

Council news round-up

Your weekly guide to the latest news

Issue 160

20 March 2020



This week's news from around the Council.

- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) update**

The spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) continues in the UK and the Council is working closely with other partners to monitor and manage the situation. Click [here](#) to read a message from Councillor Brian Edwards MBE, Leader of South Staffordshire Council.

The Council Offices in Codsall will be closed to the public from today, and events and meetings have been postponed or cancelled. At this time, residents should use alternative ways of contacting the Council rather than visiting in person. 'My Account', the Council's online facility, gives residents online access to council services 24/7 from the comfort of their own home and you can register or access it at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/myaccount. Click [here](#) to find out more about getting in touch with the Council.

As of Friday 20 March 2020, 18 cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) have been confirmed in Staffordshire. People who have been in close contact with the residents are being contacted and there is no significant risk to anyone else in the county.

Key developments at the Council this week...

- Council meetings - as an interim measure to protect Members, all non-essential, non-decision making meetings and events have been postponed or cancelled. It is anticipated that legislation and guidance will be issued by Central Government this week, providing for virtual meetings for decision-making meetings, which is not currently permissible under local government legislation. The Council meeting scheduled to take place on Tuesday 31 March 2020 remains in the diary at the moment and we are hopeful that an alternative way of holding this meeting will be available.
- The Council's Leisure Centres in Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Penkridge and Wombourne will be closing from today and staff are likely to be redeployed to support other services.
- There is now a new section about coronavirus on the South Staffordshire Council website. We will be continuing to add information and the latest advice and guidance from Public

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Health England and the NHS so please keep popping back to check or follow us on social media. Click [here](#) to view.

- The Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled for Thursday 7 May 2020 have been postponed until next year.
- The Parish Summit, scheduled to take place at the Council Offices on Thursday 26 March 2020 is now postponed. The Chairman's charity cycle challenge on Wednesday 25 March 2020 is also postponed.
- The Council is no longer participating in the work experience programme this year.
- This week, the Chancellor unveiled a set of financial measures to support the UK economy through the coronavirus crisis. It includes £330 billion in loans to protect businesses facing losses as a result of the virus and extended business rates relief. Enquiries to the Council about business support and the Central Government response about business grants should be directed to Hayley Cooper (h.cooper@sstaffs.gov.uk).

Latest guidance from PHE and the NHS

NHS website - updated on a daily basis with the latest information and guidance.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

GOV.UK - for the latest information and advice from the Government.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

This week, the Government announced the introduction of a number of social distancing measures that we should all be taking to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Residents are urged to follow the latest advice, which advises people to limit social contact where possible including non-essential use of public transport, working from home where possible, avoiding large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public places such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars and clubs. Those who are over 70 (regardless of medical conditions), under 70 with an underlying health condition or those who are pregnant are asked to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

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What to do if you have symptoms?

If you have either a high temperature or a new, continuous cough, the advice is to stay at home for 14 days. Do not go directly to your GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation.

This action will help protect others in your community while you are infectious. While most people will have a mild illness, some older people or people with weakened immune systems or with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease may experience severe illness and we need to protect them.

If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after seven days, contact the NHS **111** online coronavirus service at <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>
Only call **111** if you cannot get help online.

Prevention

It's important keep undertaking prevention measures to help reduce the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus. Please continue to follow the advice from Public Health England and the NHS.

- Wash your hands more often and for at least 20 seconds. This is particularly important after taking public transport or when you get home or arrive at work.
 - Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
 - Put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- **Community safety - warning about scam calls**
Staffordshire Police has issued a warning about scam calls. The caller claims to be from VISA and says that someone is trying to purchase an iPad or other high value item from your card. They

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will ask you to press 1 if you are not making the purchase and, once connected, they will try to obtain your bank details. If you receive any of these calls, please report to Action Fraud (tel: **0300 123 2040**; www.actionfraud.police.uk).

- **Flood recovery support**

If your property or business was flooded as a result of the recent storms, then there may be funding available to support you. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **Changes to methods of payment**

From Wednesday 1 April 2020, the Council will no longer accept cash payments at the Council Offices in Codsall and will be moving solely to other more efficient methods of payment that are safe and secure. There are many alternative methods of payment that are easy to access from the comfort of your home. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **South Staffordshire Connect service available**

The South Staffordshire Connect dial-a-ride bus service is now available. This local, bookable bus service is once again helping many people who struggle to get out and about and it is aimed at residents who live away from regular bus routes or who find it difficult to use a standard bus. The new Connect service operates between 10am and 3pm to three zones. For more information, please click on the following for more information - [Zone 1](#), [Zone 2](#) and [Zone 3](#).



Everyone is encouraged to submit news items, please email: comms@sstaffs.gov.uk