

Spring 2021

Inside Swale

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Richard Palmer, Cabinet Member for Community.

Welcome to the spring edition of Inside Swale.

As winter passes and we head towards the spring, I'm sure we're all looking forward to a time of brighter, warmer days as summer approaches.

In my role as cabinet member responsible for communities at the council, I have seen the many difficulties endured by residents over the past year due to the damage that coronavirus has caused. I would like to send my most sincere condolences to those who've had to endure the heartache of losing a loved one.

Despite all the negatives, there has been some good that has come with this awful pandemic. Communities have come together to help and support each other. Strangers have stepped up to offer a helping hand to those most in need. I think most of us have learned to be a little kinder and more tolerant towards each other.

Witnessing the compassion that people have shown in recent months has made me proud to live in Swale.

There is a long list of people that have, through their hard work and dedication, got us through these past months without a second thought for their own health. Those who work in public transport, postal workers, delivery drivers, NHS staff at all levels, care workers, staff from the emergency services, shop assistants and refuse collectors are just some of the many people we often take for granted. They're always there getting on with their jobs to help keep this country running. I think we have also all gained a renewed respect for the teachers that see our children through their education.

It is to all these people that I send my thanks and appreciation for all that you have done for the people of Swale.



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Cover photo: Queenborough sea wall, looking towards the Old House at Home public house.

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 **Swale Borough Council**

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to print and every attempt is made to ensure its accuracy.

Going green with new fleet of electric vehicles



Cllrs Eddie Thomas and Tim Valentine with three of our environment wardens and the new fleet of vans.

been replaced with nine Nissan Env200 vans that will be charged at the Swale House council offices in Sittingbourne via eight new EV chargers.

Three environmental warden vans, three green space vans, two dog warden vans and a parking services van are now out on the road alongside the Mayor's car which was upgraded to an electric vehicle in December.

The new electric vans join the two Nissan Leaf electric cars already used by the council's civil enforcement team.

One of our actions of our Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan is to replace the council's fleet with electric vehicles to help us reduce our carbon emissions and improve the air quality in Swale.

By going electric with our fleet we can save on carbon emissions and also make long-term cost savings. Electric vehicles have a much lower running cost as well as lower maintenance costs.

Cllr Eddie Thomas, deputy cabinet member for the environment at the council, said: "We've worked hard to improve the infrastructure around the borough to encourage residents to also make the switch to zero-emissions vehicles.

"We already have two electric vehicle charging points at Swale House that are available on weekends, two bays at the Swallows car park, Sittingbourne, four new bays at central car park in Faversham were installed last month, and four new bays at Rose Street car park in Sheerness have been completed this week."

For more information on air quality around the borough visit www.swale.gov.uk/air-quality.

As part of our drive to become carbon neutral we have replaced our fleet of vehicles with nine new electric vehicles, saving 30 tonnes of carbon every year.

The zero-emission vehicles will help to improve the air quality in Swale. Our fleet regularly travel through the borough's air quality management areas (AQMAs) where vehicle pollution contributes to poor air quality.

The previous fleet of diesel vans were due to be replaced as the lease came to an end in 2020 and has



Cllrs Eddie Thomas (right) and Tim Valentine with one of the new electric vans

New electric vehicle charging bays installed

Thanks to four new bays in central car park in Faversham, it's now even easier to charge your electric vehicle in Faversham.

We've installed the new charge points as part of our efforts to encourage as many as possible to switch to zero-emission electric vehicles. One of the aims of our Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan is to reduce the number of journeys made by petrol and diesel vehicles to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

Electric vehicles must be plugged-in and charging to use the new spaces. There will be no charge for the electricity used, and the parking tariff for the electric vehicle charging bays will remain the same as the rest of the car park.

A charging fee may be introduced to cover the cost of the electricity as demand rises in the future, but council car parks will always have a competitive rate for those who invest in their own electric vehicle.

Central car park is the third of four council car parks across the borough to have new electric vehicle parking bays installed.

Four new bays have been installed in Rose Street car park, Sheerness and people can already use the electric car chargers at the Swallows car park and Swale House car park in Sittingbourne. Swale House car park is available for public use weekends only.

You'll be able to charge vehicles by downloading the free Pod Point app but you will have to load some credit to be able to start using it.



Cllrs Eddie Thomas (right) and Tim Valentine at the new charging bays in Central Car Park, Faversham.

Climate Action Plan Progress

After declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency in June 2019 we set some of the most ambitious targets in not only Kent but the UK. We as a council are aiming to become carbon neutral by 2025, and to be a carbon neutral borough by 2030. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the way we work, we have still made considerable progress on these targets.

Some of achievements from 2020 include switching our fleet of vehicles to zero emission fully electric vehicles, removing single use plastics from Swale House and launching our Fuel and Water Home Advice Service. The Planning Committee has requested more renewable energy and energy-efficiency measures are included in new developments.

