

# South Staffordshire Review

 South Staffordshire Council



Issue 76 • Autumn 2020

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## Message from the Leader

Welcome to the autumn issue of South Staffordshire Council's Review Magazine, which includes a business supplement.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on all of us and our hearts go out to all those who have lost a loved one or a dear friend. The last few months have seen significant changes to the way we all go about our daily lives and the way we run local services continues to evolve.

As lockdown restrictions have eased, more shops and businesses have reopened across the district. Social distancing, hand washing and the use of face coverings remains important and I'd like to thank residents for doing their bit to reduce the spread of the virus. It hasn't been easy but by acting responsibly and following the rules we are keeping our communities safe and doing everything possible to help avoid a local lockdown.

Throughout lockdown, council services continued to function, keeping key services running as well as setting up a helpline to support vulnerable residents and distributing business grants totalling £17.5 million. Council meetings quickly became virtual meetings and work has progressed on a number of exciting projects including the Community Hub in

Codsall, with building work due to start this month.

You can read more about the Community Hub on page 11 and this issue of the Review Magazine also includes the latest guidance about coronavirus on pages 8 and 9 as well as business, planning and community news.

All in all, I have never been so proud of Councillors and Council staff for their commitment and hard work during this pandemic. Volunteers and voluntary organisations in our local communities have also played a vital role in helping support residents, whether it was delivering food parcels, picking up neighbours' shopping or prescriptions, or providing a friendly voice on the end of a telephone for anyone feeling anxious or lonely so thank you to everyone who has stepped forward to help out during this challenging time.

**Councillor Brian Edwards MBE**  
**Leader of South Staffordshire Council**

 @cllrbedwards

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 **South Staffordshire Council**

Produced and designed by South Staffordshire Council.

Email: **reviewfeedback@sstaffs.gov.uk** with any comments or suggestions for this publication.

Printed by Walstead Bicester  
(01869) 363333.

Printed on paper made from sustainably managed woodlands that are not causing environmental degradation and not from old growth forests. Elemental-chlorine free (ECF), or equivalent, pulp is used.

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## Council shortlisted for two national awards

### ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2020 FINALIST MJ

South Staffordshire Council's senior leadership team and commercial ethos have been shortlisted for two awards in this year's MJ Awards, which celebrate the achievements and hard work of local authorities. The Council has been nominated in the Senior Leadership Team and Best Commercial Council categories of the 2020 MJ Awards and the results will be announced at 2pm on Friday 2 October 2020 at a virtual awards ceremony.

Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader at South Staffordshire Council, said, "This is fantastic news and I'm delighted that the Council has been shortlisted for these prestigious awards. The MJ Awards recognise the extraordinary work of local councils across the country and I'm very proud that the hard work of our senior leadership team has been recognised alongside our drive for a commercial approach, very much marrying public sector values with commercial returns."

## Meadow verges prove a success

This summer, South Staffordshire Council trialled the introduction of meadow verges in three areas in Bilbrook, in partnership with Staffordshire County Council, Parish Councils and local community groups and in accordance with advice from Plantlife, the UK's wildflower charity. This new approach to road verge management proved a success with the scheme encouraging local wildlife and important pollinators such as bees, butterflies and other insects. Feedback has been positive and the scheme has attracted the praise of many residents and wildlife groups.



## We're here for you

The Council has been busy offering advice and support to residents and local businesses during the coronavirus pandemic.

During lockdown, the Council set up a COVID-19 helpline to provide an essential service for vulnerable residents, working closely with over 100 community groups to provide help and support to local communities and responding to over 500 emails and calls. Over 2,600 vulnerable residents who underwent shielding were contacted to make sure they had all the necessary support and the Council provided a shopping service for those struggling to access essential supplies.

Using money from the Government's Council Tax Hardship Fund, the Council introduced support measures to help those in need and applied a £150 discount to the annual bills of all households in receipt of Council Tax Support. It also administered a Discretionary Business Grant Fund to support certain small businesses that were not eligible for current COVID-19 grant schemes but impacted by the coronavirus restriction measures.

## Reopening of the Council Offices

We will be reopening the Council Offices in Codsall to the public from October 2020, initially on an appointment only basis. This is to limit the number of customers at one time to comply with COVID-safe requirements. Social distancing measures and extra cleaning have been put in place and visitors are asked to stay alert, wash or sanitise their hands before and after their visit, and to wear face coverings in consideration of other users and staff. More information and opening hours will be announced on our website shortly.

Why not save time by going digital instead? By registering for **My Account**, the Council's personalised service for South Staffordshire customers, you can enjoy online access to council service 24/7. Registering is easy and takes just a couple of minutes via the Council website. [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/myaccount](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/myaccount)

## Staffordshire Warm Homes Fund

Registering for the Staffordshire Warm Homes Fund could save you money on your heating bills. The funding scheme is aimed at residents who are struggling with their heating bills and using expensive electric heaters and open fires. Ten households in South Staffordshire have already benefited from the scheme, which allows residents to switch to gas central heating and funds first time gas connections and the installation of central heating and radiators.

For information and to apply, residents should contact South Staffordshire Warmer Homes on Freephone **0800 193 1902** or email [advice@mea.org.uk](mailto:advice@mea.org.uk). [www.staffordshirewarmerhomes.co.uk](http://www.staffordshirewarmerhomes.co.uk)

## Benefits calculators

If you're unsure what benefits you're entitled to, you can use an independent calculator to find out what benefits you could get, how to claim and how your benefits will be affected if you start work. These are free to use and anonymous.

[www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk)

<https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/>

[www.betteroffcalculator.co.uk/free](http://www.betteroffcalculator.co.uk/free)

Find out more at [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators)



## Building Better Opportunities

If you need more help to overcome multiple barriers to finding suitable employment then consider taking part in the award-winning Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme. This programme brings together a network of partner organisations across Staffordshire and South Staffordshire and provides support and advice to key groups of disadvantaged people.

