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CITIZENSASSEMBLYST



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YOUR CAST NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with our work, what we're planning and how you can get involved, direct to your inbox every month!

Now is the time for **community-driven, people-powered change** in South Tyneside.

'BEE' THE CHANGE!

On 20th March, the first CAST AGM will be held. We're calling it 'Plan Bee' with some fantastic news to ensure our growth for the coming year.

We'll be looking forward with our plans to get back out into the community with a CAST social and we've got a great guest speaker, Alison Benjamin, urban bee expert and Guardian columnist lined up for you.

Call it an incentive (or a bribe!) but each member who attends the AGM will receive a free bee-saver kit* so we can help our at-risk pollinator pals out!

2021 is going to 'bee' a great year for CAST! Bee inspired and **join us!**

Do you have hearing difficulties and feel excluded from online meetings? Here at CAST, we're always looking for ways to help our members and supporters, so we're currently trialling live closed captions (subtitles) for all of our meetings.

So what's stopping you getting involved?

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE?

News: Litter bin campaign

Article: Affordable food schemes

What is...a free port?

Community Noticeboard



Get in touch with us: [here](#) Join us: [here](#)

*to attend and claim your free bee-saver kit, you must 'bee' a CAST member. Join [here](#)

NEWS

Morrisons - litter bins and picks

As we've previously reported, following discussions with CAST members, Morrisons South Shields have offered to fund a number of litter bins and sponsor litter picks around their South Shields catchment area. Consultations are still ongoing regarding locations and timescales but so far, your response to our call for locations has been fantastic!

We've got an interactive [map](#) up and running on our website so you can see the nominations for your area as they come in. We hope to be able to open a consultation covering the Jarrow, Boldon and Hebburn areas very soon.

An area of concern noted by several respondents was to ask if South Tyneside Council would empty the bins as they are not council property. We are delighted to confirm that the council have agreed to work with CAST and Morrisons on the project. Unfortunately, there are several major considerations which need to be taken into account before the bins can be physically located - approvals may be required from the Highways team to locate the bins, the bins themselves must be robust enough for public use and they must be accessible to service crews. That said however, we hope to be able to get the scheme up and running in the very near future!

UPDATE: Iceland are currently unable to offer any resources to our project as their community budget has already been allocated however we continue to contact the chains around the borough and will keep you updated.



HAVE YOUR SAY ON... LITTER BIN LOCATIONS

Your response to our online consultation regarding litter hotspots has been fantastic! If you haven't submitted your litter hotspot nomination yet, use this [link](#) or [email us](#).

If you know anyone who doesn't have access to the internet, why not ask them and you can let us know. The more information we get, the better we can identify bin locations!

For our residents in the Jarrow, Hebburn and Boldon areas, we're continuing to contact the numerous chains around the borough and await their response - we'll keep you updated with any feedback and will open our consultation for your litter hotspots shortly.

UPDATE: A potted history of sewage in the North East

You may remember the article we ran last month - 'A potted history of sewage in the North East'.

In the piece, the author alleged that '[t]he local authorities in Sunderland and South Tyneside have literally washed their hands of the issue and defer to Northumbrian Water who claim they have the capacity to treat sewage. In reality, they continue to rely on disposing of sewage into local watercourses and into the North Sea.'

Our goal here at CAST is to present a balanced picture for you, so we've contacted both local authorities and Northumbrian Water regarding the statement. So far, we've received cursory replies from Sunderland Council and Northumbrian Water but nothing from our own council...

We'll keep you updated but leave you to draw your own conclusions for the time being.

Get in touch with us: [here](#) Join us: [here](#)

Affordable food schemes

Food surplus redistribution charity, **The Bread and Butter Thing** (TBBT) is currently working with Durham County Council as part of their planned expansion across the North East. For just £7.50, TBBT fills members' shopping bags with a minimum of £35 worth of goods made up of quality fresh food and store cupboard staples from supermarkets. The scheme aims to make life more affordable for people on a low income, reduce food waste and build stronger communities by using an innovative and self-sustaining approach to the redistribution of surplus food and non-food items.

