

Stroud District Councillors' Report – February 2021

Report of meetings during January

Council meetings

All Stroud District Council and Committee papers can be found here:

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings>

Covid Lockdown – access to SDC services

Essential council services are being maintained through the latest lockdown and officers are continuing to work with voluntary and community groups, such as Wotton Area Mutual Aid to ensure that there is a network of support for anyone who needs it across the district. For more information see the links [here](#).

Covid – safe operation of businesses

Environmental Health Officers are stepping up efforts to help businesses, shoppers, and communities stay safe during lockdown. More officers have been moved from other tasks so they can advise business owners on how to operate safely within the current lockdown rules.

Officers are also continuing to actively check compliance – anyone who has concerns can contact the Environmental Health team environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk tel: 01453 766321 (option 5). For information on safe systems of work see www.stroud.gov.uk/workingsafely

Covid relief - business grants

SDC is paying grants automatically to many qualifying businesses affected by lockdown. The process has been simplified by making automatic payments to businesses which qualify and have previously received a grant. If a business had to close during the November lockdown and it received a Local Restriction Support Grant payment, the business should automatically receive a Local Restriction Support Grant payment for the January lockdown.

If a business has already made a claim, a new application does not need to be made - once an application has been approved, payments will be made for all periods that the business is eligible. To make a claim see: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/businessrates>. Full details of the amounts being provided by the Government and paid by SDC are available at the same link.

Covid - Youth unemployment – Kickstart scheme

SDC has pledged to help unemployed young people find work as part of the £2 billion Government-backed Kickstart Scheme. The Kickstart Scheme provides funding for employers to create job placements for 16-24 year olds who are claiming Universal Credit and are at risk of long term unemployment.

SDC is a “Kickstart gateway organisation” and will support businesses in their Kickstart application. Businesses that offer more than 30 Kickstart placements can apply directly to the Government.

For each new job that is created under the scheme, employers will receive:

- 100% of the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week for a total of six months
- Associated employer National Insurance contributions
- Employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions
- A grant of £1,500 per job placement for set up and training costs.

All employers, irrespective of size and sector can join the scheme. Businesses can find out more about the Kickstart Scheme here: www.stroud.gov.uk/kickstart. Young people can apply for placements here: <https://jobhelp.campaign.gov.uk/kickstart/>

Lucky Severn Lottery Launch

Lucky Severn Lottery is a new weekly online lottery, with a chance to win £25,000 as well as support good causes and local voluntary groups in Stroud District with fundraising.

Tickets for the lottery cost just £1 per week. Each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance to win a prize each week, with a top prize of £25,000! Look out for additional bolt on prizes throughout the year. The lottery is drawn every Saturday night at 8pm.

Tickets are available at www.luckysevernlottery.co.uk (Tickets on sale from 16 February 2021. The first draw will be 20 March 2021). Anyone buying a ticket can select the cause they want to support from those registered on the website. The rest of the money goes towards prizes and administration costs. There is no cost to the charities, projects and groups who sign up.

An introduction to the lottery was shared with voluntary groups on 13 January. The presentation can be viewed [here](#). Further details and links can be found [here](#).

Leisure and Wellbeing Survey (open 28 Jan – 12 Feb)

SDC is looking for feedback from local communities to ensure everyone has access to good quality leisure opportunities that properly meet their needs. To inform decisions, we need to understand how and where people use leisure facilities as we make plans for provision over the next 20 years.

The Leisure and Wellbeing survey aims to find out what, where and how people use leisure facilities across the district. It asks about activity before the Coronavirus pandemic, how that has changed, people's plans for the future, and barriers that prevent people taking part in activity.

Parish and Town Councillors are requested to complete the form and to promote locally to family and friends. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/stroudcommunity>

New Community Resilience and Wellbeing grant

Applications closed on 29 January for the new Community Resilience and Wellbeing Grant. This is open to groups and voluntary organisations in the district for funds to help reduce inequality, promote wellbeing and support communities to recover in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The grant will support groups which work with their communities to promote aspects of wellbeing such as physical, mental and financial health, social connection, arts, culture, heritage and the environment.

Audit and Standards Committee – 26 January

The Committee examined the Internal Audit activity progress report – which looked at SDC tenancy lettings and the Ofgem application on the non-domestic renewable heat incentive (for water source heat pumps for Ebley Mill and Brimscombe Port Mill).

It also considered the Treasury Management Strategy and the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 Improvement Plan - which covered the financial impact on the council of Covid-19 and corporate governance. Link to [Committee papers](#)

Community Services and Licencing Committee – 21 Jan.

