

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR JULIA JESSEL
NEWSLETTER AUTUMN - WINTER 2020

2020 will go down as a “unique” year for all of us. Covid-19 has dominated the news and our lives, for some, with devastating circumstances. I have been delighted by the community spirit everywhere, which has helped so many people. I hope that this continues into 2021 and beyond and be a positive outcome of this global pandemic.



As your local County Councillor, I have continued to work hard on your behalf, both as a newly appointed Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change and on local issues.

SCC have been providing support for vulnerable people affected by Covid-19. Food parcels, help line and additional testing facilities are just a few of the services provided. School transport had to be redesigned to provide a safe way to get to school and an additional £2.4M has been invested.

Support for businesses impacted by the pandemic has been provided and the focus now is on providing advice, financial assistance to local businesses to aid recovery. The county council has always invested in directly supporting businesses by running services such as the [Growth Hub](#) . During the Covid-19 crisis we have offered the [Emergency Grants Scheme](#), the [Redundancy and Recruitment Triage Service](#) and the [Start-Up Programme for new businesses](#).

One of the key priorities in our Strategic Plan is to inspire healthy, independent living. Happy at Home is a new campaign designed to help residents live well at home for longer by helping them to find solutions to troublesome day to day tasks using ‘assistive technology’. [Happy at Home Interactive House](#)

An additional £1.9M has been allocated for additional highways repairs including gully cleaning, verges, grass cutting and weed control. A further £100,000 is being invested in small scale improvements for the Public Rights of Way network. Blocked gullies, potholes and other defects can be reported using the online system at [Report a fault online - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Access to quality broadband is important to residents and businesses. I am very keen that as many residents access the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme which is targeted at rural areas. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme website at <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/staffordshire>

A Climate Change Action Fund has been established to support local communities address the impacts of climate change by reducing carbon impact, improve air quality and to adapt to climate change. The fund is open for applications up until the 29th January 2021 and details are available at [Community climate action fund - Staffordshire County Council](#).

Working with local people and parish councils is so important and the following is a brief list of schemes I am working on to improve the area and address ongoing problems:

- Flooding in the early part of the year caused major problems, particularly in Barton under Needwood. Working with the Parish Council, volunteers, Environment Agency and Severn Trent, improvement works to the Barton Brook, road gullies and culverts have been undertaken. I secured additional funds for a high pressure jetter to flush out blocked gullies in Efflinch Lane, Main Street, Barton, Main Street, Warren Lane and Clays Lane, Branston.
- Finishing touches are being made to the Newborough Traffic Management Scheme which has been designed working closely with the parish council.
- A 7.5ton weight limit and 50mph speed limit on the C18 Forest Road is still being pursued but objections have been received which have to be considered before progress can be made.
- SCC are undertaking a road safety audit of the footway approaches and Branston Railway Bridge, which will inform the design of a scheme for improvements.
- A scheme to address the parking problems in Court Farm Lane, Branston.
- A scheme to introduce parking restrictions on the Hadley Street and Sudbury Road junction, Yoxall.
- The experimental traffic orders on the A515 were made permanent in September 2020. The HGV traffic has been reduced significantly and has been a real success. Discussions are taking place with Highways England to have signs on the A38 and A50 warning HGV drivers in advance of the restrictions.
- A pedestrian safety barrier at the Rangemore School will be installed.
- The Needwood Division Forum met in November to which representatives of the 7 parishes in the Needwood Division attended. Also invited were parish councillors from Kings Bromley and Streethay and Fradley. The guest speakers were Richard Rayson, SCC Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager and Ian Doust, Highways England Programme Development Manager. The meeting proved to be extremely informative about future highways investment plans.

Wishing you all a better 2021.

Cllr Julia Jessel

Staffordshire County Councillor for Needwood Division.

(Parishes of Barton-u-Needwood, Branston, Dunstall, Hoar Cross, Newborough, Rangemore & Tatenhill & Yoxall.)

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