

FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

OCTOBER 21ST

Aanii Saugeen Members,

It's been another busy week for Chief and Council as we continue to work on a number of important matters affecting our community. I would like to share some updates on the work that has been taking place, including follow-ups to concerns raised by Members, ongoing projects, and upcoming community meetings.

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DEPUTATION DAY- OCTOBER 21, 2026

We held another deputation meeting today and had the opportunity to hear and address additional concerns brought forward by our Members.

One of the things we discussed as Council was how we could make our deputation days more productive and improve the process for our Members. We recognize that when concerns are brought forward, Members are looking for answers, and sometimes those answers require additional information or follow-up from Administration.

We discussed how helpful it could be if Members who are planning to attend deputation day felt comfortable sharing a brief description of their concern or issue with Council ahead of time, whether by email or other means. T**his is absolutely not mandatory**, but having some advance knowledge of the issues being brought forward would allow Council to be better informed and, where possible, gather relevant information or have some answers prepared before meeting with the Member.

Our hope is that this would help make deputation days more productive, reduce the time Members have to wait for answers, and allow Council to address concerns with a better understanding of the issues.
We want to emphasize that deputation days are an important opportunity for Members to have their voices heard. Our intention is not to create barriers or discourage anyone from coming forward, but rather to find ways to improve the process so that we can better serve our Members.

FOLLOW-UP ON MEMBERS' CONCERNS

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The concerns regarding the school lunch program and the cash card have been addressed. We were informed that the funds available on the cash card were not sufficient to provide lunches for students throughout the full school term.

There is also the Bluewater Student Success Program, which can assist students who do not have a lunch. However, this program is intended for occasional assistance and is not available to provide lunches on a daily basis.

We were also informed that the school lunch program provides meals based on Canada's Food Guide and that approximately 220 lunches are prepared each day for our children.

HOSPICE-LIKE SPACE & END-OF-LIFE CARE

The questions and concerns regarding the Hospice-Like Space have been forwarded to the Band Administrator for follow-up. We will be receiving additional information regarding the criteria that must be met for a patient to access this space. We recognize the importance of end-of-life care, so this issue will be addressed in more detail by the Health Committee.

YOUTH CENTRE

The concerns regarding access to the Youth Centre, particularly for youth looking for a safe and welcoming place to go after school, have also been followed up on. Currently, the Youth Centre is open Monday, Thursday and Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

We have also been informed that a new staff member will be joining the team soon, with plans to expand programming to seven days a week. This will provide more opportunities for our youth to access the Centre, participate in activities and have a safe place to spend their time.

ROAD MAINTENANCE AND POTHOLES

We also followed up on the concerns raised by Members regarding potholes and road conditions throughout the community.

The Works Department has reported that 46 potholes have been filled to date, and staff continue to monitor road conditions and carry out repairs as needed.

We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Works Department in addressing these concerns and helping to keep our community roads safe for everyone.

ENVIRONMENT OFFICE UPDATE

Joint Council has hired Jocelyn Keeshig as the Interim Environment Office Manager. Jocelyn officially began her new role on October 20, 2026. We would like to extend a warm welcome to Jocelyn and wish her all the best as she takes on this important role.

Welcome aboard, Jocelyn!

HOUSING DEPARTMENT UPDATE

The Housing Department has completed its evaluation of applications for the 2025–2026 Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Children's Housing Fund.

A total of 21 applications were received, and 18 housing inspections were completed as part of the evaluation process.

Following the review, four housing projects have been approved for funding, with a total of **$234,688.65** allocated through the ISC Children's Housing Fund.

This funding will help address housing needs and support improvements to living conditions for the families and children who will benefit from these projects.

AQUACULTURE PROJECT UPDATE

Council was presented with an update on the aquaculture project, which is now in the construction phase.

The project has received **$2.2 million in funding from FedDev**, bringing the total external funding secured for the project to **$4.3 million**. Saugeen's community contribution toward the project between 2022 and 2024 totalled **$228,570**.

This is a community-led initiative that focuses on several important priorities for Saugeen, including employment opportunities and skills development, food sovereignty, lake whitefish recovery, and culture and education as well to provide long-term revenue for Saugeen.

The project is intended to create opportunities for our Members while supporting the recovery of lake whitefish, strengthening our connection to traditional foods, and providing opportunities to share knowledge and educate future generations.

Council feels it is important that our Members have a clear understanding of this project, including its purpose, funding, and potential benefits to our community. With that in mind, **a community information session will be held in the near future**, providing Members with an opportunity to learn more about the project, ask questions, and share their thoughts.

We will share more information about the date and location of this session once the details have been confirmed.

UPCOMING SON TREATY CLAIM MEETING- NOVEMBER 7, 2026

Don't forget to mark November 7, 2026, on your calendars!

Joint Council invites all Saugeen Ojibway Nation Members to attend an important community meeting to discuss our Treaty Claim and the path forward.

This will be an opportunity for Members to hear updates, gain a better understanding of where things currently stand, ask questions, and learn more about the next steps as we move forward together.

We encourage all Members to attend, stay informed, and be part of these important discussions concerning our Treaty rights and our future.

CLOSING

These are just some of the things Council has been working on this past week. There are many other matters that continue to move forward, and we remain committed to keeping our Members informed as we work through them.

I hope everyone has a great week. Take care and stay safe!

Miigwetch,



Chief Sonya Roote