

Rushwick Parish Council – District Councillor Report – January 2021

Happy New Year.

Coronavirus cases have seen an incredibly sharp rise over the Christmas period and the impact of Christmas, itself, is only just starting to filter into the figures. Malvern Hills has seen one of the sharpest rises in the West Midlands region but there are rises throughout.

You can see the updated daily figures via the Worcestershire County Council website.

From a local level I am receiving calls from residents about neighbours or near neighbours continuing not to abide by the rules set out. I have had conversations with people who have seen 12 or more people in homes near them and people coming from outside of the area to visit with no social distancing at all – all within this last week. These have all been reported to the police. This is very much happening and is why it is important that we all continue to play our part in encouraging residents to stay at home and follow the rules.

As a District Council we have ramped up our communications again. Leaflets are going to be distributed and handed out at supermarkets to as many people as possible, new posters and further use of social media is all going ahead.

Because we are now in a full lockdown again – if people need help accessing food or essentials then they should visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help.

Rushwick Assist has sprung back into action and here2help have the local contact details as well as residents having had a contact posted to them back under lockdown one. Of course, as district councillors we're also a point of contact if needed.

Public toilets and playgrounds will remain open in line with government guidance. Household recycling centres remain open and libraries are offering a limited service.

Our Economic Development team are continuing to support business including the distribution of new grants and giving information in terms of further support, which includes the extension of the Furlough scheme.

Village halls can still be used in a Covid Secure way.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

Finally, on Covid, we have been made aware of a scam where people are being called and ask to pay for their vaccine, via an online link they are provided with. This is a scam and there will be no charge for the vaccine.

Since our last meeting it has been a quieter time with Covid really dominating a lot of what we do – although I know we've both been involved in a lot of calls and messages around drainage and flooding across our ward.

Also, as we didn't meet in December some notes from things that went on prior to the Christmas break:

At the council's overview and scrutiny meeting on the 10th December we praised the work of council officers this year and noted that in this year's residents survey, which will be published in full soon, that in all but one area the council had made improvements this year according to the public. The only area that slumped slightly was the theatre, which had been closed most of the year, and in areas such as overall opinion of the council and communication from the council the public recorded significantly improved scores. It was good to see the impressions of planning and building control also having improved.

At Full Council one area that's worth noting is the Boundary Commission review. It is the council's recommendation based on current information that the council can fulfil its governance, scrutiny, and representational role with 31 members. At this point the wards are not defined and there is no suggestions of which areas may lose councillors or, infact, gain them – but as an overall figure we believe we need less councillors within the council.

The Census takes place in March next year and for the first time will be done primarily online.

We will be supporting the national Census campaign to raise awareness of it, the importance of filling it in and helping them to engage with hard-to-reach communities.

Thank you.

Daniel.