

## **Diptford Parish Council Minutes App. 2 SHDC update July/August**

### **Recycling Service Update**

Whilst FCC have been able to complete collections of grey bins and recycling in our area, some brown bin collections have had to be missed because of ongoing staff problems. These are due to:-

- The well-publicised national LGV/HGV driver shortage – There are many reasons for this, all completely out of our (and FCC's) control. An example being that as a result of the pandemic the DVLA are reporting a backlog of 30,000 tests.
- The 'Pingdemic' and actual COVID cases has impacted FCC's resources but as of yesterday there is only one driver that is currently self-isolating.

This has led to FCC struggling to cover not only sick and holiday leave but also recruit to vacant driver posts as the job market for drivers is extremely competitive. FCC would normally operate their service by covering sick and holiday with agency staff, however what few agency staff are available are, in the first instance, covering vacant posts.

Also FCC are in some cases collecting recycling materials in compactor trucks, which means the contents are mixed up, These lorries go to Plymouth Councils recycling centre at Chelson Meadow, where the contents are automatically sorted into the correct recycling streams.

### **The rollout of the new recycling service in most of our South Brent Ward has been put back towards the end of the year.**

Following two meetings with Members FCC were put under pressure to immediately improve collections and clear the backlog. As a result of the measures implemented missed collections have reduced significantly and more importantly, FCC have been getting back the following day to a significant number of these. We will continue to monitor FCC's delivery daily.

Residents still on the previous bag scheme will have received a letter explaining the situation, and also asking them not to put food waste into the brown bin but into the grey bin instead, as an interim measure until the new system starts here. This is because the contract to compost mixed food/garden waste has ended and the two items need to be handled separately now. Garden waste will be composted locally and food waste sent to the Anaerobic Digestion plant at Langage when the new system is running properly.

In our South Brent Ward the majority of properties are still on the bag recycling system, apart from most of Diptford parish which has the new system. Additionally some rounds in other parishes have been put on the new scheme and are serviced by smaller vehicles designed to access narrow roads and entrances. The implementation of these narrow access rounds has been extremely haphazard and despite receiving boxes many residents have had collections missed for a couple of weeks. Guy and Peter are working hard to make sure this situation is improved.

Finally, with the arrival of the summer holidays, we have weekly meetings with FCC to ensure there is a robust plan in place for the street cleansing service to meet the expected influx of visitors to the South Hams..

<https://southhams.fccenvironment.co.uk/mycollections>

<https://southhams.fccenvironment.co.uk/missedcollection>.

## COVID-19 Environmental Health Update

Cases across Devon have been increasing since July. Currently Exeter has one of the highest rates of Covid in the country, with particular concern around children and young adults. Cases in South Hams have risen but not to the same extent.



We are working with Public Health Devon to see any hotspots within the District. Currently Kingsbridge has been identified with high case rates. However, although high for the South Hams, it is still relatively low in comparison with other areas of the country.

We have worked closely with Public Health Devon to provide support to businesses, educate the community and encourage lateral flow testing in a bid to reduce the spread within the community. Many businesses have closed for a period of time due to either a positive COVID case and wanting to do the right thing or because too many members of staff are self-isolating.

The nightclub in Kingsbridge has recently announced that it will not open this summer due to rising COVID cases.

Following the relaxation in the COVID restrictions.

- Businesses will still need to carry out a Risk Assessment of the workplace and put control measures in place to protect the health and wellbeing of their staff.
- We understand that many businesses will keep existing control measures in place at this time.
- We are seeing more requests for Events and we are speaking with the event organisers to highlight the latest Government working safely guidance, which has just been published for events.
- Government guidance on working safely has been produced for workplaces and more will be out in the coming days, which we can signpost businesses towards.
- Public Health Devon are currently producing guidance for supporting business on outbreak management, which we will promote across the District when published.
- Our COVID Compliance Officers continue to work with businesses to provide support and advice.

## Business Grants Update

The Council has administered 11 different Government business grants schemes throughout the last year, on behalf of the Government.

A total of £82 million has been paid out to businesses in the South Hams.



All of the business grants schemes are now closed for applications, with the exception of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme.

The Council has fully spent its ARG allocation of £2,512,941 and has just been awarded a further £891,622 in ARG funding for South Hams.

The Government deadline for the Restart Grants applications was 30 June 2021 and final payments need to be made by the Council by 31 July 2021.

To date, the Council has paid out £12million on Restart Grants.



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### Relaxation of Covid regulations

SHDC have been able to resume committee meetings at Follaton, albeit with some restrictions still in place. We are hopeful that full council meetings will be able to take place there from September. Sensible precautions are still being taken in public places to protect members, staff and visitors. Staff are continuing to work from home in many instances.

### Test and Trace Isolation payments



. Under the current policy the weekly income of anyone claiming was capped at £372. We have removed this entirely although the applicant must still demonstrate they are suffering hardship.

We have made this amendment immediately. This is due to the rising cases in our area and an increase in applications and a change in focus from supporting people on low incomes only, to be more focused on public health. (helping people to self-isolate so they can do no harm). All the information and the claim form are on our website, just pop Test and Trace into the search bar and it's all there – or alternatively follow this link <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/test-and-trace-payments>

### Biodiversity Consultation



The Biodiversity consultation for Council owned green spaces was launched following the recent Executive meeting.

Pleasingly it has already received over 790 responses. It will be fascinating to see the results in a few weeks' time.

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### Localities Update



Summer has finally arrived and the team are out patrolling 'hot' spots and monitoring the street cleansing provision to ensure that our towns, beaches and open spaces are looking at their best during the school holidays.

The team will be out monitoring litter bins, recycling banks, toilets and streets to ensure that they are being emptied and cleaned to the required standard.

We have two Officers working in each of the five geographic patches during the week and two teams covering the district at weekends.

### Now's the time to help us create a plan that makes a difference



Housing, climate change, community wellbeing, Council services, the built and natural environment, and the local economy are our key areas for action in our draft 20-year vision for South Hams. Are these priority areas important to you? Is anything missing?

We need your help to put together a plan that will make a real difference to the lives of all of us who live and work in the South Hams. Please complete our full survey to have your say on our draft plan so you and your community are truly represented. The draft strategy and survey are available on the SHDC website.

### Tour of Britain to visit South Brent Ward

The Tour of Britain cycle race will pay a fleeting visit to the South Brent ward on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September. After the start from Sherford the route takes the riders past Ermington and Ugborough to Avonwick, where they will head for Totnes, passing through the edge of the South Brent Ward at Wonton. It will be interesting to see if DCC resurface the road to Totnes before then...