One person the programme has helped is Sarah who moved to South Staffordshire in 2018. Unemployed, with a broken marriage, grown-up children, living in continuous pain and decades of depression and anxiety, Sarah had given up on herself and tried to take her own life.

The support of the Staffordshire Recovery Hub and the Building Better Opportunities programme marked a turning point for her. Now, having spent 12 months on the programme, she is reaping the rewards and has secured a part-time job. Today, Sarah is a confident, proud and hard-working member of the community and a champion of mental health and wellbeing.

“To anyone who reads my story and thinks they need help, I say do it. It’s changed my life. Mental health is such a hot topic, but there is still a lot of stigma surrounding it and we need to speak up. You may be at rock bottom now - I was - but there is hope and real hands-on support available for you. You’re not on your own when you’re with BBO.”

The Building Better Opportunities programme continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic with personalised training and one-to-one support, utilising telephone calls, video calls, online meetings, delivery and postal services. To find out more call **01902 696 228** or email [bbostaffs@gmail.com](mailto:bbostaffs@gmail.com). [www.bbostaffs.org](http://www.bbostaffs.org)



### FREE SUPPORT FOR OUT-OF-WORK RESIDENTS IN SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE

- **Careers advice and employability training.**
- **IT coaching and digital job searches.**
- **Female-only ‘power to change’ programme.**
- **Upper Moreton rural activities.**
- **Recovery Hub programme.**
- **Understanding anxiety.**
- **‘Just the Job’ sessions.**





# Your local police



One of the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic has been fraudsters exploiting the situation to scam the public.

Criminals are often experts at impersonating people from trusted organisations like local councils, the NHS or HMRC. It’s important to stay alert to the dangers of fraud and cybercrime and just taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

Scams to be wary of include bogus HMRC tax refunds or demands for payment, Council Tax refunds and requests for payment from TV Licensing or other well-known subscription services because a direct debit payment has ‘failed’ to go through. Some criminals are even posing as representatives from the NHS test and trace service to fool people into giving away their personal details and banking information.

Text messages and emails include links that lead to a fake but convincing website asking you to submit personal information such as bank details, a password or a credit card number. If you aren’t sure if a call, text or email is a scam, don’t click on any link you are sent. Be on your guard and don’t click on links or attachments in suspicious email or text messages.

Top tips to avoid being scammed:

- Question any uninvited approaches.
- Don’t click on links in emails or texts.
- Check the URL or email address.
- Look out for dodgy spelling and grammar.
- Be cautious - if something doesn’t seem right or sounds too good to be true, don’t hesitate to end a phone call, bin the letter, delete the email or shut the door.

Remember - your bank, or any other official organisation, won’t ask you to share personal information over email or text. If you need to check that it’s a genuine message, call them directly using a trusted phone number you already have from previous correspondence. If you’ve spotted a suspicious email forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) on [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

Chief Inspector Dave Wain  
South Staffordshire Local Policing Team

 @StaffsPolice  Staffordshire Police

## Useful websites

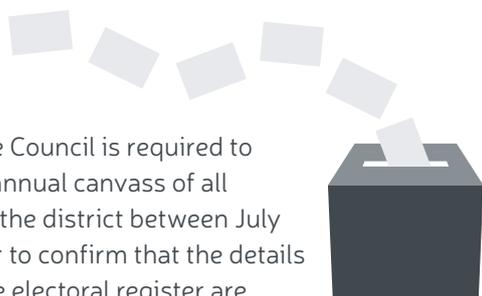
[www.staffordshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/)

[www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

# Annual Canvass underway

Every year, the Council is required to undertake an annual canvass of all households in the district between July and November to confirm that the details we have on the electoral register are correct.



In July, you will have been sent a canvass form either by email or through the post containing details of all the people in the household who are currently registered to vote. The government has made some changes to the canvass this year and now you only have to respond if:

- You're told to do so.
- You need to make any changes or additions to the information provided on the form.

You must read your letter carefully to check whether you need to respond or not. If you need to make any changes then it is a legal requirement to let us know. If you're required to respond and fail to reply, then we'll send you a reminder. Please respond quickly when you receive your form as it saves you time and the council money as canvassers will have to visit any properties where a form has not been returned.

Thank you to everyone who has responded so far. This year's canvass is taking place during a challenging public health situation and we're working hard to ensure that we take account of social distancing measures to avoid the spread of coronavirus. It's quick and easy to reply and wherever possible you should consider responding online, by telephone, by text message or by signing the form and sending it back. The canvass has to be carried out by law and the coronavirus pandemic does not change this.

If you have any questions about the form or your electoral registration, please contact the Electoral Registration Office at South Staffordshire Council.

Tel: **01902 696121**  
Email: **elections@sstaffs.gov.uk**

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**

**MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN**



## census 2021

Every 10 years there is a census of all people and households in the UK that provides a detailed snapshot of the whole population. The census has been conducted for almost 200 years and it provides valuable population information to help councils and the government plan public services like housing, education, health and transport.

Filling in the questionnaire is compulsory, and you can submit your answers either by post or online. Everyone in the country answers the same questions about the same day and the information builds a picture of all of us and how we live, and helps us understand what our society needs now and what it is likely to need in the future.

The next Census Day will take place on **Sunday 21 March 2021** and it's important that every household takes part. Early in 2021 you will be sent a census questionnaire through the post and this will include a unique access code so you can complete it online if you prefer. More information will follow nearer the time to let you know what to do.

For more information visit [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)

## May 2021 elections

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this year's postponed Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) elections will take place on **Thursday 6 May 2021**, the same day that County Council elections are due to take place.

The role of a PFCC is to hold the police and fire and rescue services to account, and the individual elected decides how much Council Tax people will be asked to pay towards community safety services, policing and fire and rescue services. It is a statutory office and the Commissioner is not involved in the day to day, operational running of the services.

