

## News You Can Use on the Doorstep

### Leader's Monthly E-Newsletter County Council Budget Special 2020

#### From the Leader of the Council

Since the general election we have had little time to rest following a busy December and the 12 months before.

As we enter the start of a new decade it is time to reflect on the changes we have seen. Compared to 2009, it is fair to say that local government and Staffordshire County Council are almost unrecognisable in size, scale and approach. However, the one constant is that the work we do, the hard work and dedication of our 4,000 staff and the very many organisations we commission and work with, continues to touch the lives of everyone in Staffordshire, every single day.

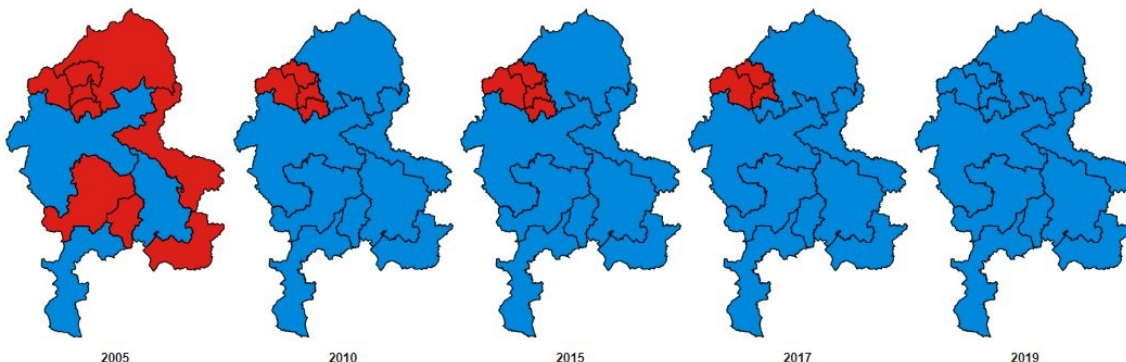


We have entered a new decade with a new Government in place, with the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and a series of manifesto commitments to deliver on the economy, infrastructure, education, health and care.

We have already started conversations with our 12 returning and new MPs in Staffordshire, to champion our great county and the contribution we make to UK PLC, but also to highlight the concerns and pressures our people face. With our MPs we want to continue working with Government, to influence its agenda, and secure the funding, freedoms and responsibilities to help make Staffordshire people's lives better.



Ten years ago, in 2009, this council faced a stark financial challenge. Over the last decade we have made difficult decisions and transformed this council to reduce our running costs by more than £260million. Our books are balanced, and we are managing and spending taxpayer's money wisely and well. Apart from Labour in minority control at Cannock Chase District Council we have turned Staffordshire Conservative Blue.



Reflecting on the past 12 months, the county council has made progress in the face of ongoing financial pressures. We continued to see near full employment and rising wages across Staffordshire, and more people gaining the qualifications they need to succeed. Working with our local enterprise partnership, business and others we have invested in business parks, transport and other infrastructure, to create the right conditions for our economy to grow and generate more better paid jobs.

Highlights include the start of the Western Extension at i54 South Staffordshire; the outstanding Innovation Centre 5 at Keele University Science and Innovation Park, which is now fully occupied; continued work on the Stafford Western Access; and the Lichfield Southern Bypass, where our contractors were working on Christmas Day to install a new bridge across the Cross City train line.

Over the last 12 months demand for social care for people of all ages has continued to rise and put extreme pressure on our finances. We have acted, with plans underway to build new nursing homes in the county and control the costs associated with our growing, ageing population. Working with NHS partners we continue to provide the right support to speed hospital discharges and help people regain their independence. Our Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme is tackling fuel poverty too, with over 100 central heating systems installed in homes to help families stay warm and well.

Earlier this year our Children's Services were once again rated Good by Ofsted. We are one of only three councils in the West Midlands to achieve that ranking, testament to the excellent staff who work for us. But we continue to see more children coming in to care. In 2020 we will be investing a further £8million in more staff and support to keep children safe and help families manage their own problems, so that fewer people need to turn to us for help.

Our approach must continue, as we still need to reduce costs by a further £62million over the next 5 years to contend with growing demand, inflation, and rising costs.

As always, if we are to realise our vision and ambitions for the people of Staffordshire, we need to work with all of our partners, and to make sure the £8.06Billion spent by the public sector in our county every year delivers the greatest possible impact. While our new Government's short-term agenda is focused on Brexit, the Queen's Speech set out an ambitious domestic agenda. As a collective, we need to demonstrate the impact that local public services make to the success of UK PLC. We need to champion Staffordshire, its strengths and its challenges, to influence Government thinking and secure the powers and funding we need for our county. We need to keep our collective focus on improving the lives of people in Staffordshire.

