

Covid-19 update – 15 April 2021

Dear volunteer coordinators and parish councillors

Update on the AstraZeneca vaccine

In the news last week, updated medical advice was provided nationally for use of the Oxford/AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine. Public Health England has put together [a leaflet with further information](#), including what to look out for after vaccination for anyone who may be worried.

Rapid Covid-19 testing for all

Since Friday 9 April **everyone** has been urged to take twice-weekly Covid tests. These are tests for people who **do not** have any of the symptoms of Coronavirus. (Anyone who has symptoms should still isolate at home and [organise to take a PCR test](#).)

Twice-weekly rapid testing will help to identify cases of Covid-19 that would otherwise be missed. With 1 in 3 people with coronavirus showing no symptoms and potentially spreading it without knowing, rapid testing of people with no symptoms helps to identify positive cases quickly, preventing the spread of infection.

There are several ways for people to access rapid testing, with the following options:

- Community testing: You can take a supervised test at rapid testing sites locally – there are eight in Cambridgeshire set up to test **asymptomatic** adults. [Find your nearest site in Cambridgeshire](#).
- NHS Test & Trace sites: These are across the country and operate as **symptomatic** testing sites in the morning but are currently providing an afternoon collect option, where you can pick up a box of tests to use at home.
- Pharmacy collect: Pharmacies are currently signing up to offer pharmacy collect from this month. Residents will be able to visit a participating pharmacy and pick up a free box of tests to use at home.
- LFD Direct: For people who can't access tests through the other routes, you can order a box of tests online or by calling 119, which will be delivered to your home.

[View a map of your area to see what options you have locally](#) to take regular tests.

6 May elections: voting during the pandemic

There are a number of elections taking place on 6 May, including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor, the Police and Crime Commissioner, County Council elections, [plus a handful of local polls](#).

There are a number of deadlines related to being able to vote, some of which people may find more relevant this year while voting during the pandemic. Elections teams are working incredibly hard to make voting in person on 6 May Covid-secure, but some people may wish to vote by post or to apply for a proxy – anyone can choose to vote by post or proxy, but you have to apply by the below deadlines.

- Monday (19 April) - the deadline to [register to vote](#)
- 5pm, Tuesday (20 April) - the deadline to [apply for a postal vote](#) (you must already be registered to vote).
- 5pm, Tuesday 27 April – the deadline to [apply for a proxy vote](#) (you must already be registered to vote). A proxy vote is when you appoint someone to visit **your** polling station on your behalf.
- Anyone who needs to self-isolate on election day because of Coronavirus, and is already registered to vote, will still be able to vote. This will be via new emergency proxy voting measures, even if they have not applied for a proxy vote before the above deadline. Anyone in this situation will be able to access an emergency proxy vote up until 5pm on election day.

Reopening village halls

National charity, Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) has issued new [information to help people running village halls](#) make sense of the latest announcements about the lifting of national lockdown restrictions. Apart from a small number of permitted activities, village halls will have to wait until 17 May before they can be hired out for many functions including exercise classes, coffee mornings, performances and celebrations.

Recovery funding

1. Intergenerational Family Learning Grants

Cambridgeshire Skills' [Family Learning Grants](#) are intended to help schools, charities and voluntary and community groups to host free local activities for all generations that are three hours or longer. Activities should be fun, informal and promote a culture of learning as a family. Total funding available in 2021 is £20,000 for engagement with at least 200 adults, so £100 is available for each adult engaged

in activities. For more information [email Sue Watsham](mailto:Sue.Watsham@scambs.gov.uk) or call **07788 247482**, or [email Tom Heffer](mailto:Tom.Heffer@scambs.gov.uk) or call **07763 969604**.

2. Sports Clubs in Crisis fund

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation has teamed up with Made By Sport (a charity which raises awareness of the power of sport and fundraises for organisations using sport to support young people) to offer the [Clubs in Crisis fund](#), for local sports groups supporting young people as lockdown eases.

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation will be administering the fund and awarding unrestricted grants of £2,021 to clubs and organisations in Cambridgeshire. Sports clubs and community organisations can apply to the fund if they use sport to improve young people's lives through:

- Developing life skills
- Building strong communities
- Improving mental health
- Developing employability skills, or
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

3. Covid Recovery Community Chest Grant

Applications are welcomed from community groups and parish councils which are resuming activity to bring people together after Covid. Anything which brings communities together to heal and any schemes designed to mitigate the effects that Covid has had on our communities, mental health and wellbeing wise, will be considered. The criteria has deliberately been set very simply to allow as many applications in as possible, so please make sure your groups apply for this funding. Email community.chest@scambs.gov.uk with any questions, but if your group is restarting, bringing residents back together after Covid, then we welcome an application from you.

This is a temporary change to Community Chest Grant guidance and the upper limit for grant awards has been raised to £2,000. Covid recovery related applications are restricted to one application per eligible body, and a group may apply for both a Community Chest Grant and a Covid Recovery Grant in the current financial year. Please note that the standard Community Chest Grant scheme continues to run, and applications are welcomed as normal. Full details can be found on [our website's grant pages](#).

Wellbeing support

1. Wellbeing Together Training

[Living Sport](#) and [Cambridgeshire, Peterborough & South Lincolnshire MIND](#) are partnering to deliver a new online community training programme to equip community volunteers/workers to support others in the community to look after their mental health, and signpost them to further help when needed.

Funded by the [How Are You Cambridgeshire & Peterborough project](#), the course starts on 20 April, and attendees are expected to participate in all sessions over a number of weeks. The course is free but a donation is suggested. You can [book, or find out more, online](#) or [email Christine Spowell](#).

2. Online Wellbeing Peer Support Group

C3 Churches are offering a virtual peer support group for anyone feeling isolated, overwhelmed or disconnected. This will run on Wednesdays at 7.30pm for an hour. The next eight session block starts on 21 April. There are limited places so please [book online in advance at the C3 website](#).