

Parish Update

October 2022

Following the passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, it is hard to find the words to describe how much she meant to so many of us - we are mourning the loss of a monarch who dedicated decades of her life to her duty.

I would like to thank our Parish and Town Councils, and all those volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure that residents across South Kesteven were able to mark the occasion and pay their respects.

Queen Elizabeth II visited our district on many occasions, including in a private capacity when she attended Burghley Horse Trials, held nearby, to watch her own daughter Anne, the Princess Royal, compete in 1971.

Our pledge to support small businesses

Small businesses are the heart and soul of South Kesteven, contributing to local economies by bringing growth and innovation to their communities and providing employment opportunities.

Many businesses endured a tough time during the pandemic and are now facing another difficult period brought about by rising costs and supply-chain issues.

South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) is passionate about working collaboratively to help them thrive and I was delighted to sign the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Local Leadership Partnership on behalf of the Council, pledging to work with the FSB to mutually support those wonderful independent businesses in our district.

Helping households cope with cost-of-living pressures

Of course, it is not just businesses facing a difficult winter. The rising cost of living affects everyone and, understandably, it is a worrying time for many.

SKDC is taking a number of steps to provide support for those living in South Kesteven who are struggling.

We have set up a dedicated section on our website containing a wide range of information and advice, as well as signposting visitors to local and national support.

A specialist Cost of Living Working Group is being formed – bringing together like-minded organisations to consider what more can be done and how to reach those residents without digital access.

Let me assure you, this is a key priority for the Council. I hope we can continue to work alongside community groups to provide vital support to our residents.

Making voting accessible

It is very important that residents across South Kesteven who are able to vote can do so in accessible polling stations with appropriate facilities for all.

To ensure that we are supporting local democracy and that voting is as accessible and inclusive as possible, the SKDC Elections team is currently reviewing polling stations in some areas of the district.

In Stamford, All Saints ward is being considered for review.

I would encourage all voters to get involved and to give your feedback on the review and its proposals by visiting the SKDC website before Friday October 7th.

Update on St Martin's Park Joint Development with Burghley Estates

The original proposal in the planning application and supporting marketing information was to retain the 1904 building and convert it for use as part of the commercial element of the St Martin's Park development, it has since become clear during work on the site that sadly this is no longer a viable option, due to the building being in such a poor structural condition.

A recent assessment of the building's suitability for retention has shown that a significant part of it would need to be removed, due to its structural safety to facilitate a new use.

Demolition of the surrounding buildings has also now fully exposed the existing building fabric to be in very poor condition and revealed that the southern elevation is not actually the original and is, in fact, part of the flat-roofed three-storey office block that has recently been demolished, with the original elevation removed many years ago.

Architects working on the scheme have advised that if the original building, which is not listed, was retained it would not meet up to date Building Regulations.

Therefore the plan being proposed by the developers of this area is to replace it with a modern building constructed to modern specifications in exactly the place and on exactly the same footprint, replicating the original design features.

The Leader of SKDC, Cllr Kelham Cooke, said: "As the demolition work has progressed it has recently become apparent that, unfortunately, the original 1904 building has very few original features remaining, after it has been altered over many years of heavy industrial use.

"A rebuilt 1904 building will be fit for purpose and will be sustainable, minimising carbon dioxide emissions in construction and use. It will be future-proofed for generations to come and the look and feel of the building will be retained.

"I am disappointed that the building cannot be retained following recent information that has come to light as the demolition has progressed, however, with structural issues and so many alterations over the years which have damaged the design and integrity of the original building, we need to now ensure that what the developers build in its place replicates the look and feel of the building when it was originally built."

Demolition and remedial work started on the whole site started in April and is due to be completed by mid-2023.

The outline application specified that all buildings were to be demolished with the exception of the 1904 building. This reflected the intention of the Council as landowner to retain the 1904 building, given its status as the oldest building on the site, and incorporate it into the approved commercial development by way of conversion and re-use.

The Planning Statement submitted with the outline application noted that the future retention of the 1904 building would be subject to survey, aware that the building had undergone a degree of intervention through its lengthy commercial use”.

Metropolitan Opera comes to Stamford

On a lighter note, I am delighted to report that Stamford Arts Centre is again hosting the 2022/23 season of The Met: Live In HD.

The Met is the vibrant home of creatives across the world who come together to develop performances attended by over 800,000 theatre-lovers in New York and millions more through digital technology.

The ten performances in the latest series will be broadcast to audiences at our local Arts Centre.

The series kicks off with Medea on October 29th and runs through to Mozart’s fable Die Zauberflöte which ends the season on June 3rd next year.

This is a wonderful opportunity to see such a prestigious programme on our doorstep. I am thrilled that those of us who wouldn’t otherwise have the chance to see these performances will be able to do so.

They are part of a very busy Autumn programme for Stamford Arts Centre and are yet another sign that we are totally committed to what is an integral part of our community.

In personal news...

Last month I took a big step outside my comfort zone by taking part in a tandem skydive for charity from 13,000ft.

I’m proud to have raised over £2,000 for Harry’s Pals, a charity that supports parents of severely ill or disabled children who unexpectedly find out that their child has a life-limiting or life-threatening condition.

It was an incredible, exhilarating experience that I will cherish forever. Most importantly, I am delighted that I was able to raise vital funds for such a worthwhile cause that makes a real difference to those people it helps.