

Community Services & Licensing Committee

Information Sheet

Strategic Head of Customer Services – Joanne Jordan

Contact: 01453 754005 or joanne.jordan@stroud.gov.uk

Joanne manages Community and Facilities, Cultural Services, Customer Services and Public Spaces.

These services are wide and varied public facing services.

Community and Facilities

Community and Facilities Manager – Mike Hammond

Contact: 01453 754447 or mike.hammond@stroud.gov.uk

The service includes

- Management of Stratford Park Leisure Centre contract
- Direct management of Joint Use Sports Centres
- Management of Cornhill Market Square
- Management of Shambles Market operation
- Management of Ebley Mill (including catering, Ebley Mill car parks, caretaking and mail room)
- Management of abandoned vehicle function
- Hate Crime, PREVENT and Modern Slavery training/awareness delivery for the authority
- Neighbourhood Warden Service
- Careline Service
- Youth Service
- Management of SDC Car Parks
- Emergency Planning

Principal Community & Facilities Officer – Mike Towson
Contact: 01453 754336 or michael.towson@stroud.gov.uk

Responsible for the following

Senior Careline Officer – Mike Godwin
Contact: 01453 754149 or mike.godwin@stroud.gov.uk

Careline is a personal alarm and monitoring service that can help people live a more independent life. We supply and install the equipment, visiting residents in their own homes. We currently have circa. 1600 units in the district, supporting over 2000 residents.

Neighbourhood Wardens

The Neighbourhood Warden Service operates district wide aiming to maintain and improve the safety of our communities and improving the quality of life for those living in the Stroud district.

In line with this community safety theme the wardens and wider team members represent SDC at numerous meetings including:

- Stroud Community Safety Partnership
- Cotswold and Stroud Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Hate Crime Group
- Joint Cluster Group
- Community Safety Officers
- Safer Estates and Anti-social Behaviour
- CCTV (Dursley & Stroud)

The team of Neighbourhood Wardens are highly visible in our communities and are often the first contact point for residents. The team work closely with many other agencies to ensure a comprehensive service.

SDC Car Park Management

A Civil Enforcement Supervisor and two Civil Enforcement Officers enforce the parking regulations laid out in the numerous SDC car parks district wide.

Income is collated and monitored by the administration support.

Senior Emergency Planning Officer – Nikki Humphries
Contact: 01453 754455 or nikki.humphries@stroud.gov.uk

- Ensures the Council complies with its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Responsible for maintaining the Council's business continuity plan
- Coordinate the council's response to bad weather
- Link in with multi agency partners via the Local Resilience Forum
- Provide advice and assistance to the Council's controller and response teams
- Working alongside the Community & Facilities Manager delivering PREVENT and Modern Slavery awareness training to staff and Members.

- Dealing with all reports of abandoned vehicles in the district in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Wardens
- Manages the Community and Facilities business support team

Senior Youth Officer (Hear by Right) – Steve Miles

Contact: 01453 754504 / 07896 690140 or steve.miles@stroud.gov.uk

- Community based youth work programmes that enable young people to have a voice and be heard on issues affecting them, delivering national Hear by Right standards for youth participation.
- The strategic and operational development of Stroud District Youth Council and the Local Youth Forum groups.
- The co-ordination of the district youth grant funding programme.
- The overall facilitation of the Council's Youth Work Strategy.
- Delivering professional advice on youth and community work issues for the Council's services and also through local youth partnerships, Parish and Town Councils and youth project management committees.
- Representing the Council on the Gloucestershire Children and Young People's District Safeguarding Network Group.

Cultural Services

General Manager of Dursley Pool and Sports Centre – Angela Gillingham

Contact: 01453 540995 or angela.gillingham@stroud.gov.uk

- Manages The Pulse, Dursley
- Manages Dursley Sports Centre

Headlines

- The new centre was successfully opened in July 2016
- The official opening took place in January 2017 with HRH The Princess Royal attending
- The centre has 1460 members which has exceeded the first year target
- 1500 children are on the Learn to Swim programme.

Priorities for 2017/2018

- Increasing income in order to work towards becoming self sufficient as a business
- Hit 1500 memberships – retaining current members and increasing new members
- Increase the number of patients referred on the Healthy Lifestyles scheme
- Continually review and improve the fitness programme
- Develop the team at the centre
- Review of the Joint Use contract

General Manager of Subscription Rooms and TIC – Joe Dymond
Contact: 01453 760991 or joe.dymond@stroud.gov.uk

Joe has been appointed as the new Manager from July 2017.

