

South Staffordshire Review



South Staffordshire Council



Issue 77 • Winter/Spring 2021

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Work underway on the new Community Hub





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Message from the Leader

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

It is now a year since the first lockdown was imposed across the country as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and I want to express my enormous pride in the way that the people of South Staffordshire have responded over the past 12 months.

I have been amazed - but not surprised - at your resilience, fortitude, patience and willingness to submit to often extreme limitations of freedom of movement and ability to meet up with family and friends. We are going through unprecedented times that have led to significant changes in the way we lead our daily lives.

Throughout lockdown, your council teams have continued to provide key services as well as operating a helpline to support vulnerable residents and distributing business grants. We have moved to online meetings, while many of our staff are working from home. The investment South Staffordshire Council has made in recent years in strengthening our digital strategy has enabled this to take place almost seamlessly. I want to pay tribute to both my fellow councillors and to every single member of staff at South Staffordshire District Council for the way they continue to serve the people of our district.

At the same time life has continued, with work progressing on the new Community Hub in Codsall. You can read more about that on page 16, along with news of construction of the extension to Four Ashes Enterprise Centre. And, at the time of publication, the Council is moving ahead with preparations for Local Elections on Thursday 6 May, as detailed on page 6.

We are now seeing light at the end of what has been a very long, dark tunnel, as the vaccination programme rolls out across South Staffordshire - bringing with it the promise of an eventual return to normal daily life.

But, at this crucial time, it is more important than ever that all of us in South Staffordshire continue to act responsibly: wearing face coverings, social distancing and regular hand-washing. It has not been easy, but by sticking to the scientific and medical advice we will come through. Advice and updates on every aspect of dealing with the pandemic can be found in the pages of this issue of Review Magazine, and we hope our readers find it useful.

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

 @cllrbedwards

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South Staffordshire Council

South Staffordshire Council

Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PX

Tel: **01902 696000** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm)

Email: **info@sstaffs.gov.uk**

www.sstaffs.gov.uk

 **@south_staffs**

 **South Staffordshire Council**

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Strengthening working across all tiers of local government

South Staffordshire Council is bringing a new focus to how we deliver our work in the district through the localities model.

Localities+

This approach will bring together the various data sources that we use to plan our services and help us to focus on what is important to each of our five localities. As a council, we're keen to identify what is important to our residents, what assets there are within our communities and how we can use this intelligence to better shape our services and delivery.

We also want to improve how we work across the three tiers of government within South Staffordshire and remove barriers that might prevent residents from speaking to the correct organisations about their services. We are holding Locality Forums to work with local representatives to enhance the data with local intelligence. The first round of online forums were held during November 2020 and the next forums are scheduled to take place in March 2021, discussing local topics including flooding, parking and tackling climate change.

The Council has also nominated a series of officers to each locality, who in turn bring their own specialisms to the agenda:

Andy Aston (locality two) - Environment.

Harvinder Bains (locality five) - Business and enterprise.

Ryan Cresswell (locality one) - Welfare services.

Maggie Quinn (locality four) - Community safety and the voluntary sector.

Rob Sharratt (locality two) - Health and wellbeing.

Ryan Taylor (locality three) - Friends groups and climate change.

These officers will act as the public face of the Council on the ground and further details can be found in the new localities podcast which you can hear at

<https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/news/podcast.cfm>

Do get in touch via localitiespodcast@sstaffs.gov.uk

South Staffordshire's Christmas Fund



Just before Christmas, South Staffordshire Council awarded 23 community groups and seven parishes up to £400 each to help support the most vulnerable in our communities. Some used the fund to send out Christmas hampers, or to deliver a Christmas Day lunch and New Year's Eve supper. Here are some heart-warming comments from the volunteers who supported Perton Parish Council's proposals:

"The lady was whooping up and down her path"

"The resident was moved to tears"

"It's brought smiles and happiness to many"

Council 'highly commended' in national awards

The Senior Management Team at South Staffordshire Council has been highly commended at a major national awards event celebrating the achievements and hard work of local authorities.

South Staffordshire Council was shortlisted in two categories and received its commendation for the Best Senior Leadership Team category at the 2020 MJ Awards. The results were announced at a virtual awards ceremony held in October 2020.

Support for South Staffordshire businesses

The Council is helping hundreds of businesses secure grant funding during this challenging time for businesses. Over the course of 2020 the grant programmes, administered by the Council, adapted to support a wide range of businesses, including the hospitality sector and mobile workers, with eight different schemes running at various times during the year keeping thousands of local businesses in business. The teams have put in an enormous effort over the past year, processing applications and issuing more than £22 million in grant funding to local businesses.

Since the beginning of this year with the January National Lockdown, the new funding administered by the Council provides further support to businesses in need totalling in excess of £6 million. The Council is working hard to ensure that as many businesses as possible can benefit from the grants schemes in the immediate short and long term to help businesses across the district to survive.

Within days of the third national lockdown being announced hundreds of local businesses applied for grant support through the South Staffordshire Council website. The aim is to support businesses either forced to close or those still operating but severely affected by the restrictions. New grant regimes will be publicised throughout the coming months.

The Council has also recently published a ten point action plan to help businesses in their recovery. Our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan is a delivery plan which sets out the key actions the Council will focus on for the shorter and longer-term recovery of the South Staffordshire economy.

South Staffordshire Council's 10-point plan for economic recovery focuses on building trust, relationships and growth with our varied business communities, and building inclusive growth that benefits all of South Staffordshire and its communities and businesses.

If you are a business owner in the district we are keen to see how we can help you. We can help in seeking funding advice, training or many other business development needs. Please visit our website for details of how to contact us and to view our 'ten point plan'. <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/local-businesses/business-grants.cfm>

Vaccine Fraud

Criminals are using the COVID-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details.

In a joint statement the Government Counter Fraud Function and the NHS Counter Fraud Authority have warned that criminals have been sending convincing-looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy.

Text messages, phone calls and fake websites have all been used by fraudsters, who have also been calling unannounced at the homes of victims by pretending to be from the NHS to administer the vaccine there and then, in exchange for a cash payment.

