

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 187

25 September 2020



## This week's news from around the Council.

- **New measures announced**

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister addressed the nation in a live TV broadcast. In response to an increasing number of COVID-19 cases and the COVID alert level being raised from 3 to 4 last Monday, new restrictions and measures were announced by the Prime Minister.

[Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 22 September 2020](#)

and [New measures in response to the acceleration of coronavirus.](#)

In summary:

- Office workers who can work from home should now do so.
- From Thursday 24 September 2020, all pubs, bars and restaurants must operate a table service only except for takeaways. All hospitality venues must close by 10pm.
- The requirement to wear face coverings has been extended to include staff in retail, all users of taxis and private hire vehicles, and staff and customers in indoor hospitality except when seated at a table to eat or drink.
- In retail, leisure and tourism, and other sectors, the COVID Secure guidelines will become legal obligations. Businesses could be fined/closed if they breach the rules.
- The rule of six rule is to be tightened up and adult indoor team sports will no longer be exempt. From Monday 28 September 2020, the maximum number of people able to attend wedding ceremonies and receptions will be reduced from 30 to 15 people. Up to 30 people can still attend a funeral.
- The planned return of spectators to large sporting events/venues and business conferences/exhibitions has been paused.

Tougher penalties were also announced by the Prime Minister. The penalty for failing to wear a face covering or breaking the rule of six will double to £200 for a first offence. Fines of up to £10,000 for those who fail to self-isolate have already been introduced.

It should be noted however, that vulnerable people do not need to shield, unless they are within a local lockdown area. Click [here](#) to view FAQs about what you can and can't do.

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- **COVID-19 West Midlands local restrictions**

Last Tuesday, Wolverhampton joined the growing list of towns and cities being placed under new COVID-19 lockdown measures.

For the latest West Midlands local restrictions advice for residents, visit:

[https://www.gov.uk/guidance/birmingham-sandwell-and-solihull-local-restrictions?fbclid=IwAR0hLH9qFz1wgL82EYl\\_BEBEmnuesYy2Zvk-IVJ3Vv1aKgZHEXC-ACQSX7I](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/birmingham-sandwell-and-solihull-local-restrictions?fbclid=IwAR0hLH9qFz1wgL82EYl_BEBEmnuesYy2Zvk-IVJ3Vv1aKgZHEXC-ACQSX7I)

South Staffordshire residents can travel to these areas for work, school, shopping or leisure activities. However, residents are not allowed to visit homes in these areas unless it is for work or the household is part of your support bubble. Likewise, if you live in any of the affected areas you can travel to South Staffordshire but you must not meet socially with residents in their homes or gardens unless they are in your single support bubble. South Staffordshire is not currently one of the areas affected by the Government's latest COVID-19 restrictions.

South Staffordshire residents travelling out of the county need to be aware there are high levels of COVID-19 in Birmingham, Solihull, Sandwell and Wolverhampton and they need to consider this when making social visits to these areas to meet with friends or family.

- **NHS COVID-19 app**

The new NHS COVID-19 app for England and Wales is now available to download. The app is an integral part of the NHS test and trace programme and it makes the process of data collection easier for both the customer and the business so people using the premises can be contacted in the event of a coronavirus outbreak. Customers simply scan a QR Code with their smartphone when they enter a venue, and the phone app and QR Code create a digital record so the venue information is logged on the user's phone.

What the app does:

- Alerts you if you've been near other app users who have tested positive or coronavirus.
- Lets you know the level of coronavirus risk in your postcode district.
- Alerts you if you have visited a venue where you may have come into contact with coronavirus.
- Provides a checklist of coronavirus symptoms to see if you need to order a free test.

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- Helps you book a test and get your result quickly.
- If you need to self-isolate, it keeps track of your self-isolation countdown and provides relevant advice.

Find out more at: [www.covid19.nhs.uk](http://www.covid19.nhs.uk)

- **COVID-19 essential information**

- **Wash hands, cover face, make space** - please remember the 'One metre plus' social distancing rule.

**Face coverings** - In England, you must wear a face covering by law in a number of indoor settings - click [here](#) for more information.

**Follow the 'rule of six'.**

- **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](http://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 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.

