

Diptford Parish Council meeting 13th April 2021

App. 2 Report by SHDC Cllrs Pannell & Smerdon

COVID

Coming out of lockdown SHDC will administer Re-start grants, which provide one off payments in April for businesses. Only business rated businesses are eligible and there is a two-tier system of payment. Grants of up to £6,000 will be paid to non-essential retail business premises, to help them reopen safely. Grants of up to £18,000 will be allocated to hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym business premises, which may open later under plans set out in the roadmap and will be more impacted by restrictions when they do reopen. In the latest round of business grants SHDC has received 3217 applications, with 2122 sent for payment. South Hams is not included in the areas eligible for the Govt's Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund.

SHDC has developed a plan to respond to the various phases of the roadmap to come out of lockdown, to support individual businesses, the wider tourism economy and ensure we provide a really positive experience for what we predict will be a significant influx of visitors. The plan will of course include our liaising with key partners, such as Devon and Cornwall Police, and include our key communication messages for each phase.

Councils are being urged to support businesses opening up out of lockdown by removing as much bureaucracy and red tape as possible, specifically supporting al fresco dining, takeaways and the freedom to use land for outdoor events and hold markets without obtaining additional planning permission.

SHDC continues to work with the Local Resilience Forum and the Health Protection Board to support the response to the pandemic. The vaccination centre at St. Boniface House, Ashburton, has worked well, but the service is now moving to Follaton House, Totnes. Mass vaccination centres have been set up in Exeter and Plymouth, together with injections also being offered at some GP surgeries.

LEISURE CENTRES have a phased reopening planned. Open from 29 March for some school PE exercise sessions, from 12 April to the general public for lane swimming/family swims/ fitness centres, 17 May for indoor group exercises, from 21 May back to normal. More new health programmes on GP referral and to help those with cancer, Parkinsons, cardiac problems and dementia. Recovery programmes for those suffering from Long Covid, and youth activity nights.

INVESTMENT FOR RECOVERY

Members have approved an **investment of £598,000** to support economic recovery, the major towns and the visitor economy of the South Hams. The funding will support the national roadmap for the easing of lockdown at a local level, as detailed below:

- Keeping the streets clean - £130,000;
- Enhanced on street presence - £36,000;
- Supporting business and hospitality - £57,000;
- Improving the business environment in our key towns £275,000; and...

...Funding for Smaller Coastal Communities and Tourism Centres

Full Council decided on 25th March to approve a fund of £100,000 for improving the built / natural environment to deliver local economic improvements within our smaller coastal communities and tourism centres. Grants will have to be match funded by parish councils. Details will be provided in the next two weeks.



The additional recommendation was included as a result of the Council being awarded specific Welcome Back Funding from the Government. Similar to the Re-opening High Streets Safely grant, this funding is European funding (ERDF) and therefore has numerous strict criteria that must be satisfied before we can claim the funds. Once officers have a clear position, we will then design our scheme for bids from our communities to access this funding. It is anticipated having a scheme open by the end of April at the very latest.

Funds for local Climate Change projects Council has decided that some of the money set aside for Climate Change and Biodiversity schemes should be allocated to members to be distributed to projects in their ward which meet the criteria. Each Member will have a £3,000 Locality Fund to award. At present this is a one-off allocation and does not recur annually as with other Locality Funding.

Call for Remote Meetings to continue



Council Leader Judy Pearce continues to press for the provision for council meetings to continue remotely beyond 6 May. This continues to be resisted by the Govt., as does the request for local authorities to be able to hold 'hybrid' meetings similar to Parliament, with some Members present in person and others remotely.

Elections



Work continues to gather pace, with a letter going out to the recently expanded Clinically Extremely Vulnerable cohort encouraging them to register for a postal vote. Risk assessments are being carried out on all our polling stations and count venues, looking at all aspects of safety to ensure COVID compliance. We will also be encouraging where possible the use of postal voting and media campaigns will begin shortly. Election restrictions on some political activity by local authorities began on Wednesday 24th March.

New Super Recycler Service



Delivery of new containers is going smoothly and according to plan. Thousands of households are now officially on the new service and able to recycle more at the kerbside, including glass and mixed plastics. The crews have been able to train on the West Devon service and our team are providing excellent feedback. The team has also been talking to residents and have so far had a lot of positive comments including many remarks on the efficiency of individual collections.

The new fleet of recycling vehicles and the depot at Ivybridge are all functioning as expected. The new recycling boxes and bags will be delivered to properties 1WEEK prior to the new service starting. The details of the new service and how to use it are on the leaflets delivered to each participating household, on SHDC website www.southhams.gov.uk and on the Council's Facebook and Twitter

pages. The first month of the new service has gone well, meaning that the roll-out remains on course. Commencement of the new service in most of the South Brent Ward is on track for mid-April. Devon and the Devon Districts now have the second best recycling rates in England.

Council Tax Bills have gone out to most households. Much of the information which used to be included is now available on the SHDC website instead.

Freeport The Chancellor announced in the Budget that Plymouth has been selected for as the location for one of the Freeports being set up around the country. South Hams has been involved in the bid, with industrial/commercial land it owns at Langage and Sherford earmarked. But this has yet to be approved by full council. It is said that Freeport status could attract 9,000 extra jobs to the Plymouth area. The timescale for a full business case is around 6-7 months.

A38 Litter

Many people have observed that there has been a marked increase in the amount of litter along the verges of the A38. Our contractors FCC are responsible for clearing this. In the past Highways England would close lanes for grass and shrub cutting, which allowed FCC staff to pick litter at the same time. HE now have a robotic arm to do the cutting, and they have adopted a rolling roadblock technique, which moves too fast for effective litter picking. High level talks are taking place to resolve this, and the following has so far been agreed:

Lay-bys

- Schedule agreed for fortnightly litter picking of Lay-bys.
- Localities have identified a number of fly-tips behind the lay-bys. We will be investigating to see if there is any evidence to enable prosecution and then arranging collection.
- Discussion to take place with Devon County Council regarding their policy of providing no litter bins in lay-bys.

Areas that require some form of highways closure

- Agreed that deep clean of the whole 16 km stretch is required every 6 months.
- There is an outstanding issue to be resolved with the responsibility for litter clearance of the central reservation.