People are being warned to be alert to these scams. The NHS will:

- ✖ **NEVER ask for payment - the vaccine is free.**
- ✖ **NEVER ask for your bank details.**
- ✖ **NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine.**
- ✖ **NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport.**

If you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up. If you are suspicious about an email you have received, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk

Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to the number **7726** which is **free of charge**.

If you believe you have been the victim of fraud or identity theft, you should report this directly to Action Fraud either online; www.actionfraud.police.uk or via phone **0300 123 2040**.

If you have any information relating to vaccine fraud you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting Crimestoppers COVID Fraud Hotline online; www.covidfraudhotline.org or phone **0800 587 5030**.

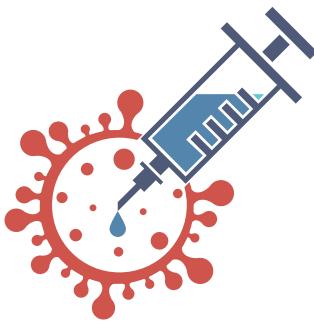
COVID-19 VACCINE FACT CHECK



The COVID-19 vaccine will always be available free of charge.



The NHS will **NEVER** ask you to share bank details to confirm your identity.



Your local police



I am extremely proud of the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team. Since I arrived in July 2020, South Staffordshire Local Policing Team has transformed the way it works and has a clear understanding of the priorities; making significant improvements in a number of key areas.

I am grateful for the support of partner agencies and South Staffordshire Council who are working closely with us to achieve this shared goal of driving down crime and anti-social behaviour. I would also like to thank the people of South Staffordshire whose support is second to none and I look forward to ensuring South Staffordshire remains the safest place to live and work in the County.

South Staffordshire has seen reductions in crime which is currently seeing a reduction of 15% based on a year-on-year comparison. Daily police/partnership briefings highlight the significant issues and emerging trends to ensure police resources are being directed to the relevant area and crime type.

Anti-social behaviour has reduced by 5% (based on a year-on-year comparison) and although Covid breaches are included in this category, the incidents of rowdy and inconsiderate anti-social behaviour have been considerably reduced during lockdown.

Please help Staffordshire Police by following the COVID-19 guidelines, by securing your property and vehicles to deter would-be thieves and by reporting anti-social and crimes for accurate reporting and allocation of resources to nip crime trends and reduce crime going forwards.

Chief Inspector Dave Wain
South Staffordshire Local Policing Team

@StaffsPolice Staffordshire Police

Useful websites

Smart Alerts contact residents about incidents of crime in their local area, please consider signing up and receive regular emails: <https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/wsi/watch-schemes-initiatives/as/staffs/staffordshire-smart-alert/>

Please call **101** for non-emergency reports, call **999** for emergencies or report online.

www.actionfraud.police.uk
www.citizensadvice.org.uk



"Working to make South Staffordshire Safer"

South Staffordshire Council
working alongside partners to
keep residents safe

May 2021 elections

Safety will be key on Thursday 6 May 2021 when residents in South Staffordshire go to the polls to have their say on who represents them at Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Elections, the County Council Elections and Local By-Elections.

Polling stations will be COVID-19 secure, with hand sanitisers provided and voters are asked to bring their own pencil or pen and will be required to wear a facemask.

Alternatively, rather than attending in person, people can choose to vote by post. It is easy and convenient; simply contact the Council's electoral services team and they will send you a postal vote form. To find out more, please contact elections@sstaffs.gov.uk. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is before 5pm on Tuesday 20 April.

Another way to have your say in the May Elections is by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

A series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the upcoming elections have been published on the council website, which we will update with further information as it becomes available. Information can also be found on the website of the Electoral Commission.

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

For more information, visit www.sstaffs.gov.uk/elections

Boundary Review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) carries out reviews of local government, of which an Electoral Review is the most common. The review assesses both the number of Councillors along with the number and boundaries of wards. Electoral reviews are initiated to improve electoral equality by ensuring the ratio of electors to Councillors in each ward is balanced.

South Staffordshire's last electoral review took place in 2000.

Stage one of the process requires the submission of two separate pieces of work for the LGBCE. The first is a Council Size Submission that presents the Council's argument for the optimum number of Councillors within the authority. Other groups beyond the Council can provide submissions alongside the Councils. The second is the electoral numbers forecast for the authority going forward six years. Both these documents are due to be submitted to the LGBCE on 3 May 2021. The LGBCE will confirm the council size in May. The next stage of the electoral review after this date will be a review of the ward boundaries within the authority.

South Staffordshire Council currently has 49 Members representing around 112,000 residents in 25 wards.

<https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/elections/local-government-boundary-commission-review.cfm>

Polling stations will be safe places to vote in May, but there are other ways to vote



The
Electoral
Commission

YOUR VOTE MATTERS
DON'T LOSE IT

CENSUS 2021

Communities in South Staffordshire will get extra support as the 2021 Census approaches.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has appointed a Census Engagement Manager to support South Staffordshire residents and help make Census 2021 a success.

Kirat Raj Singh, the area's Census Engagement Manager will help organisations, charities, faith groups and community leaders within South Staffordshire raise awareness of the census and the value to residents in taking part.

Everyone across England and Wales will be asked to take part and the information people give will decide how services are planned and funded. Ultimately, it ensures funds are invested in emergency services, health care, school places and other vital services.

Kirat Raj Singh, said: "Census Engagement Managers, such as myself, have a critical role in making sure everyone understands why the census is important and making sure all households across England and Wales know why it is important to take part and how to get the help they need."

For the first time, the census will be run primarily online, making it easy for most people to complete the questionnaire on any device - computer, mobile phone or tablet. Local census support centres will be offering help, while paper questionnaires will be available for those who need them. All census staff will operate in line with the Government's latest COVID-19 guidance.

The 2021 Census will include a new question on veterans of the UK Armed Forces, as well as voluntary questions, for those aged 16 and over, on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The census will be held on 21 March 2021. While results will be available the following year, all personal records will be locked away for 100 years and kept safe for future generations.