Angela Gillingham and Kevin Ward have been providing management support to the team until the new manager was appointed.

Main focus for the team is to:

- Increase income by providing a programme which provides popular entertainment
- Review current processes in order to improve the efficiency
- Reduce the subsidy of the venue

Museum Development Manager – Kevin Ward
Contact: 01453 763394 or kevin.ward@stroud.gov.uk

- Manages Stroud District (Cowle) Museum Service
- Museum in the Park
- Collection Stores

16/17 Headlines

- 55,000 visits to the Museum, including 2,250 on the learning programme.
- Opening of the previously lost and derelict Walled Garden, planting established and maintained by volunteers, pergola installed (funded by Museum Friends)
- £38,000 of grants for collection projects – including replacement of all showcase lighting with LED lighting.
- Shop and Café lines reviewed and adjusted.
- Purchase and installation of custom dresser for the café (Museum Friends)
- Museum successful in joining national Future Proof Museums Programme.
- Adoption of national audience survey tool 'Audience Finder'.

Major projects for 2017/18

- Retention of Accreditation (national standard for all museums).
- Continue to raise awareness, access and use of stored collections by the public, other staff and volunteers.
- Continued development of Walled Garden and exploiting new potential.
- Re-design of shop fittings/layout (subject to grant application).
- Focus on projects to reduce costs or increase income that fit the Museum's vision and manifesto.
- Outcomes from Future Proof Museums Programme.
- Development of Museum's next five year Forward Plan (2018-2023).

www.museuminthepark.org.uk
www.twitter.com/museuminthepark
www.facebook.com/themuseuminthepark
www.instagram.com/museuminthepark

Public Spaces

Public Spaces Manager – Carlos Novoth

Contact: 01453 754406 or carlos.novoth@stroud.gov.uk

- Manages the Public Space Service – this includes street cleaning, building cleaning, provision of public conveniences, grounds maintenance, Stratford Park, open and closed cemeteries, woodland and commons and management of trees, play areas. The section is also responsible for the council's waste services but these are reported to Environment Committee.
- A new tree contract has recently been let by Public Space Services ensuring reduced costs and high quality arbour work. Access to the contract is provided to all the council's service areas in addition to parish and town councils.

Major projects for 2017/18

- A review process is currently underway to evaluate the success of the Multi Service Contract and determine key actions for ensuring its long term sustainability
- Manage the multi Service contract with a view to improving services for the short, medium and longer term
- Develop the current enforcement process dealing with environmental crime and establishment of current waste policies
- Continue to review the council's public convenience service with a view to reducing costs without a reduction in service standards.
- A sponsored roundabout scheme is also planned to improve the visual aspects of the route from the M5 Motorway to Stroud. Costs for introducing the improvements to the roundabouts and surrounding areas will be financed through business sponsors.
- Develop the Sensory Garden at Stratford Park through Section 106 and other external funding.

Customer Services

Customer Services Manager - Shobhan Sen

Contact: 01453 754700 or shobhan.sen@stroud.gov.uk

For our customers the Customer Service Centre is the face of the Council whether they visit Ebley Mill or phone/text/email/write to/tweet us.

We receive an average of 12,000 calls a month, deal with 1,700 visitors and 1500 emails. This equates to 600 calls, 85 visitors and 75 emails per day. We aim to answer 95%+ of calls received within 30 seconds.

The Customer Service Centre team is generically trained covering the following services:

Ebley Mill Reception
Cashiers
Switchboard
Refuse & Recycling
Council Tax
Environmental Health

Abandoned vehicles
Car parks
Main Council email inbox
Complaints line
Freedom of Information requests
Electronic notice boards

Housing Advice
Elections
Electoral Roll viewing
Self service payment kiosk

Tell us Once
Council's Twitter account
Proof of Life certification

We are actively supporting the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) Corporate Professional Qualifications programme.

We are also involved in various channel shift initiatives to provide our customers a more efficient service.

Feedback from our customers has been consistently favourable, but we aim to continuously improve our service to better meet their needs.

Revenue and Benefits Manager – Simon Killen
Contact: 01453 754013 or simon.killen@stroud.gov.uk

Revenue

The Revenue Team is responsible for the billing and collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

We have 52,511 Council Tax properties and 4,059 business rate properties. In addition to annual billing around 35,000 bills are sent through the year. Over 70% of our Council Tax payers are on direct debit and over 8,000 accounts now get their bill sent electronically.

