

Report from Hilary Bastone – (My August notes for Parish Councils)

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS:-

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THIS MONTH'S TOPICS IN MORE DETAIL:-

Councils Stands in Unity with the Ukraine

On a very rainy morning at South Devon's Maize Maze, near Kingsbridge, South Hams' officials gathered in a field full of sunflowers, Ukraine's national flower, as a symbol of their support for Ukrainians near and far affected by the war.

While in West Devon at Strawberry Fields, Lifton, West Devon Borough Council Members and the Chief Executive gathered on a much brighter day to show their support.

South Hams District Council's Leader, Cllr Judy Pearce, Kingsbridge's Ward Member, Cllr Denise O'Callaghan, Director of Strategy and Governance, Drew Powell, along with South Hams CVS' Community Engagement Office, Jane Bray attended in Kingsbridge.

In Lifton, West Devon Borough Council's Leader Neil Jory, Chief Executive Andy Bates, Mayor Caroline Mott and Cllr Chris Edmonds also attended to show their support of Ukraine as they celebrate Independence Day on Wednesday 24 August on the six-month anniversary of Russia's invasion.

Devon's eight District Councils and Devon County Council have been working together with their wider partners in response to the government's Homes for Ukraine programme. All local authorities have been helping facilitate host Devon families with individuals and families fleeing Ukraine, and working with local community groups as well as Town and Parish Councils to ensure that support is available for both hosts and guests.

Together with the support of organisations such as the CVS and the Citizens Advice, they are uniting across the county to show their support of Ukraine's Independence Day.

Devon councils have worked closely with host families to welcome guests who have opened their homes and properties since March 2022 as part of the scheme. Host families have undergone home visits and property checks to make sure they can provide suitable accommodation for their visitors. The councils thank them unreservedly for their kindness and hospitality for their warm welcome to guests to across the Devon area.

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council, said: "It is a pleasure to show our support to Ukraine and the 155 Ukrainian people who are currently in our District. I would like to thank personally our incredibly kind hosts who have been so generous in every way.

"Our thoughts are with all Ukrainians at this difficult time for them. We hope those staying here will be able to celebrate, to make up for those in their homeland who are unable to. I personally remain in huge admiration of the determination and magnificent courage of the Ukrainian forces and any foreigners who have joined them to assist them in the resistance of the illegal invasion by Russian troops into a sovereign nation. We continue to do what we can with our partner organisations and councils across Devon to support our Ukrainian friends today and going forward. We are proud to fly the Ukraine flag in the South Hams on August 24 as we have been doing for many months."

Cllr Neil Jory, Leader of West Devon Borough Council, said: "The Ukraine flag will be flying high at Kilworthy Park to honour our Ukrainian guests and those around the world on their Independence Day.

"We want to take this opportunity to say thank all of our Borough's hosts who have gone above and beyond to offer their homes and hearts to 139 Ukrainians who so desperately needed it when they came to West Devon. You really have been amazing. Finally without the partnership work we have with Team Devon, the CVS, Citizens Advice and countless others all pulling together we wouldn't achieve as much as we do as a united force."

Cllr Caroline Mott, Mayor of West Devon, said: "West Devon has always welcomed new members within our community and we hope that our new guests have felt welcomed and supported during this traumatic time. I hope everyone reflects on our individual independence on this special day."

Councillor Roger Croad, Devon County Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for communities, said: "Our thoughts and best wishes are with all Ukrainians today as we mark

Ukraine Independence Day, and particularly for the many hundreds of individuals and families who are currently living in Devon.

“I am extremely proud that Devon has an important role in helping the country's residents at this time of great need and would like to once again recognise the huge kindness and generosity of the hundreds of hosts locally who are providing shelter and safety to our guests from Ukraine.”

South Hams District Council in conjunction with South Hams Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) is making available Small Grants Funds of up to £500 to support voluntary sector organisations wishing to help people from Ukraine and their hosts where applicable.

Jane Bray, Community Engagement Officer (Wellbeing) said: “We want ideas that will support Ukrainian people to get to know the area and the community, learn English, and join local activities. They could include helping Ukrainian guests to navigate the healthcare system, find out about housing and/or benefits, get a job, understand our schooling. Or funding could pay for entry tickets, transport, toys and other equipment.

