

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

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS:-

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Cost of Living - Getting you to the help you need

Citizens' Advice needs volunteers

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THIS MONTH'S TOPICS IN MORE DETAIL:-


Devon Carbon Plan


The finalised version of the Devon Carbon Plan will be available to the public on Tuesday 27th September from 9am.


The Devon Carbon Plan is the roadmap for how Devon will reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (at the latest). It has been built on detailed, ongoing assessments of Devon's greenhouse gas emissions.

The final version of the Plan will be available to view on the Devon Climate Emergency website. You'll be able to see exactly how Devon will tackle the climate crisis, as well as how anyone can get involved with creating a net-zero Devon - from individuals and communities, to organisations and local policy-makers.

Want to know more? There are plenty of opportunities for you to ask questions:

 An Instagram Q&A when the Plan launches on Tuesday 27th September, starting at 12pm

 A webinar to explain the Plan in more depth, Wednesday 28th September from 6-7.30pm: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-devon-carbon-plan-what-it-is-and-how-you-can-help-make-it-happen-tickets-421283900487>

 A Twitter Q&A at 12pm on Tuesday 4th October

Please share this information with your residents and communities. You can share content directly from the Devon Carbon Plan's social media feeds:

When the plan is launched, you will be able to find it on the Devon Climate Emergency website. You can also follow Devon Climate Emergency on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Garden waste collection subscription service will go ahead in South Hams

South Hams District Council has agreed that residents wanting to have garden waste collections should be charged for the service from spring 2023, with the current service to end on 31 October 2022.

Against the backdrop of rising costs, the Full Council came to the decision today (22 September) to cease the existing service and launch a paid subscription service next spring. The vote was 22 in favour, seven against.

The Council has been looking at every option to ensure that the core waste and recycling collection service can remain as smooth as possible when it comes back in-house on 3 October.

The Council will inherit increased operating costs and must contend with inflation in the price of fuel and wages, as well the need for additional resources. Introducing a charge for the garden waste collections – a discretionary service, not a statutory one – will ease the overall cost pressures on the Council.

As well as easing financial pressures, ceasing the service from 31 October will also ease pressure on the core waste and recycling collections, helping to keep those as stable as possible in the early months of the transition. The Council will ensure that all households will get their brown bins emptied on or around their last scheduled collection day before the service is ceased.

For many years the Council had been able to provide the garden waste service without charging a subscription fee but doing so from spring 2023 will bring them in line with most other districts in Devon, who already charge for garden waste collections. Plymouth City Council recently took the decision to end their garden waste collections early this year to ease their own budget pressures.

Cllr Keith Baldry, South Hams Executive Member for the Environment, said: “Since the proposal about halting the current garden waste service and replacing it with a subscription service in the spring first came to the table, it has been one carefully considered, deliberated, and debated. We know that nobody will want to pay a subscription fee for the service, but the inescapable truth is that rising costs have forced our hand.

“Ultimately, we must protect our core statutory services. Ceasing the collections over the winter will help us do that as we transition to an in-house waste collection service.

“Compared to what private companies charge for collections, that fee represents good value for money. The subscription fees will purely cover the cost of the service and there will be no profit made. We will provide residents with information in due course on how they can sign up and subscribe for the service.”

Residents can also expect to receive a letter explaining the changes in the coming days.

During the debate, residents were encouraged to compost their garden waste. People can find out more on home composting possibilities here: <https://www.recycledevon.org/in-the-garden/how-to-compost>

For those who decide to not sign up for the service, they can take their garden waste to all three recycling centres in the South Hams. Full details, including opening hours, are available online here: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/centre/>

Keep up to date on the latest here: <https://southhams.gov.uk/recyclingwaste>

Tourism Accommodation Registration Scheme

Members may be aware of the Government consultation through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport on developing a tourist accommodation registration scheme in England.

Essentially this is looking at the various loopholes regarding holiday accommodation and how better to regulate.

It is imperative that South Hams responds to this consultation as it resonates strongly with our Housing Crisis declaration and specifically around our lobbying activity around second homes and short term lets.

In this draft response I have heavily referenced Member concerns. However, if you wish to add anything into this please let me know before the deadline for submission which is 21 September.

It is the intention of the Government to publish a summary of responses later this year.

If you are particularly affected by issues around short term holiday lets you can submit your own response on the Government website.

Special Sustainable South Hams Interest Group for Parish Councillors

Thank you to all the Ward Councillors who helped to fund the Sustainable South Hams Assembly on 8 October.

