

Parish report from your District Councillors

April 12th 2022

Ukraine

HOMES FOR REFUGEES SHDC is playing a key role in delivering the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, working closely with other authorities across Devon.

Within South Hams, we are pleased to say that we have managed to contact all local sponsors in order to arrange to carry out their accommodation checks. We have last week seen guests starting to arrive and recently we visited the first guests to arrive through the scheme. A mother and daughter are in the District, having fled from Kyiv on the morning that the house next door to them was shelled by Russian munitions - that is an experience that for us is simply too impossible to comprehend. We provided them with some cash funding to buy essential supplies and offered the hosts ongoing support and contacts. They asked that we relay our thanks to the District Council for the prompt action and support it is taking to welcome them.



We have received a further set of data from the Immigration Service, indicating that a further 36 guests are due to arrive in the District, bringing the total to date to 84 guests staying with 40 sponsors. The team have already allocated visits and in the coming week we will begin to carry out assessments of the sponsoring properties.

Anyone wanting to become a sponsor must be able to offer a minimum of six months' accommodation. This can be anything from a spare room to an empty home. They will be eligible for a £350 payment per month, per address. This will not impact benefits or single person Council Tax discounts. Refugees old enough to work are able to claim Universal Credit and those of pension age can receive Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. Anyone offering support that is not accommodation or finance can email the council at supportforukraine@swdevon.gov.uk

Additionally, the Government has published a guide for Ukrainian guests, which includes advice on a whole range of topics including how to access benefits, finding work, etc. This will be available in Ukrainian. The guide can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk>

A recently launched website - www.devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine - is the single point for information in Devon.

GRANT At their recent meeting SHDC agreed to grant £10,000 to the DEC Ukraine Appeal, and to condemn the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine.

STEP ON ...



This new scheme will help local people get a foot on the housing ladder. Anyone renting a social housing property can apply for a £5,000 Step On grant to help them with their deposit to buy a shared ownership home. It is designed to encourage families to move on, freeing up socially rented homes.

www.southhams.gov.uk/step-on

WASTE & RECYCLING



Brown bin collections resumed at the end of March and in general collections are going more smoothly. However, last week FCC have been experiencing some operational challenges which have been exacerbated by staff absence. This has meant that a number of rounds each day have not been deployed.

Unfortunately, this also means that FCC are unable to carry out any recovery of the garden waste this week, as recovery of black bins and recycling is being prioritised.

If a resident's bin is not collected on their scheduled day, we are advising residents to keep their brown bin out until 5pm the following day and if it isn't collected, then to take their bin in and present on their next collection day.

Officers continue to work closely with FCC to ensure as many collections are made as possible, but in order to ensure we can hold FCC to account contractually please encourage all residents to report their missed collection online.



We do not yet know when those areas which have not switched to the box recycling system will do so.

Additional Funding for the Council



We have been successful in a funding bid to DCC / Public Health on behalf of all Devon Districts for funding to support further outbreak management. District Councils will be continuing promotion of infection, prevention and control measures within workplace settings to limit outbreaks of infection and knock on effects of impacts on local

communities. The Council will receive £55,000 and the funding is required to support public health activities directly related to the COVID-19 response, such as testing, non-financial support for self-isolation, support to particular groups (CEV (clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals, rough sleepers), communications and engagement, and compliance and enforcement.

FREEPORT



SHDC has agreed to invest up to £5m in the establishment of the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport. In addition to the hub in the South Yard of Devonport Dockyard this will have qualifying sites at Sherford and Langage in the South Hams. This is expected to create up to 3,500 jobs, primarily in the marine, defence and energy industries, including the development of a green hydrogen plant at Langage. Total investment is expected to be £65m from Central and Local Government (Plymouth, Devon and South Hams) and £250m from the private sector. South Hams will borrow money from the Public Works Loan Board to fund its investment and will recoup this from the additional business rates payable, as well as making an

ongoing income from this source.

WPD Community Matters Fund



Western Power Distribution (WPD) is pledging to support its most vulnerable customers with grants from its Community Matters Fund. To provide much needed support for the local organisations tackling these vital issues, WPD is calling on charities, councils and community groups in the South West, the Midlands and South Wales to apply for grants of up to £10,000.

This is the latest round of grants from WPD's annual £1 million Community Matters Fund, which has already seen the energy distributor support more than 100 grassroots organisations with crucial fuel poverty grants. The application window for funding is open until Sunday 24 April.

To help guide applications, examples of the types of project the fund will consider supporting are:

- Digital skills and inclusion projects
- Social inclusion and connectedness projects
- Mental health interventions
- Employability skills
- Projects increasing community access to outside space
- Inter-generational support projects
- Befriending services
- Innovative solutions to combating loneliness.

To find out more, visit: <https://www.westernpower.co.uk/community-matters-fund>

101 call handling and reporting to the police



Following concerns being raised by Councillors over 101 police call handling and reporting to the police, the local commander for that department has issued the following message for Members: *We encourage the public and our partners to report crime, intelligence, ASB and incident of concern and we understand the frustrations individuals experience, when they feel let down by the service.*

As a force we acknowledge performance is a long way from that we desire and offer our apologies.

Below is a list of activity being progressed looking to improve how we response to calls for service;

- *£2M investment in more staff during 2022/23 - which given recruitment and training will be implemented by Christmas, not before*
- *Investment in a new switchboard*
- *Investment in a new telephony software platform*
- *Investment in a new website*
- *Seeking more investment in 23/24 and 24/25 for additional staff, to bring our performance up to the level we desire*