

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Report to Harston Parish Council February 2021

Rapid testing centre opens in Cambourne

From Wednesday 3rd February a rapid testing centre will be available at The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Saturday. Key workers and people who are unable to work from home, who are showing no symptoms, will be able to book free rapid testing twice a week. The tests are strictly for people who have no symptoms of Covid-19. It enables those who test positive, and their contacts, to self-isolate, which can help drive down the R rate locally and save lives. As many as 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have no symptoms. To make the testing as worthwhile as possible, people need to take a test twice a week. A one-off test will offer little benefit as it can only provide information about likelihood of being infectious at that point in time.

Residents can book their rapid test via the Cambridgeshire County Council website:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting

Vaccination

The vaccine programme is rolling out well with nearly all over 80s vaccinated at the time of writing. Vaccines were delivered in all South Cambs Care Homes except those with active outbreaks at the end of January. Sadly, we have seen some very serious outbreaks in care homes and it will be a huge relief when all residents and staff are fully vaccinated.

In an important update to communications, the local NHS is now asking any patients who are clinically extremely vulnerable and have been shielding or who are aged 70 and over and live in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough who have not had their first COVID-19 vaccination to now get in touch with their GP practice to book their vaccination appointment.

If residents need Transport to vaccination sites, there is a central, County-approved booking point.
Phone 0345 045 5219

The NHS has also opened up access to the COVID vaccine to staff and volunteers from community groups directly working or having contact with people in the priority groups outlined here:

- those involved in the direct supply of food and other goods
- those supporting older people and those with long term health issues
- those supporting vulnerable children and young people
- volunteer drivers involved in transporting people to vaccine appointments

CCVS (Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service) are working with the NHS on identifying community groups to receive the COVID vaccine. Email: enquiries@cambridgecv.org.uk

Business Support

Businesses in South Cambridgeshire can now apply for the latest round of Government financial help for closures during the post-Christmas period and through the Spring. There are several different Government grants available for these periods.

For the Tier 4 period in South Cambridgeshire, which ran for ten days immediately after Christmas, affected businesses (including non-essential retail, leisure, personal care, sports facilities and hospitality businesses) can now apply online for the LRS (Closed) Tier 4 grant scheme. The eligibility criteria and payments are structured in a similar way to previous grants given during earlier restrictions.

For the current National Lockdown, which started on January 5, three new schemes are now available. Businesses which applied for the Tier 4 grant do not need to re-apply but will be contacted automatically by the Council. Those which haven't applied for earlier grants should fill in an online application form.

The new Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum: 5 January onwards covers the current 42-day period for business closures up until 31 March 2021, with one-off payments ranging from £2,001 to £4,500 depending on the rateable value of a business which must have been registered for business rates on 5 January 2021 and required by law to close. Those receiving this grant will also be entitled to an additional one-off Closed Business Lockdown payment for the same 42-day qualifying restriction period which will range from £4,000 to £9,000 and will be paid automatically.

The Council is also receiving additional funding to allocate at its discretion under the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme and will make initial use of these funds to provide top-ups to those most in-need businesses in the District which are eligible for the Closed Business Lockdown Payment.

The application closure date for the new grant schemes is 31 March 2021 with final payments being made by 30 April 2021.

Fly Tipping

Interestingly, there has been no significant increase in fly tipping since we had to pre-book visits to the Household Waste and Recycling Centres. However, there was a general rise predating this and there is a post-Christmas (hopefully temporary) rise. As always, if you see fly tipping please do report it straight away via the website as there may be evidence to identify the perpetrator which allows prosecution.

Green Issues

As part of the new Local Plan drafting process, a huge body of evidence has been commissioned, some for the first time, on the net zero carbon, biodiversity and water management implications of the different spatial options that were consulted on in the First Conversation on the Local Plan.

Work on chalk streams and more general attention to water management is at the heart of work on the new local plan; indeed, work on chalk streams was initiated by South Cambs planning officers working on the new local plan. The Planning Service is very concerned about maintenance of chalk streams as part of overall water management across the District and is working with local conservation organisations as well as with local and national government agencies. This is particularly important in relation to new developments where sustainability is key. Further evidence on the water cycle and integrated water management has been commissioned to guide the new Local Plan design.

On biodiversity, the council has contracted a nature conservation specialist in the Built and Natural Environment Planning department. They will be leading the drafting of a new and updated Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document which is expected to go out to consultation in the middle of the year and we would hope to have approved by the end of 2021. This will bring our guidance and standards on biodiversity up to date with the latest government changes. The Cabinet has also approved the final draft of the new Doubling Nature Strategy, which will be a sister document to our Zero Carbon Strategy.

Ian Sollom cllr.sollom@scambs.gov.uk

Tony Mason cllr.mason@scambs.gov.uk