

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL COVID-19 UPDATE – Sunday 31 May 2020**  
**From Cllr Philip Whitehead**

**Government Updates**

On Thursday evening the Prime Minister gave an update on the UK's progress against COVID-19, having met the five tests that allow the adjustment of lockdown.

**From Monday 1 June**

- 1) Nurseries and other early years settings and reception, year one and year six in primary schools can reopen in a safe way;
- 2) Outdoor retail and car showrooms, where social distancing is generally easier, can reopen; and
- 3) Up to six people will be able to meet outside (in parks, gardens and other private outdoor spaces) - provided those from different households continue strictly to observe social distancing rules by staying two metres apart.

Today, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced that from Monday 1 June the shielding guidance is being updated so that people will be advised that they can take initial steps to safely spend time outdoors. Those shielding will be able to spend time outdoors with members of their own household or, if they live alone, with one person from another household. Mr Jenrick's full statement can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/communities-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-31-may-2020>.

**From Monday 15 June**

- 1) Secondary schools will begin to provide some face-to-face contact time for years 10 and 12; and
- 2) The Government intends to reopen other non-essential retail - but only provided the five tests are still being met and shops have been made COVID secure.

**NHS Test and Trace service**

A new NHS Test and Trace service has been launched in England to help identify, contain, control and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The service will:

- Provide testing for anyone who has symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) to rule out if they have the virus
- Get in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to help them share information about any close recent contact they have had
- Alert those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them that they need to self-isolate to help the spread of the virus

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes.

People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus. Those contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service will be given clear information explaining what they must do and how they can access local support if needed.

The Department for Work and Pensions has announced that those having to self-isolate will be eligible for statutory sick pay if they are unable to work from home.

The Government has also expanded testing availability for children aged under 5, to help support the phased opening of schools and childcare settings in England from 1 June. From

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today, all symptomatic individuals in England will therefore be able to access a test if they need one.

A package of £300 million of new funding has been made available to local authorities to work with NHS Test and Trace to develop local 'Outbreak Control Plans' (as mentioned in yesterday's Member's Briefing). The plans will focus on identifying and containing potential outbreaks in places such as workplaces, housing complexes, care homes and schools, ensuring testing capacity is deployed effectively and helping the most vulnerable in self-isolation access essential services in their area. A new Local Government Advisory Board has also been established to support this work.

The NHS COVID-19 app, which will form a part of the NHS Test and Trace service, will be launched in the coming weeks once contact tracing is up and running. It will significantly extend the speed and reach of contact tracing, by helping to identify others who may have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus.

Further information on the NHS Test and Trace Service, is available by clicking the following link <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works?>

**Government food parcels – opt out**

Those people on the extremely vulnerable shielded list that receive a Central Government food parcel are able to opt out of receiving further parcels should they wish.

Residents to whom this applies, are required to re-register at the Government website [www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable). Once re-registered they need to click that they do not need support with food to prevent further parcels. Alternatively, they can call 0800 028 8327 and follow the instructions.

Residents will need to have their NHS number to hand to complete the process.

**UK Heatwave plan**

With the very dry and sunny weather conditions this weekend and forecast to continue, Public Health England has updated its [Heatwave Plan for England](#) taking into account COVID-19, to help people stay as safe as possible.

The heat can affect anyone, but some people run a greater risk of serious harm. Many of those who are at risk of harm from heat are also at greater risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 and may need to spend more time at home than they would usually. Others may need to stay at home because they are self-isolating or recovering from the infection.

We still have much to learn about how COVID-19 affects the body but both heat and COVID-19 infections put a strain on the heart, lungs and kidneys and are linked with inflammation in the body. As a result, people shielding or displaying COVID-19 symptoms are advised to take extra precautions.

For more information, visit [www.nhs.uk/heatwave](http://www.nhs.uk/heatwave).

**Council updates**

**Parking enforcement**

The council will be reintroducing parking enforcement at all car parks, and on residential and on-street parking areas in the county from Monday 1 June. All parking permits and season tickets will also restart from this date, and parking wardens will enforce any parking contraventions.

On 25 March, the Government gave NHS and care workers free use of all council parking and this will continue until further notice. However, Wiltshire Council went one step further and

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suspended all parking charges, including in residential areas, from the 27 March which was to be reconsidered when the Government issued new guidance.

As the Government looks to return to a new normal, it is important we reintroduce parking charges and enforcement to ensure the highways and parking networks are working effectively.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the council's budget, particularly in terms of lost income, and reinstating car parking charges will help us to continue to support our residents and businesses through these challenging times.