For more information, visit www.census.gov.uk

To reach your local census engagement manager/ community adviser, contact: Kirat Raj Singh - kiratraj.singh91@field.census.gov.uk



Councillor Q&A

Councillor Rita Heseltine has represented Perton Lakeside since May 2007 and is Assistant Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services at the Council. This role covers health issues and, as a result, she has led South Staffordshire District Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also sits on the Council's Lottery Advisory Panel, the Planning Committee and the Wellbeing Select Committee. Born and brought up in Wednesfield, the daughter of a tool setter, she worked as a teacher in Staffordshire for more than 30 years and has lived in Perton since 1986.

Why did you decide to become a Councillor?

I've always been interested in politics. My parents always showed an interest in politics and were passionate that everyone should use their vote because of the sacrifices made by people in the past to ensure we had that right, such as the suffragettes. I still remember casting my first vote, at a local election, and feeling so proud and privileged. Later, when I married, my husband was very involved in politics - fortunately we shared the same political values, unlike in football. I come from a family of Wolves supporters and he supported West Bromwich Albion.

I was brought up to be considerate, courteous and to help others, and you can help much more as a local councillor. It's not about blowing your own trumpet but about the quiet work, listening to people, talking with them and finding out what they need and what help you can provide.

I had been a Parish Councillor since 2004 and when I stopped teaching full-time in 2005 the time was right to stand for District Council because I felt that to do it properly I should approach it as a full-time job. I am a great believer in preserving the Green Belt and maintaining South Staffordshire as a 'community of communities'.



One of my proudest moments was when I was elected as chairman of South Staffordshire Council in 2013, and also when I was privileged to be asked to take on the role of Assistant Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services in December 2019. It involved responsibilities for health issues in the district and was a move intended to help spread the heavy workload in the Cabinet - no-one knew then, of course, that a pandemic was about to happen.

How has South Staffordshire coped in the pandemic?

I am very proud of the way South Staffordshire as a community has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The vast majority of residents have complied with the regulations and helped the enormous effort that is being put in to control the spread of the virus. I would like to say how proud I am of our officers and staff at the district council, and my fellow councillors. We had no way of predicting this but the response has been remarkable. Fortunately, we as a Council had taken great strides in our digital strategy in recent years so staff were able to quite quickly transfer to working at home.

After a year there is concern about 'lockdown fatigue' but people in the district have shown great community spirit and there is now a light at the end of the tunnel as the nationwide vaccination programme accelerates.

It has been a particularly busy time for the staff in our environmental health and finance teams - the latter dealing with a constantly changing system of Government grants to aid local people and businesses - but I am proud of the service they have continued to provide.



I think as a Council we have performed extremely well.

What do you do outside of Council work?

My late husband, David, and I moved to Perton in 1986 and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. There is a lovely village community spirit to the place with the Bluebell Walk, Penk Meadow, the Staffordshire Way, two lakes and the remains of RAF Perton from the Second World War are on our doorstep. I am a member of the Perton Playing Field Association, the Perton Carnival Committee, secretary of the Perton Village Show, a governor at Perton First School and co-founder of the Perton Carpet Bowls Club which was set up to help combat social isolation.

Aside from that I love to cook - my signature dish is Boeuf Bourguignon - and I am an avid reader; everything from Jane Austen to Lee Child's Jack Reacher thrillers. I don't like horror or science fiction though. A book I re-read regularly is Austen's Emma, and the Aubrey-Maturin novels of Patrick O'Brian - I have them all on my shelf. And I am fascinated by history, particularly the Elizabethan period.

I also love going for long walks with my greyhound, Erin. She has been a blessing during lockdown and makes sure I get my regular exercise.

Mental Health and Wellbeing - Every Mind Matters

It is important for everyone to stay in good spirits. If the weather is good to us, and we can get outside and get moving in the fresh air, this will help to give us all head space; but for anyone who is struggling, the 'Every Mind Matters' guidance from the NHS can help you.

Every Mind Matters looks at ways for you to look after your mental health. Get advice and tips on:

- How to maintain your mental wellbeing while you're staying at home.
- If you're anxious about the Coronavirus and need help in dealing with your anxiety.
- If social distancing yourself from people is giving you a low mood.
- If you are generally worried, feel stressed and are struggling to sleep.

For more details on Every Mind Matters visit <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

There is also more guidance on the South Staffordshire District Council website - at <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/leisure/health-and-wellbeing-in-the-home.cfm> on how to stay happy and healthy at home



Useful contacts

Age UK

0800 169 6565

www.ageuk.org.uk/staffordshire

Childline

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Citizens Advice - National Advice Line

03444 111 444

Mind

0300 123 3393

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

The Silver Line

0800 470 80 90

www.thesilverline.org.uk

Advice Webinars

As part of efforts around Staffordshire to support local people during the pandemic, Stafford Borough Council recently presented a short series of webinars to offer information, advice and guidance to community stakeholders on how to help local residents to get the help they need.

In relation to people struggling with their bills, income and employment, the Financial Distress and Hardship webinar had guest speakers from Citizens Advice Bureau, National Careers Service and Warmer Homes Stafford:

<https://youtu.be/GEvVB2-5vmM>

For individuals needing help with their mental health and wellbeing, we have information and advice from NHS Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust, Re-Solv, Support Staffordshire and Starfish Health and Wellbeing:

<https://youtu.be/PQeJ38jW-Gc>

Staffordshire Connects, Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services gave top tips and advice on volunteers, funding, training and other services to help with Sustainability and Community Capacity Building: <https://youtu.be/H0R1g8unMFU>



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.

County's mass COVID-19 testing blitz ramped up

A fleet of “Let’s Get Tested” vans has been rolled out across the county to bolster Staffordshire County Council’s efforts to tackle COVID-19 and test more people without symptoms.

The mobile rapid-testing vans provide pop-up community testing across the county and support the Community Testing Centres which opened their doors in January.

Many Staffordshire employers have also joined the mass-testing blitz, with Alton Towers one of the first to sign up to offer both community and workforce testing.

Central to health chief’s plans has been asking all residents who need to be out and about during the lockdown to have regular COVID-19 tests, even if they don’t have symptoms. They are also asking anybody in a hotspot area to get a test.