Although there have been delays to tree planting, we were still able to plant 2,500 trees in our country parks and identify potential sites for more planting. We're also reducing our use of pesticides, herbicides and fertiliser whenever possible.

We've worked with the Solar Together programme which saw over 450 referrals for solar installations and we're supporting community solar projects.

Faversham now has a town-wide 20 mph speed limit to help improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions, improve road safety and encourage more journeys to be made by walking and cycling. We've also installed three recycling bins for plastics on Sheppey's beaches to help reduce the amount of plastic litter that makes its way into the sea. We are working with KCC to maintain or improve the low levels of waste that goes to landfill.



Becoming a dementia-friendly council

We are changing our services to ensure they are more dementia-friendly.

We will amend services and train staff to provide a more supportive and inclusive environment for those living with dementia, as well as those caring for people living with dementia.

Working with the Oasis Academy sixth form and support service No Place Like Home, we will assess what services can be amended to be more accessible to those living with dementia, and also what training staff could benefit from.

Councillors unanimously agreed to make the council dementia-friendly after discussing how dementia had affected their lives.

Cllr Hannah Perkin, deputy cabinet member for health and wellbeing at the

council, said: "Dementia is something very close to my heart which is why I put the motion forward.

"I'm delighted we voted unanimously to create a dementia-friendly environment for people who are living with dementia and the people who are caring for them.

"It is estimated that approximately 850,000 people are living with dementia in the UK, and it's important for us to help those in Swale to live a fulfilling and independent life for as long as possible."

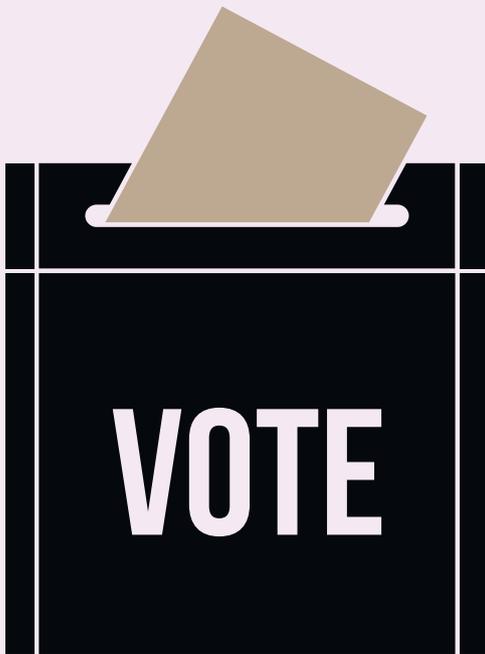
Cllr Angela Harrison, cabinet member for health and wellbeing at the council, said: "Committing to becoming dementia-friendly means we will work to create an environment and offer services where people living with dementia are understood, respected and supported.

"We'll work with the Oasis Academy sixth form and support service No Place Like Home to assess the changes we need to make long-lasting changes that help people living with dementia.

"Cinemas now offer dementia-friendly screenings, leisure centres offer dementia-friendly swim sessions and the NHS run dementia-friendly memory groups, so we're in good company and I'm excited to see how this commitment can support people dealing with this baffling disease.

Cllr Roger Truelove, leader at the council, said: "Dementia is a frightening disease that touches everybody in some form or another throughout their life.

"It is a chronic issue and we must partner with other agencies and charities to provide the care and support people need."



Kent County Council and Kent Police & Crime Commissioner elections on 6 May 2021

Local elections are taking place this May, elections for Kent County Councillors, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and four Town and Parish Council by-elections. They will be taking place on 6 May 2021.

We will be sending out poll cards for the elections to registered voters in late March. These will have all the information about where your local polling station is located.

In order to vote in the elections you must be on the electoral register, which was updated last year during our annual canvass.



Kent Police & Crime Commissioner elections

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are elected every four years, and elections were due to take place last year but were postponed due to the pandemic. The current term runs until May 2021 when the elections take place 6 May 2021.

To find out more about the Kent PCC and what they do, visit www.kent-pcc.gov.uk



Kent County Council elections

These will see all 81 seats on Kent County Council contested, to decide who will run services such as education, transport, social services and safety, so it is important you have your say. The divisions in Swale for Kent County Council seats are:

- Faversham
- Sheppey
- Sittingbourne North
- Sittingbourne South
- Swale East
- Swale West

Each division votes for one KCC councillor, except for the Sheppey division which will have two. Your poll card will tell you the name of the division that you are voting in, and where your polling station is. Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm.

Covid-19 - Voting safely on 6 May 2021

We understand that some will be concerned about going to cast their votes in person, but we are doing everything we can to make sure the polling stations are safe. If you're concerned about voting in person, you can also vote by post or appoint someone as your proxy to vote on your behalf.

