

Lighthorne Parish Council 12th January 2021 County Councillor's Report

Budget 2021/22

It is difficult to remember that when the budget was set last year, Covid-19 had just broken out in China and all the plans we made in budgetary planning for savings were ultimately absorbed by the increased costs we have incurred. One of our problems in setting the budget for next year is that the government have not yet indicated as to how much will be allocated to local authorities to help with their budget problems. The government has indicated that WCC can allocate in our budget calculations an increase of 3% towards Adult Social Care. The feeling in the Council that this increase should be amortised across two years rather than incurring a one-off imposition on our residents. At this point of the deliberations all budgetary thoughts are towards restoring employment levels in the area. Warwickshire was fortunate that last year our reserves were sufficient to withstand the impact of Covid-19.

The budget will be decided on 8th February 2021 and I will advise you of all our proposals in my next report.

Covid-19 Update as at 8th January 2021

The government changed the category for our area from Tier 3 to Tier 4 Lockdown. This has imposed severe restrictions within our hospitality trade. We had had hoped that we would be reduced to Tier 2 by events proved otherwise.

In line with national figures the rates of infection have continued to rise. Monday 4th January and later figures show that for our area the seven day rate/100,000 is now 338.2/100,000 and the over 60's day rate is 278.2/100,000 (with 116 cases over the last seven days), which when compared to other areas in Warwickshire for all ages is Nuneaton & Bedworth 485.8/100,000, North Warwickshire 455.1/100,000, Warwick 392.3/100,000 and Rugby 489.3/100,000. The big jump in cases suggests there may have been a slight time lag in getting the positive case figures with the New Year bank holiday.

The situation regarding SWFT Hospital Beds has also increased with 107 (79) confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 5 (3) patients in ICU (figures in brackets are from 4 Jan). However, the capacity has increased to 12% from 9% on 4 January, which also reflects an increase of 'open' beds up to 369 from 286 earlier in the week, which is welcome.

The cumulative deaths across our area from the start of this second wave (28th August 2020) have sadly increased by a further seven since last report to 41 with 11 occurring in care homes, 27 in hospital and three at home, out of a total of 440 all cause deaths in our area for this new second wave period.

The cumulative total of deaths across Warwickshire for Wave 2 has now jumped to 202 from 173 for a total of 1939 all cause deaths. The cumulative total of Covid-19 deaths in our area is 209 since the start of the pandemic and in Warwickshire 802; over the same period there have been 5485 non Covid-19 related deaths in Warwickshire.

A new locally led Lateral Flow Testing facility for people without coronavirus symptoms is opening in Stratford at the Courtyard Theatre, with the aim of protecting those most at risk, using rapid testing to speed up the process.

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The vaccine rollout has now started and is increasing in GP practices together with the Hospital sites; and WCC is involved with the setting up of a mass vaccination site which will be located in Stoneleigh in due course and will compliment another vaccination facility in Birmingham at Millennium Point. 24,000 vaccinations will have been delivered by the end of this week in Warwickshire and the county is doing 'quite well' at a local level than some other counties.

Essentially the three hospital hubs will be using the Pfizer vaccine and local GP's will be administering the OxfordAZ vaccine. Roving teams are carrying out vaccinations in care homes amongst staff and residents and it is anticipated to have all care homes in Warwickshire vaccinated by the end of the month, as this is a priority area.

The NHS has the capacity locally to deliver 47,000 vaccines per week and the plan is for all the over 50 and clinically vulnerable to be vaccinated by the end of March.

There are currently around 10,300 children still in school across the county representing those who are either vulnerable or children of key workers across Nursery, Primary and Secondary facilities and WCC is working with all schools on establishing Lateral Flow Testing for pupils.

I know none of us enjoy being classified as Tier 4 but the only way this pandemic can be controlled is for us all to follow the guidelines.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a successful New Year and that hopefully before too long we can look back at this period of time and reflect on how much we have learnt from the experience.

Unfortunately, as you know I am undergoing chemotherapy treatment at the moment and not enjoying the best of health. I will not be joining you at your meeting but should you have any queries or issues that I can help you with please do not hesitate to contact me by email and I will reply as soon as I am able.

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12.01.21.