

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT– 2020

Covid-19 PARISH REPORT 3 - May 12 2020

Covid-19 - Vulnerable Residents

Updates are varied and frequent on almost every issue. It is a skill negotiating and deciding on those most relevant to Ermin Ward. I will of course be guided by you if you need more regular, varied or even less information.

Lock-down updates

Regular updates: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

Food Banks

Over 90% of the food distributed by foodbanks in The Trussell Trust network is donated by the public. Your food donations are vital to their ability to give everyone referred to us a balanced and nutritious three day supply of food. Food items needed right now are listed on the website. Collection points in Cirencester are at Waitrose and at Tesco Kingsmeadow. <https://cirencester.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

Request for donations

The NHS Cheltenham and Gloucester fundraising team are looking for donations of the following items: Lip salve (stick form) and E45 face lotion for use under staff masks. Please note these items should be new and unused. They will go to staff who are working in Covid-19 wards locally. If you can donate these items please get in touch with T'pu Kapadia from the Integrated Transport Unit to arrange collection. Contact details: T'pu.kapadia@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Broadband in Rural Areas

Good broadband connection has never been so important. Thanks to Conservative Cllr Ray Theodoulou, it has recently come to light that CDC do have a Broadband enabling budget. Please could you let me know if you are not connected to super fast broadband, such as Gigaclear, I would like to see if I can get you some help from the Council.

BIN COLLECTIONS AND UBICO

Fortnightly garden waste collections will restart from Wednesday 13 May.

- Collections will be operating to the published collection schedule (see calendar);
- The service is available to all customers who hold 2019/20 garden waste licence(s)
- Only what is in the CDC garden waste bins and bags will be collected
- No side waste will be accepted
- Crew safety means significantly overloaded bins cannot be collected
- There will be no additional or catch-ups for collections;
- Existing licences have been extended and renewals will be processed in June

RECYCLING CENTRES

Hempsted & Wingmoor Farm HRCs will be open from Mon 11 May. To help keep staff and site visitors safe, all trips must be pre-booked in advance. Strict social distancing will be in place. Those who have not pre-booked will be turned away. If this goes according to plan, Fosse Cross will open on Monday 18 May. Please check first and book your place.

BUSINESS

Furlough Scheme

The government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will remain open until the end of October, the Chancellor announced today (Tuesday 12 May 2020).

Top-up to local business grant funds scheme

The Government has announced a new discretionary fund to support certain small businesses previously ineligible for the existing coronavirus business grant funds.

Detailed guidance is awaited from the Government on how to administer the new scheme. It will be separated from the existing grants a new system set up to process. Lessons have been learned from the previous round of grant funds.

Tool to help self-employed determine eligibility for grant claims

HMRC have launched an online tool the public can use to find out if they're eligible to make a claim through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. There is also some guidance about the scheme. To access the tool, users will need:

- Self-assessment unique taxpayer reference (UTR) number
- National insurance number

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme#eligible>

'One stop shop' for recruitment created for Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership (GFirst LEP), The Growth Hub Network, and GlosJobs have created a new partnership to set up a 'one stop shop' so the county can gather together 'all things recruitment' in Gloucestershire. In response to the recruitment challenges the partnership are asking all partners and the Gloucestershire business community to list their current vacancies on www.glosjobs.co.uk, so that the county has one central point for jobs available.

Please could you share on your village/parish websites. <https://www.glosjobs.co.uk/>

Tax credit payments

The government has confirmed that those working reduced hours due to coronavirus or those being furloughed by their employer will not have their tax credits payments affected if they are still employed or self-employed.

There is no need to contact HMRC about this change. HMRC will treat those applicable as working their normal hours until the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme close, even if they are not using either scheme.

FLY-TIPPING

Fly Tipping has increased, mainly builders waste. If you see any fly-tipping, please photograph it, note the exact location (grid references would be ideal) and report it here: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping/> and let me know so that I can follow it up if it is not dealt with.

