

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news



**Issue 236**

**17 September 2021**



This week's news from around the Council.

## Council News

- **New Leader and Cabinet**

At Full Council on Tuesday 14 September, Councillor Roger Lees was elected as Leader of the Council. Councillor Rita Heseltine is the new Deputy Leader with Cabinet as follows:

- Business Transformation – Councillor D Williams
- Welfare Services – Councillor R Reade
- Regulatory Services – Councillor R Heseltine
- Community Services – Councillor L Bates
- Planning and Business Enterprise – Councillor T Mason
- Partnership Services – Leader of the Council
- Assistant Cabinet Member Planning – Councillor V Wilson

Councillor Mike Lawrence takes the Chairman of Planning Committee role with Councillor Bob Cope as Vice-Chairman. Members also agreed several other changes to committee memberships, and these can be viewed [here](#).

- **Waste and Recycling service disruption**

As you will have no doubt seen in the news, there is currently a national shortage of HGV drivers resulting in disruption across various sectors, including Council waste services across the UK.

We have been feeling the impacts of this in South Staffordshire for several weeks. As staff numbers begin to dwindle below the minimum that we need to deliver a 'normal' service, unavoidable delays to a number of collection rounds across the district have occurred. To date, the vast majority of delayed rounds have been resolved within 48 hours of the normal collection date, although there are some pockets of the district that have unfortunately been subject to longer delays.

To maintain a service which is as close to normal as possible, our collection crews are working overtime every day, and a number of crews are also working Saturdays to catch up on collections not completed during the week.



# Council news round-up



Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 236

17 September 2021



Biffa, our waste collection service provider, have issued the following statement:

*“Biffa would like to apologise to the residents of South Staffordshire for the disruption to the waste and recycling collection services. The national driver shortage has led to extreme problems for Biffa in many areas and we are working hard to address the current 30% shortfall.*

*Unfortunately, the disruption will continue for a while yet and we kindly ask that if your bin is not collected on its scheduled collection day you leave it at the collection point for up to 72 hours / 3 working days to allow us to collect before reporting it as a missed collection.*

*We thank all residents for their patience and understanding at this difficult time.”*

Residents who have not had their bin emptied can report it to us after 72 hours by calling Customer Services on 01902 696000.

We apologise for any disruption caused.

[We encourage residents to sign up for our email updates](#)

- Unauthorised 4-bedroom house demolished



# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news



Issue 236

17 September 2021



An unauthorised 4-bedroom house on Green Belt land in Trysull has been demolished as the result of action by the Planning Enforcement Team. The building was constructed in 2019 without planning permission and a retrospective planning application was refused. The owner of the land appealed the decision which was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate in April this year. A Planning Enforcement Notice was served to force the removal of the unauthorised house resulting in the house being demolished. This sends out a firm message to landowners that the Council will take firm action against unauthorised development when necessary.

- **Community Lottery welcomes a new worthy cause – Staffordshire Search & Rescue Team**  
Staffordshire Search & Rescue are Staffordshire's only approved volunteer lowland search & rescue team with specialist training in locating and rescuing missing people in urban and rural lowland areas. The service is funded entirely through donations from the public and local businesses, so when the team are not on a call out or training, they are kept busy raising essential funds throughout the year to keep the service operational.

[Click here if you would like to support them through the Community Lottery.](#)

- **Resident Survey success**  
South Staffordshire's Residents Survey has achieved a grand total of 1,315 responses. In previous years, when using an external provider we would gain around 500 responses, so this is a great achievement. Whilst a summary report is now being prepared, we are pleased to announce a key highlight in line with previous years, that 92% of residents would recommend South Staffordshire as a place to live, with a locality breakdown below:



Locality 1 – 89%	Locality 2 – 94%	Locality 3 – 92%	Locality 4 – 95%	Locality 5 – 90%
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- **Drop in fly tipping figures**  
During April to August this year, we have recorded 528 fly tipping incidents across the district. We noted 868 for the same period during 2020, which is a 39% drop in incidents.

We are confident that our engagement with partners and local parishes, coupled with our enforcement actions are playing a huge role in this positive trend and hope to see it continue.

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news



**Issue 236**

**17 September 2021**



- **Baggeridge Weekly Walk**

We are delighted to have 11 people interested in becoming volunteer walk leaders to help lead a weekly walk at Baggeridge Country Park. Before walks commence, the volunteers need to go through their walk leader training which is planned to take place later this month. More information, including a start date for the walks will follow in due course. If you or anyone you know would be interested in becoming a walk leader, contact Louise Colman our fitness and wellbeing co-ordinator. **Tel:** 07939 631131 **Email:** [louisecolman07@gmail.com](mailto:louisecolman07@gmail.com)

## Regular News

- **Council Job Vacancies**

- Leisure Assistants, Wombourne Leisure Centre, closing 5pm on 29 September 2021. [Application Information](#)
- Customer Services Specialist Advisor (Fixed Term), closing 5pm on 28 September 2021. [Application Information](#)
- Homelessness Prevention Officer, closing midday on 30 September 2021. [Application Information](#)

- **Next week's Council Committee meetings**

- Planning Committee – Tuesday, 21 September 2021 – 6.30 pm

Members of the public can virtually attend meetings via Microsoft Teams - a link can be found in the News Item section at the bottom of the [Council's website](#).