An informal meeting of Committee members was arranged to review the scope of the forthcoming assessment of our current Sports, Health and Wellbeing facilities and the needs for the next 40 years. All sports groups and providers, along with Town & Parish Councils are invited to participate in the consultation. (See link to survey above).

The current situation with respect to COVID on our facilities was discussed. This included the future of the Lido at Stratford Park, which had attracted press and resident comments. It was intended that this popular venue would reopen, when allowed, in 2021, in the meanwhile some minor works are being carried out to facilitate this.

Development Control Committee – 5 January

The meeting considered three items:

- In Elmore, Gloucester (S.20/2403/HHOLD) Demolition of garage/workshop and erection of two storey extension.
- Parcel H16 & H19 Land West of Stonehouse, Grove Lane, Westend, Stonehouse (S.20/1898/REM) Reserved Matters for layout, scale, appearance and landscape for 178 dwellings and associated works at Parcels H16 and H19 of permission S.14/0810/OUT.
- Sharpness, Berkeley (S.19/2678/FUL) Erection of 14 dwellings, together with new access and associated works.

Enforcement A new report: Application & Enforcement Performance Statistics Overview was also shared with members and can be found [here](#). Link to [Committee papers](#).

Planning Application - Wotton

A revised planning application to develop the land behind the Fire Station in Symn Lane, Wotton has been received by SDC from the new owners of the Symn Lane car park scheme. They are seeking to remove the approved affordable housing element from the proposal. Whilst the car park and the number of dwellings proposed remains the same, they are outlining that the scheme is not viable with the two rented and one shared ownership affordable houses being provided as proposed. These houses remain the same size but are now proposed as open market properties instead. SDC Planners will test the viability figures. The application should be available shortly, once it has gone through admin/validation checks and will subject to the normal consultation (ref: S.21/0113/VAR).

Elections in May – Polling Stations

The Democratic Services Team are preparing for local elections as planned in May and are working hard to make sure that all of the polling stations will be safe for voting. This includes:

- Finding alternative venues for polling stations that were in schools or sheltered housing
- Each polling station will have a risk assessment, a layout plan for social distancing, a one way system and a separate entrance and exit where possible
- Extra staff are being employed for queue management
- Perspex screens and PPE will be provided for polling station staff
- Polling staff will undertake cleaning regimes in the polling station and high touch points will be cleaned regularly
- Hand sanitiser and masks will be provided for electors
- Ballot paper pencils will not be re-used unless they have been cleaned first
- Additional social distancing signage and floor markers are being provided

Further information will be available in the candidates and agents guidance from SDC.

Meetings attended in January by Cllr Ken Tucker

- 4 Jan North Nibley Parish Council meeting
- 7 Jan Meeting with local MPs to discuss COVID response, grants and future planning.
- 7 Jan Chaired Information & Computer Technology Working Group.
- 8 Jan Meeting with Chair of Housing Committee.
- 11 Jan Meeting with the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 13 Jan Meeting with SDC Group Leaders.
- 14 Jan Meeting with Ascend to prepare for internal 'attitudes and behaviours' study.
- 15 Jan Meeting with Chief Executive.
- 17 Jan Chaired Information & Computer Technology Working Group.
- 18 Jan Wotton Town Council meeting.
- 20 Jan Stinchcombe Parish Council meeting.
- 21 Jan Meeting of Community Services & Licencing Committee.
- 26 Jan Meeting to discuss SDC Strategic Recovery Programme.
- 26 Jan Meeting of Planning Review Panel.
- 27 Jan Meeting of Alliance Members to discuss finance.
- 28 Jan Presentation by MAX Sports Associates to prepare review of health and wellbeing consultation throughout the District.
- 29 Jan Meeting with Strategic Director of Communities.

Meetings attended in January by Cllr Catherine Braun

- 4 Jan North Nibley Parish Council meeting
- 8 Jan Greenway project meeting
- 8 Jan The Keepers – Wotton Area Community Hub Board meeting

- 11 Jan Chaired Greenway Steering Group meeting
- 13 Jan SDC training on secure access to new Microsoft Teams system
- 18 Jan Wotton Town Council meeting
- 19 Jan Housing Committee Alliance briefing
- 19 Jan Greenway Working Group meeting
- 20 Jan Stinchcombe Parish Council meeting.
- 22 Jan The Keepers – Wotton Area Community Hub Board meeting
- 28 Jan SDC Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy briefing
- 28 Jan Alliance budget briefing
- 29 Jan The Keepers – Wotton Area Community Hub Board meeting