We encourage those who are extremely vulnerable to apply for a postal or proxy vote to ensure they remain safe.

To find out how to apply for a postal or proxy vote visit www.swale.gov.uk/elections or email electors@swale.gov.uk or phone **01795 417316**.

If you do vote in person at a polling station, it would be very helpful if you brought your own pen or pencil to help reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19.

Take part in the consultation on our Local Plan

There's still time to take part in the consultation of our local plan. The review of the existing Local Plan Bearing Fruits will help guide the development of the borough until 2038 and, if adopted, will set the basis for future planning decisions.

The plan will be available for public viewing on our website until Tuesday 23 March 2021.

With libraries and council offices closed due to the pandemic, it won't be possible to provide physical copies of the plans at these locations. Hard copies, or extracts from documents, may be made available at cost on request from LPcomments@swale.gov.uk or by calling **01795 417014**.

To take part in the consultation, visit www.swale.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/local-plans/local-plan-review/public-consultation.



Music equipment seized



A Sittingbourne resident had their music equipment seized by our officers after continuously flouting anti-social behaviour laws.

Our officers visited the home alongside the police to seize the equipment in October 2020 after receiving continuous noise complaints since March that year.

After receiving the first complaints in March, we advised the residents to record the music on The Noise App which allows people to record evidence and report noise nuisance directly to our officers.

We also sent two letters to the occupant and our officers visited the residence and witnessed the noise on three separate occasions.

The occupant was served with a community protection warning and subsequent community protection notice following further complaints, as well as a fixed penalty notice.

Despite numerous conversations with the occupants the noise nuisance continued so we applied for a seizure warrant which was granted by Folkestone Magistrates Court.

The community really came together during lockdown and it's disappointing that nearby residents suffered because of one person's thoughtless actions.

We will support any residents whose wellbeing is threatened due to the anti-social behaviour of their neighbours and encourage people to contact us for help and advice.

For more information about how to report anti-social behaviour visit www.swale.gov.uk/community-safety-and-emergencies/anti-social-behaviour or call **01795 417850**.

Peter Morgan made Freeman of the Borough

A popular former councillor from Sittingbourne has been made a Freeman of the Borough of Swale.



Peter Morgan, was given the honour at a special meeting of the council in February, having been nominated by the council leader, Cllr Roger Truelove.

Cllr Truelove said: "In my long time associated with this council, I cannot think of anyone who has represented the sense of service with greater distinction than Peter Morgan.

"Honouring him sets a high benchmark for us now serving on this council.

"Peter schooled many community groups into existence and very frequently stayed with people's projects, usually as chairman.

"A few years ago, when Peter fell in his cellar at home, he had to go into the Memorial Hospital. After visiting him there, I put a short message on a Facebook page to let people know he was progressing well and the public response was overwhelming.

"In wishing Peter well, a multitude of people recalled their lifelong thanks to him, for all he had been to them as a councillor, but also in the wider community and strikingly as a teacher.

"Peter is a Welshman, with a gift for public speaking, and came to Sittingbourne in 1948 and made it his lifelong home.

"He was first a teacher at the Milton Butts and then at Westlands School.

"He was elected to the Sittingbourne and Milton District Council in 1962 and campaigned for years for council recognition of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

"He became the first Liberal Mayor of Swale in 1987 and Chair of Kent County Council in 1996.

"Among his many community roles he has been a lay preacher, chair of the Swale Footpaths Group, founder member of the Twinning Association between Sittingbourne and Ypres, chair of the Dolphin Barge Museum, founder of the Sittingbourne Heritage Museum, governor of Schools in Sittingbourne and Queenborough, co-founder of the Sittingbourne Music Society, founder of Crossroads Care, founder and Chair of Home Start, chair of Sittingbourne and District Volunteer Bureau.

"Many words are abused these days and one of them is legend. But even so, Peter Morgan's service to the community is legendary.

"Peter put service first and politics second. His career is an example and inspiration to us all and I am pleased members unanimously supported the call to honour him as a Freeman of the Borough of Swale."

Peter joins other Freeman of the borough such as Bob Geldof KBE and Paralympian and TV presenter Steve Brown.

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Sittingbourne

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Residents and a business owner fined more than £2,000 for fly-tipping and littering



Seven residents and a business owner have been given fines totalling £2,200 for fly-tipping and littering in Sheerness.

The fixed penalty notices were received for dumping various household waste in connecting alleyways between properties, and in commercial bins in Rose Street and Marine Parade.

Many areas have seen an increase in fly-tipping this year. We have been monitoring the illegal dumping of household furniture and waste in the alleyways in Sheerness.

We're cracking down on illegal littering and fly-tipping in this area and encourage local residents to contact us to report anyone who is illegally dumping their waste and creating a hazard for everyone. Without your help we'll never get on top of it.