As part of a systems thinking review some time ago, we looked at the way we deal with customers in the area who are moving. The outcome of this was that when we have a telephone call from someone who is moving, we try and deal with everything the council may be involved in around that move, including advising on refuse collection and recycling arrangements and sending the relevant leaflet with their new Council Tax bill. We also use the opportunity to check on the number of adults in the property, so that we can send the forms to register with elections. This results in an overall saving in postage and the customer doesn't need to call other services for the information.

We are using texting and email to promote direct debit and bills by email, along with other initiatives.

Recovery and in-house enforcement

The Recovery Team are responsible for the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates, Car Parking, Housing Benefit Overpayment and Corporate Sundry Debts, collecting over £90 million a year.

We have brought enforcement agents (bailiff) back in-house during 2016. This function has been carried out by a third party for a number of years in a county wide contract. The function now sits within the existing Council Tax Recovery Team and the work has been absorbed without any additional resource.

We are now able to take a corporate approach to multiple debts as well as provide debt and welfare benefit advice for the vulnerable. All fees are retained allowing the service to be self financing and generating an income stream.

The service has so far generated additional income of £18,000 with projected income of £25,000 during 2017.

Collection of Council Tax

99.06% or over £68.5 million of Council Tax was collected during 2016/17. The net collectable debit is now around £69 million, an increase of £7 million in the last 5 years.

A typical year would see us issue 13,000 reminders and take over 2,000 cases to court. Over 600 cases are referred to Enforcement Agents (bailiffs), 1,000 cases subject to an attachment of income or benefits and 1 person is sent to Prison.

Collection of Business Rates

98.88% or £27.8 million of Business Rates was collected during 2016/17. This was an increase over last year's performance.

The team are very proactive with new businesses at the first point of contact to secure realistic payment plans and take up of small business rate relief. This relief provides a huge lifeline for small businesses with 41% our businesses benefiting from a reduction in their bills. Most contact with businesses is done by phone, text and email rather than the 'standard letter'.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

We award Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support to 7,122 customers, with around 45% being of pensionable age. The case count has reduced in the last 12 months, although the movement of people in and out of benefit has increased.

Performance 2016/17

Systems Thinking continues to operate within the team looking at better and more efficient ways of dealing with the work and increasing areas of automation. A number of our processes are now done automatically without any staff intervention. Customer contact by e-mail and text message continues to grow. We also now have most of our landlords receiving their payment schedules electronically as well as their notifications and we are now regularly sending over 100 notifications a week by email.

- NI 181 - 13.47 days was the average time taken to process all new claims and change of circumstances
- We paid £11,350,043 in Housing Benefit to tenants of SDC. This accounts for 49% of the rent to be collected by the Council;
- We paid £12,850,835 in Housing Benefit to tenants of privately rented accommodation; and
- We paid £5,802,188 in Council Tax Support to persons who either own or rent their own homes and are liable to pay Council Tax.

Whilst the case load continues to drop, the work remains constant. The team have to look at new and more efficient ways of dealing with things. We need to manage the changes and are challenged to maintain performance and efficiency as our caseload and staffing levels reduce.

Universal Credit

The future of the Benefit Service is uncertain as we move towards Universal Credit. The Government is committed to the National expansion of Universal Credit and the roll out has been accelerated. For Stroud we enter into full service in October 2017.

We are starting to plan and prepare for the full roll-out of Universal Credit, particularly to learn more about how full service is likely to impact on us, get advice on local issues, understand the key risks, the gaps in service provision and look at options to address these.

Areas to focus on include: changes to staffing roles, changes to service provision, Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) and digital support, the impacts on stakeholders, building up links with partners, Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the key impacts and risks on areas such as homelessness.

Welfare Reform

Changes implemented from Autumn 2016:

- Maximum amount of out of work benefits working age families can receive will be £20,000 (from £26,000) or £384.62 per week (from £500)
- Maximum £13,400 (from £18,200) for single adults with no children, or £257.69 per week (from £350)

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

We recently reported to the Community Services and Licensing Committee and adopted a new policy for dealing with DHPs.

Our DHP scheme is operated within Benefits, and used to assist Housing Benefit claimants who may need further financial help with their housing costs, during periods of short term need. Housing costs can include help towards rent, tenancy start up costs and moving costs.

We receive limited funds each year for the DHP scheme. Because the amount that can be spent on the scheme each year is restricted, not everyone who claims a DHP may be awarded one. Who receives DHP is entirely at the discretion of the Council.