People using car parks should note the following guidance to help keep staff and residents safe and ensure social distancing:

- Cash will be accepted (change not given) at all car parks, but please pay using [a digital permit](#) or contactless if you can. Not all car parks accept contactless payments, but all accept digital permits.
- Signage will be in place to let people know of the charges and also to remind people to ensure social distancing when using machines or walking in car parks.
- Where possible, people should park leaving one space or more between cars to aid social distancing. This may not always be possible, but it may be achievable in quieter car parks.
- NHS workers and care workers must place supporting evidence in their windscreen when parking to be eligible for free stays, such as photocopies of work passes with sensitive information removed, or a letter of evidence on headed paper from their employer.

All valid parking permits and season tickets will be restarted from Monday 1 June with the other charges – with the nine weeks of the suspension period automatically added on to the end of parking permits and season tickets. For example, if a person has a parking permit or season ticket that expires on 31 August, that permit or season ticket will now automatically be extended to end on 2 October, nine weeks later. People do not need to contact the council for this extension; it will happen automatically. Refunds can be given to people who no longer need extended season tickets – contact [parking@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:parking@wiltshire.gov.uk) for more information.

### **Highways and high streets**

The council is set to receive £227,000 of Government funding to support the use of temporary and pop-up measures to create a safe environment for walking and cycling.

Following significant changes in travel behaviours during COVID-19 which saw more people choosing to walk and cycle during their daily exercise, these new measures will help encourage walking and cycling activity to continue whilst maintaining social distance. They play a key role in helping to avoid overcrowding on public transport as shops and businesses start to reopen.

This indicative allocation is part of the first tranche of funding from the government's £250 million Emergency Active Travel Fund. The initial focus promotes cycling as a replacement for journeys previously made by public transport and could include closing some roads to through traffic, installing segregated cycle lanes and widening pavements.

Many suggestions for schemes across the county have been received and those that meet the funding criteria, including timescales, will be prioritised. Work on these priority schemes will need to start within four weeks of receiving the funding and completed within eight weeks from starting.

A further tranche of funding is likely to be released later in the summer and will help support permanent cycling and walking measures throughout the county.

In addition, Wiltshire Council has been awarded approximately £450,000 to support the safe reopening of high streets across Wiltshire.

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This funding comes from the Government's Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and supports measures that ensure businesses and their customers can trade safely. This could include temporary changes to public spaces owned by the council and which are next to businesses so they can be reopened safely and supporting retailers on how to make temporary adjustments to their premises to comply with social distancing.

Some measures will be easier to implement such as pavement stickers outside shops showing 2 metres apart and others will take a bit longer as pavements are reconfigured to support social distancing for shoppers. However, the council will work with town and parish councils and key partners to ensure there is local support for any scheme that is progressed and we will aim to implement as many schemes as possible.

**Street markets**

Following recent changes to Government guidance, Wiltshire Council run street markets will be open from Tuesday 2 June with stallholders now able to sell their full range of goods.

Social distancing will be in place at each of the markets, and the public are strongly urged to take notice of the signage at each site and ensure they do everything they can to adhere to the measures and keep at least two meters apart from each other and the stallholders at all times.

To keep stallholders and the public as safe as possible a socially distancing queuing system will be in place at each market for each stall. Stallholders will be regularly using hand sanitiser, and cleaning where appropriate, and people are also encouraged to pay via contactless where they can and when it's available, and should not unnecessarily pick up items and put them back.

A number of stall holders have laid their stalls out differently to have a dedicated entrance and exit and operate a one way system and all have been advised to follow government guidelines around hygiene, regular hand washing and sanitising.

Council officers will be on site to manage set-up and ensure stalls are socially distanced, and arrangements are in place at each stall for a socially distanced queue system.

More information on opening times at each location including FAQs can be found at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/community-environment-street-markets>.

Chippenham, Devizes, Royal Wootton Bassett and Salisbury markets are not Wiltshire Council-run so please check with the relevant councils to find out about their current arrangements:

- [Chippenham Town Council](#)
- [Devizes Town Council](#)
- [Royal Wootton Bassett](#)
- [Salisbury City Council](#)

**Financial support for vulnerable households**

Some Wiltshire residents of working age will pay less council tax due to a Government-funded scheme to support people from the impact of COVID-19.

This latest support package from the Government, which is being managed locally by Wiltshire Council, is aimed at working age families who already qualify for council tax reduction but still have to pay some council tax.

There are currently more than 16,000 working age households in receipt of a council tax reduction in Wiltshire, and around 11,000 of those will qualify for additional financial support under this scheme.

The scheme ensures that anyone who qualifies for council tax reduction will receive a further reduction of £150 in addition to their current council tax benefit. The scheme will not put accounts in credit, so those already in receipt of a 100% reduction will not be affected.

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It also applies to those who are successful in claiming council tax reduction for the first time who may need some short-term support, before they return to work.

