

Voting Safely at the Elections

On Thursday 6 May 2021, residents in the South Hams will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections and Devon County Council elections. There are also casual elections in some parishes and towns.

While the elections are not until May, we're already making plans to help you stay safe while casting your vote.

There are a number of ways to have your say in the elections in May - you can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

If you would like to vote by post, now is the time to register using the Electoral Commission website.

What We Are Doing To Keep You Safe

"The elections are very important - they're an opportunity to make your voice heard and have a say on who represents you on issues that directly affect day-to-day life here in the South Hams.

"We're thinking about these elections now so that, however you choose to cast your vote in May, you can do so safely.

We're putting arrangements in place to help you stay safe at the polling station; you can expect many of the measures you've become used to in shops and banks over recent months, such as hand sanitiser, floor markings and face masks. But you also have the option to apply to vote by post or by proxy."

Are You Registered to Vote?

Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance at the Electoral Commission said: "The choice on how to vote at the elections is yours - you can have your say in person, by post or by proxy.

"If you're thinking about voting by post, you can apply now. This will make sure your application is processed early, and your postal vote can be sent to you more quickly. It's easy to apply and you can find out how by visiting the Electoral Commission website.

"You need to be registered to vote in order to have a say at the elections - the easiest way to register is online at Gov.UK"

Find Out More

Residents can visit the FAQ page on the Council's website to find out more about the elections on 6 May 2021.

The page will be updated with new information as it becomes available.

Any residents who have questions can also contact their local Elections team at elections@southhams.gov.uk

Got IT – Council Throws South Hams Schools A Laptop Lifeline

Computers and cash donated to four local secondary schools to improve access to essential IT.

Concern about limited access to IT equipment for local pupils has prompted South Hams District Council to donate 30 laptops and share £4,000 between four local secondary schools. Ivybridge Community College, Dartmouth Academy, King Edward VI Community College in Totnes and Kingsbridge Community College have each received the boost to help children currently struggling to access online learning at home.

The £4,000 donation to the schools to buy equipment to help students to study online has been funded through the Council's SeaMoor Lotto fund. This lottery is run to support a whole range of local good causes, with 60% of each £1 lottery ticket that is purchased being ploughed back into the community to do good. Where no specific local community group has been selected by a lotto player, this money goes into a central fund. The Council agreed that using this fund to give schools money to help those children in the community who are struggling would make a huge difference.

The Council also identified a set of laptops that are no longer in use and will share these with the schools to distribute. These are currently being refurbished by the Council's IT Team and will be sent out as quickly as possible to those children who need them most.

Cllr Nicky Hopwood, South Hams District Council's Lead Member for IT said: "Talking to our local schools, the acute need for more IT equipment was apparent. We initially contacted the schools to offer laptops that are no longer in use due to a recent upgrade. But on hearing that there is a great need right now, with many children on waiting lists for equipment, we felt that we needed to do something more. We decided the best thing we could do was to also offer funding that would enable school staff to go out and purchase equipment right away.

"With this money, schools can support more children who are really struggling to learn at home. We know many pupils are still using shared equipment or trying to take part in lessons on a phone. As well as missed learning opportunities, we know this causes real worry and anxiety amongst our young people. We're delighted to be able to do something to help right now, when our schools and pupils really need it. I want to say a big thank you to those local people who support the SeaMoor Lotto. It's because of you that we can now help local families in this way."

Stephen Corline, School Business Director at King Edward VI Community College said: "On behalf of the students and teachers of King Edward VI Community College, we would like to thank South Hams District Council for their generous support in helping students access the online learning during the lockdown. This donation of computers, together with £1,000 of community lottery funds kindly made available to us by the Council's SeaMoor Lotto, will assist us greatly in ensuring more students are able to gain access and benefit from home learning while the lockdown is in effect.

"Throughout the last year we have provided Chromebooks to students working from home when this has been needed and this extra support will help us continue to do this. With school closures lasting for months, online learning activities including live lessons and virtual projects are necessary."

Alan Salt, Principal of King Edward VI Community College added: “These devices will not only enable more of our students to engage in digital face-to-face learning activities, but also to be involved in some of the wellbeing sessions we are providing at this time as well which is so important.”

Caroline Johnson, a teacher at Ivybridge Community College who has been helping to coordinate the distribution of laptops to the pupils who need them, said: “We have been overwhelmed by the kindness of South Hams Council for their incredibly kind donation of both tablets and the funding to purchase more laptops for our students.

“Many of our students are still accessing live lessons from their mobile phones and the loan of a laptop or tablet will make a huge difference to both their learning and their engagement. However, it’s not just the students who will be grateful: we know of several parents who are loaning their child their laptop during the day to allow them to access live lessons which then results in them having to work later in the day to catch up with their own work.