In Staffordshire hotspots have been identified in the following Council Wards: Bilbrook, Brewood and Coven, Cheslyn Hay South, Essington, Great Wyrley Town, Huntington and Hatherton, Perton Lakeside, Trysull and Seisdon, Wombourne North and Lower Penn, Wombourne South East and Wombourne South West.

The move aims to tackle the “silent spreaders”, people who carry the virus but have no symptoms. The county council aims to test thousands of asymptomatic people every day.

The latest average seven-day Covid rate in Staffordshire is currently 213.3 per 100,000 population, lower than the West Midlands rate of 241.8 but higher than the England rate of 186.8 and South Staffordshire’s rate is 255.3.

Dr Johnny McMahon, Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing, said: “During this national lockdown, people must not leave or be outside their home except where necessary. This is the law.

“Some people may need to leave home for example to shop for basic necessities, or to go to work, if they cannot work from home. If people do need to leave their homes then testing across the county is available to check whether they have the virus before they have contact with others.

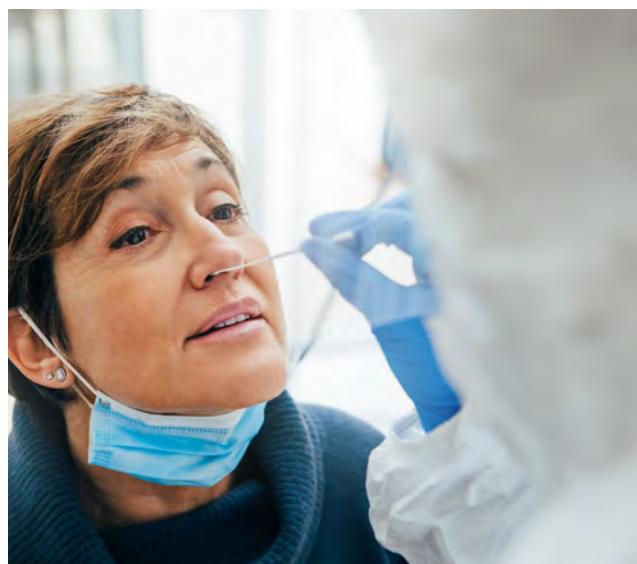
“The county council and partners have worked hard to ensure there is lots of availability for residents to get a rapid test.

“The message should now be crystal clear - if you need to have contact with others get tested regularly. If you live in a hotspot location book that test today.”

People can book a test at Welcome to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Community Test Sites Appointment System

www.zipporah.co.uk. The South Staffordshire test site is at Wombourne Library, Church Road, Wombourne WV5 9EZ.

People with symptoms or who have been asked to self-isolate should not attend. Results will be available in about 30 minutes.



How to look after yourself in these difficult times

by Ros Howard, Chartered Psychologist

We know at present we are going through an unprecedented time of change and uncertainty. This is global. This understandably creates 'a sense of threat' which means we feel emotions of stress, anxiety and fear. This is normal. Plus, the daily news reports feed 'the threat'.

So what can we do? OK - so you have probably read and seen loads of articles about 'Emotional Well-Being'. So, I'm not going to go over information that you already know. However, I am going to touch base on a few points:

Make a plan for each day, but keep it simple and flexible.

- The plan may include organisation for home management, working from home, fun activities, exercise, home schooling and a shopping trip.
- Try to keep to a routine, such as a regular time getting up in the morning, getting dressed to start the day, regular bed time, regular meal times.
- Enlist the help from family - children can learn new skills such as sorting the laundry.
- Share responsibilities in the home - we are all in this together.
- Take more time over meals - sit down together as a family. The supermarkets have lots of colourful and healthy vegetables and fruits. Try out some new recipes - encourage your children to be involved.
- Keep in touch with friends and family.

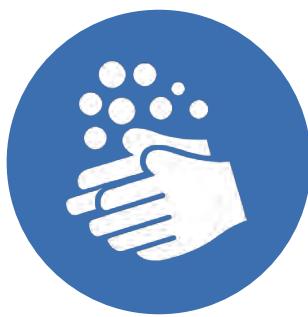
• Exercise, go for a walk - we all need fresh air and daylight. Notice things on the walk you have never noticed before. Exercise in the home - Joe Wicks offers some good fun workouts for adults and children on [YouTube](#) and Darcy Bussell offers some lovely relaxing Pilates on [YouTube](#). Go to our Active at home webpage www.sstaffs.gov.uk/leisure/active-at-home.cfm

- If you have a garden, spend some time outside in the garden. Observe wildlife in your garden, the birds, insects; what flowers are growing; notice the ever changing colours of bushes, trees, plants. If you don't have a garden, then a window box will bring creativity and colour.
- Reduce news overload. I suggest one news viewing per day.

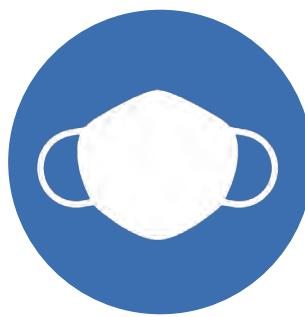
Keeping children occupied

- Gardening - planting seeds, watching as the seeds grow.
- Crafts - making things for the home such as birdfeeder.
- Creative/imaginative play - a large cardboard box is a good start; the child can create the box into anything - a car, a garage, hidey-hole...
- Colouring books - good for children and adults - calms the mind.
- Make an indoor tent - this offers all sorts of adventures.
- Naming vegetables, trying out new tastes.

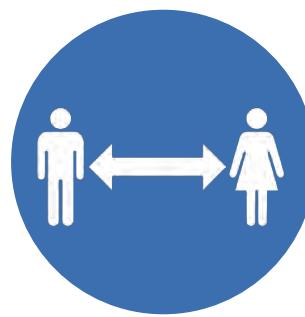
Wash hands, cover face, make space



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

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 meter 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.