Food surplus occurs when the supply of food exceeds demand and there are many different reasons for this:

- Over-production – it can be difficult for producers to estimate seasonal demand for the quantity of food to grow/make.
- Imperfect/off-cuts – foods are discarded because they don't look 'perfect' or not as attractive as they 'should'. Additionally, 'off-cuts' are discarded as they don't fit standard packaging sizes.
- 'Best Before Dates' – many people discard food when it has passed its 'best before date' not knowing it can usually safely be eaten after this date.
- Damaged packaging – food might be thrown away simply because the packaging has been damaged during manufacture/transportation.

Waste and resources charity **WRAP** highlight the scale of the problem of food wastage in the UK. Their research shows:

- Annual food waste from UK households, hospitality and food service, food manufacture, retail and wholesale sectors in 2018 was estimated at around 9.5 million tonnes – the equivalent of £19 billion!
- Of the 43 million tonnes of food purchased in the UK, the amount wasted is around 10 million tonnes! By weight, household waste makes up 70% of all food wasted in the UK – 60% of that wasted food could be eaten.

The benefits of reducing food waste are huge:

- Financial – in 2018, UK households threw away 6.6 million tonnes of food, compared to 8.1m in 2007. Excellent news? Yes but...4.5 million tonnes of this could have been eaten, creating a saving worth £14 billion or around £60 per month for the average family with children.
- Environmental – 4.5 million tonnes of food generates 5.3 million tonnes of CO2 a year – the same as taking 2.4 million cars off the road for a year.
- Energy conservation – as well as reducing the pollution produced by wasted food, the energy and resources from growing, manufacturing, transporting and selling of it could be reduced – less demand for food production means fewer resources are needed.

What do you think? Let us **know**

UPCOMING CAST MEETINGS

We are trialling live subtitles in our meetings – why not try it and give us your feedback?

CAST AGM
Sat.20th March @ 11am

Sustainable Communities
Thu.1st April @ 5pm

Interested? Got an idea or just want to listen? Why not come along?
If you're not a member, just drop us an **email** and we'll send you the link!

CAST are proud to support **SSTHC** – please don't forget their fortnightly meetings!

Get in touch with us: **here** Join us: **here**

WHAT IS...A FREE PORT?

Each month, our section 'What is...?' will take an unbiased look at terms often used but never really explained. This month, free ports...

On 3rd March, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced the location of eight new 'freeports' - special economic zones with different rules to make it easier and cheaper to do business to boost the UK economy. But what exactly are they and what benefits do they offer? We've pulled together a quick overview for you to get you up to speed.

In general, they are areas around shipping ports or airports where the usual tax and tariff rules do not apply. Goods in freeports can be imported, manufactured and exported without being subject to checks, paperwork or tariffs. For example, raw materials could be imported, made into whole products for export without any charges being paid - taxes are only paid if the goods leave the freeport zone. There are approximately 3,500 freeports around the world with about 80 located within the EU. They're not a new idea - there were seven freeports operating in the UK between 1984 and 2012 but why are they being brought back?

The argument for:

- An opportunity to stimulate trade and create opportunities: freeports have simpler planning, cheaper customs and lower taxes with tax breaks to encourage construction, private investment and job creation. Companies inside the sites will be offered temporary tax breaks, generally lasting for five years, including reductions to the tax companies pay on existing property and, when they purchase new buildings. Employers will also pay reduced national insurance for new workers.
- Innovation and green tech: the suspension of duties on goods imported and the establishment of industrial 'clusters' means that tax could be paid on a final, assembled product rather than on each individual component, especially important in the push towards net zero (the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere).
- Decarbonisation: the push to decarbonise could be supported by the streamlined planning processes with infrastructure such as EV charging points, [hydrogen fuelling](#), [shoreside power](#) etc.