We spent the 2016/17 funding of £117,588 helping 168 claimants. The main reasons for an award was largely for those affected by the bedroom tax and benefit cap. The funding for 2017/18 is £153,989.

Fraud

Under Welfare Reform the DWP created a national fraud investigation team, the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) which investigate all cases of welfare benefit fraud. This includes the fraud investigation work of Housing Benefit which had been carried out locally by each Council. Our Fraud investigators, together with any outstanding investigations have transferred to the DWP.

We are currently in talks with the Gloucestershire Counter Fraud Hub with a view to commissioning a number of days with the fraud hub to carry out agreed counter fraud activity.

Housing Benefit Overpayment

Annually, we collect around £600,000 in debt.

We have seen an increase in new debt identified following a pilot scheme called Real Time Information with HMRC. We are receiving data from them of claimant's actual wages/pensions which often differs from what has been declared.

Sundry Debtors

A system thinking project lead by Revenues and Finance has raised the importance of debt collection with other services. We have changed the way we deal with invoices and reminders corporately and also introduced a recovery protocol which is used across the authority.

We now deal with a whole range of corporate debt including licenses, commercial rent, fixed penalty notices, deposit bonds and rent in advance.

Strategic Head of Development Services – Barry Wyatt

Contact: 01453 754210 or barry.wyatt@stroud.gov.uk

Barry manages Planning and Development Services, Planning Strategy, Tourism, Environmental Health, Licensing, Health & Wellbeing and General Fund Housing. Part of these services fall under the remit of this committee, with the remaining services falling under Environment Committee.

Tourism

Policy Implementation Manager – Pippa Stroud

Contact: 01453 754099 or email pippa.stroud@stroud.gov.uk

Tourism promotion sits within the Regeneration service, focussing on projects which support the growth of the local tourism-related businesses by promoting the Stroud District as a key destination within the Cotswolds. As a member of Cotswolds Tourism, the district plays an active part in the national and international tourism promotion of the Cotswolds, targeting both traditional markets and the new emerging markets such as New Zealand and China via a series of campaigns and promotions.

The Tourism service also works to support local tourism-related businesses by promoting accommodation, attractions and events via the production of guides, brochures and press releases, alongside use of the Cotswolds Tourism website and of course social media, which is a growing and cost-effective way of promoting our district as a great place to visit.

Tourism not only directly supports the local economy, it also helps to raise the district's profile, showcasing our towns and villages and leading to new business creation through enterprise and inward investment. The Stroud district is an important area for tourism. Tourism is worth an estimated £1 billion per annum to Gloucestershire as a whole and £144m per annum to the Stroud district, supporting 3,199 jobs. 2.8 million visitors to the district are day trippers, with 0.3 million people staying overnight.

You can find the Cotswolds Tourism website here: www.cotswolds.com and a more local version here: <http://www.visitthecotswolds.org.uk/> Please do take a moment to have a look – you might see some familiar places, and perhaps find some surprises too. You might already be aware of our excellent 'Discover Stroud District' promotional video that launched in February 2017 and has already been viewed over 280,000 times worldwide.

Users of Twitter can also find us at @DiscoverStroud where we have nearly 5,000 followers and on Facebook 'Discover Stroud' with over 3,000 likes.

Environmental Health

Head of Environmental Health – Jon Beckett

Contact: 01453 754443 or jon.beckett@stroud.gov.uk

Jon manages the Environmental Health Service part of which falls within the remit of this committee, namely the delivery of the Health & Wellbeing Plan and licensing. The rest of the work of the service falls under the Environment Committee

Sport and Health Development Service Manager – Jane Bullows

Contact: 01453 754322 or jane.bullows@stroud.gov.uk

Jane and her team oversee and deliver sport, health & wellbeing development initiatives including the Healthy Lifestyles Scheme, sport, physical activity and recreation/play projects.

The service innovates a number of projects and enables/facilitates partnership working, whilst remaining flexible to the changing physical activity and health and wellbeing needs/landscape in the Stroud district. It also is a major contributor to county, regional and national strategies for sport & health development, public health and wellbeing, play development, disability development, safeguarding, planning and employability/education and training.

The service is based on principles such as, raising participation in sport and physical activity, improving mental and physical wellbeing, weight management, prevention of long-term health conditions, providing rehabilitation, evolving club to community links, enabling

lifelong learning opportunities and opening development pathways from foundation to excellence level.