Elections for PFCCs usually take place every four years but this time elected Commissioners will be in office for only three years and not the usual four. They are elected using the supplementary vote system where you make a first and second choice when you vote.



To vote in the PFCC election you must be registered to vote - visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote). You will need to confirm your name, address, date of birth and national insurance number.

For more information about the Staffordshire PFCC visit [www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk)



# Councillor Q&A

Councillor David Williams has represented Hatherton and Huntington since May 2010 and is Cabinet member for Business Transformation. In addition, he represents Penkridge as a County Councillor at Staffordshire County Council, where he is Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. He is Chairman at Saredon Parish Council, Chairman of Governors at Littleton Green Community School and a Trustee for Wedges Mills Village Hall. David grew up in Shareshill and has lived in Wedges Mills, Saredon, for 11 years.

## **Why did you decide to become a Councillor?**

I've always been interested in local government and both my parents were Councillors so it was normal in our house to hear political discussions and opinions. My parents often disagreed with each other and I learnt from an early age that it is good to consider all angles and to hear and challenge others' opinions and thoughts. Following the sad passing of my Mum, who was the sitting Councillor for Huntington and Hatherton, I was asked if I was interested in applying, which I did. It was an opportunity for me to carry on the good work my Mum had done over the years.

## **What did you do before becoming a Councillor?**

Until I retired in March 2019, I was a Watch Commander in Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, serving the communities of Staffordshire for 25 years. I feel passionate about helping my community and during my career I was fortunate enough to be involved with many community projects and was Chairman of the DOVES forum in East Staffordshire, supporting services dedicated to helping those suffering domestic abuse. I also spent time on a local Sure Start committee, which sparked my interest in early years development and education.

## **What's your proudest achievement?**

It's so hard to pick just one. I am proud of many things such as helping the most vulnerable people in our community find work or a safe home to live and being part of Littleton Green Community School's Ofsted inspection and achieving a good standard. It's all important to me. Recently, I was chosen to represent Staffordshire County Council as Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. It's a role I feel I can really embrace and have a say in decisions that affect my constituents, being situated between major transport links in the Midlands. However, I have to add that becoming a grandparent to Bertie earlier this year has also made me very proud and just seeing him smile lights up my day.

## **What do you enjoy most about being a Councillor?**

Being able to instigate change where needed and ensuring residents have their opinions taken seriously. As a Councillor, you are able to help people navigate the confusing world of local politics and it's a great feeling when you can help someone who needs it or influence decisions for the right reasons. Acting as a voice for others, especially those who have trouble speaking out, you can make sure the whole community is heard as well as supporting constituents through procedures that are unusual to them to improve their quality of life. Most of all you feel part of the community.

## **What inspires you?**

I have been inspired by the community spirit that has been shown during the global pandemic. So many people have given up their time to support their community and form volunteer groups, which have helped deliver food and medicines to vulnerable people and those that need it during lockdown. Many are still helping today and it is awe inspiring.

## **What is your favourite place in South Staffordshire and why?**

My favourite place is Shoal Hill Common, the heath land next to Cannock Chase, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as there are beautiful walks through the forest as well as the peaks with great views all around the landscape.

## **Hobbies?**

Fishing and football.

## **What was your first job?**

My first full-time job was a Student Registered General Nurse.

## **Favourite piece of music?**

Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen.

## **Favourite book?**

James Patterson detective stories.



## Information from your Council

It's now been more than six months since the country went into lockdown in March in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Since then, we've seen the easing of lockdown restrictions but life is far from returning to normal.

For the time being, we need to continue following government advice about social distancing, hand washing and wearing face coverings. All information is correct at the time of going to print (September 2020) but please be aware that some guidance and restrictions on movement may be subject to change. We are regularly updating information on our website and you can also sign up to receive regular updates by email.

For the latest advice and information, please visit:

[www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

[www.sstaffs.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/coronavirus)

[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus)



## Wash hands, cover face, make space Local Outbreak Control Plan

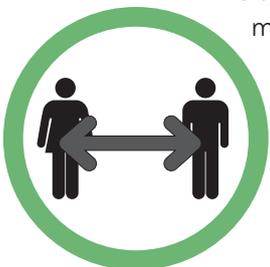
To reduce the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus, please wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds, practise social (physical) distancing and wear a face covering in shops and supermarkets, on public transport and anywhere you can't keep a safe distance from others. In a variety of indoor settings, use of face coverings is now mandatory so please check before you go out.



Remember the 'One metre plus' social distancing rule. This means that where it is not possible for people to stay two metres apart, they should stay one metre apart and take additional measures to protect themselves such as wearing a face covering, increased use of hand sanitiser, sitting side by side rather than face to face, or meeting outdoors to reduce the risk of transmission.



Please do this to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in South Staffordshire.



Where infection rates and coronavirus cases are seen to be rising, local lockdowns are put in place quickly to help keep residents and visitors safe. In South Staffordshire, Staffordshire County Council has plans in place to swiftly identify, contain and stop any local outbreaks across the county and the county council works with Public Health England, the NHS and district and borough councils to manage any outbreaks.

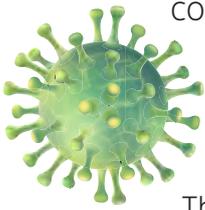
To view the plan, visit:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Coronavirus/Outbreak-control/Outbreak-control-plan.aspx>



**CORONAVIRUS**  
**LIMIT CONTACT WITH OTHERS**

## About COVID-19



COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that can affect your lungs and airways. Symptoms include a new, continuous cough, a high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher) and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms.

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness, and the symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common such as cold or flu.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate at home immediately and do not go directly to your GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Get a test to check if you have coronavirus and stay at home until you get your result. Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home until you get your result.

If you're worried about your symptoms and you're not sure what to do, use the **NHS 111 online coronavirus service** or call **111** if you cannot get help online. Call **999** if you feel very unwell or think there's something seriously wrong.