The county council will always be there for those who really need us. But our work now more than ever is about creating the conditions for people to stand on their own two feet, to make the most of their talent and ambitions, and to manage their own

problems. Access to good jobs, decent homes, the chance to learn throughout your life, live a healthy lifestyle and support your loved ones – these are our ambitions for families and people in Staffordshire, what we will continue to work towards in 2020 and beyond this decade.

### **Record Levels of Spending on Care in Staffordshire Backed**

Plans to spend a record £320m on protecting increasing numbers of vulnerable adults and children in Staffordshire have been backed by the County Council.

The spending plans are part of the budget proposals for 2020/21 – which means 65 per cent of the council's budget will be spent on care in the next financial year.

The council is also planning to reduce its own running costs by £62m between 2019 and 2024 to help manage the funding pressures.

It is also proposed that county council tax increases by 3.99 per cent in 2020/21.

Philip Atkins, Leader of the Council, said this council's proactive plan had allowed it to live within its means, deliver a balanced budget and still protect everyone eligible to receive care next year.

Philip said: "Sixty-five per cent of our budget is now spent on caring for the frail elderly and vulnerable children and as a result this puts pressure on other areas.

"Despite this, we have acted swiftly to manage these pressures and continued to bring wider benefits to Staffordshire families by growing the economy, creating better jobs and helping more people lead healthier, independent and rewarding lives.

"Our call now is for the new Government to back the ambitions of well-run councils like Staffordshire by securing a long-term national solution to how we fund care, support children with special educational needs and disabilities and protect our local roads from further decline."

In 2020/21 the county council's budget will see:

- An extra £8.1m invested in helping to keep more children out of care
- £650,000 invested in climate change and sustainability projects
- Over £120m spent on capital projects, such as schools and business sites
- Savings across services to meet the £62m five-year plan to 2024
- Joint approach with the NHS for an affordable approach to health and care

To help achieve this, the council is proposing to increase council tax by 3.99 percent, which includes the Government's 2 percent levy to help towards footing the care bill.

This is less than £1 per week more on the average bill for a Band D Property and it will still be the third lowest county council tax in England.

## **Council Pledges to Get Best Deal for Staffordshire – HS2 gets the Green Light**

Staffordshire County Council today vowed to continue to work to get the best deal for Staffordshire, after the Prime Minister gave HS2 the green light today.

Boris Johnson said Phase One and Phase 2a, which will run from the Midlands to Crewe, will go ahead, and that Phase 2b should be considered as part of a wider integrated High-Speed North rail plan.

The Prime Minister also gave his backing to the operation of the Handsacre Link, which will allow both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to benefit from HS2 compatible trains via Stafford.

Following today's announcement Philip Atkins, Leader of Staffordshire County Council, said: "HS2 will cut through 45 miles of Staffordshire and from the outset we have championed the cause of our county and our communities in terms of securing meaningful mitigation and compensation.

"We have also made it clear that Staffordshire must share in the economic benefits and improved connectivity by securing the Handsacre Link as part of Phase One, which will allow both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to access HS2 compatible trains.

"Any proposal to discontinue the planned link would be unacceptable, so I am pleased that the Prime Minister has given his personal backing to Handsacre.

"With confirmation that HS2 will go ahead our priority remains to get the best deal on HS2 and to ensure that the Government and HS2 Ltd deliver on their promises to Staffordshire."

The Oakervee Report on HS2 which was published today details a number of recommendations, including the removal of the Handsacre Link.

However, as the link is included in the Hybrid Bill, which has been given Royal Assent, any changes would need further legislations and would result in further delays. Staffordshire County Council also secured legal assurances that the Handsacre Link will be constructed and operated as part of Phase One.

**Philip Atkins**  
**Leader Staffordshire County Council**

## New Year's Honours



Three people from Staffordshire have been [recognised by The Queen in the New Year's Honours List](#) for their services to the community and to innovation with MBEs, including Kath Perry, county councillor for Cheslyn Hay, Essington and Great Wyrley, for services to the community in Staffordshire; Yvonne

Clarke, of Uttoxeter, managing director of Pathways Community Interest Company for services to innovation and the community in North West England and Peter Derek Walters, of Forsbrook, training manager at Worldskills UK, for services to the Worldskills competition.

## New Year new you



Our [Staffordshire Connects website](#) has helpful advice and information for those planning lifestyle changes in 2020. It's that time of year for resolutions to improve your mental and physical health. Search for [more information and a directory of local services and groups](#) that can be of support.