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- **Coronavirus support and advice for businesses**

- **NHS COVID-19 app** - It is now a legal requirement for venues in hospitality, leisure and tourism, close contact services, places of worship and local authorities to display an official NHS QR Code poster. [Visit the Council website to find out more.](#)
- **Workplace action cards** are now available from Public Health England, which provide instructions to anyone responsible for a business or organisation on [what to do in the event of one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in your organisation](#). These quick reference guides provide key steps to help you quickly identify, report and respond to any potential COVID-19 outbreak within your local community. The action cards have been developed to cover a range of businesses and organisations to provide specific advice on the issues each type of organisation may face now lockdown restrictions have been eased.
- **New business webinar** - Run in partnership with Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, the Council's next business webinar will take place on Thursday 9 October 2020 at 2pm. The subject of the webinar is 'Selecting Your Marketing Mix - For Business Revival' and this interactive session will guide you through your marketing strategy. [Register here for the webinar.](#)

- **Council Leisure Services update**

After the recent government announcements, leisure centre staff and customers must wear a face mask/covering in all public areas of the leisure centres. Public areas include reception, corridors and toilets. Face coverings can be removed once customers have reached their respective exercise area and can be removed during the workout. However, face coverings will then need to be worn when exiting the facility area and building.

Baggeridge Country Park will be monitoring usage of the children's play area and are working towards implementing a 'One in, one out' policy, with restricted and reduced access. This is due to start at the weekend.

As part of the NHS test and trace system, the leisure centres and Baggeridge Country Park are now all displaying QR Code posters for the NHS COVID-19 app. Visitors/customers will need to download the app on their smartphone so they can scan on entry to the park and leisure

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centres. QR Code posters will also be located within various areas of the park including the Lydiate Room, payment machines in the car park and the children's play area. They will also be located in areas of the park occupied by tenants such as the tea-room and high rope facility.

- **Loyalty rewards for leisure centre members**

Next week, members of the leisure centres will be in with the chance of winning some fantastic prizes when Leisure Services holds a random prize draw. Members will have the chance to win some fantastic prizes including a Fit Bit charge 3, resistance bands, Lean in 15 cookbook, protein bars, bottles and towels. Good luck to everyone.

- **National fitness day**

Last Wednesday, the Council's leisure centres were delighted to take part in National Fitness Day and promote the importance of being active and how it can have a positive impact on people's bodies and minds. Lots of [staff, instructors and young people shared photos](#) of what fitness means to them and you can see more on the leisure centres' Facebook pages.

- **Waste and recycling collections survey**

This 'Recycle Week', South Staffordshire residents are being asked to complete a short, three question survey on waste and recycling collections within the district. It takes less than two minutes to complete and we would be grateful if you could take the time to fill this out and share with your family and friends in South Staffordshire.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JT5G786>

- **Family Hub emergency assistance grants**

If you are struggling to find the money to buy food because of COVID-19, the Family Hubs run by Staffordshire Connects are here to help you. For more information, visit:

<https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/service.page?id=X8GSyOF0ADQ>

- **Community safety**

This week marks the beginning of Staffordshire Police's Operation Disrupt, a dedicated operation into tackling those involved in drug crime, cybercrime, child sexual exploitation, modern day slavery, burglary and car thefts. Find out more by watching this [video about Operation Disrupt](#).

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- **Support Staffordshire training dates**

Funded by Staffordshire County Council, here is [information and training dates for online virtual 'Supportive Communities' training sessions](#) to gain new knowledge and skills in supporting older people.

- **Free online behaviour and wellbeing workshops**

[October Behaviour and Wellbeing Programmes for South Staffordshire](#) - run by the Family Support Service by SCTSP (Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Support Project) in Partnership with Staffordshire County Council.

- **Meadow grass cutting underway**

The Street Scene Team has started the annual meadow grass cutting and they will be cutting all the meadow grass areas owned by the council over the next three weeks. The team started in Perton this week and you can [see some pics on the Council's Facebook page](#).

- **Council job vacancies**

- **Enterprise Manager** - [application information](#).  
Closing date - 5 October 2020.
- **Benefit Assessment Officer** - [application information](#).  
Closing date - 9 October 2020.

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

- **Your Community Challenge Panel** - Monday 28 September 2020 - 4pm - virtual meeting on Teams.
- **Personal Development Review and Appointments Panel** - Wednesday 30 September 2020 - 2pm - 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](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

Everyone is encouraged to submit news items, please email: [comms@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:comms@sstaffs.gov.uk)