

Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 185

11 September 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

- **COVID-19 - new measures announced this week**

This week, the Prime Minister announced new measures to suppress the virus and keep the number of injections down. The full speech can be found [here](#) and the slides accompanying the presentation made by the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor, Professor Chris Whitty, can be found [here](#).

Click [here](#) to view FAQs about what you can and can't do.

- From Monday 14 September in England, the Government is introducing the **rule of six**. This means that people cannot meet socially in groups of more than six people. This applies in any setting, indoors or outdoors, at home or in the pub. It does not apply to schools and workplaces and COVID-Secure weddings and funerals are exempt as are organised team sports. The ban will be set out in law and will be enforced - for those that don't comply there will be a £100 fine and fines will double on each offence up to a maximum of £3,200.
- Hospitality venues such as pubs and restaurants will need to legally record the contact details of a member of every party and record and retain these details for 21 days and provide them to NHS Test and Trace without delay when required. Fines will be issued against hospitality venues if they don't do this and if they fail to ensure their premises remain COVID-Secure.
- The Government will boost the enforcement capacity of local authorities by introducing **COVID Secure Marshalls** to help ensure social distancing in town and city centres.
- The Prime Minister also announced an alternative plan based around **mass testing**. The current practice of using testing to identify people who are positive to allow for self-isolation and to protect the community and high-risk groups will continue to be a priority. Future testing will be based around using testing to identify people who are negative i.e. those who do not have COVID-19 and are not infectious This will allow people to behave in a more normal way, in the knowledge they cannot infect anyone else with the virus. New

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testing is being developed using swabs/saliva that can be processed between 20 and 90 minutes. This approach is being trialled and, if successful, will be rolled out nationally.

- **Community Hub news and information**

Click [here](#) to read the latest update about the Community Hub in Codsall, which contains news about the start of construction work and a contractor hoarding line and vehicle movements plan.

- **World suicide prevention day**

This week, World Suicide Prevention Day took place on Thursday. Every year, organisations and communities around the world come together to raise awareness of how we can create a world where fewer people die by suicide. If you're having suicidal thoughts, it's important to tell someone. Help and support is available and you do not have to struggle with difficult feelings alone.

Samaritans - for everyone

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) - for men

Papyrus - for people under 35

Childline - for children and young people under 19

Call **116 123**

Call **0800 58 58 58**

Call **0800 068 41 41**

Call **0800 1111**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/suicide/>

Locally, we are all working together to help prevent suicide and Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, local hospitals and NHS community services have developed a #TalkSuicide prevention campaign. Click [here](#) to find out more.

- **Leisure Centres update**

- **Wombourne Leisure Centre** - Swimming pool access has been increased by opening up family bubble swims to non-members and by increasing lane capacities to three swimmers per lane. The sports hall has also opened to clubs this week and the leisure centre plans to open up for general badminton bookings from Monday 14 September.

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- **Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre** - The sports hall is now open to clubs and the leisure centre is planning to open up for general badminton very soon. Unfortunately, the air handling system for the swimming pool has broken and it is anticipated that replacement parts will arrive at the beginning of October. It is hoped that members will be able to access swimming by the middle of October. The roller-skating club is planning to return shortly and the badminton mash-up session restarted on Wednesdays, 7pm to 9pm, but is limited to a maximum of 12 players.
- **Penkridge Leisure Centre** - The Toning Suite opened last week and the leisure centre is planning to reopen the sports hall later this month. Work on the replacement of the roof of the swimming pool has been delayed and will start in mid-September, taking around four to six weeks, so it is hoped to reopen the swimming pool mid to late October.
- **Codsall Leisure Centre** - Staff training is continuing over the weekend and the leisure centre is opening their swimming pool to adult members from Monday 14 September. It's planned to reopen the sports hall at the end of September, initially to clubs and then to members, and the leisure centre hopes to resume outdoor netball in the next couple of weeks.
- **New children's play area helps boost income**

This year, car parking ticket sales at Baggeridge Country Park were up by nearly 4,000 visits and income increased by over £10,000 in comparison to figures in Summer 2019. The park has attracted visitors throughout the coronavirus pandemic and a new outdoor children's play area which opened at the beginning of August has proved a huge success. Click [here](#) for more information on this great new facility, which was created and installed by leading playground equipment supplier, KOMPAN.
- **Challenge Academy shortlisted for award**

Challenge Academy, the outdoor adventure experience based at Baggeridge Country Park, has been shortlisted in this year's Midlands Enterprise Awards, in the 'Best Outdoor Leisure Attraction - West Midlands' category. The winners will be announced on Monday 19 October 2020. For more information about Challenge Academy visit www.challengeacademy.co.uk.

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- **Staffordshire History Festival**

The annual Staffordshire History Festival, a two-month celebration of local history and cultural heritage in Staffordshire and beyond, is taking place online during September and October 2020. This year's festival is a virtual programme of informative posts, quizzes, videos, live online events, crafts and activities for children and families and information about how to participate will be posted on Staffordshire Libraries Facebook page during the festival. Click [here](#) to follow on Facebook.

There will be focused history days too on Thursdays in September and October including:

- The Battle of Britain, for the 80th anniversary - Thursday 17 September 2020.
- The Staffordshire Hoard - Thursday 1 October 2020.
- The Home Front and the 1940s house in the Second World War - Thursday 15 October 2020.
- Staffordshire History, Heritage and Legends - Thursday 29 October 2020.

- **COVID-19 essential information**

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

Please 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 a number of indoor settings - click [here](#) for more information. Please remember that some people are exempt from wearing a face covering so in settings where face coverings are required, there may be people who are not able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. The reasons for this may not be visible to others. Always **#BeKind**.

- **NHS test and trace** - click [here](#) to find out more.

If you develop symptoms, get a test as soon as possible. Do not wait. To get a test, you will need to apply online on www.gov.uk or call **119**. Depending on how many days have passed since you started to develop symptoms, you will either take a home test or be tested at a

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test site. The test involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud.

The NHS test and trace service is a vital tool and helps control the spread of coronavirus. In England, you will be contacted by the service if you test positive for COVID-19 and you will be asked where you've been recently and who you have been in close contact with. This will help the NHS contact anyone who may have caught the virus from you. All information you provide is confidential and no one who is contacted will be told your identity. Anyone you've been in close contact with will be told to stay at home (self-isolate) for 14 days. This is because it can take up to 14 days for coronavirus symptoms to appear.

Remember - the NHS test and trace service **will not** ask you for bank details or payments, ask for details of any social media accounts, ask you to set up a password or PIN number over the phone, or ask you to call a premium rate number, such as those starting 09 or 087.

- **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.

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

- **Cabinet** - Tuesday 15 September 2020 - 2pm - virtual meeting on TEAMS.
- **Planning Committee** - Tuesday 15 September 2020 - 6.30pm - virtual meeting on TEAMS.

Members of the public can virtually attend these meetings via Microsoft Teams - links can be found in the news section on the Council's website at www.sstaffs.gov.uk.

- **Council job vacancies**

- **Solicitor** - click [here](#) for more information.
Closing date - Friday 25 September 2020.

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- **Enterprise Manager** - click [here](#) for more information.
Closing date 5 October 2020.

- **Win a family forest staycation**

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. Our next super draw on 31 October 2020 is coming soon and the prize is a family forest staycation voucher worth £500, redeemable with Forest Holidays. 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