

16 May 2020

Another busy week for both the county and district as they get to grips with lots of new guidelines announced this week with the easing of the lockdown restrictions, but there certainly seems to be a bit of light at the end of the tunnel; although it is imperative to continue to observe social distancing and maintain high levels of hygiene by washing hands regularly.

The opening of the garden centres has been particularly welcomed by many of us and I've been impressed by the social distancing and hygiene measures in operation at all these facilities, helping us to feel safe, getting their businesses going and providing us with some added colour for our gardens. SDC's Environmental Health Teams have also been in contact with every garden centre to ensure they are all comfortable with social distancing guidelines and modus operandi.

COVID-19 Update

The cumulative cases in the county are now 1347 with confirmed cases in Stratford on Avon District at 351 representing an increase of 75 new cases since the previous week. The expanded testing programme which now includes a pop-up site at Stratford College has inevitably resulted in more cases being identified.

Out of the 425 SWFT Hospital Beds there are 34 cases of COVID-19 and three cases in intensive care. Sadly, the cumulative deaths across Stratford District as of 13th May is 100 with a cumulative total of 369 deaths in Warwickshire due to COVID-19. Over the same period there have been 2074 non COVID-19 related deaths in Warwickshire. The higher proportion of deaths in Stratford District reflect its older demographic profile when compared to Warwick District, Rugby or North Warwickshire.

Across the county there were 130 COVID-19 deaths in care homes settings compared to 635 non COVID-19 deaths in care homes over the same period.

In the ONS data which now reports on place and occurrence of death, based on registrations up to 9 May there were 56 COVID-19 deaths which occurred in care homes settings in Stratford District, with all cause deaths over the same period in care homes reported as 250.

(The variance in some of the figures reflects the differences between the Public Health England and ONS data which are reported at slightly different times of the day/week).

The capacity in hospitals remains good with 8% of beds occupied by COVID-19 patients and 13% with suspected COVID-19 patients and two patients in Intensive Care. There are 22% of beds occupied by Non-COVID-19 patients and a spare capacity of 57% reinforcing that the NHS is very much open for business!

There continues to be a reduction in the number of cases being hospitalised but WCC is reinforcing the importance of social distancing and hand hygiene measures being fully adopted as this is not the time for any relaxation because there are still so many unknowns regarding COVID-19.

There has been a total of 562 cases or suspected cases in 62 care homes settings from a total of 160 homes in Warwickshire and WCC is continuing to work closely with all care homes in respect of PPE, testing and training in respect of infection control and hygiene to help bring the number of cases down. There are 30 care homes which have requested WCC's support for additional training. All care home staff and residents are continuing to be tested and re-tested as a priority.

Test, Track and Trace (TTT) is aimed at identifying people with symptoms however mild and will be supported by the NHS COVID19 App, as well as a web-based tool and via telephone calls from the contact tracing teams. PHE will be providing input on a local basis for the workplace, care homes and school settings, as and when required. Test results will be shared with the individuals.

There is positive news on the PPE front in there being sufficient supplies in the system and WCC is continuing to liaise closely with all the care homes.

Household Recycling

WCC is opening the larger sites in the first instance on 18th May but this excludes the Wellesbourne facility is not included at this time. The sites opening include Burton Farm in Stratford and Princes Drive, Leamington Spa and visits will be controlled by a full booking system to manage the customer flow through the site: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hwrc> Whilst the first four days are fully booked, WCC will be releasing more days at the end of Monday.

Safety is paramount for staff and customer and PPE will be worn by staff and there will be additional security at those sites opening which will operate seven days a week. It is planned for Wellesbourne's site to open in the not too distant future, once the initial rush has calmed down. The additional safety and security measures being implemented across the larger sites is costing WCC an additional £20k per week. Any vehicle turning up without an assigned booking slot will be turned away.

Community Grants

I am pleased to advise that I have been able to award special grants from my member's delegated community grant scheme to the Wellesbourne & Snitterfield Scrubbers, Wellesbourne & Walton Community Cares organisation, Herd and Grow in Ashorne, Stratford Foodbank which also services Wellesbourne and Home-Start South Warwickshire.

Healthwatch Survey

Healthwatch in Warwickshire and Coventry would like to understand the public's views on health and social care support during the current pandemic. The organisations are launching a survey to find out how services are working for people and to ensure that high-quality safe services and support are being delivered now, and as the lockdown eases.

They are seeking to find out:

- How the pandemic has affected your experiences of health and social.
- If you have been able to access all the information that you need in order to keep you/your family safe and well.
- Whether your mental health been affected, and if so, what support you have been able to access.

The survey will run throughout May. To tell Healthwatch about your experiences please go

to: www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk/covid-19/tell-us-your-experience

Visit their website for more information or to get in touch: www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

Household Waste

The door to door waste collection service has continued throughout the lockdown period and BIFFA has worked extremely hard and diligently. However, due to the increased tonnage of curb side waste any additional items not placed in the respective bins have been able to be collected.

Business Grants

SDC has now paid out over £28million to businesses and organisations which are registered for business rates and the team have worked exceptionally hard in challenging circumstances to help as many businesses affected by the lockdown. I have also been busy contacting and helping various individuals, businesses and organisations who are potentially eligible to claim for the grant with their application, which has been appreciated.

Community Hubs

SDC has played a key role in setting up the Community Hub in Stratford Leisure Centre and delivering food packages to vulnerable and shielded residents across the districts. Over 1000 food parcels have now been distributed and the team has worked extremely diligently and in liaison with WCC.

Economic Recovery

SDC has already been identified as the fourth worst district/borough council to be hit financially in the UK due to its reliance on tourism and is set to lose £millions in its collective revenues from car parking, licensing fees, planning and building control fees, leisure fees and business rates. As a consequence there is a major focused effort in terms of developing a strategy to give businesses confidence and to encourage residents and visitors back into the town centres as and when the time is right and appropriate in accordance with Government guidelines.

Wishing you all a great weekend!

Anne

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