25
acre site



Judged 'Excellent' in all areas by the Independent Schools Inspectorate

529

Grade 9, 8 or 7 awards (equivalent to A* – A) at GCSE this year

Book a School tour or Virtual Open Event with us

Register now to join one of our Virtual Open Events at www.wgs.org.uk/openday. If you would like to book a personal School tour, please complete our online form: www.wgs.org.uk/schooltour

Alternatively, for more information about joining our School, please contact our Admissions Team telephone: 01902 422939 or email: admissions@wgs-sch.net



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High Quality
Teaching



TES Independent School Award Winners



Wrap around care
from 7.30am - 6.15pm

Places still available for September 2021

Community Lottery benefits local good causes

Since the launch of the South Staffordshire Community Lottery in November 2017, thanks to the generosity of supporters, more than £85,000 has been raised for good causes, charities and community groups in and around South Staffordshire. The lottery was set up to give local groups the opportunity to raise additional monies to support the fantastic work they do.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, groups have faced challenging financial times and have been unable to fundraise through their tradition means. Now more than ever good causes need to adopt simple, quick and digital fundraising solutions that can be used without the need for events or face to face interactions. The South Staffordshire Community Lottery provides an online platform that will give good causes a sustainable, year-round income.



If you are part of a local community group such as a sports club, local charity, school PTA, friends' group, foodbank, community centre/village hall or social enterprise looking for a free, quick and easy way of raising funds - register today. There is no risk, no cost, no administration and free marketing tools to help with fund-raising campaigns. Your cause will start fund raising from the very first ticket bought through your personalised lottery webpage.



Good Causes, Charities and Community Groups

Join today, promote your page and for every £1 lottery ticket sale, you keep 50p. Your supporters get the chance of winning weekly cash prizes, including a jackpot of £25,000.

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- No licences to pay
- Free marketing support
- Start benefiting from your first ticket sale
- Simple and quick to register
- No catch, it's a win win for everyone

Good causes signed up are now raising between £100 to £1,000 plus every year!

Register today...
southstaffslottery.co.uk

Players must be aged 18 years or over and live in the UK.
South Staffordshire Community Lottery is promoted by South Staffordshire Council, a Local Authority licensed by the Gambling Commission. Registration No. 0004648-100-R-326-374-002. Terms and conditions apply. Always play responsibly.



Together we win!

What your support means...

AFC Gnosall

AFC Gnosall provides a much loved and valued outlet and opportunity for children and young people to play football, many of which live in South Staffordshire. The club provides qualified FA Coaches to junior teams from U5s-U16s that play mini soccer and competitive football in the FA Mid Staffs Junior League, cup competitions and friendlies.

The current COVID-19 Pandemic has had a massive effect on the club, and they want to be able to fundraise through the lottery to help their club and other good causes rebuild after this unprecedented time.

Glenthorne Primary School

Glenthorne Primary School joined the lottery in June 2020. They joined the lottery as they wanted to boost their fund raising to help them create a Forest School for their children, especially for those who have complex social and emotional needs. The school is also keen to enable families to work alongside their children to help promote language, independence and teamwork. Every ticket bought through the school's dedicated lottery page will help them achieve their forest school.

Rockspur CIC

Rockspur House has been signed up as one of the South Staffordshire Community Lottery's good causes for more than 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 were able to use the money raised from our good cause page to pay for activity packs."

Nick Morris, Rockspur House



COVID Support Officers

The Council's Street Scene and Envirocrime Service Team has a pool of 14 COVID Support Officers and they have been working within South Staffordshire since November 2020.

As a result:

South Staffordshire
STREET SCENE

450 **high street inspections** have been undertaken - ensuring the public are adhering to the rules.

375 **shop inspections** have been undertaken - giving local businesses help on COVID related issues.

190 **school visits** have been made to support schools with monitoring and providing advice on the drop off and pick up arrangements.

68 **park visits** have been made - ensuring that parks are being safely utilised.

1600 **signs and floor stickers** have been put up by the COVID Marshals across the district providing helpful advice and reminders for the public regarding rules.

1300 **shopping bags** have been delivered by the COVID Marshalls to the shops to promote shopping local.

Numerous **welfare visits** for the vulnerable residents of South Staffordshire where support is needed.

If you need any information please get in touch with Andy Aston,
Email: a.aston@sstaffs.gov.uk

These figures relate to information gained from 15 November 2020 to 14 January 2021.



The Council teams are working within our communities to ensure our residents and communities are supported when they need it. Whether that is ensuring that we make contact with the most vulnerable in our society, ensuring that food parcels are delivered to those that need them or supporting communities to ensure that they get the right support from other agencies, our teams have been on the ground making a difference to the lives of residents across the district.

Council updates financial plans as it prepares to set council tax

The Council is in the process of formally updating its financial plans as it does every year in advance of setting council tax. On 23 February Council was due to consider the 2021/22 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

These proposals follow an extensive process including a thorough review of the Council's plans, priorities and resources - and full consideration of issues and risks facing the district.

The proposals of an increase in council tax by £5 (band D property), which equates to less than 10 pence per week, will mean that the district will still have one of the lowest council tax charges in the country. Also, that the Council's budgets (with some help from reserves) will remain balanced for a four-year period to 2024/25.

Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council said "This budget represents a robust financial position. Critically, and despite the challenge of COVID-19 and other cost pressures, this budget invests in critical services while balancing the books over the medium term."

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*Quote Ref
SSR0121

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Mike Millis,
Middleton On Sea



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Mr & Mrs Barber, *Wells*

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"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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*Finance subject to status, T&C's apply. Subsidies are limited by area and not guaranteed. Putting off your enquiry could reduce the potential subsidy available to you



South Staffordshire
BUSINESS HUB

Business News

Winter/Spring 2021

Update from the Business Hub

Businesses within the district have faced challenging times due the Coronavirus Pandemic but this has not stopped the ongoing support work that the Business Hub continues to offer. A trial of business support triages took place late summer where businesses were able to discuss their needs and wants with one of our expert team. We were then able to offer valuable advice and signposting to our internal and external working partners who will work with the businesses on a range of

items from grant funding, training and qualifications, to marketing advice and expansion plans.

Another area that has been focused on and is planned to continue are Business Webinars. These proved highly successful and popular. Having listened to businesses and learnt what they need advice and support on the team are working hard to put together a schedule of events for 2021. The topics are every growing but include; tendering,

marketing, online selling and many more, also to include advice on how businesses can open and operate safely after the current Lockdown ends.

