

Report for Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council 25th January 2021

Firstly, I'd like to wish all councillors, clerks and residents a safe and happy New Year.

The year has of course got off to a very worrying start, with the country going into lockdown once again. In Hampshire, the number of positive Covid-19 cases has been rising substantially over recent. Since March, there have been 47,363 confirmed Covid-19 cases in Hampshire and 1,455 COVID-19 associated deaths (as at 18th January). In the seven days to 18th January, there were 6,616 confirmed cases. This is, thankfully, a reduction in the number for the previous week: 7,838. The County's weekly case rate standing at 462 per 100,000 (the national rate at the same point was 537.9). East Hampshire currently has a rate of 453.8 per 100,000, with Rushmoor being the hardest hit (1,298.1 cases per 100,000). [Hampshire COVID data](#) is published weekly on the HCC website.

During lockdown:

- All primary and secondary schools and colleges have moved to remote learning. Children of key workers and vulnerable children will still attend schools in person.
- Hampshire Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) remain open. A [pre-booking system for residents to access Household Waste Recycling Centres \(HWRCs\)](#) to manage demand and reduce queuing traffic is still in place.
- Libraries are closed for browsing, however members can borrow, return and reserve physical items from libraries by using the [Ready Reads service](#) or [reserving online](#). Fines are frozen.
- Country Parks are open and normal hours and parking fees apply. However, due to restrictions, the farms at Manor Farm and Staunton Farm are closed. Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve is also closed.
- Essential highways maintenance will continue in a Covid-safe way.
- Registration services will continue to offer birth and death registrations over the phone and citizenship ceremonies virtually. Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies will only take place with up to six people in exceptional circumstances, in line with government guidance.

The Hampshire Coronavirus Support and Helpline can be contacted on **0333 370 4000**. (calls charged at local rate.) People can also request a call-back from the helpline by completing the [call-back request form](#). The helpline is open 9am - 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am - 4.30pm on Fridays and, to support the lockdown, will also open 10am - 3pm on Saturday and Sunday.

HCC has launched a new community project to tackle hardship caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The 'connect4communities' programme will be community-based and driven by HCC Council - working with community partners such as schools, colleges and Early Years providers, as well as voluntary and charity organisations. Funded by the £2.89 million Winter Grant Scheme, awarded to the HCC by the Department for Work and Pensions, the scheme comprises a planned programme of supportive measures mainly, but not exclusively, targeting families on low incomes with children over the winter and beyond. At least 80% of the total funding will go towards families with children, with up to 20% allocated for other households in need. £320,000 is being made available to help childcare, voluntary and charitable organisations to provide activities and food for vulnerable Hampshire children during the February half term. Information about the scheme can be found at: connect4communities.org.

From Monday 25th January, HCC will be temporarily removing the time restriction on using free Older Person's Bus Passes so that they can be used before 9.30am. the intention is to help older people travel to early morning vaccination appointments and to travel at quieter times for essential journeys such as food shopping.

HCC has launched the [Hitting the Cold Spots](#) (HTCS) initiative, a county-wide project offering advice and support to people who are having trouble staying warm during the winter. It includes home visits, help to access funding for heating repairs and replacements and temporary heating. In addition to the practical help available, Hampshire residents can also receive advice about tariff switching and referrals to other services for further help, including 'safe and well' visits and healthy living advice. Some of the services have eligibility criteria, but the phone advice line is open to all Hampshire residents. The advisors will be able to talk through the best possible solutions for each caller. Anyone who is struggling to stay warm and well this winter, can contact an advisor on Freephone 0800 804 8601 (Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email staywarm@environmentcentre.com

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20th January 2021