Items ranging from bags of household rubbish to furniture including a bed frame, carpet and mattress were seen being dumped by residents.

One couple were caught dumping their old bed frame, carpet and other household waste in a commercial bin in Marine Parade.

Another gentleman was seen dumping old wood in the alleyway outside his property between Invicta Road and Alexandra Road by contractors who were on site already clearing up the mess left by other irresponsible residents.

It's not fair for those who dispose of their waste responsibly and we would like to thank those individuals who do the right thing and take the time to help us clear waste and keep the area tidy.

Household waste and recycling centres are open, and slots can be booked, so there is no excuse for illegally dumping waste where families are living.

Our environmental wardens are on the ground and keeping a close eye on the area fining people on the spot.

By dumping your waste, you risk receiving an on the spot fixed penalty notice of £400 for fly-tipping and £150 for littering.



Report

To report an incident of littering or fly-tipping call

01795 417850 or visit www.swale.gov.uk/bins-littering-and-the-environment/littering/report-fly-tipping

Book a slot

To book a slot at a Kent County Council household waste and recycling centre visit www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/rubbish-and-recycling/household-waste-recycling-centres/visiting-a-hwrc-during-coronavirus or call **03000 41 73 73**

Bulky collection

To book a bulky collection with the council call **01795 417888**

Let's talk council tax

We are asking band D council tax payers to pay less than 10p extra per week for our services.

The increase to our portion of the council tax was agreed in February. Following the increase, a band D property will be asked to pay just £3.54 a week, or £184.32 a year, for our services from April this year, a rise of £4.95 for the year. Most properties in Swale are in bands A-C, which means they will pay less than this.

Cllr Roger Truelove, leader of the council, said: "The revenue budget that funds the core services of the council is under severe pressure. This pressure comes from long-term uncertainty about income from central government, and inevitably, the financial pressures due to the Covid-19 crisis. These include both increased expenditure on areas such as homelessness and loss of income, from for example car parking fees.

"Throughout the current financial year, the Government has given us regular support through Covid-19 related grants and with this and good internal financial management, we have resisted the pressures.

"I believe we can manage the challenges for the next year through the same combination of grants we are to receive and sound control of expenditure.

"We will only be asking for a council tax increase of 9p a week for band D properties, though I am aware that people's overall charge will be affected by a larger Kent County Council precept.

"These difficult times make it impossible to increase our spending on our core services in any serious way. However, I do believe we owe it to Swale residents to make improvements to their borough and this we will do.

"We will be setting up the Rainbow Housing Company to provide more affordable housing, a project which is financially stable.

"Within our robust reserves, there are allocations of funds intended to encourage growth and recovery in the borough, and we shall be using those to help the local economy, our visitor economy, our heritage, our environment and public realm and our local community groups.

"In a sound and responsible way, we can spread benefits to the people of Swale in one-off spends that people need in the recovery from the way we are now having to live."



'Your Services 2021/22' can be found online at www.swale.gov.uk/your-services from late March 2021.

Let's break this down..... So what does our portion go towards? Some



Housing advice and homelessness support



Leisure and sports centres



Grounds maintenance



Planning services

Who receives the council tax you pay?

Although we are the collection authority for council tax, not all of your final council tax bill goes towards Swale council services. Kent County Council, Kent Fire and Rescue, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and parish or town councils where these exist also take a portion. These are set by the respective organisations.



Kent & Medway
Fire & Rescue Authority



Ways to pay

There are a number of ways to pay your council tax, but the easiest way is by Direct Debit. It's simple to set up and saves you time. You can complete a Direct Debit form online – you don't need to register for an account or sign into our website.

Once it's set up, your council tax bill can be paid in either 10 or 12 monthly instalments. Visit www.swale.gov.uk/ways-to-pay to set up your Direct Debit or to find out about other ways to pay.

Other ways to pay include calling our 24-hour automated payment line on **0330 088 1702**, online at www.swale.gov.uk/pay-your-council-tax, by standing order, cheque or PayPoint.

If you do not already have an online My Services account to view details of your Council Tax Account, visit www.swale.gov.uk/my-services to register now.

If you have questions about how to pay, or are struggling to make payments, call **01795 417272**.

Ebilling

You can now receive your council tax bills by email. A copy of your bill will be sent to you as a pdf document attachment.

To sign up for the new e-billing service:

visit www.swale.gov.uk/ways-to-pay, email ctax@swale.gov.uk or call **01795 417272**.

of the total revenue is spent on:



Refuse & recycling
collection



Environmental
response



Street
cleaning



Environmental
health

Funding helps purchase permanent housing for people previously sleeping rough

People living in temporary accommodation who have previously slept rough will soon be able to move into more permanent housing thanks to more than £380,000 from the government's Next Steps Accommodation Fund.