For further information and to keep up to date on the support available please follow both South Staffordshire Council and The Business Hub on Social Media or visit our website:

www.sstaffsbusinesshub.co.uk

Coronavirus Grants

Businesses who cannot trade because of national coronavirus restrictions may be entitled to access business support grants.

Grants are available to a range of businesses that cannot trade including non-essential retail, hospitality venues, accommodation such as hotels, leisure and sports facilities, entertainment businesses, hair and beauty venues and community centres.

Eligibility is set by the government and the value of the grants depends on the rateable value of the business premises. The financial help aims to support businesses through the latest restrictions and recent lockdown period. For further information, please visit our website at <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/environment/coronavirus-business-grants.cfm>

Brexit for businesses

Now that the UK has left the European Union there are new rules which apply to travel and doing business with Europe. The changes affect rules on exporting, importing, tariffs, data and recruitment. If you need to check what action you need to take regarding your business activity, the UK government has launched its Brexit Checker tool. The tool will give you a detailed personalised set of actions to help you get to grips with the changes.

www.gov.uk/transition

South Staffordshire Council works with partners, including the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses to support local businesses and provide information to understand the potential impact of Brexit on their businesses. For details of upcoming Brexit-related events follow the Council and The Business Hub on Social Media or visit www.sstaffs.gov.uk/communities/brexit.cfm



Lettings now being taken

Building work to extend the Four Ashes Enterprise Centre is now due for completion this spring. Enquiries and lettings are now been taken for units within this popular industrial site, situated off Latherford Close.



Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council, said, "As a council, it is our priority to support local businesses to grow and prosper. We are proud to be able to offer this extension, which will give new start-ups and existing businesses the opportunity to achieve their business goals."

The units will provide 35,000 square feet of new accommodation and vary in size from 936 square feet to 4,000 square feet. All are constructed with a steel frame superstructure on a reinforced concrete pad foundation. Each will have its own office, kitchen and toilet facility with roller shutter doors with a minimum of four metre eaves height and three phase electricity supply. The units will be available for a variety of uses within the Planning Use Class Orders B1, B2 and B8. Prices will start from £144 per week plus VAT.

Enquiries and lettings are now being taken.

Latherford Close, Four Ashes, Wolverhampton, WV10 7BY

Please contact the Commercial Team for more information.

Andrew France

Tel: **01902 696117**

Email: a.france@sstuffs.gov.uk

Harvey Bains

Tel: **01902 696480**

Email: h.bains@sstuffs.gov.uk

www.sstuffs.gov.uk/industrial-units/index.cfm

Community Hub under way

Construction work is now under way on a new community hub in Codsall. Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council, joined representatives from Russell House Surgery, Codsall Library and builders Seddon Construction in a ground breaking event to mark the start of this ambitious project, which is expected to open in early 2022.

Councillor Edwards said, "It is really exciting that construction work is now underway and I'm delighted that our plans are moving forward despite the coronavirus pandemic. We are investing £10 million to refurbish and add an extension to the council offices in Codsall and the transformation of the site will secure the building's long-term future.

"Electric vehicle charging points will be installed in the car park and batteries in the basement will store electricity to run the building and also enable us to sell surplus energy from solar panels back to the grid.

"Specialist teams from across the public, health, private and voluntary sectors will be co-located together in a modern, agile working and collaborative environment and, when the building is open to the public, residents will benefit from being able to access multiple services on one site right in the heart of the community."

As part of the plans, the existing library will be relocated to a new extension at the front of the building and there will be increased car parking, office space and community meeting rooms. Russell House Surgery will also relocate to the community hub.



Left to right: Pat Roberts, Patient Participation Chair at Russell House Surgery, Stuart Fanshaw, Operations Director at Seddon, Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council, and Graham Riley, Library Manager at Codsall Library.

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

Tel: **01902 696124** • Email: businesshub@sstuffs.gov.uk

www.sstuffsbusinesshub.co.uk



Welcome to
the home of the



HOT DESKING ■ VIRTUAL OFFICE ■ EVENTS ■ MEETING ROOMS ■ ADVERTISING ■ NETWORKING

Spotlight on Planning Enforcement

Our Planning Enforcement Team plays an important role in making sure that development is being carried out properly and investigating when work is being carried out without permission.

This can range from unauthorised development, unauthorised works to listed buildings and trees, changes of use of land and buildings, or breaches of planning conditions. Not all complaints to the Council are covered by the Planning Enforcement Team, for example land ownership or party wall disputes, or roads, highways and traffic obstructions. You can find out more here: www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning/planning-enforcement.cfm

Once a report has been made, officers will investigate thoroughly, looking at the history of the site and the planning policies that apply. Sometimes, all that is needed is the proper planning permission and we give advice to try to remedy breaches and work with landowners wherever possible to put things right. This isn't always the case and some investigations can take a long time with a lot of hard work and negotiation to bring about a satisfactory conclusion, as was the case in Great Wyrley which is outlined below.

Keeping on top of unauthorised development and other breaches of planning control often gets a bad press despite the hard work of our planning enforcement officers. However, the determination of our Enforcement Team paid off recently when a landowner finally cleared a site which had caused issues for a local community in Great Wyrley since 2017.

Local residents reported a site off Jacobs Hall Lane where waste was being stored and a junkyard had built up. Negotiations with the landowner to clear the land were unsuccessful and as a result, Planning Enforcement Notices were served on the landowner.

These were appealed and led to a Public Enquiry being held at the Council Offices in 2018.

After hearing the evidence, the Inspector dismissed the appeal and with this backing, the Enforcement Team had the authority they needed to press the landowner to clear the site.



In August 2020, a final site visit was carried out, and it is clear from the before and after pictures that after three years of continued effort, this was a win not only for the Council, but for the local community too.

Local Plan Review update

We are still aiming to consult on the next stage of the review, Preferred Options, later in 2021 and the focus now is preparing our evidence base and working with elected Members on the assessment and selection of sites.

