

District Councillors' Report to UPC (Cllr Victor Abbott and Cllr Alison Dewynter)
13 March 2024

1. Highlights from SHDC Council Plan

The principal priority is to deliver core services and to that end:

- . the full recycling and waste collection service has been re-implemented as an in-house service;
- . the Planning Portal has been updated with work ongoing to underpin the Enforcement system;
- . Licensing continues month by month;
- . reputable governance is ensured by internal and external review by multiple councillors and external bodies.

New priorities are to address the two emergencies:

- . the housing crisis

Eleven houses have been bought to create temporary accommodation, and we are working with others to develop affordable housing schemes;

- . human-induced global warming by thinking globally and acting locally.

With the local food symposium complete, we are intending to put the SHDC internal food supply in order;

We are supporting environmental schemes across the District by providing funds to Sustainable South Hams (SusSH), and will become Members of the SusSH offshoot, the Erme & Yealm Rivers Association.

Following consultation and viewing by 1,200 residents, the plan will be available soon and run for four years.

2. Community Library Support Fund (Closes 31 Mar 24)

In response to mobile libraries being decommissioned at the end of February 2024, a fund has been set up to enable the provision of more community spaces for local people to expand their love of reading.

People with an existing book swap or library, or those who are planning to create one, can apply for a grant of between £100 and £300 which can be used for shelving, seating, books, lighting etc.

More information and a link to the fund are here:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/community-library-support-fund>

3. Consultation on designated bathing waters

The government have proposed 27 new bathing sites across the UK, including five locations in the South Hams. They are: Coastguards Beach on the Erme; River Dart at Dittisham; River Dart at Steamer Quay; River Dart at Stoke Gabriel; and River Dart at Warfleet Dartmouth. Designation as a bathing site means that water quality would be tested throughout the summer.

Residents are encouraged to have their say here:

[Bathing water consultation](#)

4. Small Grants for Village Halls

DEFRA has reopened its funded grant scheme for those managing rural community buildings. This time, the award threshold is lower to support smaller projects and make it accessible to more groups. Grants of between £2000 and £5000 and up to 20% of eligible project costs are on offer to new applicants who wish to undertake smaller projects such as disability access, toilet upgrades and new kitchens.

<https://acre.org.uk/press-release-small-grants-made-available-to-village-halls-in-england/>

5. Grants to Support Individuals and Families in Need

Grants of up to £2,000 are available to charities, housing associations, schools and social services providing support for individuals and families across the UK who are in financial need.

The Cosaraf Charitable Foundation's Hardship Grants will support individuals and families who have exhausted all other sources of funding and are struggling with everyday costs, such as basic living expenses, household items and utilities, work- or education-related expenses, or rent arrears.

Applications can be made at any time and are assessed every six weeks.

<https://www.cosaraf.org/what-we-do/hardship-grants/>

6. Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation on the control of alcohol in public places

A PSPO is designed to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour in an area which could have a harmful effect on the quality of life for those in the local community. It can ban or restrict certain things, or need specific things to be done, in this case the control of alcohol in public areas.

PSPOs last for three years before they need to be reviewed and the current orders run out in July. We now need to consult on the next set for the following three year period.

The review affects five PSPOs in the following towns: Totnes; Dartmouth; Ivybridge; Kingsbridge; Salcombe.

Residents are encouraged to contribute to the consultation. [visit the consultation to have your say](#), which runs until Tuesday 19 March.

7. £300 Energy Vouchers for South Hams Residents

South Hams residents could get help worth £300 towards the cost of energy bills by talking to Citizens Advice South Hams. Our independent specialist advisers can also

help with complex billing issues, resolving matters directly with energy providers; help deal with energy supplier issues, including billing and meter problems; help householders understand how to make their homes more energy efficient and look at fuel bills and household finances to help save money. All advice is free, independent and confidential. Contact Citizens Advice on 0808-278-7948.

8. Changes to the way you can vote in the UK

Voters can now apply online to vote by post or by proxy.

Voters' identities will be checked as part of the application process. Both online and paper applications will need ID verification (except for emergency proxy votes)

There is now a limit to the amount of people voters can be proxy for. They can act as a proxy for two people.

If they vote on behalf of UK voters who live overseas, they can act as a proxy for up to four people (but only two of those can live in the UK)

Find out more on the [Electoral Commission website](#)

9. Garden Waste Service

South Hams residents can sign up to or renew their garden waste collection for the coming year. The cost is going up this year but there is a lower fee for those who sign up before 31 March 2024. The fee of £52 (for those who sign up between 15 Feb and 31 March 2024) or £55 (for those who sign up after 31 March 2024), will cover collection of one brown wheelie bin. There is a maximum of two subscriptions per household. Collections are fortnightly except 20 Dec to 20 Jan when the service is suspended.

Sign up here www.southhams.gov.uk/gardenwaste

Or call 01803 861234.

10. Learn Devon Courses

[Learn Devon](#) have a range of free courses to choose from to help residents build on their digital skills. The courses range from accessing digital banking, connecting with loved ones on-line to accessing job and training opportunities.

Free courses can be [found here](#).