“Being able to allocate additional laptops to these families will facilitate a more sustainable work life balance during this difficult time.”

Anyone wanting to support local good causes, and be in with a chance of winning weekly prizes up to £25,000, can buy SeaMoor Lotto tickets safely and conveniently at:
www.seamoorlotto.co.uk

South Hams households asked to take part in Census 2021

Households across South Hams will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

It will be the first run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council, said: “The Census is a crucially important process that allows Councils to see the demand for services in each area. It means we can make sure that sufficient amenities are in place for each community in the South Hams and funding goes where it’s needed.

“It affects everything, from healthcare to waste management to education, so I hope that everybody in the South Hams fills out their Census questionnaire to provide us with the best picture possible of our population. It’s easier than ever with the first predominantly online census, so please take part.”

Census day will be on March 21, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March.

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. And, for the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they

have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at Office for National Statistics, said: “A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in the places where they are most needed.

“This could mean things like doctors’ surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That’s why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them.”

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

For more information, visit census.gov.uk

New Recycling Service

In preparation for South Hams' new recycling service being introduced in Spring 2021, we have had to make changes to the free recycling service offered to schools. A consultation was carried out in October 2020 to address these changes and find out how we can meet the recycling needs of schools, while maintaining a free service.

Results of this survey were included in a report to the Executive Committee in December 2020. The Executive decided to continue to offer the free recycling service and to align this with the new recycling service offered to households.

We have begun contacting schools to advise of this decision and put arrangements in place for the new service.

Supporting Vulnerable People

Rachelle Underwood has now started as the Councils' dedicated Vulnerability Officer. This is a two-year post, funded from our DCC COVID Hardship Fund and shared between both Councils.

Rachelle will have a small caseload of people who have multiple needs and require additional support to access the services of the Council. She will also be working with other agencies, groups and charities to ensure there is a wide network of support and that duplication of services is avoided where possible.

If any Member wishes to contact Rachelle about a person they have concerns about, please email her at rachelleunderwood@swdevon.gov.uk where you can discuss possible options for further support.

Freeports

Find out all you need to know about Freeports here:

Trade: freeports and free zones | The Institute for Government

Parking Proposals – Have Your Say

South Hams District Council promised that they would only increase parking charges at their carparks once in the 4-year term of the current Council. That one-off increase was meant to begin in Spring 2020, after a public consultation.

However, they had no idea at the time that the world would be facing a global pandemic.

Because of the pandemic, South Hams District Council delayed the public consultation and the proposed implementation of a 4% increase at their Council owned car parks.

Originally, the proposed increase would have come into force in Spring 2020, but instead, the Council delayed the consultation on the proposals so they would not take place when communities were battling the first wave of the COVID crisis.

Nearly one year on from the start of the pandemic, and after consultation with Town and Parish Councils about the needs of individual communities, the next step is a public consultation to get residents' views on the proposals.

If agreed, this will be the first price increase at the Council-owned car parks since July 2018, when fees were increased by 2%. It will also follow the Council's previous decision to only raise parking charges once in the current political term (till 2023) and by less than predicted inflation.

Cllr Keith Baldry, South Hams District Council's Executive Member for the Environment said: "Although not popular, increased parking charges allows us to continue to provide a parking services to our residents and support the public spaces around it.

"Our officers have been talking with our Town and Parish Councils to find sensible solutions and recommendations about the parking charges, which enables them to be designed to meet individual community needs."

The consultation will run for 21 days from Thursday 4 to 25 February 2021. If the Council decide to progress these proposals following the consultation, the changes will come into effect from the 1 April 2021.

For more information and to have your say on the proposals, please go to:
www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/carparkingconsultation

- THE PROPOSALS
- applying the Pay and Display charges;
- making reference to Electric Charging Points;

- incorporating the new reserved parking bays at Bigbury car park;
- providing for no parking between 10pm and 6am at the Memorial and Strete Gate car parks Slapton;
- applying parking charges 24 hour a day at Mayors Avenue car park, Dartmouth during the High Season only (March to October);
- applying parking charges from 8am until 10pm at Memorial, Strete Gate, Torcross Tank and Torcross Layby Car park, Slapton;
- increasing the Dittisham sailing club, Dittisham permit from £25.00 to £30.00;
- amending the Dartmouth Market Square, Dartmouth no parking restriction from between 6am and 5pm to no parking between 6am and 9am Tuesday and Friday;
- reserving 3 bays at Dartmouth Market Square for Dartmouth Town Council permit holders only Monday – Friday between 7.30am and 5pm;
- where the all day parking tariff is increased as a result of these recommendations, the permit price will be increase thereafter should it be introduced in line with the permit pricing formula; and
- including Steamer Quay Road, Totnes in our Off Street Parking Order