The fund has been set up to help those who were placed in temporary accommodation as part of the government's Everyone In initiative, which saw thousands of people sleeping rough across the country brought in off the streets during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. It will help those who are now ready to take the next step into a more permanent housing solution.



It will help those who are now ready to take the next step into a more permanent housing solution.

We were awarded the funding along with our partners Riverside and The Forward Trust who will purchase properties in Swale to convert into shared accommodation.

A dedicated support team will also be recruited to help people move from their temporary accommodation into the new long-term housing.

Cllr Ben J Martin, cabinet member for housing at the council, said: "We're delighted to receive more than £380,000 funding from the government to help people who were previously sleeping rough into more permanent accommodation.



"We'll be working with Riverside and The Forward Trust to find appropriate properties and recruit support workers.

"We've already helped more than 90 people off the streets into accommodation in the past year through the Everyone In initiative, and this money will help them move on into more suitable accommodation.

"Alongside this funding, we'll also be contributing £63,000, as well as an additional £439,000 from Riverside which gives us almost £900,000 in total to purchase registered affordable housing properties that will help people who are ready to take that next step."

Anyone sleeping rough in Swale should contact the council on **01795 417485**.

If you've seen someone sleeping rough and you think they're in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical help, call **999**.

For more information and advice about rough sleeping and homelessness, visit www.swale.gov.uk/homelessness-prevention.

Fuel and Water Home Adviser Service

If you need extra support in reducing your water and energy bills, you can now reach out to our new Fuel and Water Home Adviser Service for help and advice.

You can now get advice on how to effectively manage energy and water use in your homes, and help with applications if you are eligible to apply for grants.

You can make a self-referral to the service, and housing officers, health workers, family finance workers, housing associations, food banks and other charities are able to make a referral on your behalf.

It's simple to make an appointment with Fuel and Water Home Adviser Service, visit www.children-families.org/fuel--water-home-adviser.html or call **01795 889233**.

Help keeping your home warm

You may be able to get help towards keeping your home warm, including if you're receiving certain types of benefits or you have a health condition which is affected by living in cold conditions. We may be able to refer you for extra support if you haven't previously qualified for help under benefit-based schemes and you're:

- in fuel poverty
- on a low income
- vulnerable because of a health condition which is affected by cold living conditions

To see if you're eligible for extra support such as the warm homes scheme, visit www.swale.gov.uk/housing-council-tax-and-benefits/housing/help-keeping-your-home-warm.

Top tips for saving energy and water

There's some simple ways to save money and energy in your home:



Fuel Supplier

You could save money by moving to a cheaper tariff and/or switching to a dual fuel discount the average household can save up to £300 a year.



Boiling water with a kettle

By only filling a kettle with the amount of water you need for your hot drink you can avoid wasting energy boiling excess water. You can save more than £23 a year just by being careful with how you use kitchen appliances.

Changing lightbulbs

New lightbulbs use less energy and cost less to run. By replacing them with LED or energy saving halogens with a lower wattage but the same light output you could save £10 per year per lightbulb.



For more tips like this, book an appointment with our Fuel and Water Home Adviser.

Do you need to manage the affairs of someone else?

Register to watch one of our Zoom webinars that we host on the 2nd Thursday of every month which covers the following topics:

- how to protect your family assets from inheritance tax
- Lasting Powers of Attorney; and
- planning for the cost of long-term care.

We're now taking bookings for:
Thursday 11th March at 7.00pm
Thursday 8th April at 7.00pm



To register your interest and to receive a webinar link, visit www.cwj.co.uk/site/seminars or email marketing@cwj.co.uk or call 01795 536820



"The helpful and efficient way we were dealt with each time was great."

"I have been using your company for years as do other family members - as always excellent service from start to finish."



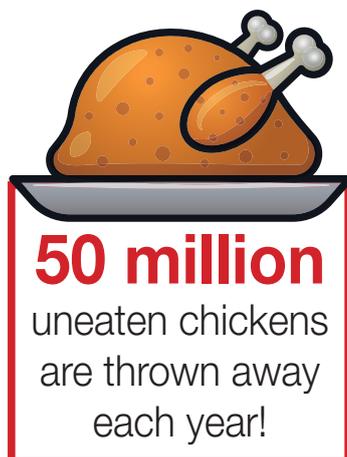
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Make the most of your food waste this Easter

Cooking up a storm this Easter? Don't forget all your peelings can go into your food waste bin (and any bones if you're planning a Christmas style Easter feast). Got some veg left over from Sunday lunch? How about bubble and squeak to use up those leftovers. Love Food Hate Waste has some great ideas on how to make the most of your leftovers on their website. You can even search by food item too www.lovefoodhatewaste.com, they even have some ideas for some sweet treats.