There is health and wellbeing advice to help people in Staffordshire with goals like getting active, eating healthier and giving up damaging habits such as smoking.

Visit [Staffordshire Connects](#) now to see what's available in your community

## Stay warm and well



Stay healthy this winter, be a flu fighter and keep an eye out for your elderly neighbours – these are the messages from health experts in Staffordshire. The elderly and vulnerable should not hesitate and seek help at the first sign of an illness – even if it's just a cough or a cold.

Local pharmacists or NHS 111 will be able to advise on symptoms and whether people need to see a doctor.

Read more [tips for keeping warm and well this winter](#) and further advice on [staying healthy this winter](#) from the NHS

## Recycle and Reuse 2020



January is here and many people will be starting the New Year with a clear out. Before taking old electrical items to a Staffordshire recycling centre, consider if they can still be of use to yourself or others such as friends or relatives. Many charity shops will accept electronic devices that are still in safe working condition alongside old clothes that are

still suitable to wear. Residents can also donate unwanted outfits to clothes banks. Find more [help and advice on New Year recycling](#) and make your 2020 recycling pledge.

## Recycling your metal matters



A new campaign is encouraging Staffordshire people to recycle more metal products.

'Make Your Metals Matter' wants people to recycle all the metal packaging found around their house, including food and drink cans, foil trays, empty aerosols and household aluminium wrapping foil.

Around 400 million cans, foil trays and aerosols are used every year in Staffordshire.

If all the metal packaging used in Staffordshire's homes each year was collected for recycling it would save around 10,787 tonnes of carbon dioxide, the equivalent to taking 2,295 cars off local streets.

[Find out more about recycling in Staffordshire here.](#)

## Record Spending on Care backed



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To help achieve this, the council is proposing to increase council tax by 3.99 per cent, which includes the Government's 2 per cent levy to help towards footing the care bill. This is less than £1 per week more on the average bill for a Band D Property and it will still be one of the lowest county council taxes in the country.

## Major development paves way for more jobs



Major business and transport development projects picking up pace throughout 2020 will pave the way for more job creation in Staffordshire.

Latest statistics show that 2.1 per cent of Staffordshire residents claim out of work benefits, lower than both regional (3.8 per cent) and national (2.9 per cent) figures.

Both Stafford and Lichfield will see significant progress on road building projects which will bring housing, multi-million-pound business investment and new jobs. Construction of the Stafford Western Access Route and Lichfield southern bypass is well under way.

In addition, development at some of the county's main business parks such as i54 South Staffordshire and Kingswood Lakeside continues.



## Stay prepared for the cold

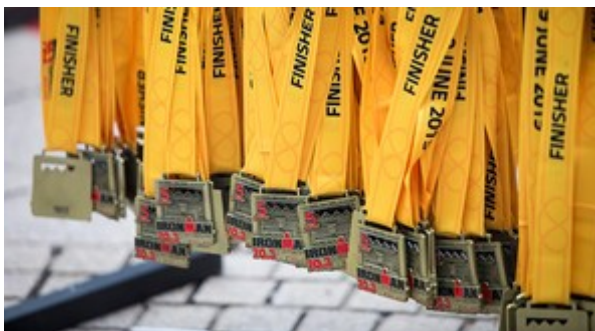
We're almost through a relatively warm winter period, but cold weather has been known to strike as late as March in recent years.

Staffordshire County Council's gritters work hard to keep the roads clear of snow and ice but it is crucial that everyone takes extra care on the roads in winter and drive to the conditions.

This [winter driving guide](#) offers advice if you need to make journeys in wintry conditions.

Please take time to check the [gritting route map](#).

## Volunteer for IRONMAN Staffs



IRONMAN 70.3 Staffordshire takes place on Sunday 7 June and you could be part of it.

Race organisers are looking for enthusiastic, motivated individuals to join the team and help deliver a fantastic day for athletes and spectators.

Individual volunteer roles are available to view and apply for [on the IRONMAN website](#). If you are part of a team, club or organisation who would like to be involved then please contact [uk@ironmanvolunteers.com](mailto:uk@ironmanvolunteers.com).

Volunteers will receive a T-shirt, drawstring bag, 10% discount on IRONMAN merchandise and plenty of water and snacks to see you through your shift.

Volunteer groups will also receive a donation.

## Staffordshire Warmer Homes



Eligible households in East Staffordshire could be helped out of fuel poverty.

The £150m Warm Homes Fund has been established by National Grid to support local authorities to address some of the issues affecting fuel poor households.