For most people, COVID-19 will be a mild illness but there is a need to protect others in your community while you are infectious as older people and others with weakened immune systems or with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease may experience severe illness.

To relieve your symptoms, doctors are advising stay-at-home patients to take whatever they would for a cold such as paracetamol, eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables and drink lots of fluids. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after seven days, contact the NHS service at <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> or call **111** if you cannot get help online.

## NHS test and trace

**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 NHS test and trace 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.



### Important

The NHS Test and Trace service **will not** ask 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.

## Health and wellbeing at home

The coronavirus pandemic is having an impact on everyone's daily life. It may be difficult, but by following government guidance to **stay alert**, you are helping to protect yourself, your family, the NHS and your community. During this time, you may be bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also feel low, worried, anxious, or be concerned about your health or that of those close to you. These are all common reactions to the difficult situation we face and it's important that you take care of your mind as well as your body.

- Think about your new daily routine and engage in useful or meaningful activities.
- Stay in touch with friends and family.
- Talk about your worries.
- Look after your physical wellbeing.
- Seek advice and support if you smoke or use drugs or alcohol.
- Look after your sleep.
- Focus on the things you can control.

[www.everymindmatters.co.uk](http://www.everymindmatters.co.uk)

## Useful contacts

### Age UK

0800 169 6565

[www.ageuk.org.uk/staffordshire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/staffordshire)

### Childline

0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### Citizens Advice - National Advice Line

03444 111 444

### Mind

0300 123 3393

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### National Domestic Violence Hotline

0808 2000 247

### Police Non-Emergency 101

For emergencies, always call **999**

### Samaritans

116 123

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### The Silver Line

0800 470 80 90

[www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk)



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# School Open Day

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October**

For more information about the October open day or other open events, please contact Julie Roberts, Admissions Assistant.

T: 01902 422939  
E: [jar@wgs-sch.net](mailto:jar@wgs-sch.net)  
or register online [www.wgs.org.uk](http://www.wgs.org.uk)



Flexible and convenient School Bus Services across 3 counties



TES Independent School Award Winners



Wrap around care from 7.30am - 6.15pm



A community like no other

## Community spirit shines through

Volunteers and voluntary groups in South Staffordshire have played a vital role helping local communities during the coronavirus pandemic. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, communities have sprung into action with community groups like Friends of Bilbrook, Friends of Essington and Wombourne Best Kept Village providing local support networks.

Over the last few months, volunteers have been busy delivering meals, shopping and prescriptions to vulnerable people self-isolating, and providing support for anyone feeling anxious or lonely. The groups have delivered hundreds of leaflets to households, shared information on their websites and through social media, made and distributed over 200 wash bags for care home workers, organised a weekly virtual quiz, and carried out village litter picks on a regular basis. Even children have helped create cheerful notes included in parcels for the elderly.

Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council, said, "The community response has been fantastic, and I'd like to say well done and thank you to all the local community groups, voluntary organisations and individual volunteers across South Staffordshire who have helped out during this challenging time."

## Community Hub update

In September, building work begins on the new Community Hub, the Council's ambitious project to refurbish and add an extension to the Council Offices in Codsall.

Seddon Construction Limited, the UK's largest privately owned and family managed contracting business, has been awarded the contract for refurbishing and building the Community Hub and the complete build programme will take approximately 17 months with completion expected in early 2022.

As part of the plans, the existing library will be relocated to a new extension built at the front of the building and there will be a refurbished café, coffee bar and retail unit set in an open plan atrium, increased car parking, and community meeting rooms. Russell House Primary Care Practice will be relocating to the new Community Hub and more office space will be available for local businesses through the award-winning South Staffordshire Business Hub.

Specialist teams from across the public, health, private and voluntary sectors will be co-located together in the building's modern, agile working and collaborative environment and residents will benefit from being able to access multiple services on one site.

Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council, said, "This project is synonymous with the Council's robust approach to commercialism, due diligence and risk management. The impact of COVID-19 has underlined the need to update the building's outdated infrastructure and enhance the space so it's conducive for a future way of working, with agile working continuing to be a driving factor behind the design of the office space. This investment will secure the building's long-term future and I'm sure it will be a huge asset to the district."

## What your support means to us



Rockspur House has been signed up as one of the South Staffordshire Community Lottery's good causes for just over 12 months now. This not for profit, community interest company (CIC) provides day activities for adults with learning disabilities aged 18 to 65+ in the South Staffordshire area.

*"Being part of the Community Lottery has been an absolute lifeline for us during COVID-19. Some of our members are really struggling at home and we have been able to use the money raised from our good cause page to pay for activity packs from the moment we went into lockdown up to VE Day. We have also used the funding to help put fuel in our vehicle to deliver these packs as posting would have cost a fortune. Thank you to our supporters - every £1 lottery ticket really does make a difference to the lives of local people."*

Nick Morris, Rockspur House

**Help our community recover from the impact of COVID-19...**

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Players must be aged 18 years or over and be in the UK. South Staffordshire Community Lottery is sponsored by South Staffordshire Council. Licence Authority licensed by the Gambling Commission. Registration No. 000-048-000-0. 12th 1/14/2022. Terms and conditions apply. Always play responsibly.

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# WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

"It's the best home improvement we have ever made. Our conservatory is now our dining room in the garden."

Mike Millis,  
Middleton On Sea

**SUBSIDIES AVAILABLE**

\*Quote Ref  
SSR0920

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## INSTALLED IN 1 DAY

"What a difference a day makes as the saying goes, and yes, that's all it took to install."

Mr & Mrs Barber, Wells

## WARMER IN WINTER

"There is no doubt that the conservatory is much warmer than previously, and no, the room is not darker either!"

David Birch, Chichester

## USABLE ALL YEAR ROUND

"The conservatory is now used throughout all seasons of the year and is far more comfortable to sit in whatever the weather outside."

