# July notes for Parish Councils.

#### **Team Devon**

You may be aware that the government has recently made a devolution offer to county areas without any of the previous strings attached by way of mayors or local government reform to unitary status.

Given the excellent way that Team Devon – that is the districts working together with the county council - along with town and parish councils – has worked through the pandemic, following a Team Devon meeting to discuss the matter on Tuesday, it was decided that we would explore our joint working further with a view to putting in a bid as a pilot scheme for the county working with districts. We have tasked senior officers with designing a draft governance structure and the following press release has been prepared: Team Devon set to bid for more devolved powers for the county

Council leaders across Devon say they want to take advantage of a Government offer to devolve more powers from London.

They are planning to build on the close working relationship they developed in Team Devon as they responded to the challenges of Covid.

Team Devon saw the county council coming together with district and town and parish councils to respond swiftly to all the extra needs and requirements of residents during the pandemic.

Now Team Devon leaders have agreed to develop a bid to Government for devolved powers.

Devon County Council leader John Hart, who chairs Team Devon, said: "I believe we have delivered for Devon during the pandemic and used the additional money that was available effectively and efficiently on behalf of our residents.

"Our regular meetings of council leaders and chief executives from the county and all the districts - along with town and parish representatives - brought us closer together and the trust we built up meant that we could act swiftly and decisively.

"We want to build on that cooperation and trust in a Deal for Devon.

"It would require the Government to support us to do the very best we can for Devon and its residents and businesses as we drive the recovery, tackle climate change, boost skills, improve our infrastructure and connectivity and confront the very real problems we have to face such as the shortage of affordable housing.

"We believe Team Devon is ideally placed to negotiate a Deal for Devon with the Government. So we've asked our officers to start preparing proposals that we can discuss with Ministers and Whitehall over the summer so that we can be at the head of the queue when the Levelling-Up White Paper is published."

South Hams District Council has begun developing a 20 year vision for the District and now they would like to know what you think.

On 15 July, South Hams District Council agreed to put the contents of their emerging vision document out to public consultation. The consultation begins today 21 July 2021 and will run for 6 weeks.

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council said: "There will be a survey that our residents businesses and partners can fill in, which directly relates to the contents of the document, but we also want to engage on a much wider scale.

"We know that there will be many people who, for whatever reason, will not read the whole document, but we would still like to know what they think about key topic that we have highlighted.

"We also recognise that there will be many people in different areas, with different interests who many only be interested in certain parts of the plan."

For this reason South Hams District Council are running a number of engagement initiatives over the summer.

This will include a variety of Social Media polls on Facebook and Instagram to capture opinions of perspectives on single topics such as affordable homes and electric vehicles and will share these with community groups.

Hard to reach groups, individual community groups, disability groups and those who might not "find" the consultation will be contacted and invited to comment and contribute to ensure that the final plan is representative of all of our residents.

The District Council will continue to run the residents, business and visitors opinion surveys, which began in June with face to face engagement and are now available on their website, and the photo competition last week will remain open until 20 August 2021.

South Hams would encourage all residents to send in photos of the District and their community. Why tell the Council what is important and special about your community, when you can show them?

Cllr Judy Pearce added: "When we present the final plan back to the District in September, we would like you all to be able to see you and your community represented in some way within the plan.

"If you are looking at this draft today and you think something is missing, then tell us, send us a photo, fill in the survey. Although this is a high level, aspirational vision for the District, it must represent the District that you know."

Find out more and have your say: www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/betterlivesforall

## £127,000 Business Boost for Local Towns

Dartmouth, Kingsbridge and Totnes will receive funding from South Hams District Council to help their town centres bounce back this summer and through the winter.

Earlier this year South Hams District Council invited each of the five main towns of the District to submit bids of up to £50,000. This pot of money was made available to them, to support them reopening now that COVID-19 restrictions are being lifted.

Bids were received from Dartmouth, Kingsbridge and Totnes, and today South Hams District Council is delighted to announce that all three have in some way been successful with their bids.

Dartmouth will receive £47,000, Kingsbridge will receive £30,000 funding and Totnes will receive £50,000.

