

Parish Councils update from South Hams Cllrs. Pannell & Smerdon

July 2020

- **SHDC.** Council remains in emergency mode, with urgent decisions being taken by senior officers in consultation with the Leader. More meetings are now being held remotely using video conferencing. SHDC had so far held two Full Council Meetings and a number of Committee meetings, including planning.
- **Finance.** There are significant financial implications from the emergency for SHDC – both loss of income and emergency expenditure. The council is facing a shortfall in income from Business Rates and Council Tax, car parking, leisure centres, ferry takings etc. and has to spend out on emergency measures such as administering the various grant funds and community support etc. So far we have received £900,000 in compensation and the Government has now announced that it will make up 75% of the shortfall after the first five per cent. Officers are currently drawing up a new budget for the current year. Discretionary spending may have to be severely curtailed and capital projects deferred.
- **Planning. FOR THOSE NOT IN DNPA AREA.** New applications are being accepted. Less controversial plans are being decided, as in the past, by officer delegation, with local Ward Member consent. Development Management meetings have resumed by video conferencing.
- **Waste services.** Household recycling centres are open again – but not yet for commercial waste. Refuse collections continue as normal. The introduction of the new recycling system with plastic boxes replacing bags has been delayed until next March, because the crisis has halted construction of the specialised lorries needed, in Ireland, and the building of the new waste transfer station at Ivybridge. There will be additional costs for extra recycling sacks are needed.
- **Public areas.** Public toilets have reopened, first at the beaches and then in towns, and gradually also in more rural areas. Children's play areas are able to reopen after checking equipment for safety. No cleaning regime is necessary for outdoor play equipment, but notices will encourage social distancing.
- **Leisure Centres** will hopefully reopen later this month.
- **Covid Grants.** SHDC has helped 3,579 businesses in the district and distributed £41million in Government grants. It has also helped another 200 businesses by distributing £1million in discretionary grants to those who didn't qualify under other schemes, such as businesses in shared spaces, bed and breakfasts, charities etc., with a further £1million in the pipeline.

- **Impact on the economy.** Unemployment has risen and applications locally for Universal Credit are up by 400%. At the height of the lockdown 60% of businesses were closed and 55% of employees furloughed. The Devon economy is predicted to dip by 8%, that's one per cent worse than the national average. Devon is the fourth worst affected county in England by the economic downturn, and South Hams is worse hit than the average across Devon
- **Emergency Welfare Fund** has been set up together with Devon County Council to help people such as those waiting to receive Universal Credit and the self-employed.

HELPFUL LINKS: Here are some links which may prove useful, if you don't already know them:

- **Covid 19 related Helpline for South Hams** [01803 861297](tel:01803861297)

Advice is still available for other matters through the South Hams DC website, but responses may take longer as some staff have been switched to virus-related activities.

- **Local Action Support Fund** <https://southhams.gov.uk/LASFund>
- **Post Office support for getting access to cash** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52229698>
- **Info on grants and funding for individuals, groups and businesses.** <https://www.devon.gov.uk/document/grant-and-funding-support/>
- **The Silver Line** - FREE confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day 0800 470 8090
- <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk>
- **The Mix.** Online support Webchat for 10-18 year olds, online counselling for up to 28. Group chat, general chat, helpline, email and text support and webchat 0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk
- **Victim Care Unit** on 01392 475900
<https://www.victimcaredevonandcornwall.org.uk/Help-and-Support/> This link is more local support and covers a wide range of topics which is useful.
 - **Domestic abuse.** There is an increased risk of domestic abuse. Help is available from Devon and Cornwall Victim Support. Email victimservices@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk Tel: 0300 303 0554
- **National Domestic Abuse** free phone helpline 24 hours is 0808 2000 247 - the web link <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>