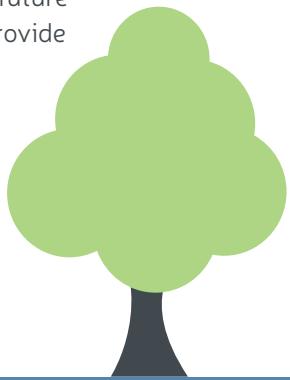


There is a huge amount of work supporting the review of the Local Plan and the studies and reports are used to help us to decide the best locations for development. You can see this evidence for yourself on our website and the studies include Green Belt, Landscape, Sustainability, Climate Change, Biodiversity and other topics such as the historic environment and sports facilities and open spaces. We also work with other organisations and partners on highways, flood risk and health issues.

Cllr Roger Lees, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services said: "Getting the right development, in the right place, needs careful consideration and Members are taking on board all the evidence to make sure that the decisions we make are robust.

"There is no doubt there are some difficult decisions to be made between protecting the Green Belt and providing a strong planning framework for the future of South Staffordshire which will provide much needed homes and jobs, and which will help revitalise the economy."

To see the evidence that has been published so far, go to www.sstaffs.gov.uk/localplanreview



Keep in touch

To receive updates about the Local Plan review please email localplans@sstaffs.gov.uk with your contact details. Don't forget, if you have made comments previously on the Local Plan we will write to you automatically.



Cash in your attic?

There's never been a better time to sell at auction...

Now taking consignments for our September Sale:

Antiques ~ Jewellery
~ Silver ~ Coins
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or WhatsApp: 07949 603872



www.cuttlestones.co.uk

Photos feature lots from previous Antique & Interiors sales. Please visit website for latest catalogues.

NEW UNITS TO LET - Available Spring 2021



Four Ashes Enterprise Centre

Latherford Close, Four Ashes, Wolverhampton, WV10 7BY

Four Ashes Enterprise Centre is a thriving business park near Wolverhampton that caters for new start-ups and existing small and medium-sized businesses.

A 35,000 square feet extension will provide a range of brand-new commercial units To Let.

For further information, please visit:

www.sstaffs.gov.uk/industrial-units



South Staffordshire Council

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Lower Drayton Farm, Off A449, Penkridge, Staffs, ST19 5RE



Are you, or someone you know currently unemployed or facing redundancy?

South Staffordshire Work Clubs can help.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the work clubs have continued to support residents in South Staffordshire with 1:1 support.

This includes CV development, interview techniques, pathways to employment, job search, IT support and self-employment.

All staff and volunteers are qualified. They live locally, so understand the issues of living and finding work in South Staffordshire and surrounding areas.

If you want to join others who have found work, started courses, volunteered or learned new skills then get in touch today.

For more information and to apply, please contact:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/south.s.clubs>

Twitter: @SSWorkClubs

Email: southstaffsworkclubs@gmail.com

val.chapman3@btinternet.com

Tel: 07718 911367

www.sstaffs.gov.uk/find-a-job/work-clubs-2.cfm

Registered charity: 1149436

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Email: advice@mea.org.uk



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South Staffordshire Review

Reaching every home

The South Staffordshire Review residents' magazine is delivered to 46,000 households in the district and printed three times a year.



Interested in advertising in the South Staffordshire Review?

Call **0161 408 3912**
Email: advertising@sstuffs.gov.uk

www.spotonmedia.co.uk



Stay positive, stay active

New online live exercise classes now available

South Staffordshire Leisure Centres provide a range of Live and Online exercise classes for all fitness levels which you can do with confidence in the safety of your own home.

We want to encourage everyone to take control of their health this year. We offer a programme of 25 classes per week being delivered by our own instructors, all of which are tailored to suit small spaces and with limited need for any equipment. Let us help YOU to get fitter, lose weight, increase your strength and improve your overall health.

With the classes being live, they are also a great way for you to interact with other people and our instructors. No need to worry about facemasks or social distancing...just you, your laptop or device and little space in your home.

Our online exercise class membership is £12 per month - that's just £3 per week! Alternatively, you can pay as you go for £4 per class.

To find out more visit www.sstaffs.gov.uk/leisure/online-exercise-classes-membership.cfm



Burnt off my Christmas excess in one spin session :)

Dale M



Great spin! Really well planned and varied, good challenge and never boring

Lesley C



Great motivational workout. Fantastic, thank you

Emma F

Swimming lessons

By the time you read this article, we hope our leisure centres are back open and we have been able to re-instate the swimming lessons. When we restart swimming lessons there will be reduced capacity to ensure we can maintain distancing.

Due to the reduced capacity in the lessons, we have had to adjust some children's lesson days and times. If you have not yet returned to lessons, it is important that you don't just turn up and presume your lessons will take place at the pre-lockdown day and time. If you are unsure of when you should be attending, please contact the Swimming Academy co-ordinator at swimcoordinator@sstaffs.gov.uk

We will not be taking on any waiting list children currently as we need to ensure that our current swimmers have secured their place first.

Our commitment

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, over the last 12 months most of us have experienced periods of feeling anxious and concerned with regards to visiting the leisure centres. Although we are confident that we have everything in place to ensure that your safety is paramount, we recognise that everyone feels differently and that some people don't feel ready to return. That's why we want to reassure you that you are welcome back when you feel ready to return. In the meantime, if you wish to suspend your membership and payments, get in touch by emailing us at leisure@sstaffs.gov.uk

National Lockdown Survey 2020

The National Lockdown survey was carried out last year to understand how safe leisure users felt during lockdown and to help leisure providers shape how to re-open facilities and make provisions as safe as possible for users.



79% of respondents said they felt more comfortable using South Staffordshire leisure in comparison to other providers. This is higher than the national average! **As a service we are proud to say that South Staffordshire Leisure Services offer a Covid safe service.**

In order to ensure the safety of our staff and customers, please prepare before you visit by making yourself familiar with the safety measures we currently have in place:



Advanced booking is essential

(Members can book online).



One at a time at reception

(card/contactless payments preferable).



Changing rooms

(Tier system may affect this provision).



Sanitise hands on arrival.



Toilets

- open but operating a one in, one out policy.



Masks

must be worn on entry and through corridors.



Scan the NHS Track and trace QR code on entry.



