

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

New Business Support Grants

We are aware that a number of new grant schemes have been announced by Government recently.

We have set out below what we currently know and how we plan to go ahead in the coming weeks. Our aim is to try to get you the support you need as quickly as possible.

We have limited information about the new schemes. Please bear with us while we await further information from Central Government.

If there are any new announcements, we will communicate what these mean for your business as soon as we can in the New Year.

We would appreciate if you could avoid contacting us while we put processes in place. This means we can focus all of our attention on getting the money out to businesses that need it as quickly as possible.

Answering queries puts additional pressure on our teams that are all working hard to get support measures in place.

Information about the Hospitality and Leisure Grant (HLG)

We do not yet have much information about this scheme as it was only announced on 21 December 2021. At the time of writing this bulletin, the Government has not yet published formal guidance.

We are contacting businesses in the eligible sectors individually with more information on this matter wherever possible.

We will have further updates on how to apply as soon as we can make applications available. Therefore, please do not contact us about this grant until further notice, even if you think you may be eligible and have not been contacted by us yet.

Information about the COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF)

The Government announced the COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund on 15 December 2021.

The fund is intended to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing business rates support schemes (such as expanded retail discounts).

It is important to note that unlike other COVID-19 grant schemes, this will not be a cash grant payment. It will instead be a reduction on the 2021/2022 business rates bill. Where a business has already paid this in full, a refund will be issued accordingly.

We are currently working on the final CARF policy to be published in the New Year, but this may take a little time to finalise. This is because our resources have been shifted to supporting businesses with more immediate COVID-19 response measures.

Information about the Community Recovery Grant

A number of you may still be waiting to hear from us about the Community Recovery Grant scheme that we made available in November.

We know we told you that we'd be able to assess your projects by the end of December, but the rapidly changing COVID-19 response, as well the high number of applications we received means that we are unlikely to finish assessing applications before January.

Because of the limited funding, we have to review all projects before final decisions can be made. It's important that we make sure that this award has the maximum possible impact across our businesses and communities.

We have sent you a separate email with more information regarding our plans for the CRG applications, so please check your nominated email addresses for that. We will be contacting all businesses that applied once the final assessments have been completed.

Slapton Line Adaptation Manager Update

Sam Lew will be starting work as the new Slapton Line Adaptation Manager on 17 January 2022.

Sam will be hosted by the South Devon AONB Unit on behalf of the Slapton Line Partnership.

Sam said: "I'm absolutely over the moon to have been given the opportunity to work with you through the Slapton Line Partnership.

"Having worked with Partnerships and local communities in a coastal setting for many years, it is motivating and inspiring to see how the existing strategy has been formed to bring multiple sectors together and create truly holistic and transdisciplinary approach to coastal adaption.

"Through the co-creation of the new Adaptation Plan, with the local community at its heart, we will not only create a new vision for prosperity through adaptation to coastal change in South Devon, but also set an example for the rest of our coastline to follow.

"I firmly believe that through creative and innovative thinking, the area in and around Slapton Line has a very bright future and I feel privileged to be part of it.

"I'm excited to get started with you all on this important work. It's a fantastic way to begin the new year and I look forward to meeting you all at our first meeting.

"I hope you all have a restful Christmas and New Year."

The Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund is now up and running and we are receiving claims regularly. I will seek to give an update to members on claims and types of requests soon.

As part of our package of support for hardship, we have created the following directory on our website which we hope will be useful to both customers and our members when they are

advising or signposting for support –it includes many internal offers as well as some of the work of our partners.

If you spot something is missing that you wish to add in, please contact our vulnerability officer Rachelle Underwood via email who will ensure it is added to the directory. I hope this is helpful.

www.southhams.gov.uk/support-directory

Watch our meetings in safety online

Following the Government's announcements on the COVID alert levels now being raised to Level 4, we would like to remind anyone wanting to watch our Council Meetings that the safest way to do this is via our live streams.

This can be done safely on YouTube, Facebook or on our engagement portal.

Facebook - South Hams District Council

Youtube - South Hams District Council

South Hams Engagement Portal

Although decision making continues to take place in person, due to the increased risk and to protect everyone involved, we are strictly abiding by our Health and Safety policies.

Therefore, we are limiting the number of people in all meeting rooms to safe numbers.

Priority for those attending the meeting in person will be given to the members of the committees and those people directly participating in the meeting.

Thank you for your continued patience at this difficult time.