

Parish report from your District Councillors

May 2022

Council Chairman for 2022/23

Congratulations to Cllr Austen, (Ivybridge West) our new chairman, and to Cllr Taylor, (Charterlands) our new vice-chairman for the year ahead following yesterday's Annual Council. A resident of Ivybridge for over 25 years, Cllr Austen previously worked in business before lecturing in accountancy. Cllr Austen is married with two daughters and in his spare time, he enjoys walking on Dartmoor. This is the second time Cllr Austen has been a councillor for South Hams District Council. He was first elected for a four-year period from 1999 to 2003 and was again re-elected to the Council in May 2019.



Cllr Lance Austen is congratulated by the outgoing Chairman Cllr Richard Foss

Waste Update-SHDC Members grill FCC managers

A Special Full Council Meeting was called by Members on Wednesday 8th June to once again question FCC senior management on the continuing poor performance of the garden waste service. Members spent over two hours relaying their frustrations, and those of their residents on the erratic and haphazard reintroduction of the brown bin collections, despite repeated assurances in March from FCC that all was in place for the service to restart.

All Members of the Council were unanimous in their condemnation of FCCs poor service to our communities, and FCC Director of UK Operations Steve Longdon was left in no doubt that a major improvement in the service was long overdue.

FCC continue to struggle to recruit enough workers to fully staff the service, leading to the situation that some garden waste rounds cannot go out on their allotted collection day.



The black bin waste and the recycling collections are fully resourced and are operating as we would wish.

FCC are unable to carry out any recovery of the garden waste 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.

Council Tax Energy Rebate



Just over 9,000 households who live in Council Tax bands A to D and who paid by Direct Debit on 1 April have now been paid their £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate by South Hams District Council. Despite guidance issued to councils stating that payments should be made by the deadline of 30 September, South Hams District Council knew that their residents needed this extra help as soon as possible.

Staff worked rapidly to set up the systems to those already registered by direct debit, so they could be paid as early as possible. Whereas some councils nationwide have told their residents that they won't receive payment until as late as the September deadline. To date, the Council has issued just over 9,000 payments, which was paid to residents' bank accounts last week.

Those with different direct debit payment dates throughout April will receive similar payments soon. An application form is live on the Council's website, for those who do not pay by Direct Debit, and these will be processed from May.

Solar Panels on South Hams Leisure Centres

In a meeting on 7 April, the Council's Executive Committee heard about the steady progress being made by the organisation since the approval of its Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy in December 2020. The goals set in this strategy include reducing the Council's own carbon footprint to net-zero by 2030 and increasing biodiversity on its own land by 10% in 2025.

To back up the organisation-wide efforts to lower carbon emissions, the Executive Committee approved plans to loan Fusion Leisure £500,000 for the installation of solar panels at all four District Council leisure centres. A study on greenhouse gas emissions caused by Council activity was commissioned last year. It showed that the biggest proportion of the organisation's emissions relate to its activities from leased assets, franchising and outsourcing. That includes the four leisure centres.

The installation of the panels will reduce the carbon emissions of the centres by 131 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), equivalent to the annual energy emissions of 38 homes. Predictably, the emissions study also found that the reduction in staff travel caused by the pandemic led to a big saving in CO₂ released into the atmosphere; a saving of 234 tCO₂e was made, the equivalent of powering 66 homes for a year.

Climate Infrastructure Fund launches



We have launched a new fund to support and boost sustainable infrastructure in the area - and we're inviting applications from the community.

The new Climate Infrastructure Fund has been created to invest in the development of infrastructure related projects to help the South Hams reduce its carbon emissions. Organisations applying can ask for between £1,000 and £25,000 to support their projects.

Feel free to share information on the project to any groups or organisations that you think might be interested - the application process closes on 9 June. To find out more [visit our climate change website](https://www.climatechange.southhams.gov.uk/climate-infrastructure-fund).

Ukrainian Refugees



It's been a busy time leading the district support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. We are doing all we can to ensure that we rapidly undertake the accommodation checks and are now also undertaking more visits to Ukrainians that have arrived, in order to get some essential financial support to them, and this has been done this week. The total number of host properties successfully matched with Ukrainian guests so far is 61 in South Hams (and the team are also supporting another 34 in West Devon).