All of these factors can help to raise the profile of a region and increase manufacturing, jobs and investment in less affluent areas. Sounds good? Indeed, however don't forget the argument against:

- Security is the major concern of critics. Freeports are much less regulated than the rest of the country opening the threat of money laundering, tax evasion and trafficking. A [Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies report](#) highlighted the misuse of freeports for drug trafficking, the trade in counterfeits, money laundering and tax dodging.
- Freeports do not boost employment overall simply move economic activity from one area to another. As employers in freeport zones pay reduced national insurance contributions for new workers, this cost must be subsidised by the state therefore negating their possible benefits.
- Research by the [Centre for Cities](#) published in 2019 concluded that they were unlikely to provide highly skilled jobs, instead creating low wage jobs in warehousing.

Whatever your view on freeports, the Port of Tyne, despite submitting a bid, was not among the eight announced. Teesport is set to become the freeport in the North East and the largest, spanning a huge 4,500 acres - the equivalent of 2,550 football pitches. Will it deliver? Only time will tell.

Still unsure? Check out the links below



April: 'Dirty' pensions

Do you have any terms you're unsure of?

Let us know [here](#) and we'll take an impartial, honest look into them for you.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Healthwatch Sunderland & Healthwatch South Tyneside are currently working with the NHS to find out people's experiences of receiving their COVID vaccine in our area. If you've had your vaccine, would you be willing to share your experiences through their survey? The results will help the NHS understand directly from you what is going well and what else could be done to improve the delivery of the vaccine to local people. Just complete this [short survey](#) and share with your contacts to encourage as many responses as possible.

Canny Social - a pilot programme supporting the mental health of men in South Tyneside. The pilot is specifically targeting men who have been discharged from or are at risk of admission to Mental Health facilities. If you are working with any adult males in the borough who you think might benefit from being part of this pilot, you can find more information [here](#) or get in touch via styne@includingmen.org

The Young Parents Pathway is recruiting for a part-time Service Coordinator within their supported housing service. As a lone worker you will provide support, advice and guidance to their young parents with complex needs. Interested? Apply [here](#)

Women's Health In South Tyneside (WHIST) are still delivering their online courses. If you're looking for creative writing, photography, relaxation or just a space to have a chat with other ladies, why not take a look at their great new look [newsletter](#) - it's packed full of information and support for women in the South Tyneside area.

Watch: South Tyneside Council meetings online - details [here](#)

The NHS are trialling a texting service to make it easier to book your Covid vaccine. The text message sender will show as 'NHSvaccine' and include a link to NHS.uk
THEY WILL NEVER ASK FOR PAYMENT DETAILS.
Stay safe - check [here](#)

Ocean Choices dementia day care service has now reopened and accepting new service users.
More info [here](#)

'Get your body moving for good health'
Check out South Tyneside Mental Health User Voice's latest newsletter [here](#)



DID YOU KNOW...

...you can raise free funds for your favourite charity just by shopping online?

Give as you Live (GayL) is a free and easy way to raise money for your favourite charity, just sign up and start shopping to raise cash!

- Choose from 200,000+ UK charities.
- Shop at thousands of online stores.
- The donation is made at no extra cost to you.
- It's completely free for your charity.
- No joining/payment fees.

How does it work?

Stores pay GayL a commission for sending them customers - 50% of that commission goes to your chosen charity, the other 50% is used to fund GayL.

They've already raised over £14 million in donations.

Why not take a look?

IN THE CAST PIPELINE...



Here's what we're working on at the minute...

Local governments have invested £9.7bn into fossil fuels through pension funds, according to new research.

A report by [Friends of the Earth](#) has found that despite 75% of councils in the UK declaring a 'climate emergency', many were still investing in fossil fuels during 2019/20.

We're looking for members for a new working group to research the issue.

We'll be running an article on 'dirty pensions' in the next newsletter but if you're interested, why not get involved?

Get in touch with us: [here](#) Join us: [here](#)