Mr & Mrs Gibson, Portishead

## MOULD & CONDENSATION

"This is the best thing we have done in this house. Used to run with condensation and now zero."

Karen Thomas, Chippenham

## COOLER IN SUMMER

"You could have fried an egg on the table in there in the summer, I now look upon the conservatory as a new room. It is quiet, restful and cosy."

Carol Doyle, Surrey

## REDUCES ENERGY BILLS

"I've already turned the underfloor heating down. Lovely job guys, thank you!"

Anne Bird, Bristol

## QUIETER IN BAD WEATHER

"For the first time in 10 years we do not have to close the door to the conservatory when it rains, as the noise is minimal and before I found it difficult to hear the TV over the loudness of the rain on the old roof."

Mr & Mrs Bailey-Webb, Warsash

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# Business News

## Autumn 2020

# Open for business

With the reopening of non-essential retail stores and the hospitality sector in June and July, shoppers were able to return to the high streets once again and residents were able to return to the workplace and resume activities such as dining out or going to the pub.

In recent weeks, restrictions have eased even more and a wide range of sectors and activities have been able to restart, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidelines. Safety is of paramount importance and South Staffordshire Council has been working with local businesses and organisations both to maintain public health and support the economy.

### Keeping people safe

Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council, said, "We're doing all we can to support businesses across the district and make our high streets safe for everyone. We want everyone to be able to shop with confidence and we are committed to working with businesses to help the district's economic recovery in the months ahead.

"Yes, the shopping experience is different but the warm welcome from local retailers is still the same. South Staffordshire businesses have lots to offer and I'd urge residents to shop locally where possible to show support for our businesses in these extremely difficult times."

### Advising businesses

Key to all this is the work of the Council's Environmental Health and Licensing Team and six people known as Locality Enablers, working with the Business and Enterprise team.



The Council's Environmental Health and Licensing Team has been busy over the last few months advising retailers both in person and online through a series of online webinars. The team has visited hundreds of retail premises, offering help and guidance about how to reopen safely. A number of helpful resources to help businesses operate safely have been produced too including a bank of downloadable resources for staff and customer facing areas including social distancing posters and signs ([www.sstaffs.gov.uk/openforbusiness](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/openforbusiness)).

The Council's team of Locality Enablers have also become a familiar sight on high streets throughout the district. Acting as ambassadors for the Council, this team liaises, supports and acts as a conduit back to in-house service teams, helping bring council services closer to communities. The work involves the engagement of Members, partners and communities in locality issues and their work has proved to be vital in the recovery process and helping South Staffordshire become **#openforbusiness**.

## Localities<sup>+</sup> Locality Enablers

- Andy Aston
- Harvinder Baines
- Ryan Cresswell
- Maggie Quinn
- Rob Sharratt
- Ryan Taylor

This work is supported by the European Regional Development Fund



# Please support your local high streets

Where you shop matters more than ever. Local businesses are the heart of our local communities in South Staffordshire and right now they need your support. Here are just a few of the local retailers who are **#openforbusiness** and waiting to give you a warm welcome.

## Advice for shoppers

When shopping please observe social distancing guidelines to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus. Shops are limiting the number of people allowed into their stores so sometimes you will have to queue, with posters and markings acting as reminders for everyone to maintain appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures to protect customers and retail staff.



If you are suffering with coronavirus symptoms, please self-isolate.



Please try to shop on your own to help restrict the number of people in-store at any one time.



Please wear a face covering and carry hand sanitiser with you whenever you go out.



Only take children with you if absolutely necessary and ensure they keep close to you at all times.



Use contactless payment whenever possible.



Do not touch any items that you are not purchasing.



Be respectful of shop staff and other shoppers **#BeKind**.



Only visit shops with people you live with and in your support bubble.



Stay at least two metres away from other people.



Wash your hands when you get home.



“More than ever, we need to support our local high streets and businesses. The last few months have been incredibly hard for them and as the district continues to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, we need to support them by shopping locally. By spending money in your local shop, restaurant, café or pub, you are helping local business owners and local communities get back up and running. Shops and businesses are continuing to follow government guidance and have implemented a range of measures to ensure people are safe while they shop, so please **#shoplocal**.”

**Councillor Brian Edwards MBE**  
Leader of South Staffordshire Council



## Our response to coronavirus

Supporting local businesses to survive and recover from the disruption brought about by the coronavirus pandemic is a priority for the Council.

- Since the end of March 2020, the Council has processed **1,500+** applications and provided over **£17.5 million** in grants to local businesses.
- We have advised **100s** of local businesses affected by COVID-19 and we are committed to supporting all businesses in the district.
- There have been **800+** interactions with food takeaways, pubs and garden centres to make sure they comply with COVID-19 regulations and we have determined **500+** planning applications since the start of lockdown. 
- Increased incidents of fly-tipping have taken place in the district since the start of the pandemic and we have cleaned up **400+** cases of fly-tipping during lockdown.
- Waste collection services have continued as normal and we have continued to run our Street Scene services five days a week. 

Councillor David Williams, Cabinet Member for Business Transformation at South Staffordshire Council, said, "During lockdown and through the initial stages of recovery, our staff have helped local businesses and residents respond to the crisis. This has been possible due in large part to the Council's digital modernisation programme and flexible approach to working, which has enabled Council staff and Councillors to manage the delivery of many Council services from the safety of their home."

"The team here at South Staffordshire Council has really gone above and beyond to support the local community during this crisis. How they have embraced and used digital technology is truly remarkable and a fantastic example of a digital council."

## Workplace action cards

Action cards are now available from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) 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.

The range of action cards includes:

- Small and large gathering action cards for entertainment and holiday resorts, places of worship and tourist attractions.
- Residential workplace action cards for campsites and caravan parks, domestic abuse refuges, homelessness accommodation, and hotels and other guest accommodation.
- Workplace action cards - including, but not limited to, arts venues, cinemas, food and drink establishments, food processing, construction and outdoor work, shops, and hair and beauty.