Households that currently aren't connected to gas, and meet certain eligibility criteria, could

get a brand new fully funded central heating system in their home thanks to the Staffordshire Warmer Homes initiative.

Eligible households are being written to directly, but others who think they might be eligible are being urged to go to [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/warmerhomes](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/warmerhomes), or call E.ON on 0333 202 4481 to find about more and apply.

## Getting married in Staffordshire



Did you pop the question on Valentine's Day?

You'll soon be making plans for the big day such as ceremony choices, table arrangements and of course, picking the perfect venue.

Staffordshire has more than 100 licensed venues where you can marry, from the Grade 2 listed County Buildings and the attractively furnished registration offices to stately homes and country pubs.

Our [Getting Married in Staffordshire website](#) offers the perfect guide to help you pick the perfect venue along with helpful information on ceremony choices, renewing vows, upcoming wedding fairs and advice on managing costs.

It's the perfect place to plan your perfect Staffordshire wedding.

## Wuhan Coronavirus - Advice



The situation involving the latest outbreak of a coronavirus from Wuhan, China is rapidly evolving. There are currently two confirmed cases in the UK. The risk to the UK population as a whole has been assessed as **moderate**.

Information on what the Wuhan coronavirus is, and some frequently asked questions can be found on [Public Health England's blog](#). This is updated regularly as the situation changes, and should be your first port of call if you have any questions.

If you have any queries in the meantime, [Public Health England's website](#) has all of the latest information regarding the Wuhan coronavirus.



## General Election Results December 12, 2019

### Actual Votes Cast 2015, 2017, 2019

	Numbers of Votes Cast: Conservative & Labour					
	Conservative			Labour		
	2015	2017	2019	2015	2017	2019
Burton	24,736	28,936	29,560	13,484	18,889	15,064
Cannock Chase	20,811	26,318	31,636	15,888	17,927	11,757
Lichfield	28,389	34,018	34,844	10,200	15,437	11,206
Moorlands	21,770	25,963	28,192	11,596	15,133	11,764
Newcastle-u-Lyme	15,870	21,094	23,485	16,520	21,124	16,039
SoT Central	7,008	13,186	14,557	12,220	17,083	13,887
SoT North	10,593	18,913	20,974	15,429	21,272	14,688
SoT South	12,780	20,451	24,632	15,319	19,788	13,361
South Staffordshire	29,478	35,656	36,520	9,107	12,923	8,270
Stafford	23,606	28,424	29,992	14,429	20,695	15,615
Stone	25,733	31,614	31,687	9,483	14,119	11,742
Tamworth	23,606	28,748	30,542	12,304	16,401	10,908
<b>Totals</b>	<b>244,380</b>	<b>313,321</b>	<b>336,621</b>	<b>155,979</b>	<b>210,791</b>	<b>154,301</b>

### Percentage of Votes Cast 2015, 2017, 2019

	% of Votes Cast: Conservative & Labour					
	Conservative			Labour		
	2015	2017	2019	2015	2017	2019
Burton	50.14%	57.98%	60.65%	27.33%	37.85%	30.91%
Cannock Chase	44.19%	54.98%	68.31%	33.73%	37.45%	25.39%
Lichfield	55.16%	63.56%	64.53%	19.82%	28.84%	20.75%
Moorlands	51.12%	58.14%	64.58%	27.23%	33.89%	26.95%
Newcastle-u-Lyme	36.91%	48.11%	52.49%	38.42%	48.18%	35.85%
SoT Central	22.55%	39.78%	45.39%	39.31%	51.54%	43.30%
SoT North	27.40%	45.26%	52.26%	39.92%	50.91%	36.60%
SoT South	32.68%	49.05%	62.20%	39.17%	47.46%	33.74%
South Staffordshire	59.43%	69.76%	73.03%	18.36%	25.29%	16.54%
Stafford	48.41%	54.74%	58.64%	29.59%	39.86%	30.53%
Stone	54.71%	63.19%	63.57%	20.16%	28.22%	23.56%
Tamworth	50.04%	61.02%	66.31%	26.08%	34.81%	23.68%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>45.69%</b>	<b>56.29%</b>	<b>61.62%</b>	<b>29.16%</b>	<b>37.87%</b>	<b>28.24%</b>

**Celebration with the new Conservative Party Chairman on February 21<sup>st</sup> at Stoke Town Hall – in the heart of ex-Labour in Stoke-on-Trent with our Twelve Staffordshire**



**MPs**

**From 3 Constituencies in 2005 to ALL 12 Today!**

**12/12 on 12th of 12th**