There is of course a time lag in the data being received by the Council from Government. We anticipate the actual number to be higher than this. To date we have undertaken 79% of the accommodation checks we've been notified of; so far we have been informed of 60 Ukrainian guests actually arriving in the South Hams through the scheme.

For each guest arriving through the scheme, the government will provide funding to Councils of £10,500. We are pushing Devon County Council to understand how much of it they will 'top-slice' and therefore how much we have available to fund wrap-around support.

We do however now need to focus on what the longer term wrap-around support looks like. With that in mind, in the past week we have:-

- Arranged a drop in briefing session for Town and Parish Councils to ask any questions on the scheme or to share any steps they are taking to support Ukrainians on a locality basis.
- Worked with Team Devon to develop a series of webinars for Hosts and Sponsors over the coming month. Sophie Cobbledick from our Housing Team continues to play a lead role on the Team Devon work strand.
- Finalised plans with the CVS to deliver signposting, linking up translators to hosts / community groups / other organisations supporting our Ukrainian guests,

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.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points



The first electric charging points will be commissioned the week commencing 13 June at Mayors Avenue car park, Dartmouth as part of the Deletti project. This will provide two electric charging bays for the public to use.

Powered by the renewable energy through a green tariff, the charge points are compatible with all makes of EVs and will fully charge a 50 kWh battery in two to four hours, providing a range of up to 200 miles depending on vehicle specification.

The rate of charge is dictated by the vehicle's inverter however these chargers can deliver enough electricity for up to 88 miles of travel in one hour. This means the points are ideal for both shorter stops, such as shopping trips, and regular charges by residents.

As these points are for public use, they are also available for visitors of Devon wishing to charge their electric vehicle.

The cost to fully charge a 50 kWh battery, providing a range of up to 200 miles, would be in the region of £17.50.

For ease of use, drivers will be able to pay via Scottish Power's app, which is free to download, or through a scannable QR code which will be displayed on the charge point.

Scottish Power do not charge a subscription fee or a minimum vend. Users may need to purchase a parking ticket as normal, please check at each site.

These charging points are part of the larger DELETTI programme, a £1.3 million project which is being largely funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Scottish Power intend to carry out civil works to install the charging point at Creek car park, Salcombe the week commencing the 14 June followed by Western Power Distribution connection works the week commencing 21 June followed by commissioning for use the week commencing 11 July. These dates may be subject to change.

Press releases and social media coverage regarding the EV charging points will be carried out.

Emma Widdicombe

New Household Support Fund



Details are starting to emerge of the government's intentions on this. Last year the funding, which gets allocated to upper tier authorities, had very little guidance. This year the government have stated that 33% of the funding should be spent on supporting children, 33% on pensioners, with the remainder allocated based on local need.

While we are still awaiting final funding allocations, initial Team Devon discussions are proposing that DCC use the children's element as they did last year, to provide additional free school meals and the suggestion is that a one-off payment is made to those of pensionable age in receipt of Council tax support i.e. already in receipt of a benefit. Across Devon that equates to some 19,000 individuals and would result in a payment of around £85.

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.

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.
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Let's Talk Teenagers

After the success of the first Let's Talk Teenagers sessions piloted earlier this year, a second series of the online sessions will be held in June.

These sessions are an opportunity for parents and carers of teenagers to hear about the challenges young people are facing today whilst being offered tips, techniques and resources to explore for more help and support.

Funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Safer Devon Partnership, South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership and Teignbridge Council for Voluntary Service, these evening, 90 minute sessions will be running on consecutive Wednesdays at 7.00pm on 15, 22 and 29 June. Designed to empower parents and carers to support their teenagers through the challenges they are faced with daily, topics covered include:

- substance misuse
- exploitation
- healthy relationships
- safety online
- social risks

Please feel free to promote the sessions by sharing information with your communities and partners. [Follow this link](#) to book on the course and find out more.