## Pavement licence guidance



Pubs, bars and restaurants can now apply for a temporary licence to place tables and chairs on the highway to extend their outdoor space. The licences are being introduced to help businesses with social distancing.

For more information, visit:

[www.sstaffs.gov.uk/licensing/pavement-licence.cfm](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/licensing/pavement-licence.cfm)

To find out more about the Business Hub, please contact us.

Tel: 01902 696124 • Email: [businesshub@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:businesshub@sstaffs.gov.uk)

[www.sstaffsbusinesshub.co.uk](http://www.sstaffsbusinesshub.co.uk)



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Business News South Staffordshire

Welcome to  
the home of the



## Western extension main works underway

Expansion works at i54 South Staffordshire are running ahead of schedule with the construction of fully-serviced factory platforms now underway. Advanced works involving site clearance, land investigation and testing across a 60-acre site were completed in July, just two months after the opening of a newly-built access road. The main works are expected to be completed next year and it is anticipated new occupiers could start arriving from 2022, providing around 1,700 new jobs.



*Left to right: Councillor Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth at Staffordshire County Council, Councillor Stephen Simkins, Cabinet Member for City Economy at the City of Wolverhampton Council, and South Staffordshire Council Leader, Councillor Brian Edwards MBE.*

A £150,000 contribution to the western extension scheme will support a plan to boost employment skills, training and recruitment to local people, helping them to access the newly generated jobs, and the partners have also agreed a further £500,000 to support and promote sustainable travel activities. In addition, £50,000 has been granted to Pendeford Hall Nature Reserve to help continue and develop its education, health and wellbeing, and personal and social skills development outdoor activities for local communities.

Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council, said, "All of the partners associated with i54 South Staffordshire are committed to supporting the local economy and bringing more jobs and investment to the area. Our award-winning work continues at pace despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the new western extension is really starting to take shape and show its full potential now the construction of the fully-serviced factory platforms is underway. It's encouraging news about this outstanding business location and I'm very proud to support this project."

## Revised timetable for Local Plan Review



In August 2020, the Government announced that it was consulting on proposed changes to the planning system, including wide-ranging changes to the Local Plan process.

Consultation is a very important part of the review process and restrictions caused by the pandemic have affected consultation on the Council's Local Plan, which provides the long-term planning framework for South Staffordshire. A revised timetable had been agreed by our elected Members, rescheduling consultation on the 'Preferred Options' stage to Summer 2021.

However, Councillor Roger Lees, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, said, "It's vital we review and respond to the Government's proposed wide-reaching planning changes and how these proposals will impact upon the residents, businesses and environment of South Staffordshire. We will await the final outcomes from the Government, but our aim remains to ensure that we have a strong planning framework for the future of South Staffordshire, which will provide much needed homes and jobs, and help revitalise the local economy."

To receive regular updates about the Local Plan, please email your comments to [localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk). If you have made comments about the Local Plan, we will contact you automatically.

## Planning hints and tips

To find out more about the Council's planning services including Local Plans, Development Management and Planning Enforcement, visit our planning pages [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning)

This includes a new Public Access system on the Council website where you can check the progress of live applications, view plans and application details, search the weekly list of applications and decisions, and comment on live applications. <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning/comment-on-planning-applications.cfm>

You can also sign up to receive planning alerts from the Council with My Account, the Council's one stop shop, which gives you online access to council services 24/7. [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/myaccount](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/myaccount)

If you're thinking about adding an extension to your home, replacing or enlarging your driveway or maybe adding a conservatory, you may need planning permission to carry out the works. Always check to see if you need permission before you start your project.

For useful information and general planning advice, visit: [www.planningportal.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.co.uk)



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Andrew France  
Tel: **01902 696117**

Email: [a.france@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:a.france@sstaffs.gov.uk)

Harvey Bains  
Tel: **01902 696480**

Email: [h.bains@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:h.bains@sstaffs.gov.uk)



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**Syech Lane Cemetery**  
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**Strawberry Lane Cemetery**  
Great Wyrley, South Staffordshire, WS6 7AU

Information about our two cemeteries can be found on the Council website at:  
[www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bereavement-services](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bereavement-services)  
Tel: **01902 696111**

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# Stay positive, stay active

## Welcome back! We've missed you

After a four-month closure, our leisure facilities reopened at the end of July with social distancing measures in place throughout all the leisure centres. Facilities are reopening in gradual phases rather than all at once and we are updating information on our website and through social media regularly so please keep an eye on our Facebook pages or sign up to receive updates for the latest information.

### The following facilities are open:



**Gyms, exercise classes, toning suites, 3G pitches and sports halls**

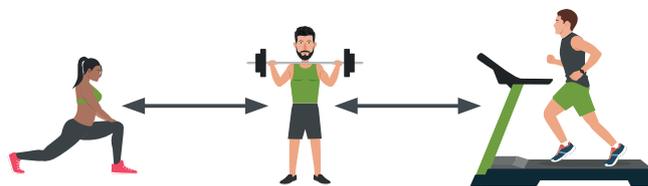


**Wombourne swimming pool**

### The following facilities remain suspended and will reopen at a later date:

- **Swimming pools at Cheslyn Hay, Codsall and Penkridge; swimming lessons will resume with a phased approach.**
- **Changing rooms.**

All information is correct at the time of going to print (September 2020) but please be aware that the leisure facilities on offer may be subject to change. Changes to opening times and new timetables for gym sessions and exercise classes are now in place to allow more time between sessions. Class numbers have also been reduced in size and exercise equipment has been relocated and spaced out more so users can maintain a safe distance from others while they exercise.



