

Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 180

7 August 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

- **New play area opens at Baggeridge**

This week, the new outdoor play area at Baggeridge Country Park was officially opened by Councillor Kath Williams, Chairman of South Staffordshire Council, and Councillor Len Bates BEM, Cabinet Member for Community Services. The exciting new design features a new play experience for younger age groups from toddlers up to 12 years and includes swings, a slide, playhouses, ropes and a carousel. Leading playground equipment supplier KOMPAN created and installed the play area, which was commissioned by South Staffordshire Council earlier this year. The new play area proved an instant success with local children attending the launch event, who tested out the new equipment and gave it the thumbs up.

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

- **Funding available - Staffordshire Warm Homes Fund**

It's never too early to prepare for winter and South Staffordshire Council is urging residents to register for the Staffordshire Warm Homes Fund that could save them money on their heating bills. The funding scheme is aimed at residents who are struggling with their heating bills and using expensive electric heaters and open fires. Ten households in South Staffordshire have already benefited from the scheme, which allows residents to switch to gas central heating and funds first time gas connections and the installation of central heating and radiators. Click [here](#) for more information or visit www.staffordshirewarmerhomes.co.uk.

- Working in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy Waterside Care, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and ourselves, the Friends of Bilbrook carried out a series of in-river environmental improvements to the Moat Brook in Bilbrook yesterday (6th August). This work will build on our work to improve the value of the habitat along the brook for wildlife.

The restrictions of the lockdown have prevented our friends groups from carrying out many of their usual activities, but as these have eased locally, we are only too happy to support the groups to restart their work in a safe and responsible manner.

<https://twitter.com/WatersideCare/status/1291313115045548032>

(Twitter link above of a socially distanced group photo!)

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- **COVID-19 update**

- **Wash hands, cover face, make space**

With more hot weather expected this weekend 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.

- **Face coverings** - In England, you must wear a face covering by law in the following settings:

- Public transport.
- Indoor transport hubs.
- Shops and supermarkets.
- Indoor shopping centres.
- Banks, building societies, and post offices.

You are expected to wear a face covering immediately before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until you leave. For members of the public, from Saturday 8 August 2020 the places where you will have to wear a face covering will be expanded further – click [here](#) for more information.

- **Shielding advice** - click [here](#) for the latest advice to people about shielding. From Saturday 1 August 2020, the advice to people shielding changed; shielding has been paused and the advice is to adopt strict social distancing rather than full shielding measures. This means that people who have been shielding are now starting to go out so please **#BeKind** and remember they may not be familiar with social distancing arrangements in shops and the high streets at first and may be anxious and uncertain as they emerge from shielding.

- **Pubs** - Pubs and licensed premises across Staffordshire are being reminded how they can do their bit to prevent the spread of COVID-19 - click [here](#) to find out more.

- **Eat out to help out** - Launched this week, this scheme encourages the public to support the struggling restaurant industry gives people the opportunity to get 50% off their meal bills. People who dine out from Monday to Wednesday in August will get 50% off the price of their meals, up to the value of £10 discount a head. There is no minimum spend and the

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discount cannot be claimed on alcoholic drinks or service charges. Available at participating restaurants only. Click [here](#) to find out more.

- **Local Outbreak Control Plan** - Staffordshire County Council has plans in place to swiftly identify, contain and stop any local outbreaks across the county. The County Council will work with Public Health England, the NHS and District and Borough Councils to manage any outbreaks. Click [here](#) to view.
- **Virus isolation period extended from seven to 10 days** - People who test positive for coronavirus or show symptoms in the UK must now self-isolate for at least 10 days rather than seven - click [here](#) for more information.
- **NHS test and trace** - A new public health campaign has been launched to encourage more people to get a test as soon as they develop symptoms as well as respond if contacted by the service - click [here](#) to find out more about test and trace. The aim of the awareness campaign is to help build public understanding about the integral role that test and trace plays. Restaurants, pubs, salons and gyms are among the businesses who are being supported by test and trace to log their customers to prevent transmission and help contain the virus.
- **Coronavirus support and advice for businesses**
 - South Staffordshire Council's second stage of discretionary business grants is now open for applications. Click [here](#) to find out more and see the revised eligibility criteria that apply.
 - Our next virtual business support seminar will take place on Tuesday 11 August 2020 from 2pm to 3pm. Click [here](#) to register for this event about recruiting during a pandemic. Click [here](#) to view previous online sessions covering hospitality sector re-opening, managing finance, maximising social media to generate new business, and trading legally and safely during COVID-19.
- **Annual Canvass**

Every year, the Council is required to undertake an annual canvass of all households in the district between July and November to confirm that the details we have on the electoral register are correct. This month you will receive a canvass form from the Council through the post containing details of all the people in the household who are currently registered to vote.

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The government has made some changes to the canvass this year and now you only have to respond if:

- You're told to do so.
- You need to make any changes or additions to the information provided on the form.

You must read your letter carefully to check whether you need to respond or not. If you need to make any changes then it is a legal requirement to let us know. Please respond quickly when you receive your form as it saves you time and the council money as canvassers will have to visit any properties where a form has not been returned. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **Great feedback from leisure centre members**

There have been some lovely comments from members using the leisure centres. The leisure centres have been open to members for two weeks now and it great to know how safe you all feel being back here. Click [here](#) to read more.

- **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 even win a cash prize ranging from £25 up to a jackpot of £25,000.

And this August there's a super draw with five £100 B&Q vouchers to be won! This draw will take place on Saturday 29 August 2020 at 8pm. To be in with the chance of winning, buy your lottery tickets before this date. Simply register on the website (www.southstaffslottery.co.uk) or telephone **01902 213777**.

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

- **Special Council** - Tuesday 11 August 2020 - 6.30pm - virtual meeting on Teams.

Details about how members of the public can view virtual meetings will be posted in the news section of the Council website before meetings.

www.sstaffs.gov.uk

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