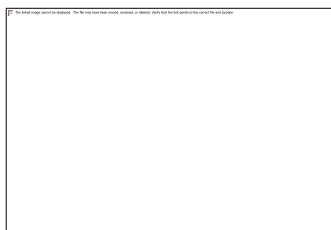


# Parish Annual report from your District Councillors 2023

## Waste collection



One of the biggest issues we had to face in the year was the appalling service provided by our waste service contractors FCC. Many attempts to improve their performance failed and in the Summer South Hams Council voted to take the waste collection, street and toilet cleaning services back in house. The Council reached a mutual agreement with FCC to terminate the contract from the start of October, since when there has been a significant improvement. The Council also took the decision to suspend the brown bin garden waste collection scheme over the winter and to reinstate it from March, with the introduction of a charge of £49 per year. Currently more than over 11,000 residents have signed up. Due to FCCs poor performance under the contract SHDC were able to withhold substantial sums from them, these funds will help us as the decision to take the service back under SHDC management plus rising energy costs is likely to add significantly to the council's costs for this service, possibly up to £3m over the next few years. At a Special Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> April SHDC Members debated and unanimously approved a report detailing how the Waste and Recycling service will be updated to ensure all SHDC residents receive the full **Devon Aligned Service** (DAS) including glass and food waste collection from the doorstep.

We have been waiting for the Governments delayed Environment Bill to be published which should detail improvements to waste collection particularly around food waste, however for reasons of expediency the Council has decided to put underway changes now ahead of this.

Currently approximately 22,500 households receive the full DAS, 15,000 are on a weekly co-mingled collection which allows all materials to be recycled at Chelson Meadow, Plymouth, except food waste, and a further 8,000 (**including most of the South Brent Ward**) are still on the old blue and clear sacks. These households have to recycle glass using bottle banks (if they have them) and have to put food waste in the black bin for incineration.

Plans have been drawn up to ensure that the waste and recycling service both remains **within** the revenue budget 23/24 and provides the full DAS to **all South Hams residents by October 2023**. This will involve two main strands:

(1) The purchase of additional vehicles (8x7.5 tonne narrow access and 2x12tonne kerbside sort trucks) £2.16million funded from earmarked Vehicle and Plant Reserves. Due to massive demand within the waste industry it has proved impossible to hire or lease these vehicles.

(2) The use and upgrade of SHDCs site at Torr Quarry, Kingsbridge as an additional offload site for the Kingsbridge/Salcombe/Dartmouth area to relieve pressure on Ivybridge and ensure faster turnaround of trucks, £0.5 million funded from internal borrowing. The Torr Quarry site will need upgrading to meet new Environment Agency rules around the bulk storage of waste and recyclates, mainly relating to access and additional new fire protection measures such as a massive water tank etc.

**Street Cleaning**, a key priority, has been remodelled to ensure that all key areas are covered by a large mechanical sweeper on a 6 weekly schedule while the small mechanical sweepers are used in the main towns and close areas. Frequent emptying and unreliability mean use of these small vehicles are being reviewed against newer technology.

## Aldi scheme for Ivybridge shelved



The South Hams Council Executive agreed to stop work permanently on the Aldi supermarket proposal in Ivybridge. Originally planned in 2018 to help regenerate Ivybridge town centre, the proposal at first received support from Ivybridge Town Council and a residents' survey. However, following the Covid pandemic and a return to local shopping in the town, support for the development waned, particularly

when it became apparent there would be a loss of car parking spaces during construction. The decision to stop came after the South Hams' Development Management Committee, having considered all the relevant planning matters, unanimously refused the planning application, citing possible harm to town centre businesses, tree loss and unsympathetic design. The council incurred costs of approximately £480,000 in developing the scheme.

## £1m to Support Community Net Zero Targets



South Hams District Council was granted funding of over £1m to help reduce carbon emissions in the District. The money will allow the Council to deliver targeted business and community support programmes. The award comes from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Council is using the

money to achieve the most sustainable outcomes possible to support its Climate Change and Biodiversity promise to become net-zero by 2050. By working closely with specialist organisations, businesses and community groups, the Council can improve sustainable travel infrastructure, begin to decarbonise our marine sector, and help our farming community to adopt innovative approaches to farming that are better for our climate and ecology. The programme will run until the end of March 2025.

## Solar Panels on South Hams Leisure Centres



The Council approved the investment of £500,000 in the installation of solar panels at all four leisure centres in the district - Ivybridge, Totnes, Kingsbridge and Dartmouth. A study on greenhouse gas emissions caused by Council activity was commissioned in 2021. 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 (tCOe), equivalent to the annual energy emissions of 38 homes. The investment was originally to have been carried out by a loan to the operators, Fusion, but the council has now decided to fund the work direct.

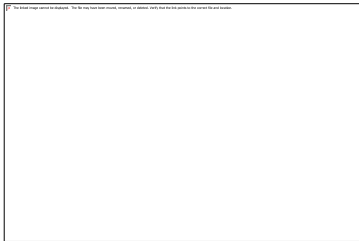
## Plymouth Freeport application approved



The Full Business Case for the Freeport was approved by the Government and the tax sites at Sherford, Langage and Oceans Gate (Plymouth) went live on July 4. This means that the opportunities for businesses to invest and create jobs can start in earnest, taking advantage of the benefits of the Freeport. Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and Devon County Council have worked with private sector

organisations and landowners to create Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Limited, a private company limited by guarantee without share capital.

## Ukrainian refugees



By Summer the total reported number of Ukrainian guests residing in South Hams under the Homes For Ukraine scheme was 120 over 51 properties (and the team were also supporting another 121 guests in West Devon). The Support for our Ukrainian Guests is continuing in the form of essential financial support and assisting with the building blocks of sustainable living in the UK. This has also evolved into working with guests and hosts where relationships are breaking down, and planning for any moves from accommodation as required.

## Local elections

Cllrs. Smerdon and Pannell are coming towards the end of our four-year term of office as elections for the District Council take place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May. We are both standing for re-election, and regardless of the outcome would like to thank our Parish Councils and their members for their welcome, co-operation and friendship over the past four years.