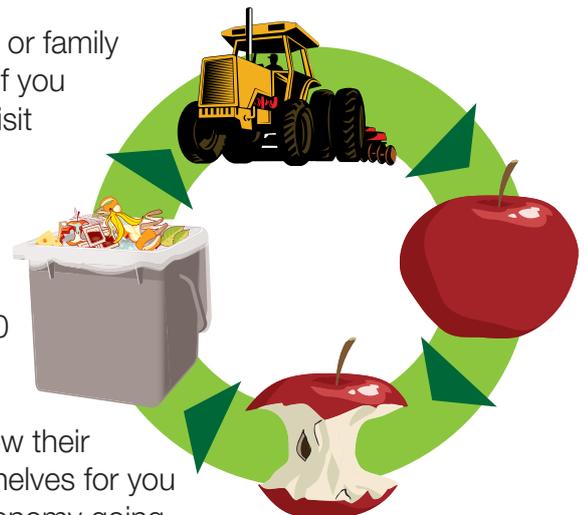
Anything that isn't used up can be frozen, gifted to a neighbour or family member, and for anything else pop it into your food waste bin. If you need help with what can and can't go in your food waste bin, visit www.swale.gov.uk/waste-wizard.

Don't have one, call us on **01795 417888** and join our weekly food waste collection service. Last year our food waste service collected over 2,800 tonnes of food waste, an increase of more than 300 tonnes over the previous year. Your food waste will be turned into soil conditioner to help local farmers grow their produce ready to get back on the shelves for you to buy. Help us keep the circular economy going.



50 million
uneaten chickens
are thrown away
each year!

It was national food waste awareness week on 1-7 March and we want to thank everyone who got involved and took part in the discussions with us on social media. You can still check out the fun facts about food waste and ideas on how to make the most of your food waste on our Facebook and Twitter.





Know what to do with your textiles?

Do you take advantage of our textile collection? You can place a carrier bag of clothes next to your blue bin on your recycling collection day. Please remember that textiles should not go in with your recycling.

Unfortunately, we are still seeing clothes ending up in the blue bins, which causes the loads to be rejected, missing out on all that good recycling. We have 300,000 tonnes of clothes across the UK still being placed in bins.

There are plenty of things to do with your unwanted textiles. If you are feeling creative, why not try and upcycle it yourself? There are plenty of simple ideas such as turning some old jeans into shorts, but for some more hints and something a little more challenging, then take a look at the Love Your Clothes website for handy hints

www.loveyourclothes.org.uk.



Not confident with a needle and thread and got more than a bag full? Why don't you take it to a charity bin, there are plenty across Swale, you can find them here

www.loveyourclothes.org.uk/guides/where-recycle-clothing-and-textiles.

To help tackle textiles in blue bins we launched our 'Love your Clothes' campaign on social media in February. We asked residents to get creative with their clothes rather than popping them in the bin. If you missed anything, head to our Facebook page for some great ideas, and it's not too late to make your own pledge to reduce clothes going to waste.



Make the most of your garden waste this spring

You may have noticed the signs of spring have started to appear, so now is the time to get out in your gardens and start getting it ready for the (hopefully) sunnier times ahead.

You're more likely to generate more garden waste during the spring and summer months. Grass clippings, weeds and trimmings from your pruning – it all builds up.

So, what do you do with all this waste? For £37 a year* you can get a brown garden waste bin which will be collected up to 26 times a year. Not that much garden waste? Why not share the bin and the cost with a neighbour?

Grass cuttings, leaves and flowers are perfect for the garden waste bin but remember, please pop these in loose, no black sacks.

Please remember to not place food into your garden waste bin, please use your food waste bin. If you don't have one please call **01795 417888** to see if your eligible.

No turf or soil please as this makes the bin too heavy so can't be lifted onto our vehicles, which then results in your bin not getting emptied.

To subscribe, visit www.swale.gov.uk/bins-littering-and-the-environment/bins/garden-waste or call **01795 417888**. *Price valid until 31 March 2021. Price will change to £40 a year from 1 April 2021.



Help make your garden wildlife friendly

If you are looking to encourage more wildlife into your garden, why not try some of these simple tips:



Cutting back: creating a compost area or dead hedge in your own garden means nothing is wasted- creating your own compost saves you money and helps your carbon footprint as the waste isn't transported off site.

It also encourages more insects – bugs love a compost pile and enhances your garden for wildlife, while adding nutrients to the soil.



Water: Wildlife needs water to drink and bathe. You can create a birdbath or pond from anything that will hold water- a stone sink, a washing up bowl, even an upturned dustbin lid - add rainwater and some pebbles or stones so creatures don't drown.

Upcycle: Instead of throwing away old pots and containers, why not upcycle them and fill them with seeds and plants for your gardens? Get creative and add some variety to your space.