### Measures now in place at the leisure centres include:

- Restricted numbers of users to allow safe distancing.
- A book online system for the gym and exercise classes to reduce queuing.
- A queuing system at the entrance with only one person allowed at the reception desk at a time.
- Screens at reception desks with users encouraged to use contactless payment whenever possible.
- Social distancing floor stickers, directional signage and information posters.
- A one-way system throughout all the leisure centres.
- Hand sanitising stations and cleaning stations in the gyms and exercise class studios so users can wipe down equipment before and after use.
- A regular cleaning schedule and daily deep cleans.

### Please follow these guidelines when using the leisure centres:

- If you are suffering with coronavirus symptoms, please self-isolate and stay at home.
  - Advanced booking for all facilities is essential.
  - Use contactless payments whenever possible
  - Arrive workout ready as changing rooms are not available.
  - On arrival, please use hand sanitiser.
  - Follow the directional arrows and one-way systems.
  - Follow social distancing rules and keep your distance from other users.
  - Wipe down equipment before and after use.
  - Be respectful and patient with other users and our staff
- #BeKind.**



"I'd like to thank our staff and instructors for their dedication and enthusiasm during such a difficult time and all our loyal members and customers for their ongoing support and understanding. Over the last few weeks, it's been great to welcome back members and users of our leisure centres. Rest assured, health and safety remains our top priority and all the necessary social distancing and extra cleaning and hygiene measures are in place to make the facilities COVID-safe for users and staff."

**Councillor Len Bates BEM**

Cabinet Member for Community Services

## New play area opens

In August, a new outdoor play area opened at Baggeridge Country Park. The exciting new design features a new play experience for younger age groups from toddlers up to 12 years and includes swings, slides, a roundabout, a double zipline, an extended sand play area and castle styled activity unit.

Leading playground equipment supplier KOMPAN created and installed the play area, which was commissioned by South Staffordshire Council earlier this year.

Councillor Len Bates BEM, Cabinet Member for Community Services, said, "This fantastic new play area brings the joy of outdoor playing to our young Baggeridge visitors. Families now have access to a exciting play area that is designed to engage and develop children and support their health and wellbeing.

"The new layout is a significant improvement on the previous play area at the park with improvements in access for disabled users and, where possible, it has been constructed using organic, sustainable and recycled materials. I'm sure it will prove extremely popular with young people and families."



© Jon Thorne Photography

Back row, left to right: Steve Gallis from Baggeridge Country Park, Councillor Roger Lees, Councillor Marcia Sinclair from Himley Parish Council, Mark Jenkinson and Simon Nuttall from South Staffordshire Council and Paul Greenfield from Kompan. Front row, left to right: Councillor Len Bates BEM, Cabinet Member for Community Services, Councillor Yvonne Nock, Chair of Himley Parish Council, and Kath Williams, Chairman of South Staffordshire Council.

### Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre

Saredon Road, Cheslyn Hay, WS6 7JQ Tel: 01922 417790  
f Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre

### Codsall Leisure Centre

Elliotts Lane, Codsall, WV8 1PG Tel: 01902 844032  
f Codsall Leisure Centre

### Penkridge Leisure Centre

Cannock Road, Stafford, ST19 5RX Tel: 01785 714152  
f Penkridge Leisure Centre

### Wombourne Leisure Centre

Ounsdale Road, Wombourne, WV5 8BJ Tel: 01902 898202  
f Wombourne Leisure Centre

### Baggeridge Country Park

Gospel End, DY3 4HB Tel: 01902 882605  
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Sign up to receive updates

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Book online  
now available!

## Get active

### Makeover for leisure centres

During lockdown, staff worked hard redecorating leisure facilities and new air conditioning and windows were installed at some sites.

### New cycling bikes arrive

If you love cycling workouts then you're in for a treat at Codsall Leisure Centre, which now has new Matrix Studio cycling bikes.



### Active outdoor learning

Based at Baggeridge Country Park, Challenge Academy is an outdoor adventure experience with high ropes, zip wires and woodland camps, promoting active outdoor learning and fun for all ages and abilities.

At the moment, access to the site is limited to 20 'adventurers' per session and you will need to book online in advance. There are different courses to test and challenge everyone from 4 years to the young at heart (85 is the oldest visitor yet!) so it's the perfect place to go if you're looking for outdoor fun, adventure and excitement.

[www.challengeacademy.co.uk](http://www.challengeacademy.co.uk)



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# Word Search Competition 76

Can you find the following words in the grid? They are all to do with safely supporting your local high street shops.

They may be horizontal, vertical or diagonal and could be backwards or forwards.

- South • Staffordshire
- Open for • Business
- Stay • Shop • Spend
- Local • High Streets
- Warm • Welcome
- Contactless • Payment
- Be Kind • Hand • Sanitiser
- Wash hands • Do not touch
- Wear • Face Coverings
- Keep your • Distance

S	H	K	T	B	S	W	F	H	T	D	S	M	W
T	C	E	N	E	O	A	P	F	I	S	Y	S	E
E	U	E	E	K	U	R	O	S	E	A	T	M	R
E	O	P	M	I	T	M	T	L	T	A	O	D	E
R	T	Y	Y	N	H	A	T	S	F	C	L	N	S
T	T	O	A	D	N	C	B	F	L	R	O	E	I
S	O	U	P	C	A	U	O	E	A	L	C	N	T
H	N	R	E	T	S	R	W	E	H	T	A	D	I
G	O	E	N	I	D	H	W	A	N	D	L	S	N
I	D	O	N	S	D	N	A	H	H	S	A	W	A
H	C	E	H	H	W	R	K	N	A	R	H	L	S
A	S	I	O	D	N	E	T	E	D	A	O	O	D
S	R	O	P	E	N	F	O	R	P	E	N	V	P
E	S	G	N	I	R	E	V	O	C	E	C	A	F

## Congratulations and thank you!

Congratulations to **Emily Karakas** from Perton who won £25 in the Word Search Competition in **Issue 75** of the South Staffordshire Review.

The correct answer was **KINDNESS**

A big thank you to everyone who entered and well done to those who got the answer correct!