“We want to enable the community to welcome more widely its Ukrainian guests and support Host-Guest placements to remain successful. Maybe you would like to help set up and/or run a coffee morning or other drop in session for hosts and Ukrainian families. Elsewhere these have been followed up by cultural activity sessions open to all which have been very popular.”

Team Devon are working together to provide safe 'Homes for Ukraine'
www.devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine

Ukrainian: Партнери Devon працюють разом, щоб забезпечити безпечні домівки для українців www.devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine

Russian: Партнеры Devon работают вместе, чтобы обеспечить безопасные дома для украинцев www.devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine

In South Hams and West Devon, the Councils have a dedicated Homes for Ukraine: Project Support team whose role is to support Ukrainian guests across both council areas. They oversee the needs of Ukrainians, and help them to access support wherever possible. To speak to the team please contact them on: supportforukraine@swdevon.gov.uk

The CVS welcome ideas to support wellbeing and application forms are available by emailing cvs@southhamscvs.org.uk South Hams CVS can also help with finding activity venues.

EV Charging Infrastructure Webinar

Energy Saving Trust's Local Government Support Programme is running an introduction session for councillors on EV charging infrastructure on Wednesday 28 September at 3.30pm.

The online session will be chaired by Cllr David Renard, chair of the LGA's Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport Board and leader of Swindon Council and will cover

the role of local authorities and councillors in installing infrastructure, chargepoint technology, funding and examples of local authority projects. There will also be an opportunity to have your questions answered by the expert team at the Energy Saving Trust.

Farming Crime Survey

Devon and Cornwall Police, in association with the University of Plymouth and the University of Winchester are conducting a survey of farmers and

landowners to examine their experience of crime and policing.

The work, which is funded by the Seale Hayne Educational Trust, will be used to inform and shape future approaches by Devon and Cornwall Police to engage with and police rural communities.

Communication Grants

Our colleagues at the Council for Voluntary Service have pulled together an update on current grants available to community organisations in the area.

Please note the specific grant fund of up to £10,000 for Community Transport schemes with Kingsbridge being identified by Devon County Council as a priority area for award of funding.

Please feel free to share with your community and Town and Parish Council colleagues.

Government Funding for Electric Vehicles

The Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) is a voucher-based scheme that provides eligible applicants with support towards the upfront costs of the purchase and installation of electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints.

The WCS is open to businesses, charities and public sector organisations that meet the applicant and site eligibility criteria.

The grant covers up to 75% of the total costs of the purchase and installation of EV chargepoints (inclusive of VAT), capped at a maximum of:

£350 per socket

40 sockets across all sites per applicant – for instance, if you would like to install them in 40 sites, you will have 1 socket available per site

Success: Carbon Skills Funding Secured!

We have successfully secured £233,400 of funding through the Government's Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. The Fund provides grants to boost decarbonisation skills and unlock decarbonisation in the public sector.

This funding will enable us to carry out detailed leisure centre site designs to produce heat decarbonisation plans for those sites with older boilers, including: Totnes, Dartmouth Swimming Pool and Quayside and Dartmouth Dryside.

Having a robust decarbonisation plan will enable us to develop detailed project proposals on heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures.

The next step will be to consider a submission for capital funding at the appropriate time and to the relevant government fund to deliver these works.

South West Water

South West Water has applied to Ofwat to vary its licence to include the area provided for by Bristol Water, as part of its recent acquisition of the company.

Under section 8 of the Water Industry Act 1991 SWW is required to publish a notice of its application for the variation, and formally notify a number of key stakeholders, including Local Authorities whose areas include the whole or any part of the area to which the application relates.

Online support service for health and wellbeing

NHS Devon, Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, and Torbay Council have worked in partnership to commission Qwell to provide all adults aged 18+, living in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay with access to free online digital mental health and wellbeing support.

Sustainable South Hams

Sustainable South Hams is the primary network in the South Hams for sharing knowledge and inspiration with community groups on local climate and nature events and projects.

It has received seed corn funding for 2022 from SHDC to facilitate this endeavour.

In order to monitor and empower this initiative it is important that the parish-specific information on the new SSH website is accurate.

Please check your parish information on the “Find a Group’ section of the above website, featuring the parish map for South Hams.

Parishes on the map are colour coded to denote whether they have a Climate or Nature group, and whether they have Declared and Emergency or have a Carbon Reduction Plan or a Nature Recovery Plan.