The service works with a plethora of partners, both internally and externally from district to national level, such as:

SDC Community and Facilities, SDC Planning, SDC Asset Management, SDC Housing/Tenant Support, SDC Environmental Health, SLM, NHS Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire County Council and Public Health, 2Gether Trust, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group Stroud & Berkeley Vale Locality, local hospitals/physio depts. and mental health support centres, Sport England, English Federation Of Disability Sport, Youth Sport Trust, Women's Sports Foundation, National Governing Bodies of Sport, University of Gloucestershire, SGS College, Gloucestershire College, VCA, all Stroud district primary, secondary and SEN schools, Active Gloucestershire, Turning Point, Nelson House, Park House, Independence Trust, Barnwood House Trust etc.

The team is managed by one Sport and Health Development Manager and as at 2017, consists of a Sport & Health Development Officer (F/T), a Healthy Lifestyles Co-ordinator (P/T 20 hours p/week). The service is able to deliver a broad range of sessions by way of freelancers and/or volunteers based off site around the district (such as Walking 4 Health trained volunteer walk leaders, Cardiac Rehab Phase IV instructors, Respiratory Rehab Instructors, GP Referral instructors, Cycling 4 Health instructor, Cancer Rehab Instructor, Move It or Lose It Instructor). Each year, seasonal staff are employed to deliver the Kapers Summer Playscheme and a number of young volunteers assist with our sports events such as the Panathlon, the Len Hutton Football Festival and the Generation Games.

Delivery is strategically linked to SDC strategies/priorities and local health plans: Corporate Plan, Health & Wellbeing Plan, Community Safety/Crime and Disorder agenda, Environmental Health objectives, Green Infrastructure Plan; CCG Strategic Implementation Plan and a plethora of County through to national Strategies: PH Fit for the Future, GCC/CCG County Obesity Strategy, NHS Mental Health Strategy, Active Gloucestershire Social Impact Bond, GCC Police and Crime Commissioner plans, DCMS/Sport England Sporting Futures, EFDS Strategy, 44 National Governing Bodies of sport whole sport plans, NHS/PHE/NICE overarching objectives and protocols to name but a few.

Key performance last year

- Successful delivery of Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults Awareness Training to over 340 SDC staff and associated contractors.
- Healthy Lifestyles Scheme continued to evolve:
 - *650 patients attending our GP Exercise on Referral Scheme with over 60% completion rate of the twelve week intervention.
 - *2152 cumulative attendances at our Cardiac, Respiratory, Cancer, Better Balance (falls) & Move it or Lose It Rehabilitation classes (average of 30-35 per class for Cardiac Rehab).
 - *Over 2000 hours walked by our Strolling In Stroud Health walkers, totalling 4000 miles covered and over 1000 walkers through the scheme.
- Kapers Summer Playscheme saw over 700 cumulative attendances, generating an income of £11,400 towards the scheme.

- A third successful season for Play in the Park scheme, delivered at 6 venues over the summer with 140 children aged 5-12 taking part.
- Over 1000 total of children and young people and adults attended our sports development events/schemes, for example our Active4Life Event saw 107 participants aged 51 to 85 years young and over 40 volunteer contributors.

Key projects for 2017/18

- Continue to deliver a range of initiatives under the Sport & Healthy lifestyles banner, including Nordic Walking, Cycling4Health website, Walking Netball, Cancer Rehab
- Continue to input and/or lead strategically/operationally to the District and subsequent County working groups for Mental Health & Wellbeing, Drugs & Alcohol, Domestic Violence/Sexual Abuse, Weight Management, Social Prescribing and associated projects.
- Continue to lead and deliver Safeguarding (GSAB and GSCB) awareness training and process development for SDC and associated staff.
- Continue to work with the CCG, County Council Public Health and NHS 2Gether Trust to deliver health & wellbeing projects targeted at communities most in need.
- Monitor national and local Public Health, CCG, Sport England and DCMS policy changes and communicate these to relevant staff and organisations

Principal Licensing Officer – Rachel Andrew

Contact: 01453 754401 or email rachel.andrew@stroud.gov.uk

Rachel and her Licensing Team deal with a wide range of different licensing functions including:

• sale of alcohol	• scrap metal dealers
• entertainment	• street traders
• late night takeaways	• gambling premises
• taxis and private hire	• charity collections

Many of the decisions about whether to grant a licence application are delegated to Officers, particularly where the decision is not controversial. However some decisions are referred to Committee or to a hearing panel. A hearing panel is made up of 3 members of the Committee.

Last year hearing panels considered:

- 6 alcohol and entertainment licence applications
- 1 review of a licensed premises