

## Parish report from your District Councillors

OCTOBER 2022

### WASTE - brown bin service improves & SHDC to charge for brown bin collections



The brown bin garden waste collection service has made a marked improvement since South Hams Council took the service back in house on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. On several days recently all the rounds have been running, compared with an average of only 50% in recent months under FCC. SHDC is now once again responsible for all waste collection services, together with street and public toilet

cleaning. The move is likely to result in the council incurring additional costs of several million pounds in the next few years as a consequence of the mutual termination of the contract with FCC. SHDC has agreed that residents will have to pay £49 a year for brown bin collections from next March. The current service will finish at the end of October and collections will be suspended over the winter. The vote was 22 in favour, seven against. Residents who don't take up the subscription service will be able to retain their bins. Those who don't yet have recycling boxes should be on the system by next June.

As well as easing financial pressures, ceasing the service from 31 October will also ease pressure on the core waste and recycling collections, helping to keep those as stable as possible in the early months of the transition. The Council will ensure that all households will get their brown bins emptied on or around their last scheduled collection day before the service is ceased. For many years the Council had been able to provide the garden waste service without charging a subscription fee but doing so from spring 2023 will bring them in line with most other districts in Devon, who already charge for garden waste collections. Plymouth City Council took the decision to end their garden waste collections early this year to ease their own budget pressures.

#### **Cllr Keith Baldry, South Hams Executive Member for the Environment, said:**

"We know that nobody will want to pay a subscription fee for the service, but the inescapable truth is that rising costs have forced our hand. Ultimately, we must protect our core statutory services. Ceasing the collections over the winter will help us do that as we transition to an in-house waste collection service. Compared to what private companies charge for collections, that fee represents good value for money. The subscription fees will purely cover the cost of the service and there will be no profit made. We will provide residents with information in due course on how they can sign up and subscribe for the service."

Residents can also expect to receive a letter explaining the changes in the coming days.

During the debate, residents were encouraged to compost their garden waste. People can find out more on home composting possibilities here: <https://www.recycledevon.org/in-the-garden/how-to-compost>

For those who decide to not sign up for the service, they can take their garden waste to all three recycling centres in the South Hams (and the community composting scheme in South Brent. Full details, including opening hours, are available online at: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/centre/>

Keep up to date on the latest at: <https://southhams.gov.uk/recyclingwaste>

## **FREEPORT**

Full council has a special meeting on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> to decide whether to explore the possibility of turning our Freeport areas (Sherford and Langage in the South Hams, part of the Dockyard area in Plymouth) into one of the Government's new Investment Zones. These bring greater tax benefits for employers, but with fewer planning and environmental controls as part of the Government's Growth policy.

## **COST OF LIVING CRISIS**



The Council has resolved: to write to the Prime Minister to make sure she realises the serious impact the Cost of Living crisis is having on residents of not only the South Hams but the United Kingdom; work closely with HM Government to deliver South Hams share of the £500m

Household Support Fund on a timely basis and to continue to develop and support Better Lives for All to identify and help those most in need or at greatest risk of hardship to ensure they are fully aware of the help and assistance that is available and to ensure they receive that assistance.

## **COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF)**

A total of £1.68million was made available by Government to SHDC to support businesses that have been affected by COVID-19, but have been ineligible for other business rates support.

Councils were responsible for developing and implementing a scheme based on local need, however we were unable to award relief to ratepayers who were entitled to Extended Retail Discount (covering Retail, Hospitality and Leisure), the Nursery Discount or the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme. Relief can also not be given to unoccupied properties.

The Council has awarded rate relief totalling £1.61million to 509 business properties following a meeting of the Council's rate relief panel on 23 September. The amount of relief awarded is equivalent to 26% of the 2021/22 business rates liability, based on rateable value. We have primarily been able to support businesses in the manufacturing, wholesale and supply chain sectors. Ratepayers benefiting from relief will shortly receive a new bill with a covering letter explaining the terms of the award of the relief. As the relief

must be applied to the 2021/22 business rates liability, most businesses will find that their account for 2021/2022 will go into credit. This will be transferred to the 2022/23 financial year thus reducing the amount of business rates payable. Should a ratepayer request that any credit be refunded, a refund will be raised.