As a result, 50 groups (including any parish councils) may have a free log-in code for the Carbon Savers Course from carbon Savvy.

Applications for a free login in code for a Group Leader should be made to info@sussh.org

This is a ten month course with a series of 15 minute videos on climate topics, with associated handouts, flyers and magazine features. For more information, including a full syllabus, contact louise@sussh.org

Sustainable South Hams CIC will launch the Parish Council Special Interest Group at the upcoming Sustainable South Hams Assembly on Saturday 8 October at Kingsbridge Community College (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

Please encourage your parish councillors to come along to find out what it's all about. The new group will be addressed by Sune Nightingale (parish councillor for Dittisham) and Adam Williams (SHDC Climate Change Specialist).

This inaugural meeting is programmed between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. in a classroom along the top corridor from the entrance Foyer of KCC. Delegates for the whole Programme are limited to 200 on a first-come-first-served basis via an Eventbrite booking.

If Councillors are unable to attend this inaugural meeting they can still register an interest in joining further meetings by contacting sune@sussh.org

The purpose of this group is to provide support to parish councillors interested in learning more about the climate and nature emergency and finding out how they can work together to find ways of addressing these problems at the parish/ward level.

The main purpose of the Assembly is to highlight existing sources of information and support for groups working on climate and nature initiatives within their community. See programme on the Eventbrite Link. For any queries, please contact louise@sussh.org

Let's Talk Teenagers

We were delighted to have 155 people join us last night for our first of the series of five focused sessions for parents and carers of teens. The feedback was really positive yet again with comments about how useful the sessions were.

We had two people join from Canada, three from America and someone from Gran Canaria. We have also already provided more than thirty CPD certificates for those attending last night's session, so it's proving helpful for professionals as well!

We are keen to promote the next sessions in the series and next Tuesday's focus is on how to support Teens Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing, which we know is a real priority.

Please pass the information out to as many parents and professionals as you can:

20 September 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. - Mental Health and emotional well being

27 September 7 p.m. to 8 p.m - Anger and challenging behaviour

4 October 7 p.m. to 8 p.m - Bullying

5 October 7 p.m. to 8 p.m - Online Challenges

To book, people need to go to: devon.cc/teenagers

Rebecca Hewitt, Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager, Teignbridge District Council

South Hams District Proclamation held at Follaton House

Dignitaries and members of the public gathered outside Follaton House in Totnes to hear the Deputy Chairman of South Hams District Council, Cllr Bernard Taylor, read the proclamation confirming King Charles III as our monarch.

St James's Palace in Westminster held the first proclamation to the nation on Saturday, while County Hall in Exeter hosted the Devon-wide proclamation on Sunday.

The Deputy Chairman read the Privy Council's proclamation to those present, before a rendition of God Save The King.

Cllr Taylor said: "It has been a real honour to read the proclamation in the South Hams. The event at Follaton House is a part of history and playing a role in that is a privilege. I wish His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort the very best for the future as they start their new roles."

You can watch the proclamation on the South Hams District Council YouTube channel:
<https://youtu.be/NHBDRpGaTo4>

Books of condolence are available to sign at Follaton House every day throughout the mourning period from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m, ending on Monday 19 September.

Condolence Books for Her Majesty The Queen at Follaton House

A book of condolence for Her Majesty The Queen will be opened today (9 September) at 2 p.m. at Follaton House, Totnes.

Condolence books will then be available to sign at Follaton House then from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. from Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at weekends.

An e-book of condolence is available here: www.royal.uk

Deepest condolences from South Hams District Council

Cllr Lance Austen, Chairman of South Hams District Council, said: "We have been extremely saddened by the news of the death of Her Majesty The Queen.

"She has served the Commonwealth for a historic 70 years, leading us all with grace and an unwavering sense of duty. The Queen's dignity throughout her long and wonderful reign has never faltered and she is admired hugely across the world. We will warmly remember her.

"On behalf of South Hams District Council, our thoughts and sincere sympathies are with the Royal Family at this time of loss.

"Our flags have been lowered to half-mast during the mourning period, but will be raised briefly during this time to celebrate the proclamation of the new King.

“Our condolence books will be available to the public in our offices at Follaton House from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. from Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the weekend. The books will first be available from 2 p.m. tomorrow (9 September). However, you can also express your sympathies at the national online condolence e-book, which is available at www.royal.uk.