## Partnership updates

- **Wombourne Parish Council to host 3rd #shoplocal event**

Wombourne Parish Council will be hosting their 3rd #shoplocal event this Saturday 18 September in the village centre from 11am to 3pm. Local residents and visitors are encouraged to #shoplocal whilst enjoying free entertainment themed around Fairy Tales as part of the initiative to recover and rejuvenate local High Streets. There will be fairy tale princesses, live music, a storyteller, as well as a free fairy tale trail around the village shops and a memento for

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news



**Issue 236**

**17 September 2021**



attending in fancy dress. The Parish Council will also be hosting their first free to enter craft fayre in the Council Chamber where local residents will be showcasing their homemade goods, this is also running from 11am to 3pm. For more information, follow the Parish Council on Facebook and Instagram - @Wombourne Parish Council.

- **Difficult Decisions - Help us to Prioritise and Align Clinical Policies**

In January 2020, the six NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) began the first phase of engagement about five areas of care: assisted conception, hearing aids for non-complex hearing loss, male and female sterilisation, breast augmentation and reconstruction, and removal of excess skin following significant weight loss.

The eight-week engagement work ended on 1 March 2020. [More information and the report of findings can be found online here.](#)

Since then, there have been changes to the way the NHS has been able to deliver services and see patients. We know this may have affected the way people feel about or changed their experience of the services.

[This most recent questionnaire is mainly to understand if anything new needs to be considered since the pandemic and can be accessed here.](#)

- **Free Awareness Session - Spotting the Risks in Vulnerable People**

Do you work with or support vulnerable people? Do you ever have concerns but are not really sure what they mean? Do you know how to support them? [Click here for more information.](#)

## Covid-19 Update

- **The Government's Winter Plan for Covid-19**

Between March and July this year, the Government's roadmap for England reopened the economy and lifted restrictions in four steps. This week the Prime Minister announced the COVID-19 Response during autumn and winter. The Government plans to achieve this by focusing on five key areas:

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news



Issue 236

17 September 2021



- Building our defences through pharmaceutical interventions: vaccines, antivirals and disease modifying therapeutics.
- Identifying and isolating positive cases to limit transmission: Test, Trace and Isolate.
- Supporting the NHS and social care: managing pressures and recovering services.
- Advising people on how to protect themselves and others: clear guidance and communications.
- Pursuing an international approach: helping to vaccinate the world and managing risks at the border.

Under Plan A of the autumn and winter plan, announced by Health Secretary Sajid Javid, ministers will:

- Encourage the unvaccinated to be jabbed.
- Offer the vaccine to 12- to 15-year-olds.
- Begin a booster vaccination programme for millions.
- Continuing testing, the tracing of cases and self-isolation for those who catch the virus.
- Businesses will also be encouraged to consider using the NHS Covid Pass to check the vaccination or test status of customers.

Under Plan B - which ministers say will only be enacted if further measures are needed to protect the NHS:

- The public would be urged to act more cautiously
- Mandatory vaccine passports could be used for mass events and other settings
- Face coverings could be legally mandated in some places
- Guidance on working from home may also be issued under this plan.

- **Encouraging Safer Behaviours and Actions**

It remains important for everyone, including those who are fully vaccinated, to follow behaviours and actions that reduce transmission and help to keep people safe. Following the recommended actions will also help limit the spread of seasonal illnesses, including flu:

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 236

17 September 2021



## Safer Behaviours and Actions



Get vaccinated



Let fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer



Wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed settings where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet



Get tested, and self isolate if required



Try to stay at home if you are feeling unwell



Wash your hands



Download and use the NHS COVID-19 app

- Invitation from The Cabinet Office & NHS Test & Trace - Keeping communities safe during winter

Monday 20 September 2021 - 3.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Community leaders have played a vital role during the pandemic. Before the colder months set in, we are holding a Keeping Communities Safe During Winter webinar to support community and faith leaders, voluntary and community groups with their ongoing engagement and communications. The Zoom webinar on Monday 20 September 2021 at 3.00 pm is an opportunity to:

- keep up to date with the latest information on COVID-19 from Government officials
- ask questions and discuss ideas for effective engagement
- inform the Government about challenges, barriers, and experiences in communities

[All community leaders are welcome to attend; please click here to register.](#)

There will be opportunity to ask questions. To submit a question in advance or if you have any questions about the webinar, contact Obaayaa Asantewaa or Pascoe Sawyers at

# Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news



**Issue 236**

**17 September 2021**



[community.resources@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:community.resources@dhsc.gov.uk)

## Helpful Resources

A range of on-going support resources are now accessible from South Staffordshire Councils Website which will be added to regularly:

- **Adults**

[Click here to find Support Resources for Adults](#)

*Including - Mental health, dementia, loneliness, domestic abuse, carer support, Parkinson's, drug misuse.*

- **Children and Young People**

[Click here to find Support Resources for Children & Young People](#)

*Including - Family Support, keeping children safe, keeping children safe online, keeping babies safe, Teen mental health.*