

# Report from your District Councillors

February 2025

## Consultation on ‘Strengthening the standards and ethical framework for local authorities in England’

The Government launched a consultation on 18 December 2024 seeking views on proposals to introduce a mandatory minimum code of conduct for authorities. The Consultation can be found here: [Standards Consultation](#)

### Removal of bottle banks

As approved by the Waste Working Group in September, a number of bottle banks across the South Hams will be removed in the coming months as part of our ongoing efficiency programme of our waste and recycling service.



13 banks across the District will be taken away in the first wave of removals from 3 February. These banks have been selected because almost all residents now have access to glass collections as part of their weekly kerbside recycling collection.

#### The first bottle banks being removed are:

- Tuckenhay - Bank at The Watermans Arms
- California Cross - Bank at the California Cross Inn
- Churchstow - Bank at the Church House Inn
- Hemerdon - Bank at The Miners Arms
- Heybrook Bay - Bank at The Eddystone Inn
- Marldon - Bank at the Church House Inn
- Ringmore - Bank at the Journey’s End
- Shaugh Prior - Bank at the White Thorn Inn
- Yealmpton - Bank at Ben’s Farm Shop
- Wotter - Bank at the Moorland Inn
- Kingswear - Bank at Darthaven Marina
- Stokenham - Two banks at Stokeley Farm Shop

All of the bottle banks being removed in the first wave are in car parks of commercial businesses. These businesses are being offered the opportunity to keep the bottle banks on site for their exclusive business use, as a chargeable trade waste service.

A further 34 bottle banks across 30 other sites in the South Hams are also set to be taken away. The timeline is as follows:

- **Phase 1 - planned start from 3 February - removal of bottle banks in commercial settings (listed above) and offer of trade glass option**
- **Phase 2 - planned start from 24 February - removal of 10 banks from the least used sites in public settings**

The banks set to be removed in phase 2 are:

- Rattery Village Hall
- Noss Mayo, tennis court car park
- Loddiswell, Butts Car Park
- Harbertonford Car Park
- East Prawle, layby
- Strete, layby
- Beesands seafront
- Woolwell Community Centre
- Lee Moor, Village Hall
- Modbury, Poundwell Meadow

- **Phase 3 - planned start 17 March - removal of the remainder of banks in public settings**

15 bottle banks across nine sites will remain in place, to support the visitor economy in the busy summer months.

## Response to the Local Government Finance Settlement

Please find attached a copy of the Council's consultation response to the Local Government Finance Settlement.

[Click here to download a copy.](#)

We have made the point that we strongly oppose the decision taken by ministers to cut the funding for rural authorities.

In particular, the decision to abolish the Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG) without any engagement or consultation with the affected authorities has been very disappointing.

The Council's view is that affected authorities should have had a lot more notice that this was going to be the case and been given the opportunity to make representations.




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## PayByPhone

Many thanks for all your feedback on PayByPhone.

We have been working with our supplier using this feedback to improve the customer's experience when using the cashless parking app.

A number of changes have already been carried out since it went live and the suppliers continue to work with us to make further improvements.

We understand that many customers are more familiar with the previous app, and changes in functionality can take time to adjust to.

While not all changes may be possible, PayByPhone is committed to improving the overall user experience and making the parking process as seamless as possible.

We will continue to pass back any feedback received.



## Garden waste service

South Hams residents can sign up to or renew their subscription for our garden waste collection service from Monday (3 February).

The fee is going up this year to cover costs, though we're offering a discount to those who sign up early.



Anyone who signs up between 3 February and 1 April 2025 will pay a discounted fee of £65 for a year-long subscription running from April 2025 that covers collections for one brown wheelie bin.

There is a maximum of two subscriptions (which would cover two bins) per household. Anyone who signs up after 31 March will pay £68. This is an increase on last year's fee, but it is necessary to cover rising costs.

The quickest and easiest way for residents to sign up is on our website: [www.southhams.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.southhams.gov.uk/gardenwaste) - the website is also full of information on the service. Alternatively, residents can call us, though we encourage everyone to use the website as it's easier and quicker.

For current subscribers who renew before 1 April, there will be no changes to their service, and they can continue to use their brown bin with no interruptions.

We will be promoting subscriptions to residents with social media, e-mail newsletters, and a press release.

## Avian Influenza - Bird Flu

An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) has been declared for the whole of England.

This means that people who keep birds must, by law, follow strict biosecurity rules to prevent the spread of bird flu.



Biosecurity measures include for example;

- Placing bird food and water under cover to prevent contamination from wild birds
- Changing or disinfecting footwear when entering the enclosure to prevent any contamination.
- Washing hands before and after tending to birds

Bird species such as parrots and budgies that are kept entirely indoors are excluded from the order, but people who keep poultry are, regardless of how many birds they keep, included. Since 2022, one in five bird flu cases were in poultry kept in the garden as pets?

## What's bird flu and how does it spread?

Bird flu is a fatal viral disease that can affect both wild and domestic birds, including chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. Cases usually peak in winter due to the migration of wild birds into the UK, who can bring the virus with them, but outbreaks can occur at any time of year. It's spread by:

- Mixing with infected wild birds
- Being exposed to faeces and feathers from infected birds
- The virus being brought into the bird's environment, for example from dirty footwear or clothing

## More information

In order to keep up to date with latest advice and developments please see the Government website for the most up to date information. It contains lots of information, such as webinars for bird keepers, and links that you will find helpful

Latest situation in England (DEFRA): [click this link.](#)

## Reporting Dead Wild Birds

Finally, it is important that if you find a wild dead bird to not touch it, but to report it to DEFRA. They test the bird to track the extent of any bird flu outbreak. You can report to DEFRA [via this link](#) or by telephoning them on 03459 33 55 77.

## Cost of Living update

Due to our success in managing and distributing the latest tranche of the Household Support Fund (HSF) we have been able to secure a further £17,918.06. This will be available for residents to apply via the application form.

To date we have issued 376 Post Office Vouchers worth £112,800 to the groups agreed by members and through the application form we have awarded £80,900 to 423 households. 10 care leavers have been awarded £300 each.



Our Cost of Living and Financial Support Officer Natasha Balouza has attended several events across the district and is working with Citizens Advice and local energy groups such as Dartmoor Community Energy that support households to reduce energy costs to encourage those that need help to contact us. Please do not hesitate to contact Natasha or myself if you have any queries.

We are aware nationally, that the Department for Work and Pensions currently has a huge backlog of Pension Credit applications (more than 91,000 at the end of December) and it is possible that you may get residents contacting you about this.