“If residents would like to show their respects to Her Majesty The Queen, you can leave flowers at the flagpole at Follaton House, or you can donate to one of The Queen’s charities. You can find a list of charities here: www.royal.uk/her-majesty-the-queen ”

Council to consider ceasing free garden waste collections and charging for them from spring 2023

South Hams District Councillors are to consider whether the Council should cease its free garden waste collection service from 31 October and start charging £49 per year for an 11 month fortnightly garden waste collection service from spring 2023.

Against the backdrop of rising costs and continued driver shortages nationally, the Council is looking at every option to ensure that the core waste and recycling collection service can remain as smooth as possible when it comes back in-house on 3 October.

The Council will inherit increased operating costs and have to contend with inflation in the price of fuel and wages, as well the need for additional resources. Introducing a charge for the garden waste collections – a discretionary service, not a statutory one – would ease the overall cost pressures on the Council.

As well as easing financial pressures, ceasing the free service from 31 October would also ease pressure on the core waste and recycling collections, helping to keep those as stable as possible in the early months of the transition.

Previously the Council has not charged for the service, but if the Council decides to do this in future, it would bring them in line with most other districts in Devon, who already charge for garden waste collections. Plymouth City Council recently took the decision to end their garden waste collections early this year to ease their own budget pressures.

Councillors will consider the decision at next week’s meeting of the South Hams Executive on 15 September. Should the Executive agree to the plans, they will be deliberated for final approval at South Hams’ Full Council meeting on 22 September.

Cllr Keith Baldry, South Hams Executive Member for the Environment, said: “When the Council decided to bring the waste service back in-house, that comes with the reality of increased costs. With such high inflation, we’ve been left with no choice but to consider every way we can to balance the budget.

“A paid garden waste collection is one way we might be able to achieve that. As well as balancing the books though, this is also about ensuring that our statutory services, the core waste and recycling collections, can run as well as they possibly can when the service comes back in-house.

“However, we want to keep running the current free service into the autumn, so that our residents have a chance to clear their gardens ahead of the colder months ahead.

“Compared to what private companies charge for collections, a £49 annual fee represents good value for money.

“Stopping the free service in November and replacing it with a paid service in the spring are steps that the Executive will carefully consider next week. This will not be an easy decision either way and one that residents can know will be taken with the utmost thought and deliberation.”

Residents can take their garden waste to all three recycling centres in the South Hams. Full details, including opening hours, are available online here:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/centre/>

The Council is also investing £200,000 in new community composting sites, which should offer many residents an alternative to garden waste collection, and potentially lower the environmental impact of the collection service.

The Executive will debate the topic at their meeting on 15 September at 10 a.m. You can watch the meeting live on the Council's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Ongoing Support for Refugees from Ukraine

South Hams is now home to 155 Ukrainians who are fleeing the war in Ukraine, from 66 family groups, and in West Devon 139 Ukrainians from 51 family groups.

Working with the voluntary sector and Devon County Council, both South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils continue to play an important role in delivering the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme and helping Ukrainians beyond their initial six-month sponsorship.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Government launched the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme. At the time both Councils were called upon to provide a range of services to facilitate the scheme. This included carrying out property checks before Ukrainians arrive, conducting welcome visits once they have settled and ensuring support to meet their immediate needs

Together South Hams and West Devon have created a shared project team to ensure that both Councils are as effective as possible in meeting the needs of the guests and their hosts.

Support has also been commissioned from both the Citizens Advice (CA) and the Council for Voluntary Sector (CVS).

Citizens Advice are providing support to individuals who require help with claiming benefits, jobs, childcare, and immigration enquiries and the CVS have supported with arranging community events and supporting volunteers and support groups.

Cllr Judy Pearce Leader of South Hams District Council, said: “This has been a huge collaborative effort, between ourselves as South Hams District Council, our neighbours in West Devon Borough Council, our local communities and the voluntary sector.

“Well done to everyone for stepping up and supporting the families in their time of need, in particular those people who have been generous enough to open their homes. It has not been

easy to turn around the complex support that these families require in such a short amount of time, but both Cllr Jory and I are proud of the collective support that has come together.”

“Sadly this support effort is still required as the war in Ukraine continues. Cllr Jory and I are writing to Government, urgently seeking clarity on the future of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and a more permanent solution for the Ukrainian families.

Both Councils are concerned that as we reach the initial six-month sponsorship period; many of the placements will end.

