

Hampshire County Council Divisional Report for Hambledon Parish Town Council

Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Hampshire

As at 1600 yesterday the number of confirmed COVID-19 related cases in Hampshire stood at 3,334 out of a local population of 1,382,542. There have been, sadly, 880 corona-related deaths up to 15th May. 22% of all deaths in Hampshire involved coronavirus between 29th February and 15th May. Many of our residents are quite rightly fearing this pandemic; equally many are sticking zealously to the mantra “**Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives**” even though we are now transitioning from level 4 to level 3 in easing the lockdown.

Please be assured that specialists from Public Health England (PHE) are working with Hampshire County Council and NHS colleagues to continue to help combat this pestilence. The priority is to ensure critical local services to Hampshire residents are maintained and signposting people to the most up-to-date official sources of information and advice.

The Coronavirus Hampshire Helpline Hantshelp4vulnerable is for frail or vulnerable residents who do not have support from family, friends or their local community, and who need urgent assistance with essential food or household supplies, the collection of medication, or who are at risk of loneliness. Anyone in need of help can call 0333 370 4000 seven days a week, from 9am-5pm. Hantshelp4vulnerable provides advice and information, as well as co-ordinating requests for practical help, passing them through to the appropriate Local Response Centre – there is one based in each of Hampshire’s 11 districts.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

All of Hampshire’s 24 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), alongside HWRCs in Southampton and Portsmouth, are now open from 10am to 6pm. Use of sites is only for essential disposal of waste whereby storing such waste causes a risk of injury or to health.

As a result of a certain amount of traffic chaos a new pre-booking system to manage demand and reduce queuing traffic will be introduced in the middle of this month. Do check the [hants.gov.uk](https://www.hants.gov.uk) website for further information when it is available. As per government guidelines, residents in the specified vulnerable category (those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, people over 70 and pregnant women) are strongly advised not to visit a site.

Hampshire Schools Opened Today

Hampshire’s pre-schools, nurseries and primary schools were ready today to welcome more children back to school, joining sons and daughters of key workers and vulnerable children who have been attending early years provision or school throughout lockdown.

Councillor Roz Chadd, Hampshire County Council’s Executive Member for Education and Skills, commented: “I’d like to reiterate my thanks, once again, to all early years education providers and our family of schools, who have been looking after the children of key workers and vulnerable children since 18 March, including during the Easter and half-term holidays. At the same time, they have maintained contact with, and provided ongoing educational support to, those children and young people who, on the Government’s instruction, have stayed at home. In addition, over the past three weeks, they have dealt admirably with the enormous and unprecedented challenge of preparing for a phased return to school for specified year groups. It is a complex task and early education providers, school leaders and their governing bodies have had to work hard to plan and implement measures that will ensure that staff, children and young people can adhere to national

guidance and operate as safely as possible. In so doing, they have been building on the Government's plans for a gradual, phased and initially small-scale return, allowing for local flexibility within schools in terms of class size, staffing, and the constraints of school buildings." Every educational setting that opened today will have undertaken a thorough health and safety risk assessment to identify the measures they will need to have in place to reduce the risk of spreading infection. This includes minimising contact by having smaller class sizes and avoiding mixing between groups.

Each education setting will have its own approach, based on the amount of space and number of staff available. Parents and carers are advised to follow the information they receive from their education setting about the arrangements, including those for the home-to-school journey, that will be in place. The additional numbers some schools will be taking in today will be cautious, and schools are planning to build up numbers over time, safely.

Parents and carers are asked to exercise patience over the first few days as schools will be working in new ways and it is better to be careful and safe, than rush too many children in at speed. Unfortunately, in some schools it will not be possible to accommodate all children in all priority year groups while adhering to the national guidance, mainly due to school and classroom sizes presenting logistical problems.

With the Government advising that people should avoid using public transport as far as possible, children and young people are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school where it is safe to do so and to continue to follow the 2 metres, physical distancing advice. If parents and carers must drive children to school, they are urged not to car-share but to transport only their own children. Those who have no alternative to public transport should follow the Government's advice. The County Council's Services for Young Children and School Improvement Teams have been working with Hampshire schools and early years settings to help early years providers and schools prepare for wider opening. Resources, experiences, and approaches are being shared across all education settings, giving school leaders a wealth of information and support, which has helped them to make the best decisions to support their school community. That work will continue over the forthcoming weeks to ensure schools have access to high quality advice and support.

As announced by Government, secondary schools are now planning for some part-time face-to-face contact with young people in Year 10 from 15 June 2020.

Upholding democracy during Covid-19 – Hampshire County Council holds its first virtual AGM

Hampshire County Councillors have taken part in the Authority's first ever virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 29th May – maintaining open and democratic decision making during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The AGM was held remotely, and web-streamed live, via the County Council's YouTube channel, allowing the business of the Authority to continue amid ongoing social distancing restrictions. A recording of the AGM is also now available to view online.

Leader of the County Council, Councillor Keith Mans said: "Since our last full County Council meeting in February, the world has changed radically, and we are all now looking towards what might be our 'new normal'. While it's not currently possible for us to meet in person because of ongoing physical distancing, technology allows us to continue to fulfil our democratic mandate to the people of Hampshire – maintaining transparency and accountability around decision making, and our evolving response and recovery in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic. We anticipate

that more of our Council meetings will be scheduled in due course, according to business need, and ensuring the safety of Councillors, officers and members of the public.”

“To date, the County Council has implemented an effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic across all its service areas. We have done this in line with central Government guidance, and we have also begun recovery planning - working closely with partners across all sectors. We continue to adapt this response in line with the evolving situation.

I appreciate that it’s been difficult and people have sacrificed a great deal – I know that not seeing parents or grandchildren has been particularly hard for many, but by complying with the Government guidance and ‘staying alert’ we are saving lives.

We must not forget the lives that have sadly been prematurely lost to the virus – our thoughts and prayers are constantly with those grieving their loved ones. We must also remain thankful and appreciative towards the key workers who have kept going throughout the pandemic. On behalf of the Council, I would also like to extend our thanks to all Hampshire County Council officers for their dedication and hard work in difficult circumstances over recent weeks.

The steps needed for recovery are being carefully considered across the County Council – and based on Government guidance and regulations, we are developing plans to reopen services when it is possible to do so safely. Our recovery approach will embrace the direct impacts of Covid-19 on the County Council itself, its wider direct partners, and on residents in communities and businesses across Hampshire.”

The new County Council Chairman for 2020/21 elected at the AGM was Councillor Mel Kendal. As the civic head of the county, he will represent the Authority on any royal visits and ceremonial occasions in Hampshire as well as carry out other civic activities and duties. The Chairman presides over County Council meetings and ensures they are conducted in line with Standing Orders and that they are a forum for debating issues.

Councillor Kendal is in his 24th year as a Hampshire County Councillor – serving New Milton. He is a former Deputy Leader of the Council (2011-13) and has served on various Executive Member functions in Hampshire’s Cabinet. Councillor Marge Harvey, County Councillor for Catherington, was elected Vice Chairman.

Stay safe, stay well, stay alert and please self-isolate if requested.

Cllr Roger Huxstep Member for Meon Valley Division

1st June 2020