Your assistance is requested to ensure this information is updated for all your parishes as soon as possible please by using the form provided.

If you have any queries about this process please contact SSH at info@sussh.org

This SSH parish map with the information provided by your parishes will also be embedded in the SHDC Climate and Biodiversity website.

Heating Devon Survey

A survey has launched to find out what steps Devon residents are taking to ensure they can keep their homes warm in winter while managing energy costs.

The HeatingDevon survey is capturing the views of people from across the South Hams, trying to gauge the views of people living in rural areas, as well as urban locations.

The HeatingDevon survey is available online and will run until 26 August. All adults living in Devon are eligible to participate.

Devon Annual Public Health Report

Members may be interested in the Devon County Council Annual Public Health Report which considers impacts of both the Covid-19 pandemic/ living with Covid and the potential impacts as a result of the Cost of Living Crisis.

Free Tree Packs

leaf sapling tree environment climate changeIf you're encouraging communities, schools and landowners to do some tree-planting this November they can apply for free trees through the schemes below, but the deadlines are imminent, so please share this information ASAP:

The Woodland Trust is giving away hundreds of free trees for schools and communities. The closing date for applying for a tree pack is 26 August 2022 for November delivery. Then applications will open again on 1 September 2022 for spring packs (March 2023 delivery). For details of the tree packs available and to apply go to: [Free Trees for Schools and Communities - Woodland Trust](#)

This year, Devon County Council's Free Tree Scheme is offering 100 free tree packs to landowners across Devon for the forthcoming planting season. Each tree pack will contain 45 native trees and will be funded by Devon County Council's Emergency Tree Fund, granted by The Woodland Trust. To find out more, including how to apply for a free tree pack, visit devon.cc/emergencytreefund and head over to the 'Free Tree Scheme' tab. The initial deadline for applications is 18 September 2022 with later applications subject to availability.

If you're planning tree-themed activities or events during November and/or have tree-related resources, please email me the details as soon as possible.

Contract Agreed for Play Parks' Refit

South Hams District Council has awarded a contract, following a public consultation with the local community, for work on the Collapark and Westonfields play parks in Totnes.

The District Council carried out a consultation with the local community to find out exactly what the community wanted in their children's play area through a range of onsite posters, hand-delivered postcards and social media promotion all linking to an online questionnaire.

Following the consultation, residents from both sites clearly preferred mostly wooden equipment, with the focus on pre-school and primary school age children.

Following a competitive tender process, experienced playground design company, Kompan have won the contract. The tender bids were evaluated by a panel, which included District and Town Council officers and councillors, and a Bridgetown Alive community representative.

The panel agreed on the successful design that closely met the needs of the community. Kompan produce long lasting and high quality playgrounds designed for all ages and abilities.

South Hams District Council is contributing around £50,000 as part of their Capital Play Parks Renewal Scheme together with approximately £30,000 from planning development funds (Section 106) which have been reserved ready to be used for these new and improved community facilities. Totnes Town Council are also contributing £10,000 towards the Collapark play area improvements.

Work is expected to begin in November and will take around three weeks. This will allow time for the removal of the existing equipment. These will be replaced with the new freestanding equipment and new safety surfacing below new and retained equipment in the parks. Some swings are being kept at Collapark.

South Hams District Council's Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Jonathan Hawkins, said: "We're really pleased that a contract has been agreed with such a high quality play company. Their design perfectly meets the needs of what the community asked for through our consultation. This has been a great project working alongside Totnes Town Council to meet the needs of our community.

"It is important to us that when the children are playing, that they not only have great fun, but that they also gain important social skills as well as physical development and endurance. Not forgetting their families, who enjoy some well-earned social time of their own too.

"We really look forward to seeing the children playing in the parks when they are completed later in the year."

Cllr Emily Price, Mayor of Totnes said: "Lots of us have happy memories of playing in or taking our children to the playground in Collapark, but this revamp is now much needed. It's fantastic to know local families and the community got involved in designing the new look play area so we can be sure it meets local needs.

"It's been great working together with South Hams District Council to make this happen, and I'm proud Totnes Town Council was able to help fund the new equipment as it will have so many benefits on the physical and mental health for our children. We'll soon have this wonderful new community facility where many new happy memories can be made."