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council, said: "The bids had to follow the same rules as the Additional Restrictions (ARG) grants, which were quite restrictive, so it is an absolute credit to those towns that put the effort and thought into their bids that they have been successful.

"Formal letters have now been sent out to the towns – this was a brilliant offer from us and well done to Totnes, Dartmouth and Kingsbridge for seizing that opportunity."

The funding will be made through the Government's Additional Restrictions Grant, which was distributed by the Council to help businesses impacted by COVID-19.

The plans put forward by each town and the elements which were successful for funding under the bid are:

Dartmouth - £47,000 funding for:

Support for those business on the Embankment that have had to modify their businesses for outdoor dining

A hardship grant for businesses that have not been able to access any other form of funding

A matched funded grant for business looking to undertake investment to improve their business offer

Other plans include better signposting, crab-line recycling bins and videos promoting Dartmouth.

Kingsbridge - £30,000 funding for:

Kingsbridge / Salcombe / Modbury Chamber of Commerce, which will extend the hugely successful "dress to impress" business grant scheme

Plans for an open air cinema in the town square in August

Totnes - £50,000 to:

Support the community transport scheme, including a trial park and ride at KEVICCs

Plan an events programme in the town to boost footfall

Support the Chamber of Commerce to deliver Christmas lights, Civic Square improvements and business support.

### Community Led Electric Car and Bike Club - Survey Launched

Local residents, businesses and community organisations are being asked for their views on establishing a community-led electric car and bike club for the South Hams via a short online survey.

The survey is being promoted by South Hams District Council and would give affordable access to electric cars for everyone, whilst also supporting the shift to zero carbon transport.

South Hams District Council declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency on 21 May 2019 and the Council is working hard to reduce the District's carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. As part of that aim, the Council continues to work with partners to drive forward that commitment.

Since the announcement of the Government's 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles, interest in electric cars has surged by 500%1. However, they remain too expensive for many people. In addition, one third of households cannot charge a car at home2.

An electric car club would address these challenges by locating cars across the District, bookable from as little as half an hour for one all-inclusive price. This would give members access to electric cars without having to own one.

Furthermore, by switching to using an electric car club and getting rid of a little used personal vehicle, members could save money whilst also helping reduce issues related to congestion, parking and pollution.

The survey also asks if respondents would be interested in an electric bike share scheme. Because they are electrically assisted, the bikes are a great alternative to the car for many shorter trips including commuting, everyday errands and leisure trips.

South Hams District Council's Executive Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Cllr Tom Holway, said: This could be a fantastic scheme that would make electric transport accessible to everyone. Not everyone has the means to buy this type of technology and this really could offer South Hams' residents the opportunity to have access to electric technology. I urge residents to share their views on this exciting scheme in the survey."

The survey is available at https://bit.ly/ElectricSHams and is open until 24 August 2021.

The survey is being run in partnership with Co Cars car club, a social enterprise that has an established network of low and zero emission cars across the South West. The company also runs the Co Bikes electric bike sharing scheme.

Mark Hodgson, Managing Director of Co Cars, said: "Over the last 12 months, we have seen a huge surge of interest in our shared, electric cars and bikes from communities across the region.

"We're really excited to see if we can bring them to the South Hams as they would give people access to the latest technology at an affordable price, helping them save money and hassle when compared to owning a car."

The results of the survey will not only help establish the viability of the project but will also be shared with South Hams District Council to assist their planning.

For more information, visit www.co-cars.co.uk and www.co-bikes.co.uk.

## **Business Grants Update**

The Council has administered 11 different Government business grants schemes throughout the last year, on behalf of the Government.

A total of £82 million has been paid out to businesses in the South Hams.

All of the business grants schemes are now closed for applications, with the exception of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme.

The Council has fully spent its ARG allocation of £2,512,941 and we are awaiting our third tranche allocation, which should be received in the middle of July.

The Government deadline for the Restart Grants applications was 30 June 2021 and final payments need to be made by the Council by 31 July 2021.