Find the word or phrase that is **NOT** included in the grid. Write your answer on the back of a postcard (or sealed envelope) together with your name and address and send to:

**Helen Dye, Word Search Competition 76, South Staffordshire Council, Council Offices, Codsall. WV8 1PX**

Or, email your answer (together with your name and address) to: [wordsearchcompetition@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:wordsearchcompetition@sstaffs.gov.uk)

The first correct entry picked after the closing date of **4 November 2020** will win a **£25 Prize**

£43.60 per bin, per year



# GARDEN WASTE

## Collection Service



Subscribe online [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/gardenwaste)

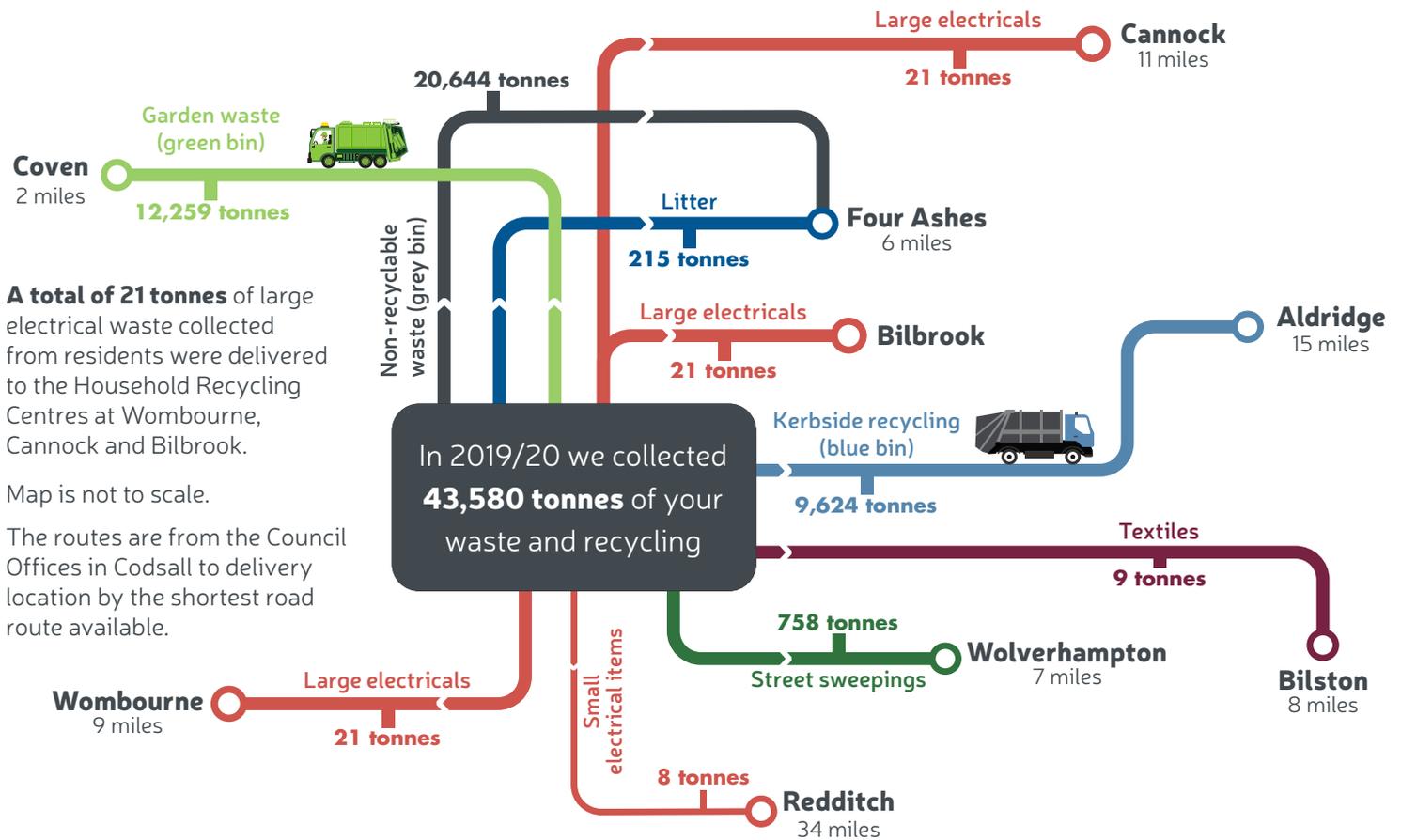
Join the 30,000 households in South Staffordshire that have signed up to our garden waste collection service. You can subscribe to this service at any time and the current scheme year runs until 25 June 2021 so the sooner you sign up the more collections you will get. There's no limit to the number of green bins that we will collect for a charge of £43.60 per bin and the easiest way to sign up is online via our website or by calling **01902 696000**.

If you prefer to compost your garden waste, remember the Council offers home compost bins at a reduced price and there's lots of information to help you on your composting journey including hints and tips, frequently asked questions and a video on our website at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/homecomposting](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/homecomposting).

## Where does your waste go?

We're recycling more than ever but have you ever wondered where your waste goes and how far it travels after you dispose of it? Take a look at this infographic to find out more.

More information can be found on our website at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bins-recycling/recycling-performance.cfm](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bins-recycling/recycling-performance.cfm).



A total of 21 tonnes of large electrical waste collected from residents were delivered to the Household Recycling Centres at Wombourne, Cannock and Bilbrook.

Map is not to scale.

The routes are from the Council Offices in Codsall to delivery location by the shortest road route available.

For more information on your waste and recycling collections, visit [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/waste](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/waste)

**NEXT EDITION: Issue 77 - out Winter 2021**

# Thinking about studying at University next year?

Chat to us at one of our Autumn Open Days

OCTOBER

10

9AM-3PM



NOVEMBER

07

9AM-3PM



1st

in Birmingham  
for Student  
Satisfaction\*

\*National Student Survey  
(NSS) results 2019-20



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