

## Diptford Parish Council Minutes Appendix 2

### Parish Councils update from South Hams Cllrs. Guy Pannell & Peter Smerdon

April 2020

There are many fantastic voluntary groups now working in most Parishes, we would like to thank everyone for their amazing community spirit.

The main contact email for SHDC in this crisis is

[Communitycoordination.covid19@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Communitycoordination.covid19@swdevon.gov.uk)

- **SHDC.** Council is in emergency mode, with decisions being taken by senior officers in consultation with the Leader. The Executive held an informal meeting by video conference, and the Council is awaiting guidance on whether this can be used for formal meetings. Virtually all staff are working from home.

There could be significant financial implications for SHDC – loss of parking income and emergency expenditure, and concerns that future Leisure Centre responsibility might fall back on the Council – but it will all depend on whether the Government is able to recompense local authorities in full. Many normal functions of the Council will be under resourced as staff are redeployed to deal with aspects of the current Emergency. Parking charges in Council car parks have been suspended and there is no parking enforcement.

**DNPA.** All staff are working from home, and Parke house is locked and the grounds are closed to the public. The Rangers are still working but with reduced capacity, helping to reinforce the message that people should not visit Dartmoor at this time. Financial implications are hard to predict but unlikely to be good. Development Management is still functioning but obviously with reduced resources, applications are still being processed and decisions made by Officers but there is as yet no provision for DM Committee to make online decisions. All other Committees are suspended.

- **Planning. FOR THOSE NOT IN DNPA AREA.**  
New applications are suspended temporarily. Those in the pipeline are being worked on, and the Council is investigating whether it can resume with remote working and video meetings.
- **Waste services.** Household recycling centres closed. Refuse collections continuing as normal at present but may need to be reduced/amended
- **Public areas.** Public toilets closed for reasons of public health, as should children's play areas. Parks and open spaces should be kept open at present for exercise, so long as people respect distancing

- **Council tax reduction.** Help is available for people who already receive help with their Council Tax because of low incomes through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and this will be extended to help those most affected by the COVID 19 situation. More details will follow.
- **Small Businesses.** Help is available to businesses which have had to cease operations because of Government regulations. Business Rate holiday for the current year – nothing to pay. Those eligible for this have been informed by letter sent to their business address. Cash grants of up to £25,000 from the Government for those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. There is also the Government assistance available to pay 80% of staff wages up to £2,500 per month. Anyone who considers they are eligible and who hasn't received a letter by 5<sup>th</sup> April please go to

<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/businessratesquery>

- **Grants for local community groups and Town and Parish Councils.** Quick grants of £500 from Devon County Council and also £500 from DNPA (for those in the National Park) available to community groups/parish councils who are supporting people with food banks, shopping, emergency financial assistance etc. Bigger grants of up to £6,000 also available from Devon CC
- **Food parcels.** The Government has identified 1.5million people 'shielding' at home because they are vulnerable with health conditions. These have been informed by letter and food parcels have been received by SHDC who will use their staff to distribute them in the first instance. These deliveries may be handed over to supermarkets to handle.
- **Working with Community Groups.** Devon CC and SHDC will be identifying and liaising with community groups so assistance can be co-ordinated and to avoid duplication. Groups will be issued with a short guide covering issues such as selection, registration, safeguarding, risk assessments etc. SHDC is making a sum of money available from reserves to support residents in danger of running out of money for food and essentials. For further details use the email at the top of this item or go to [Isabel.Blake@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Isabel.Blake@swdevon.gov.uk)
- **Food banks.** Morrisons have said they will supply surplus food to groups running food banks
- **Domestic abuse.** There is an increased risk of domestic abuse. Help is available from Devon and Cornwall Victim Support. Email [victimservices@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:victimservices@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk) Tel: 0300 303 0554