To date, the Council has paid out £12million on Restart Grants.

We are beginning to get to the end of administering the main business grants but we are conscious that there will be a lot of retrospective reporting to BEIS of all the schemes that we will need to do also.

### Better Lives For All – Help Shape A Strategy For South Hams

Better Lives for All is the rallying call from South Hams District Council as the first steps are taken towards developing a new long-term strategy for the District. From supporting businesses to thrive to helping communities stay strong, it's now time for you to share how you see South Hams as a place to live, work, and play and what you hope for in the future.

Put forward in response to the newly evolving challenges and opportunities of the post-pandemic landscape, the draft strategy sets out the direction and a timeline. This includes the steps being taken to ensure as many people as possible share their ideas and suggestions. This will mean the views of residents, local business and visitors are included when priorities for action are agreed later this year.

The report on the planned corporate strategy was discussed at the Council's Executive Committee meeting today, Thursday 8 July 2021. Now, Full Council will consider it on 15 July. If agreed, the public will be invited to share their thoughts on what is needed to make the South Hams a better place to live, work and visit through a consultation starting on July 19 2021 and running for six weeks. You can take a sneak peak at how the strategy is shaping-up so far https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/betterlivesforall

How to have your say

From 19 July 2021, you can fill in our quick and easy survey at https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/betterlivesforall

If you can't wait for the consultation to start and you would like to get involved in shaping the context for the final strategy you can help us right now.

We want to know how you see South Hams as a place to live, work and play. Help us to paint a picture of the South Hams you know.

Enter our photo competition - show us the South Hams you see https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/photographycompetition

Tell us what you think about the South Hams as a place to live, work and visit: https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/better-lives-for-all-survey

The strategy will drive the South Hams firmly forward in response to global and local issues. It will ensure that Council resources are used efficiently and effectively to deliver the priorities identified by Members and through the wider public consultation.

It has been developed so far using feedback from all Council Members. This means that from the outset the focus has been on the individual needs of communities across the South Hams, from coastal towns to rural hamlets.

Looking to take every opportunity to support businesses and local people, the strategy outlines six core focus areas that will underpin the Council's work over the next 20 years. These are:

Adapting and mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity

Improving homes

Protecting, conserving and enhancing our built and natural environment

Stimulating a thriving economy

Strengthening community wellbeing

Delivering quality Council services

As well as articulating the Council's vision and ambitions for the longer-term, the new strategy contains specific, measurable and time bound targets covering the short-term (next three years).

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council, said: "There is no denying that South Hams is an incredibly special place. At the forefront of our planning for the future is ensuring the wellbeing and prosperity of residents, stimulating a resilient and diverse economy and protecting the built and natural environment.

Underpinning our vision, we must ensure that we deliver quality Council services that are responsive to the needs of South Hams, its residents and businesses.

"We have a broad basis for this strategy. We have already pushed ahead to develop a Housing Strategy and Climate and Biodiversity Strategy – both supported by detailed action plans. The COVID-19 pandemic may have held us up but our ambition is not dimmed. We will deliver with renewed vigour over the next few years, achieving improvement and opportunity for the lives of our residents.

"The next step is arguably the most important. We need to reach out to as many different people as possible to consolidate our understanding of the hopes and concerns of residents, businesses and visitors. Please do take part in our survey, enter our photo competition and tell us what you think about the South Hams where you live, work and play – your input is crucial to the success of our work and will give us the foundation blocks we need to deliver our vision of Better Lives for All."

The strategy follows a very busy year for the Council, which adapted rapidly to deliver vital lifelines to local communities. This includes:

Injecting £71.7 million of government business grants into the local economy

Approving £multi-million schemes to boost economic strength in Salcombe and Ivybridge

£124,000 of funding has gone to community groups to help them deliver a wide range of projects to improve the wellbeing of local people, including new sports facilities

Homes across the District were also improved. 500 homes were supported to access energy efficiency improvements. This included grants for 31 of the least energy efficient properties to install central heating for the first time.

127 residents have been able to live more safely in their homes thanks to adaptations to the property to meet their needs.

