

Parish Councils update from South Hams Cllrs. Pannell & Smerdon

June 2020

- **SHDC.** Council remains in emergency mode, with urgent decisions being taken by senior officers in consultation with the Leader. Some meetings are being held remotely using video conferencing. SHDC had so far held two Full Council Meetings and a joint meeting of the members of Overview and Scrutiny and Development Management. The new Chief Executive has taken up his post. Andy Bates comes to us from the Local Government Association, where he was Principal Adviser for the South West.
- **Finance.** There are significant financial implications from the emergency for SHDC – both loss of income and emergency expenditure. This is anticipated to total in the region of £6million, on an annual budget of £9.4million. 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. We do not know whether the Government will recompense local authorities in full. So far we have received £900,000 and there has been no indication of what else might be allocated. South Hams has combined with the local authorities from across Devon to lobby MPs and the Government for additional funding to help bridge this shortfall. The council may have to make some very difficult choices and is currently drawing up contingency plans. Officers believe the council will remain solvent, but discretionary spending may have to be severely curtailed and capital projects deferred. Some other local authorities across the country may find themselves insolvent.
- **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. It is planned to start holding Development Management meetings by video conferencing soon.
- **Waste services.** Household recycling centres opened again in May – but only for private cars and for materials which present a hazard if they remain in homes, although this is gradually being relaxed. Refuse collections continue as normal at present. The introduction of the new recycling system with plastic boxes replacing bags has been delayed until February, because the crisis has halted construction of the specialised lorries needed, in Ireland, and the building of the new waste transfer station at Ivybridge.
- **Public areas.** Public toilets have reopened, first at the beaches and now in the towns, but it is not clear whether there are sufficient cleaning resources to reopen those in more rural areas. Children's play areas remain closed Parks and open spaces should be kept open for exercise,

so long as people respect distancing. Tennis courts have been allowed to reopen. The beach car parks at Bigbury, Slapton and North Sands, Salcombe, have reopened following the relaxation of the rules on trips out for exercise.

- **Discretionary grants** for businesses which haven't previously qualified for funding became available from 1st June . SHDC will have £2.4million to administer for businesses in shared spaces, bed and breakfasts, charities etc. Details of how to apply to this scheme are on the SHDC website.
- **Other funding available**, which we have already reported on, includes: **Council tax reduction** for those on low incomes. **Business Support Grants:** There have been cash grants of up to £25,000 from the Government for those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. There is also the Government assistance available to pay 80% of staff wages up to £2,500 per month. Small business grants of £10,000 are available for businesses with a Rateable Value of less than £15,000. This also applies to Village Halls, Recreation Associations etc. SHDC has paid out £39.35million in Government grants to 3,431 businesses in the South Hams – 85% of those eligible and 98% of all those who applied.
- **Help for self-employed and small businesses** is available from the Government. Go to the Gov.uk website for details.
- **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.
- **Grants for local community groups and Town and Parish Councils.** Quick grants of £500 from Devon County Council and also £500 from DNPA (for those in the National Park) are available to community groups/parish councils who are supporting people with food banks, shopping, emergency financial assistance etc. Bigger grants of up to £6,000 also available from Devon CC. SHDC has funding of up to £250 per parish for virus-related work in the community, but the size of depends on the number of applications in each area.

SEE PAGE BELOW FOR HELPFUL LINKS

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**

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/>