SIR GEOFFREY CLIFTON-BROWN - MP for the Cotswolds

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown is liaising with CDC cabinet members and group members on a weekly basis, to take local concerns back to the central government for answers. His support is making a huge difference across the board, including:

- Lobbied hard to convince CDC to resume Green Bin collections
- Hastened reopening of Recycling Centres
- Has now got a new fund to support dairy farmers - our Cotswold MP worked very hard with other colleagues to get this much-needed support for our dairy farmers.

<https://www.cliftonbrown.co.uk/content/dairy-farmers>

Let me know if you want me to ask him something for you.

You can also engage via Facebook on the live streaming sessions at the Barn Theatre on Fridays afternoons. The session on 8 May covered schools and included a panel of experts and school heads.

<https://www.facebook.com/theBarnTheatreCirencester/>

Police & Crime Commissioner Election

This month Gloucestershire was set to go to the polls and vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner election. However, along with festivals, holidays and most other things in 2020, the election has been postponed until 2021. Until then, Martin Surl will continue in post for another 12 months.

Families

Life is particularly challenging for families in lockdown. Working from home is very difficult with young children running about, homeschooling can be a battlefield and a computer for each student is needed for on-line lessons - a huge expense at a difficult time and I am told that stocks are low. For those who should be taking GCSEs and A levels this summer, it has been devastating - hopes, dreams and travel plans all on hold.

<https://www.glofamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glofamilies/home.page>

Support and advice for parents.

Phone line has extended opening hours in the evening and weekends. The service is available Mondays-Fridays, 9am-8pm, and on Saturdays 10am-6pm.

Call free of charge: 0800 542 02 02. If they can't answer straight away, please leave a message and they will call back.

Email : familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk and they will respond to the same working day. Find on Facebook – just search for Family Information Service – Gloucestershire and leave a message. Useful hints and tips, visit www.glofamiliesdirectory.org.uk

Zoom

I am delighted that some of my Parishes have already held meetings virtually by using Zoom - it was really good to virtually see everyone again!

Zoom can be run from a mobile phone or a laptop (better because you can see everyone at the same time). If you want to give it a go, I recommend you set it up in good time and have a practice and request everyone to join 10 minutes early to give them time to resolve any issues.

<https://zoom.us/>

Local authorities have new powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-given-new-powers-to-hold-public-meetings-remotely?utm_source=e9e74923-3b23-40ab-b860-508a5e8eee17&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

PLANNING APPLICATION OBSERVATIONS

This week we are testing a virtual meeting platform for the Planning and Licensing Committee and I will be involved in a test virtual meeting on Wednesday 13 May at 10.00 a.m. I am very keen that this is a success; I have one or two items which must go to committee and the current guidelines make uncomfortable reading.

Please continue to comment on Planning Applications via the CDC portal (link below). Until virtual or physical Planning Meetings can proceed, applications with even one objection will be brought to my attention and I am keeping a close eye on all applications. I am liaising with residents/parish councillors and the head of planning and officers where appropriate. I strongly encourage any of you who wish to object, support or make other observations to an application to make comments via the preferred Public Access route on the Council's website. The CDC website was updated in February 2020, links saved before then will no longer work.

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/view-planning-applications/>

Find the application you want to comment on, click into it and click on the COMMENTS tab where there is a form for you to fill in the details. Occasionally comments are submitted by other routes and this can lead to misunderstandings and/or a lack of formal record being made on the system, which in turn can lead to lack of formal communication & notification regarding procedures (e.g. Committee dates, public speaking, etc.)

CAR PARKING

Car parking charges have been suspended until further notice. The Old Memorial Hospital car park is now open and plans for the Waterloo ground plus five multi-storey car park has been put on hold. Traffic wardens are still operating (this is a county council remit).

CDC Corporate Peer Group Review

Published on 23 December 2019, this report was finally released to the Conservative Group on 19 April by the leader of CDC. He told us that he intends to publish it when things get back to normal.

Parish Connections magazine

Parish Connections is not being printed this month. An electronic version can be accessed from the end of this month here: <https://erminwestbenefice.org.uk/>

Ermin Ward Covid-19 Computer Aid

Are you or do you know a vulnerable person who needs a computer to be connected? Or do you know a student who is struggling with online school work as there are not enough computers in the house? Please contact me.