

Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 177

17 July 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

- **i54 South Staffordshire western extension ahead of schedule**

Expansion works on the i54 South Staffordshire business park are running ahead of schedule with the construction of fully-serviced factory platforms now underway. Advanced works involving site clearance, land investigation and testing across a 60-acre site at i54 South Staffordshire were completed last week, just two months after the opening of a newly-built access road - and while following the Government's Covid-19 safety guidelines.

Click [here](#) to read more and to see some pics.

- **The UK's new start: let's get going**

The Government has launched a new public information campaign to help businesses and individuals prepare for the end of the Brexit transition period. Called 'The UK's new start: let's get going', the campaign will set out the actions that businesses and individuals need to take to prepare for the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. The campaign will run across the full range of communication channels including TV advertising and radio, digital, print and direct channels such as text messages and webinars.

www.gov.uk/transition

- **Leisure centres reopening**

South Staffordshire Council's four leisure centres in Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Penkridge and Wombourne are preparing to reopen following last week's Government's announcement giving the green light to open. Facilities at the leisure centres will reopen in gradual phases rather than all at once and the first phase will see gyms and exercise classes reopen to members-only from Monday 27 July 2020 and to the general public from Monday 3 August 2020. Swimming pools are not reopening at this stage and other facilities including changing rooms, the sports halls, toning suites and 3G pitches will remain suspended and reopen at a later date. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **COVID-19 update**

This week's news includes updates about coronavirus cases in South Staffordshire, face coverings, changes to shielding advice and a reminder about social distancing.

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- **Coronavirus cases in South Staffordshire** - For the latest information on coronavirus cases, visit the daily COVID-19 dashboard - click [here](#) to view. Information from this dashboard, which includes Pillar 2 data (positive cases from testing in the wider community) is also included on the Council website along with the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan - click [here](#) to view.
- **Face coverings** - Wearing a face covering in shops and supermarkets in England is to become compulsory from Friday 24 July – click [here](#) for more information.
- **Changes to shielding advice** - From Saturday 1 August 2020, the advice to people shielding is changing - click [here](#) for more information. Shielding will be paused and you will no longer need to shield. From this date, the government is advising you to adopt strict social distancing rather than full shielding measures. Strict social distancing means you may wish to go out to more places and see more people but you should take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household or support bubble. You can visit shops and places of worship, but you should continue maintaining rigorous social distancing.
- **Social distancing** - Remember the '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.
- **Survey about your experiences of accessing and using health and care services**
Healthwatch Staffordshire and Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent have launched a survey regarding people's experiences of accessing and using health and care services during the coronavirus pandemic. Click [here](#) to access the survey, which closes on Sunday 13 September 2020.
- **South Staffordshire is #openforbusiness**
More and more shops are now reopening throughout the district. Please observe social distancing guidelines to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus.

Advice for shoppers:

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- 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.

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 as part of this work the Council has been running a series of online webinars and produced 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

- **Praise received for Council's wildlife verges**

The Council's decision to trial leaving a few road verges and boundaries in certain parts of the district to grow wilder has attracted the praise of the Friends of Bilbrook and residents. Last year, the Friends of Bilbrook, along with all the other Friends groups in South Staffordshire, lobbied the Council asking it to rethink how roadside verges are cut and managed, to encourage more wildlife. Their concerns were taken on board and thanks to the efforts of councillors and Ryan Taylor in the Street Scene Team, a trial was agreed.

In accordance with advice from Plantlife, the UK's wildflower charity, the Council trailed a new approach to road verge management with nature at its heart. Three areas within Bilbrook were chosen as part of this trial and the feedback has been positive, gaining universal approval on social media. Friends of Bilbrook has enlisted the support of one of the county recorders, Sheila Moore, in listing all the species of flowers and grasses so that there is a baseline in which to

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compare the species present in these plots now, and as the years progress. Already the group has noted a diverse list of species, which weren't allowed to grow previously.

- **New electronic document management system for planning**

This week saw the launch of a new electronic document management system for all planning related content on the Council website. This will improve the customer and staff experience and it means that all of the following actions can now be completed from one location:

- You can check the progress of live applications.
- View plans and associated documents.
- Comment on live applications.
- Search the weekly list of applications and decisions.
- See if appeals have been lodged and any decisions made on them.
- See recent planning history.
- Search for applications by address or on a map.

Click [here](#) to take a look.

- **Council job vacancies**

- **Strategic Projects Assistant Team Manager** - click [here](#) for more information.
Closing date - Friday 24 July 2020.

- **Next week's Council Committee/Panel meetings**

- **Special Council** - Tuesday 21 July 2020 - 5.30pm - virtual meeting on Teams.
Click [here](#) to view the agenda documents.
- **Planning Committee** - Tuesday 21 July 2020 - 6.30pm - virtual meeting on Teams.
Click [here](#) to view the agenda documents.

- **Helping good causes in the district**

Good causes in South Staffordshire need your support and the South Staffordshire Community Lottery is raising funds to help the district recover from the impact of COVID-19. One way you can help is by buying a lottery ticket in this weekly Community Lottery and 60p from every £1 ticket will support local good causes and charities. As well as supporting a good cause you might

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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**.

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