

# Diptford Parish Council Minutes

## App 2

### SHDC February 2022

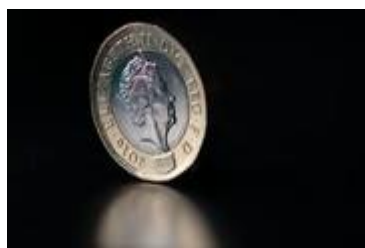
#### Levelling Up and County Deal

The long-awaited Levelling Up White Paper has finally been published. It sets 12 ambitious goals for Levelling up by 2030, covering areas such as economic growth, digital connectivity, transport and education. The pan-Devon area (including Plymouth and Torbay) has been identified as a pilot area and invited to develop a 'county devolution deal'. This is an opportunity to make the case to Government for the things our residents and communities need e.g. affordable housing. This is not about structural change (local government reorganisation) or a directly elected mayor.



We would be able to build on the successful collaboration of DCC and Devon Districts throughout the pandemic and now during the recovery phase (Team Devon). The White Paper also includes the following: Councils will be given the power to require landlords of empty shops to fill them if they have been left vacant for too long. All homes in the Private Rented Sector will have to meet a minimum standard - the Decent Homes Standard.

#### £150 payment towards energy bills



The Chancellor announced that households in council tax bands A to D will receive a one-off payment of £150 towards the rising cost of energy bills, excluding second homes and empty properties who are not eligible for the payment. The Government has said that they expect residents who pay by Direct Debit to receive this money in April, with Local Authorities using bank account details

to credit their account with a one-off payment of £150. For households in Bands A to D who do not pay by Direct Debit, a process will need to be put in place for the payment to be made. On top of this £150, discretionary funding of £144m will also be provided to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes that do not pay Council Tax, or that pay Council Tax for properties in Band E to H.

Separately, the Energy Bills rebate will provide around 28 million households with an upfront discount on their bills worth £200. Energy suppliers will apply the discount to domestic electricity customers' energy bills from October, with the Government meeting the costs. The discount will then be automatically recovered from people's bills in equal £40 instalments over the next five years.

## Council tax

Proposals for the 2022/23 Council Tax will be voted for at the Full Council Budget meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February. The proposals include a recommendation to increase Council Tax by £5 a year for Band D properties – equivalent to 10p a week.

The Government has factored in this increase – the maximum allowed without a referendum – into funding presumptions for the coming year.. A LibDem recommendation that £322,000 extra be allocated to the Climate Change Action Plan will also be debated and is likely to receive approval.

## Refuse/recycling

An all-party working group has been set up to consider the way forward, looking at a number of alternatives. Performance by the contractors is slowly improving but we can't yet say when the switch to recycling boxes will resume. The budget proposals going to the Executive next week include a £200,000 commitment to invest in community composting.

The temporary suspension of the garden waste (Brown bin) service is due to end on 31 March. At a series of meetings between SHDC Executive and the contractor FCC it has been very firmly expressed that our expectation is that the garden waste service should resume by April at the latest. FCC have confirmed that they are committed to ensuring that they meet their contractual obligations.

We will update residents as soon as further information is available.

## Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant

A one-off grant payment for hospitality and leisure businesses including restaurants and pubs, is worth up to £6,000 and is designed to help those who have struggled in what should have been the most profitable time of the year. We are administering the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant; the Council has now directly contacted local businesses by email, which, based on previous grant applications, might be eligible for this financial help.



The Council is urging local hospitality and leisure businesses that meet the criteria to check their email and junk mail folders and follow the instructions to claim the government grant. Contact the council via their website - <https://southhams.gov.uk/businesscovid19> - if you think your business is eligible.

The deadline for grant applications from businesses has been extended from 28 February to 18 March. All business grant payments have to be made by 31 March.

## Community Funding News

Devon Funding News is a great place to go to see what new grant funding schemes are available to our communities. It can be found online at [devon.gov.uk/community-funding](https://devon.gov.uk/community-funding)



The website is updated regularly and some of the new schemes added in January include:

- Up to £5,000 for the repair or improvement of community buildings [Screwfix Foundation](#)
- Up to £10,000 for community groups and artists planning activities focusing on art, creativity and culture in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee Just a couple of the schemes that may be of interest to our communities.

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## Funding for wellbeing projects

Voluntary groups in the South Hams are invited to apply for their share of a £50,000 funding pot to support wellbeing projects across the District. South Hams District Council has launched a new grant for local voluntary and community groups. Worth up to £2,500 per group, the money can be used for any project or scheme that makes a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of local people. Community groups should apply for a grant at [www.southhams.gov.uk/covid-community-fund](https://www.southhams.gov.uk/covid-community-fund) by **7 March 2022**. The £50,000 funding has been sourced via Devon County Council. It is part of the District Council's stated commitment to take positive, practical action to improve health and wellbeing.

Applications are welcomed from all voluntary community groups in the South Hams, from local youth groups and befriending services to community transport organisations and sports clubs. Grants worth up to £2,500 will be made to those groups who can demonstrate that the money can be used to improve health and wellbeing. This could include, but is not limited to, projects to make it easier for more people of all ages and abilities to:

Develop new friendships and reduce loneliness; Learn new, healthy cooking skills; Gain confidence or a sense of belonging; Explore our natural environment and countryside; Play a new sport or physical activity; Enjoy gardening; Get creative with art and crafts

## Role of AONBs could be expanded



Plans to safeguard England's protected landscapes for future generations and to boost nature recovery have been set out by Environment Secretary George Eustice.

Proposals to strengthen England's protected landscapes were announced on Saturday 15th January 2022 when the Government published their response to the **Landscapes Review** of National Parks and AONBs. Strengthened AONBs are central to the response that seeks to strengthen purposes, powers and resources for AONBs.

The proposals, which are subject to consultation, are set out in the Government's response to Julian Glover's independent Landscapes Review (known as the 'Glover Review') which looked at whether the protections for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are still fit for purpose.

The Government's response sets out ambitious changes to increase access to nature and ensure protected landscapes can deliver more for climate, nature, people and place for the next 70 years and beyond, as we build back greener from the pandemic and level up all parts of the country.

The 12-week consultation also asks for views on proposals to drive nature recovery within our landscapes and support for the communities that live and work within them, such as the design and delivery of new agri-environment schemes and an ambitious management plan for each area.

AONBs have been awarded a 15% increase in their funding. Sadly this does not apply to National Parks.

## Town and Parish Council Guide to Net-Zero



Some Parish and Town Councils have reached out to us over the past year looking for advice on tackling the Climate Emergency. Over the past few months we have been working on pulling together some resources and tips on what Town and Parish Councils can do. The guide isn't intended to be prescriptive but rather offer to some help or inspiration to Town and Parish Councils looking tackle to the Climate Emergency. The guide is web based and intended for all audiences, whether they have yet to declare a Climate Emergency or simply looking for action ideas or tools and resources to help them along the way. The guide is published on our Climate Change website.

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