These include pubs, restaurants, cafes, hair salons and barbers. Some leisure facilities and tourist attractions may also reopen, if they can do so safely, including outdoor gyms and playgrounds, cinemas, museums, galleries, theme parks, zoos and wildlife centres, libraries, social clubs, places of worship and community centres. Theatres and concert halls can reopen but not for live performances.
- Venues that must remain closed for the time being include indoor fitness and dance studios, gyms and swimming pools, water parks, nightclubs, bowling alleys and spas.

From Monday 6 July:

- The advice to people shielding will change. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Staffordshire's 43 libraries will begin a phased reopening. Click [here](#) for more information and to check the reopening times for different libraries.
- Parking charges will re-start at Baggeridge Country Park.

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- **Moment of remembrance and NHS birthday**

Sunday 5 July marks the anniversary of the day the NHS was founded in 1948 and the whole country is invited to commemorate the birthday of the NHS and social care. Broadcasters will suspend normal transmissions at 5pm and everyone is encouraged to join with others in their streets and neighbourhoods to applaud not just the NHS and other key workers but all those who have volunteered or helped keep services and community networks going.

On the evening of Saturday 4 July, there will be a moment of remembrance and reflection for those we have lost during the coronavirus pandemic. Everyone is encouraged to put a light in a window or on their doorstep - an LED candle, a lamp or a torch rather than a candle, to remember those we have lost. National landmarks will also be illuminated in blue as part of this collective memorial.

Click [here](#) for more information.

- **Planning Enforcement in action**

This week the Council's Planning Enforcement team was busy dealing with travellers who had forced entry to playing fields in Great Wyrley on Monday afternoon. Sixteen caravans and associated vehicles entered the land unlawfully and without the permission of the Parish Council who own the land. After being evicted from land in Wedges Mills, the travellers relocated to the playing fields and were seen to angle grind the lock off the gate to gain access to the field.

The Planning Enforcement Team worked closely with the Police to serve a Section 61 Notice on the travellers to force them to leave the land. The presence of two tow trucks encouraged them to leave and as a result of the swift action, the travellers packed up and left the land by 6pm the same day, which resulted in minimal damage and litter on the site. Click [here](#) to see a pic.

- **COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan published this week**

With lockdown lifting even further from Saturday, Staffordshire County Council has plans in place to swiftly identify, contain and stop any local outbreaks across the county. The COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan for Staffordshire was published this week - click [here](#) to view - and the County Council will work with Public Health England, the NHS and District and Borough Councils to manage any outbreaks.

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- **South Staffordshire is #openforbusiness**

When shopping please 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 the Council has been advising local retailers and visiting high streets to help them prepare for reopening as well as running a series of online webinars and producing a number of helpful resources to help businesses operate safely including a bank of posters and signs - click [here](#) to view a booklet displaying the different posters and signs that can be printed off.

www.sstaffs.gov.uk/openforbusiness

NEW this week - advice for taxi drivers and passengers - click [here](#) to find out more.

- **Start-back PPE packs for micro-businesses**

If you run a small business based in Staffordshire with nine employees or less and need personal protective equipment (PPE) to help re-open your business with confidence then you could be eligible for a free pack of PPE from Staffordshire County Council. Click [here](#) for more information.

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- **Universal Credit**

Financial support may be available if you've been affected by COVID-19. Visit this new website to find out what financial support the government is offering. Find out more at <https://bit.ly/uc-mids>

- **British Gas fake email scam**

Action Fraud has received over 2,600 reports about emails claiming to be from British Gas. The emails threaten to disconnect the recipient's gas service if an outstanding bill is not paid. The links in the emails lead to genuine-looking phishing websites that are designed to steal personal and financial details. Remember - your bank, or any other official organisation, won't ask you to share personal information over email or text. If you need to check that it's a genuine message, call them directly using a trusted phone number you already have from previous correspondence. If you've spotted a suspicious email forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) on report@phishing.gov.uk

- **Help save water this summer**

Demand for water in the Midlands has increased sharply as a direct consequence of the exceptionally dry spring and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Environment Agency and Severn Trent have seen spikes in usage of up to 40% in some cases. To ensure safe, reliable supplies of water for the whole community please minimise the use of water hungry gadgets like sprinklers and pressure washers, avoid using hoses to water gardens and try not to wash vehicles more than once a month between now and September (except for reasons of essential hygiene). Click [here](#) for some water saving tips and click [here](#) to find out more about free water saving devices from Severn Trent.

- **Council job vacancies**

- **Community Services Manager** - click [here](#) for more information.
Closing date - Monday 13 July 2020.
- **Casual Cleaner** - click [here](#) for more information.
Closing date - Friday 10 July 2020.

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