COVID-19 has left some people struggling financially and this extra money will provide support and hopefully ease the pressure for those who are already in a particularly vulnerable situation.

Qualifying households will shortly be sent a new council tax bill for 2020/21 by Wiltshire Council confirming they have been awarded a further reduction.

If anyone has any questions they should call 0300 456 0109 or email [counciltax@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@wiltshire.gov.uk).

### **Schools – booklet to help families return to school**

Schools have been open for children of key workers and the most vulnerable children throughout the lockdown, however as mentioned earlier, the Government has announced early years settings, primary school reception, years 1, 2 and 6 can return from 1 June. Secondary school years 10 and 12 will have some face-to-face contact from 15 June.

For all children, and particularly young children, going back to school with new structures and routines in place is going to feel very different. Schools across Wiltshire are working very hard to prepare pupils for these changes and the council is providing guidance and support where it is needed.

The council's Schools Team has created a new information guide for parents and carers to support them get their children ready to return. The booklet provides useful advice and tips including:

- Talk about the positives of going back to school
- Talk about all the things you have done during the lockdown period
- Think about ways for them to connect with their friends before going back
- For younger children explain when this is going to happen i.e. there are so many sleeps before going back
- Encourage open discussion
- Start to encourage the number of times your children wash their hands and practise maintaining social distancing
- Share school information with them to help them prepare for the changes
- Put a routine in place in the run up to going back – get your child to talk to you about what the routine will look like

The booklet can be accessed online – [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/downloads/22821](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/downloads/22821)

### **Support for older residents**

A new 'Active at Home' booklet has been launched by Public Health England today to provide practical guidance for older adults on home-based activities to maintain their strength and balance during the Coronavirus outbreak.

The booklet is available to download [here](#). Please encourage people in your community to download the booklet for themselves or share with family or friends that might find it useful.

### **IT update**

Criminals are using COVID-19 as an opportunity to target the public sector, businesses and individuals. The biggest threat is ransomware attacks where hackers attempt to gain access through fake (phishing) emails and prevent you from accessing your computer or data and demand payment to restore access.

Recently the council has seen an increase in these fake emails and the design of some has been very sophisticated.

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If you receive an email that in any way doesn't feel right or has links and attachments which are unfamiliar to you, always be cautious. Don't click on any links or attachments and forward the email to [mimecheck@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:mimecheck@wiltshire.gov.uk) only.

If you notice something out of the ordinary or if you have any security concerns, please contact the council's ICT service desk immediately on 01225 718718.

**Other matters:**

**Road and street work permits**

From Monday 1 June, the way road works and street works are managed in Wiltshire will be changing.

The Government is requiring all highway authorities to implement Permit Schemes, where anyone wishing to work on Wiltshire's roads has to submit a permit to work. The current system relies on work promoters submitting Notices where they have a legal right to carry out work.

The new Permit Scheme will allow better control and direction on the works that take place on our roads as they are not permitted to start unless they have prior approval (excluding emergency works).

The change has required an increase in the staffing in the Network Management Team in order to be able to process approximately 33,000 applications per year.

Further information on the council's works permit scheme system is available by clicking the following link <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-road-works-permit-scheme>.

**Special schools**

Plans to invest in special school education moved a step forward this week after Government officials gave the green light to a key part of the process to provide additional school places in north Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council wants to ensure that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities have access to a first class education for SEND pupils. The new school is key to these plans.

After consulting extensively with parents, pupils, schools and the community the council approved a number of recommendations including:

- The establishment of a new, maintained special school with a single leadership team to work across all three sites of St Nicholas, Rowdeford and Larkrise schools.
- Expansion on the existing Rowdeford site to accommodate up to 400 pupils as part of the new special school by September 2023.
- Approve that the sites of St Nicholas and Larkrise stay in use until the new provision is ready, and then review if it is appropriate for children to transition to the new site at Rowdeford. This is to be established by approval by cabinet of further consultation on the appropriateness of transferring the provision of St Nicholas and Larkrise to the Rowdeford site no later than 12 months before opening all the new provision. This consultation would be determined by the demand for places, views of stakeholders and wider development of inclusive education for children and young people with SEND living in Wiltshire.

The Office for the School Adjudicator (OSA) examined the proposals to amalgamate the three schools and establish the new, maintained special school with a single leadership team to work across all three sites of St Nicholas, Rowdeford and Larkrise schools. It has now given

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the green light for the amalgamation to go ahead - a key milestone in taking forward exciting work to develop the provision.

In preparation for the OSA decision the council has already started to design a build programme to meet the need for additional special schools places in north Wiltshire.

The council will be shortly announcing the preferred contractor to oversee the build and it looks forward to working together with families, pupils and schools to ensure the county has the best available provision which meets the needs of our SEND pupils now and in the future.