

## **Parish Update – February 2023**

### **Voter ID and the May local elections**

In May, local elections will be taking place across South Kesteven. There will be a big change this year with photo ID required to be able to vote at a polling station; but it's important to note that postal voters are not affected.

Accepted forms of photo ID include a passport, driving licence, Blue Badge, Older Person's bus pass, and identity cards with the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram. Most voters will already have an accepted form of ID - and those who haven't can apply online or via SKDC.

The Council is making it as straightforward as possible for those who need to obtain ID so they can cast their vote. People can apply free either online at [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) or through SKDC by completing a paper application form or applying in person.

SKDC administers the polls so our preparations are well under way. The elections are a massive undertaking for us, when every District Council seat across South Kesteven will be contested - that's 56 seats across 30 wards, as well as those for town and parish councils.

For all the information on the May local elections, including how to register to vote, visit our website, [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk).

### **Garden waste**

Fortnightly collections for the 2023-24 Garden Waste Collection Service scheme will start on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, which means it is time to renew your service.

Last year more than 31,000 residents joined the scheme, and they are being contacted to remind them to renew their membership for the service, which is, of course, also available to new members.

Customers can renew or register [*from Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> February*] paying by card or direct debit at our website [southkesteven.gov.uk](http://southkesteven.gov.uk)

It's easy to join online - or by phone - and we are confident that for £2.13 per collection the service represents great value for money and saves residents time and trips to their local recycling centre.

### **New bin collection lorry for breast cancer awareness**

You may have seen the amazing coverage of our new pink bin lorry, raising awareness of breast cancer and the importance of checking for symptoms.

It is already in service so you may have seen it out on its rounds sharing a message which can literally save lives.

The Council worked closely with our lorry supplier, Dennis Eagle, who were delighted to support such a good cause with a pink paint job on a freighter already on order for the refuse collection fleet.

The new vehicle was always scheduled for delivery to join our fleet, so there was no extra cost to the council for either the lorry or the pink paintwork.

It came about through our housing officer Rachael Bradley, working tirelessly to help other sufferers after being diagnosed with breast cancer at the start of the Covid pandemic in 2020. I am pleased to report she is now in remission.

### **SKToday magazine**

Do keep an eye out for your next issue of SKToday, which is being delivered to every home in the district from the end of February onwards.

As well as useful information on Bank Holiday bin collections, there's advice on how households can better cope with the cost of living, and features on some wonderful inspirational women of South Kesteven, our vital homelessness prevention work, and all the ins and outs of the Council Tax.

### **Parking payment change**

SKDC-operated car parks have all been successfully upgraded to allow card and contactless payment. This means customers will be able to pay with cash or by card, as the previous phone and pay system is discontinued.

The new system allows faster, more convenient, transactions and less need for people to use coins, reducing queues and preventing people having to struggle for the correct change.

The ticket machines will still provide a paper ticket for display in the windscreen.

### **Cost of Living**

I understand how important it is that we continue to support those most affected by rising energy and household prices. I am pleased that SKDC's Cost of Living Task Force continues to make progress supporting residents across the District.

In the latest edition of SK Today, further information is included and provided a printed resource for every home in the District.

An additional leaflet will be distributed alongside Council Tax reminders, rent letters and tenancy sign-up packs, and alongside other letters issued by SKDC.

There is also an online hub with information and guidance available via the SKDC website:

[www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/costofliving)

### **And finally, a plug for Stamford Arts Centre**

For those of you who are fans of classical music, I am delighted to report that world-renowned artists will be performing at the historic and picturesque Stamford Arts Centre over the next few months – and what a fantastic venue it is for them.

The performances continue until April so there is plenty of time to attend the Arts Centre and witness this celebration of classical music in our District.

Our Arts Centre teams do a wonderful job in booking exciting programmes of entertainment so I would encourage you to give your support and experience events here.