To see the report and draft strategy, please go to: https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/betterlivesforall

Enter our photo competition - show us the South Hams you see: https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/photographycompetition

Tell us what you think about the South Hams as a place to live, work and visit: https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/better-lives-for-all-survey

## How do you feel about Rewilding?

Many Town, Parish and District Councils around the country are turning to a concept called rewilding, letting some green and grassy areas return to a more natural state. The aim for many of these Councils is to increase the amount of biodiversity and wildlife locally.

As a District Council, South Hams currently manages about 50 hectares of green space which is cut every couple of weeks.

Today, the Council are launching a consultation to explore what the public thinks about the Council enabling rewilding on a small proportion of this land. (10Ha for a biodiversity led approach, and 3.5Ha for wildflower meadows).

In 2019 South Hams District Council declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency.

Across the UK, many habitats which are important for supporting wildlife have already been lost. For example, 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s, with a knock on impact on the species which rely on these habitats.

The abundance of habitat specialist butterflies has declined by 68% since 1976 for example.

As part of their declaration and to mitigate against such biodiversity loss, South Hams has said it aims to increase biodiversity on Council owned-land by at least 10% by 2025.

Creating and restoring more biodiverse green spaces and enabling rewilding of some Council owned land, could help the Council reach its biodiversity targets and significantly improve conditions for local wildlife.

This consultation is proposing an approach which could see the Council proactively manage 10Ha land as wilder green space, 3.5Ha of land as wildflower areas, and 3.5Ha of new tree planting. This could support pollinators, as well as wildlife such as reptiles, small mammals, amphibians, birds and even bats.

Cllr Tom Holway, South Hams District Council's Executive Member for Climate Change, said: "In 2019 we made a very important declaration, namely we declared a climate change and biodiversity emergency. This means that we made a commitment to proactively do things that could halt the progress of climate change and biodiversity loss.

"This idea of rewilding is a great way for Councils to make a big difference locally. In reality, South Hams actually owns a small proportion of the green spaces in the District, only around 50 hectares and we are proposing to do this on about 1/3 of that.

"However, I am excited about the difference this could make, and it would be wonderful to get local communities engaged in this process and for them to see these habitats change and grow over the coming year.

"This consultation is all about understanding what the public thinks about this idea and if they would be supportive of it in general terms."

The Council recognises that some members of our community may be concerned about uncut grasses looking untidy or neglected.

However, the proposals suggest that the areas selected for rewilding would still be carefully managed, often with cut grass framing the area, paths cut through longer grass and clear signposting to show everyone which grassed areas are part of the scheme.

If the consultation returns a favourable response to the concept of rewilding some Council owned land in South Hams, a proposals map will be available in the autumn, and in some cases there may be more site level consultation over the specific detail of proposals to ensure the approach fits with the aspirations of local residents.

Through this experience and the consultation, South Hams would also be able to support and offer advice to Town and Parish Councils who are also considering allocating space to rewilding.

For more information on the proposal and to have your say visit:

www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/enhancingbiodiversity

Or to read more about South Hams District Council's Climate Change Declaration, visit: www.climatechange.southhams.gov.uk/climate-declaration

#### **Accommodation for Rough Sleepers Funding Bid**

Bidding has opened for the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme. This is a fund developed as the next stage of the "Everyone In" drive triggered by the pandemic. South Hams have submitted a bid.

We will be bidding to purchase four one-bedroom properties as part of our housing project similar to the Housing First model which is aimed at rough sleepers with chaotic support needs.

The ethos behind this model is that first we provide the home and from there we work with individuals to make living in accommodation a long term sustainable lifestyle, through intensive support tailored to their individual needs.

We are calling this 'Leap Pad' accommodation, when the individual is ready to move on they will be supported into a sustainable home.

We have had a high level of success with engaging with rough sleepers across the district and have successfully housed many of this cohort in suitable long-term accommodation. However, one of the barriers we face, especially with the most entrenched and chaotic of this group, is the lack of move on accommodation options.