Keep your distance.

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

f Baggeridge Country Park

@baggeridgepark

Visit our website

www.sstuffs.gov.uk/leisure

Find out about becoming a member

www.sstuffs.gov.uk/leisure/memberships.cfm

Sign up to receive updates

www.sstuffs.gov.uk/alerts



Baggeridge Country Park awarded Green Flag

Baggeridge Country Park has been a green flag accredited park since 1998 and has been awarded the status consistently every year.

The Green Flag Award® scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

The fact that Baggeridge has been accredited this award for the past 23 years, clearly shows how hard the rangers and park manager work to keep the park so well maintained.

We are proud to be able to continue offering our visitors access to such a well kept park which offers a huge range of amenities for everyone to enjoy.

Book online
now available!

Residents are being called on to continue to stick to the rules as South Staffordshire Council steps up its efforts to encourage everyone in the district to "Do It For What Matters" and help bring down the cases of COVID-19.

Everyone has their own special reasons why they want to see the back of the Coronavirus pandemic. We're all different. And that is why the Do It For What Matters Most campaign has been launched across South Staffordshire and the wider county.

It features ordinary people who, for their own reasons, want to defeat COVID-19.

The Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) brings together the blue-light emergency services, all local NHS organisations, local authorities including South Staffordshire Council and local representatives of national agencies.

Dr Richard Harling, spokesperson for the SRF said: "Even though we now know restrictions will be in place until at least the spring, the lower the infection rate the lower the restrictions will be so we all have an incentive to fight this."

"Do It For What Matters Most looks at people from all walks of life, all ages and all backgrounds. It makes you realise that we're all in this together, but we are also very different.

"We can all do our bit and that means following some relatively simple rules and keep up-to-date with advice. Whatever the advice is three things won't change - Hands, Face, Space."

You can find out more information about the campaign at [http://stopthespread.
doingourbit.info/](http://stopthespread.doingourbit.info/)

Post your own videos telling us what you're doing it for and use the hashtag **#DoingOurBit**



Word Search Competition 77

Can you find the following words in the grid to do with the South Staffordshire Community Hub.

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

- South • Staffordshire**
- Business Hub • Library**
- Refurbishment • Extension**
- Russell House • Café**
- NHS • Police • Meeting**
- Community • Rooms**
- Council • Chamber**
- Seddon • Solar Panels**
- Battery Storage**

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

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 77, South Staffordshire Council, Council Offices, Codsall. WV8 1PX

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

The first correct entry picked after the closing date of **28 April 2021** will win a **£25 Prize**

**Congratulations
and thank you!**

Congratulations to **Philip Machin** from Wombourne who won £25 in the Word Search Competition in **Issue 76** of the South Staffordshire Review.

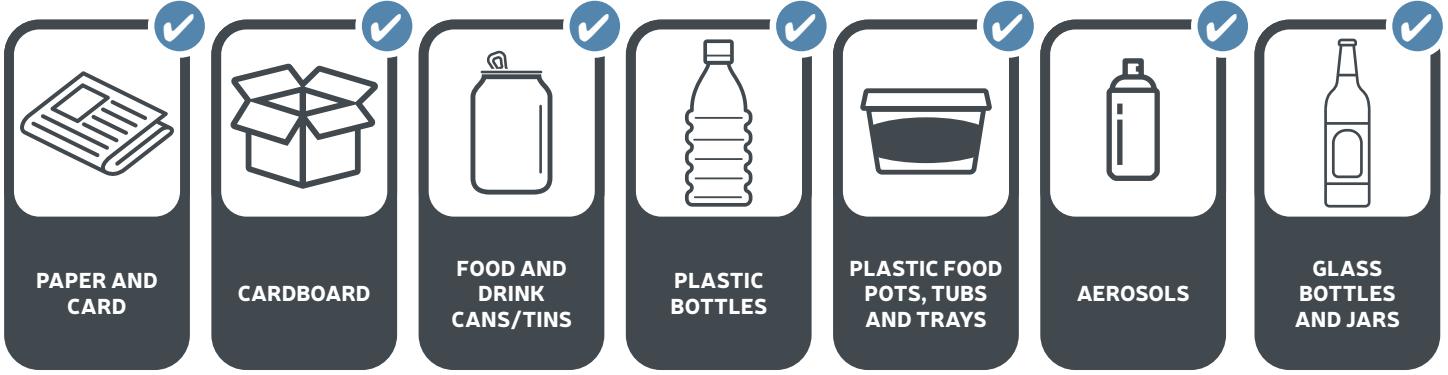
The correct answer was **SPEND**

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



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WE WILL ONLY ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN YOUR BLUE BIN



**PLACE LOOSE IN YOUR
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**IF YOUR BLUE BIN CONTAINS ITEMS THAT WE CANNOT
COLLECT FOR RECYCLING IT WILL NOT BE EMPTIED**

For more information visit www.sstaffs.gov.uk/recyclingfinder

You may be familiar with the above bin sticker that was fixed to blue bins in South Staffordshire at the end of 2020. It serves as a visual reminder to ensure that you are recycling as much as you can within your blue bins.

Recycling is important to conserve resources, save energy and help to protect the environment. Thanks to the support of South Staffordshire residents, 51% of household waste in the district is reused, recycled or composted*.

Not sure what can be recycled in your blue bin? A comprehensive list of over 100 materials and which bin to put them in, is available at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/recyclingfinder *Percentage based on household waste between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.

Thank you Residents

Over the festive period and into the New Year some waste and recycling collection services were disrupted by bad weather and unprecedented COVID-19 related staff shortages, with over 40% of the operatives off work at one point. We would like to thank all residents for their patience, support and positive messages for the crews during this time.

Stay up to date with any service changes by liking us on Facebook, following us on Twitter or signing up to our email bulletin service.

 @south_stuffs  South Staffordshire Council

Stay  Connected
South Staffordshire Council

You can now sign up to receive regular waste and recycling eAlerts and updates containing news and useful tips.

Visit: www.sstaffs.gov.uk/alerts

For more information on your waste and recycling collections, visit www.sstaffs.gov.uk/waste

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