For more ideas and inspiration go to www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/wild-about-gardens.

Home composting is also a great way to dispose of some of your garden waste, it is easy to do and can help feed your garden again. Keep an eye out for information about our upcoming compost give away.



Elimination of Single-Use Plastics: Success So Far

Single-use plastics have started to be removed across council operations as we aim to eliminate all single-use plastics by the end of 2021.



Adopted as part of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan in April 2020, the goal recognises the danger of non-degradable plastics to the environment, including Swale's waterways and coastline.

To achieve the elimination of plastics that do not provide a long-term use, we've taken significant action already, including:

- Removing coffee machines containing plastic sachets
- Switching to use dissolvable sachets for cleaning products where possible to reduce the number of plastic bottle used – where this is not possible larger product bottles are purchasing in place of a higher number of smaller ones
- Removing the necessity to replace black bin liners so often
- Planning to use glasses in office meetings rather than plastic bottles and cups when returning to work at Swale House (when it is safe to do so)
- Taking the decision to not renew the contracts for drinks and vending machines

We're also working in partnership with D.S. Smith Papermill to ensure disposable hot drink cups are collected and recycled.

The work to retro-fit Swale House will also include the provision of central recycling stations.

Recycling and refuse collection dates

If you're unsure of your collection week, visit www.swale.gov.uk/my-collection-day and click the 'Next Bin Collection' link, or call **01795 417888**.

Week 1 collections

April 2021							May 2021							June 2021						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
							31													

Week 2 collections

April 2021							May 2021							June 2021						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
							31													

 Blue bin collection week  Green bin collection week

Don't forget – food waste is collected weekly with both bins

In the event of severe weather, please leave your green/blue bin and food waste bin out as per your normal collection schedule – we'll get to you as soon as we can. Daily updates will be available on www.swale.gov.uk

You can check garden waste collection dates at www.swale.gov.uk/my-collection-day

Let's talk recycling!

As more of us have been adapting to working from home, taking in more deliveries, getting out in our gardens and cooking up a storm in the kitchen over the last year, there's been more opportunities for us to recycle.

Swale, as part of the Mid Kent Partnership, has one of the highest dry recycling rates in the country, however, we have also seen a large volume of contamination. To keep recycling rates high, please ensure you place all your recyclable items loose in the bin and not within carrier bags or black sacks as this is where the contamination is creeping in.

Please do not put these in with your recycling to help keep it contamination free:

- **Textiles**
- **Food waste**
- **Garden waste**
- **Black sacks and carrier bags**
- **Polystyrene and plastic film**
- **Nappies/sanitary products**
- **Crisps packets/chocolate wrappers**



What also helps is rinsing all food containers, bottles and jars so no food waste gets into our bins accidentally.

With Easter just around the corner, don't forget that the boxes from your Easter eggs can be flattened and popped in your recycling bin. Any large boxes from your deliveries that won't fit in your bin will be taken if popped next to your blue bin on collection day. Extra recycling will always be taken provided it's in a clear sacks or cardboard box.

Unsure about something? Use our handy waste wizard tool to check www.swale.gov.uk/waste-wizard.

Keep your eyes peeled on your bins for our sticker campaign rolling out soon to all residents across the borough. The stickers have been designed as a handy reminder of what should and shouldn't be going in our blue bins.

Yes please



Easter egg boxes



Glass bottles and jars

No thank you



Disposable nappies



Food waste

Support from foodbanks increased during pandemic



The pandemic has hit many families hard over the past year. Foodbanks across Swale have seen an increase in demand of almost 50% from families in the borough.

We work with a number of foodbanks in the borough to help ensure that those who are most in need have access to the food they need. They have been under significant pressure during the pandemic to help those who have been hit hardest.

You can help support local foodbanks by donating food and essential supplies that are most needed. Although each individual foodbank will have different needs for what they are most in need of, basic supplies that you can help with include:

- Long life milk
- Tinned meat
- Rice
- Tinned potatoes
- Tinned meals (curry, chilli etc.)
- Tinned vegetables
- Shampoo
- Cleaning products
- Tinned fish
- Cereal
- Pasta
- Tinned soup
- Tinned fruit
- Tea bags
- Soap

You can find donation points in supermarkets, but to find out more about how to donate, please contact the foodbank directly. You can find contact details for local foodbanks by visiting www.swale.gov.uk/foodbanks.

Covid-19 winter support scheme available until 30 March

Nearly 300 families impacted by Covid-19 have received pre-packaged essential food boxes through our Covid-19 winter support scheme.



We work in partnership with West Faversham Community Centre and Diversity House, who have processed and delivered more than 600 food boxes to residents' doors, supporting 1,050 people across the borough since its launch.