Social Housing turnover on one bedroom properties is low and Private Rented accommodation is frequently prohibitively expensive. As a result these individuals spend longer times in unsuitable temporary accommodation or return to the streets because the accommodation option is hard for them to sustain.

This project will be match funded by us, through the disposal of the some of our unsuitable and not cost effective Shire properties and in line with Members approved use of these funds. If we are successful for the bid a report will return to Members for actual purchase of these properties.

### **Test & Trace Isolation Payments**

With the increase in positive COVID tests locally, you may well be contacted by a resident who has needed to self-isolate or they have a child who cannot attend school and they are unable to work as they need to care for that child.

The Government has extended the £500 test and trace payment for people experiencing hardship until the end of September 2021.

All the information and the claim form are on our website, just pop Test and Trace into the search bar and it's all there – or alternatively follow this link <a href="https://www.southhams.gov.uk/test-and-trace-payments">https://www.southhams.gov.uk/test-and-trace-payments</a>

#### Doo-Ty

There are two types of fouls that have no place on the football pitch – with dog fouling on sports grounds a potential health hazard for people as well as other dogs. Luckily, dog owners picking up after their pooches means playing fields, can be enjoyed by everyone in pawesome South Hams.

As football mania reaches fever-pitch this July, new signs are being put up around the District to remind people of where and when your dog can run free and that you risk a £100 fine if you don't follow the rules.

From riverside walks to fun in the park, your dog loves spending time out and about with you. To help you to enjoy your time exploring the South Hams with your pet, here's a reminder of when your dog should be on a lead:

On a road, on the pavement, or on a path shared with cyclists or horse riders

Where there are two or more commercial / shop premises

Car Parks

Cemeteries and Churchyards

Any fenced, hedged or walled pond, area of water or nature reserve

Alongside marked sports fields whilst organised sport is in progress

Areas delineated as formal gardens

Courtenay Park, Salcombe

Any land that is covered but open to the air on at least one side and areas where the public are entitled or permitted to have access (with or without payment) IF asked to put your dog on a lead by an authorised officer

Please do not take or let your dog onto these areas below, even if it is on a lead:

Any fenced, hedged or walled children's play area

Any fenced, hedged or walled bowling green

Any fenced, hedged or walled tennis court

Any fenced, hedged or walled skateboard or BMX park

Any fenced, hedged or walled putting green

Any sporting or recreational facility pitch when sport is in play

Please also bear in mind that your dog should not be allowed onto any private gardens.

There are exceptions to the above. For example, these rules do not apply to a person who:

Is registered as a blind person in a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948

Is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (Registered Charity no. 293358) and upon which that person relies for assistance

Has a disability which affects that person's mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, in respect of a dog trained by a prescribed charity and upon which that person relies for assistance

Whether you're in a space that requires you to keep your dog on a lead or they can run free, you must always pick up after your dog. You're also required to carry the means to pick up after your dog. That means grabbing a couple of dog-poop bags with you every time you go out. If you don't, you can be fined £100.

It is important to pick up and dispose of dog poop properly because it can be a health hazard for humans and other animals. If you leave dog poop somewhere a child (or adult) may step in it, you risk making them very sick. In rare cases, it can even lead to brain damage and blindness. Even if a dog poops somewhere that you feel does not pose a risk to humans, leaving dog poop lying around

could be dangerous for other dogs as it can spread parvovirus. Dog poop left on the ground can also have a very serious effect on pregnant sheep and cattle, resulting in the pregnancy ending.

Whilst the vast majority of dog owners do the right thing, unfortunately it's not 100%. If you are aware of a regular dog fouling issue, you should report it on the Council website at: https://southhams.gov.uk/report

The rules are the same across England and are laid out by the Council under a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), which can be read here: https://southhams.gov.uk/article/4111/Dog-Fouling

Cllr Jonathan Hawkins, South Hams District Council's Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, said: "Across the South Hams we follow the National Standard, which allows our spaces to be enjoyed by all, including dogs. However, for this to work and spaces to stay enjoyable, we need everyone to do their bit and really think about if their actions (or the actions of their dog) could make things unpleasant for others or cause illness."

