

County Council Report – February 2021

When you read this report we should be about halfway through the lockdown. At the time of writing the GP practices in the Division were getting on very well with mass vaccination and I hope NHS logistics will hold up and we will be well into vaccinating the 60-65 year olds having already done the 16s to 64s with poor health. Depending on your GP Practice affiliation you will be contacted to go to either Studley or Stratford.

It has now been recognised that Lockdown can cause issues with mental health and family finances.

The County has a number of services for mental health support that can be accessed and these are:

- Suicide prevention website (also with links to wider Mental Health services & support) <https://www.dearlife.org.uk/>
- Mental Health support available during lockdown (including arts offer for clinically extremely vulnerable): <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/information-coronavirus/mental-health-advice-coronavirus-pandemic/1>
- Wider arts support available for adults over 18 with mild to moderate Mental Health difficulties has gone live this month (albeit virtually) <https://arty-folks.org.uk/what-we-offer/>

For financial help please contact the local welfare scheme:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/localwelfarescheme and for wider support please go to

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/facinghardship

A caution has been issued regarding scams for Covid testing and everyone should be very careful to check any offers are from the NHS. The RSC theatre “the other place” is being used for rapid tests and these can be booked on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/stratford-upon-avon-covid-community-testing-32080684767>

There is some confusion over the District Council’s changes to Green Bin and food waste collection service. After April 5 green bins will only be collected if a fee has been paid. This fee of £35 for the year can be paid at www.stratford.gov.uk/online-forms/subscribe-for-garden-waste-service.cfm. Food waste will still be collected weekly as part of SoADC general precept, but must be put out on the street in small green caddies. These caddies are about 14 litres volume and three can be ordered free of charge by phoning SoADC and asking for them or sending an email to: streetscene@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

Finally the County has started finalising its budget. The Government has generously allowed councils the option of raising your taxes by a maximum of 2% with up to 3% extra for adult social care. Warwickshire’s residents are relatively wealthy and only a few residents are eligible for financial support for care when they need it. As a consequence I do not expect WCC to ask for more than 1% uplift for adult social care. Children’s services are a very different matter and costs are rising very rapidly, a trend that has been exacerbated by Covid-19 epidemic. These services are a legal right and must be funded from the general precept. As a consequence other services like roads maintenance, flood relief, and public rights of way are being squeezed. A decision on the budget is expected to be made on February 8.

Arden Clerks and Chairs met in January and heard a new Police Sergeant, Stacey Norton, would take over from Sgt Angus Eagles who has passed his inspector’s exams. Water depth markers were added to the minor works budget and a grant towards a CCTV camera in Valley Road, Earlswood was agreed.

Local elections are scheduled to take place in May 6. I would strongly advise anyone who is in a higher risk category from Covid-19 should apply for a postal vote. Please contact me if you wish to obtain a form so as to apply.

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