

Council news round-up



Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 181

14 August 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

- **Community Hub update**

On Wednesday, Council debated and voted to progress the Codsall Community Hub, agreeing contracts with Seddon Construction Ltd as the main contractor, Wagstaff Interiors for loose furniture and Kier Business Services for project management. Click [here](#) to read more.

- **Advice for coping in hot weather**

This week, we've experienced extremes of weather with long periods of hot weather followed by downpours. Most of us welcome hot weather, but when it's too hot for too long, there are health risks with elderly people and children most at risk during the heat. Be sure to stay hydrated throughout the day and drink plenty of water. Apply sun cream regularly if you are out and about in the sunshine. Click [here](#) to learn more about how to cope in hot weather.

- **Flooding information**

We've also experienced heavy showers and thunderstorms so here are some useful web addresses about what to do in the event of localised flooding.

- If there is an imminent threat to life contact **999** and follow advice from the Emergency Services.
- To keep up to date with Environment Agency flood warnings, check your flood risk and sign up for free flood warnings visit <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings>, the flood guidance statement (click [here](#) to view) or follow @EnvAgency on Twitter for the latest flood updates.
- Make sure you are signed up to receive flood alerts and warnings for your area by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>.
- To find out more about what to do before, during and after a flood, visit the Staffordshire Prepared website at <https://tinyurl.com/yxupd9pa>.
- To keep up to date with Met Office advice, visit <https://tinyurl.com/vyikmct9> or follow @MetOffice on Twitter.
- To report flooding and drainage problems that don't pose an imminent risk to life visit Staffordshire County Council's website at <https://tinyurl.com/yxa7m7fj>.

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- **COVID-19 update**

- **Thank you from the Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire**

Click [here](#) and [here](#) to view a thank you card and letter from the Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire. The letter expresses gratitude to all who have contributed to the fight against COVID-19 and recognises all contributions, in whatever form they have taken, those working in healthcare, all who have helped provide support in communities and all those who have continued to provide key services throughout this awful pandemic.

- **COVID-19 survey**

Live in Staffordshire? Complete this COVID-19 survey to share your thoughts on what the county council's priorities should be. Click [here](#) to complete the survey. Closing date is Sunday 13 September 2020.

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

To reduce the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus, please wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds, practise social (physical) distancing and wear a face covering in shops and supermarkets, on public transport and anywhere you can't keep a safe distance from others. In a variety of indoor settings, use of face coverings is now mandatory so please check before you go out - click [here](#) for more information.

- **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. Please do this to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in South Staffordshire.

- **Council Tax Support - hardship fund**

In April 2020, the Government announced a £500 million hardship fund to support those of working age in receipt of Council Tax Support who may be facing additional hardship as a result of COVID-19. South Staffordshire Council received £515,000 and so far we have paid out £308,750 to almost 2,100 residents.

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The maximum amount anyone can receive at this point is £150 and if the amount due for the year is less than £150, an award is made up to the amount due. This is automatically applied to accounts and there is no need for anyone to apply. Anyone who becomes entitled to Council Tax Support before 31 March 2021 will be awarded a hardship payment and the Council will monitor accounts towards the end of the year to make further awards if it becomes clear that a resident is continuing to experience financial difficulties.

○ **Local Outbreak Control Plan**

Where infection rates and coronavirus cases are seen to be rising, local lockdowns are put in place quickly to help keep residents and visitors safe. Staffordshire County Council has plans in place to swiftly identify, contain and stop any local outbreaks and the county council works with Public Health England, the NHS and district and borough councils to manage any outbreaks. Click [here](#) to view.

○ **NHS test and trace** - A public health campaign is underway 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.

○ **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.

○ **Eat out to help out** - Support the struggling restaurant industry and get 50% off your 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 discount cannot be claimed on alcoholic drinks or service charges. Available at participating restaurants only. Click [here](#) to find out more.

○ **Discretionary business grants** - 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.

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- **Business Hub welcomes three new tenants**

Lockdown has been a busy time for the South Staffordshire Business Hub with local businesses continuing to look for new office accommodation. From Tuesday 1 September 2020, the Civil Engineering Contractors Association is joining the Business Hub and, subject to contracts being signed, two more businesses are due to relocate there shortly. This now means the Business Hub is up to full occupancy.

- **More facilities set to reopen at the Leisure Centres**

The Council's four Leisure Centres in Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Penkridge and Wombourne are now moving into phase 2 of their reopening plans.

- The 3G pitches at Cheslyn Hay, Codsall and Penkridge Leisure Centres are due to reopen next week.
- Wombourne Leisure Centre hopes to re-open the Toning Suite very soon.
- Wombourne Swimming Club has started back with trial sessions in the pool.
- Chase Swimming Club is set to restart at Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre on Monday 24 August 2020.

If the trials prove a success and everything goes smoothly, we hope to reopen the swimming pools in a staggered approach starting with the pool at Wombourne Leisure Centre later this month.

- **Morale gets a boost at Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre**

Meet Tink, who has just been voted the new staff morale manager at Cheslyn Leisure Centre - click [here](#) to view. Over the last week, residents have been voting on the leisure centre's Facebook page to choose from five contenders for the role - Roxy the labrador, Charlie the chihuahua, Tink the bun, Eric the turtle and Rusty the working cocker spaniel. The original post on Facebook has proved popular, gaining 242 comments and 15 shares, and the votes are now in so expect to see more of Tink on Facebook, complete with his own staff name badge.

- **River restoration work continues**

Well done to Friends of Bilbrook volunteers and Waterside Care from Keep Britain Tidy for their hard work at the Moat Brook in Bilbrook. Click [here](#) and [here](#) to see more about this important river restoration work. www.friendsofbilbrook.org

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- **Funding still 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.

- **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.

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.

- **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.

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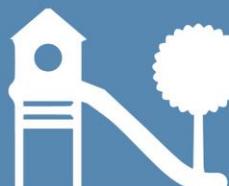


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And this August there's a super draw with five £100 B&Q vouchers to be won! This draw will take place on Saturday 29 August 2020 at 8pm. To be in with the chance of winning, buy your lottery tickets before this date. Simply register on the website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

- **Council job vacancies**

- **PA to Leadership Team** - click [here](#) for further information. Closing date 28 August 2020.
- **Member Support Officer** (part-time) - click [here](#) for further information. Closing date 28 August 2020.
- **Environmental Crime and Enforcement Officer, Street Scene** - click [here](#) for further information. Closing date 28 August 2020.

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