The boxes have been a helping hand to those who have had a change in their financial situation, received a positive Covid-19 test, are self-isolating following contact from the NHS Test and Trace system or experiencing a change of personal circumstances because of the pandemic.

There are nine different pre-packaged essential food boxes available including essentials such as pasta, soup, fruit, cereal, toilet roll and handwash, alongside vegetarian, Free-From, Afro-Caribbean, Eastern European, and Asian boxes to meet the various dietary, cultural and religious needs of local residents. Each box provides enough food for seven days.

For more information and to apply for the winter grant scheme visit www.swale.gov.uk/cwgs.

To find out more about foodbanks in Swale, including opening times, visit www.swale.gov.uk/foodbanks.



Your councillors

For more information about your local councillor visit
www.swale.gov.uk/find-my-councillor



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Take part in Swale Borough Council's waste and street cleansing survey

You can now take part in our waste and street cleansing survey.

The survey gives you the opportunity to let us know how the waste and street cleansing service can be improved before the current 10-year contract ends in October 2023.

The service includes how bins are collected, how often the streets are cleaned, and how littering and fly-tipping offences are tackled.

The survey asks whether you prefer mixed or separated recycling, if the streets are being cleaned often enough, and if electric waste collection vehicles are important to you.

Cllr Julian Saunders, cabinet member for environment at the council, said: "We want to know what we can do to improve the waste and street cleansing service we offer to residents.

"We want to know if residents are happy with their bin collection, if the roads are being cleaned enough, and if we're tough enough on fly-tipping and littering offences.

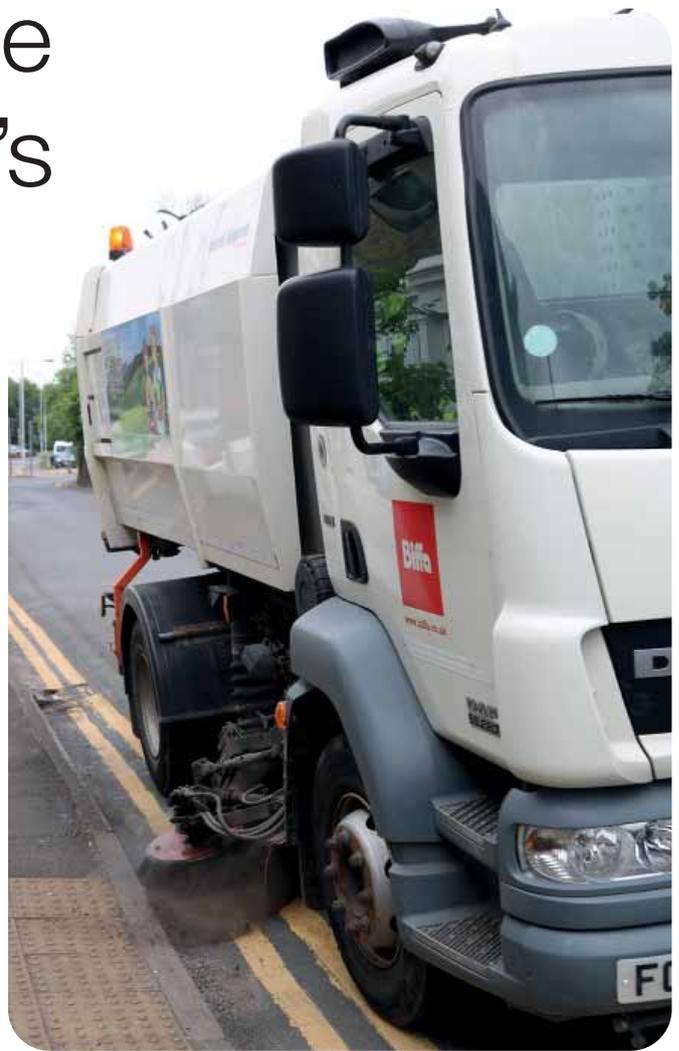
"One of the questions we're asking residents is - if they could pick one thing that is the most important for us to improve on - what would that be?"

"With the contract coming up for renewal in the next few years, this is the perfect time for us to look at what's going well and what we can improve on.

"Possible improvements were discussed at the latest area committee meetings, so now it's important that we hear from residents and understand their priorities as we put together the new service contract.

"Ultimately our goal is to offer a green and energy efficient service that helps us meet our climate and ecological emergency obligations, while delivering a consistent and reliable service for residents in the most cost-effective way possible."

The waste and street cleansing survey is open until 5 April. To take part visit www.swale.gov.uk/waste-and-cleansing-survey.





HM Government



KEY FACTS ON VACCINES



SAFE - ✓

EFFECTIVE - ✓

IMPORTANT - ✓

After clean water, vaccination is the **most effective** public health intervention in the world for saving lives and promoting good health.

*Source: Oxford Vaccine Group