

## **Parish Update – June 2022**

Jubilee weekend seems a long time ago now, but it's worth mentioning what a fantastic response there was in South Kesteven with celebrations taking place in every corner of the district.

That's not the end of South Kesteven's Royal connections, however, as they continue this month with the Queen's Baton Relay coming to Grantham on July 11<sup>th</sup>.

A lot of hard work went into securing the Grantham leg of the relay when more than 1,000 flag-waving schoolchildren are expected to line the 2.2km route, and I would like to extend to you SKDC's invitation for residents and businesses to join them.

The Grantham relay leg is part of the baton's 294-day long journey across the Commonwealth, which began on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021, visiting all 72 nations, before its arrival in Birmingham for the start of the Commonwealth Games on 28<sup>th</sup> July.

### **High quality homes**

I was delighted to be involved in the handover of our latest social housing project - five newly built homes in Stamford for residents on our housing register.

Meeting the new tenants and being able to show them around their spacious bungalow in Trinity Road was a genuine thrill and I am looking forward to SKDC doing more of the same in the near future.

One of our key ambitions is to provide housing that meets the needs of all residents, and I am committed to us pursuing our ambition to build more council homes across our District, while also seeking to continue improving our existing stock.

The bungalows in Stamford are specially designed to meet tenants' needs into old age if required, meeting the "lifetime homes standard", which means they can be easily adapted for specific needs. They are also fitted out to a standard equal to that of the private sector.

### **Council Tax energy rebate payments**

The next stage in the roll-out of £150 energy rebate payments to eligible residents of South Kesteven is now under way. SKDC has already distributed £150 payments to almost 40,000 residents who pay their Council Tax by direct debit and whose bank account validation checks were confirmed.

Around 20,000 non-validated customers, and those who do not pay by direct debit, are now receiving a letter in the post which includes a barcode.

The barcode is for a £150 voucher, which can be redeemed from any Post Office branch. Residents will need to take their letter and provide a valid form of identification from a list included in it.

Once the Post Office is satisfied identification has been proved the voucher can be redeemed, either in cash or be credited to a bank account of the residents choice. Letters are being issued at the rate of 2,800 a week up to 29<sup>th</sup> July.

The rebate is for people who live in Council Tax bands A-D and is designed to help with gas and electric bills.

## **Community Awards reminder**

Just a quick reminder that there is still time to send in nominations for the SK Community Awards 2022.

Please look around your communities, see who is making a difference in and nominate them - the closing date for nominations in each of the seven awards categories is July 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **Military support**

In June SKDC once more got behind Armed Forces Week, which offered an opportunity to come together to recognise and celebrate the wonderful service provided by our regular and reservist soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, both past and present, and the families that have supported them.

The Armed Forces standard was raised on St Peter's Hill where I was delighted to be joined by cadets and military representatives, including the Malaya and Borneo Veterans' Association.

Grantham has strong links to the Armed Forces and those close ties continue with young people joining the forces to serve our country with honour and distinction, returning to civilian life as valued members of their community, greatly enriched by their experiences.

It's also my pleasure to announce that Grantham's Guildhall Arts Centre is now offering ticket discounts to the military community through SKDC's Armed Forces Discount Card.

The discount card, available from SKDC, is open to service personnel and their families living in the district, including reservists, veterans and widows or widowers, and now special offers will apply to shows and events promoted by SKDC that are marked by an Armed Forces discount card logo.

## **Support for Ukrainians**

There has been a tremendous response across South Kesteven to the humanitarian crisis brought about by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Our district is, in fact, hosting more refugees than any other in Lincolnshire under the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme and SKDC has once again gone above and beyond, with a special project team working hard to ensure they receive the support they need.

We have so far carried out well over 100 accommodation checks and are also administering the £350 a month 'thank you' payments that are available to people who provide accommodation for at least six months.

It has been truly heart-warming to see how residents of South Kesteven have opened their homes to those whose lives have been turned upside down by the terrible events in their own country.

## **On board**

Finally, from a personal point of view I am delighted to have been elected to the Board of the Conservatives In Local Government and am looking forward to working with the Local Government Association Conservatives to drive improvement and innovation across local government.