The Councils think that as the ‘Homes for Ukraine Scheme’ was only meant to be temporary, there is now a risk that some of the families might find themselves homeless. With significant pressure already on temporary accommodation in the area, both leaders are now calling on the Government for ongoing plans for the future of the scheme.

Cllr Neil Jory, Leader of West Devon Borough Council, said: “Opening your home to a family in need is a huge act of kindness. Many of our hosts have gone above and beyond what is expected of them to ensure that the Ukrainian families are supported to settle in and access services. We cannot thank them enough for their generosity.

“However, the host placements are not sustainable long term with some placements only being available for a few more months due to other commitments. It is important that we continue to pull together as a community to support these families to access alternate host placements and, where possible, long term independent accommodation options.”

Anyone who wishes to offer self-contained rental accommodation to a Ukrainian household is encouraged to contact SeaMoor Lettings on Seamoor.lettings@swdevon.gov.uk.

For further information on becoming a host please visit;

The link to obtain information on hosting is: www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance

The link to register as a host is: www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine

Both Councils are taking a report to the next meeting of their Executive and Hub in September, explaining how the scheme has worked, what they councils have done to facilitate the scheme and their concerns for the coming months.

Cost of Living - Getting you to the help you need

Councils taking action now and proposing a co-ordinated response throughout the winter.

The dramatic increase in the cost of living is beginning to have a significant impact on residents across West Devon and South Hams. Both the District and the Borough Councils know that the cost of living which is driven by the increase in energy prices are already having an impact on most households.

Even before this current situation, 17% of Devon households were experiencing food insecurity (2021) and this has been compounded further by inflation which is now at a 40-year high. Now with the proposed increase on the energy cap expected in October, South

Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils want to take action and do everything they can to signpost their residents to get the help that they need.

Cllr Leech, West Devon Borough Council's Lead Member for the Cost-of-Living, said: "Responding to the cost-of-living increase is something that we cannot do alone. Communities, government agencies, the voluntary sector, we all need to come together to ensure that the help which is provided finds its way to those people who need it.

"Sadly, we are not able to solve this national crisis, but what we can do is focus our attention on working with our partners to provide support and guidance to those in need."

Cllr Nicky Hopwood, South Hams Executive Member for the Cost-of-living, said: "It is important that we act now to mobilise all of our resources to provide a co-ordinated response to this crisis. Don't be ashamed to come forward if you think you need help, apply for grants and benefits that you are entitled to and also look at the long-term options for reducing your energy costs."

"We have already made additional voucher payments to those residents of state pension age who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. If you've had one of these post office vouchers, it's important that you cash it before 30 September."

As through the Covid pandemic, both Councils responded quickly and provided support to residents both with local support and in progressing Government support packages.

Now the Councils are once again mobilising to respond. So far, they have processed the Government energy bill rebates of £150 through Council Tax, Launched a Discretionary Council Tax Rebate Scheme for those households not eligible for the main scheme, launched a Household Support fund to provide rapid, short-term financial support to meet immediate needs with food, energy or water bills and other essentials. They have also promoted a Devon County Council scheme to continue with free school meals throughout the summer holidays.

They have also made a one-off payment of £90 to householders of state pension age who are already in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and are promoting schemes that will increase the longer-term energy efficiency of properties within the Borough.

However, both Councils are aware that this may not be enough for some people and the Councils will be taking a report to their Executive in South Hams and their Hub in West Devon, setting out the steps they propose to take.

If both Councils agree a detailed plan will be brought back to both committees by November for approval.

Cllr Hopwood added: "It is clear to me that what is needed is action now to get these government schemes moving and signpost residents to the help they need, but in addition to this we need a clear strategic plan to take our action to the next level. This will likely include lobbying Government and further work with our partners to outline what we can each do to support our residents. What is required is a co-ordinated response from now, all the way through the winter and into next year."

Both Councils have set up a dedicated page where residents can go to get action:

[South Hams Cost of Living Help Page](#)

West Devon Cost of Living Help Page

Residents are also encouraged to sign up for Council News email bulletins to ensure that they get information as it becomes available to them.

If you are interested in listening to the Councils' debate and discussion on this item, you can watch the Executive and the Hub meetings live on You Tube: West Devon Hub agenda and papers are now live, South Hams agenda will be published later this week.

Citizens' Advice needs volunteers

Citizens Advice South Hams is recruiting for volunteers; the organisation is anticipating that many more people will come forward asking for help during the difficult winter months ahead.

If you know anyone who might be interested, please share the Citizens Advice South Hams website with them.