Cllr Tom Holway, Ward Councillor for Ermington and Ugborough said: "Our open green spaces play a vital role in the wellbeing of local people and it is right that they should be enjoyed by everyone – including our four-legged friends. However, a small minority of owners failing to pick up dog-poop on playing fields is a big problem for those who use the space for sports and are putting their health at risk each time.

"The rules for sports fields like Erme Playing Fields is that dogs must be on leads when training or matches are underway. At other times the space is a designated green space for everyone's enjoyment and dogs are allowed off the lead. However, off the lead does not mean that owners can turn a blind eye to their dog's business."

Cllr Victor Abbott, Ward Councillor for Ivybridge East and part of Ugborough, said: "Owners failing to pick up after their dogs is no joke. Luckily, there is something we can do about it. If someone is seen failing to pick up poop, we can issue Fixed Penalty Notices of £100.

"For example, at Erme Playing Fields officers are dropping by regularly to carry out spot checks, advise owners on what to do, and issue fines. The same will be happening at playing fields and spaces across the South Hams, with the aim to make sure our green spaces can be enjoyed by everyone. If there is a repeat problem with dog fouling at your local open space, make sure you report it."

It's not just parks and open spaces where dogs and their owners can play together. If you're planning to take your dog to the coast, these are the council-run beaches where dogs are welcome at all times:

Slapton Sands

Salcombe North

Sections of Sugary Cove

**Bovisand** 

Beesands

For those people who prefer a dog-free space on a beach, there are also some time restrictions in place on specified beaches managed by the Council. These are:

Mouthwell Sands at Hope Cove between 1 May and 30 September inclusive between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. in any 24-hour period.

South Sands, Salcombe between 1 May and 30 September inclusive (24 hour ban) except during Ferry operating times when dogs are permitted to cross the Sands on a lead to embark and disembark to and from the Ferry.

Part of Bigbury Beach between 1 May and 30 September inclusive between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. in any 24 hour period.

Remember, dogs are welcome on these beaches above outside of these specified times. Other beaches in the South Hams are privately run, so check first on what rules apply for dogs. Responsible dog owners know that picking up after their dog doesn't stop there. It's also important to dispose of the bagged waste properly.

Cllr Jonathan Hawkins, South Hams District Council's Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, added: "When it comes to over-flowing dog waste bins with bags of poop piled on top, I'd ask the owners to stop and think about if they'd be happy to tackle emptying these? It's not a pleasant job for our team, which becomes more dangerous when the bags are dumped on top or hooked on tree branches nearby. The team do their best to keep the bins emptied but at certain times they can quickly fill. Putting a dog-poop bag on top or beside a bin is not the same as binning it and is an offence you can be fined for.

"If the dog waste bin is full, I ask dog owners to please hold onto the poop bag until they can safely dispose of it. Please also let us know there is a problem by reporting the full bin. You can do this quickly and easily by reporting it online at our website https://southhams.gov.uk/report"

Top tips:

Never let your dog walk too far from you as this makes it difficult to see where they foul.

Dogs will usually foul soon after being let off the lead or out of the car/at the start of a walk so be ready.

Pay attention at all times to what your dog is doing, don't be distracted - especially not by your mobile phone!

Always carry 'poo' bags. It's an offence not to carry the 'means' to pick up

Take a torch with you on dark evenings and early morning walks in winter.

Dispose of bags in a dog or litter bin, or take it home to dispose of in your household bin.

Not disposing of a bag correctly is also a dog fouling and littering offence.

Keep your dog to the boundaries of sports pitches if possible as even after picking up, residual deposits can be left. Many complaints are received concerning sports pitches from the players, who can get dog mess on themselves during a game.

Dog faeces left on grazing or farm land can contaminate water courses and feed grass where cattle and sheep graze. These sheep and cattle may eventually find their way into the food chain. Please pick up after your dogs on country walks - do not use the so-called "stick and flick method.

If you would like any further information about enjoying time with your dog off the lead, please visit: https://southhams.gov.uk/article/4111/Dog-Fouling