

MDC Community Briefing

Issue 14

22nd March 2021

COVID news

Lockdown lift-off lowdown

What's already changed?

- Schools and colleges have reopened, and university students return
- Two people from different households can meet outside for recreation, which can include "a coffee on a bench"
- Care home residents can have one nominated visitor, with testing and social distance precautions

From 29 March:

- People will be allowed to meet outside, either with one other household or within the "rule of six", including in private gardens
- The stay at home rule will end, but the government will urge people to stay local as much as possible
- Outdoor sport facilities will reopen, including golf courses and tennis and basketball courts, and formally organised outdoor sports can restart
- Weddings attended by up to six people can take place in any circumstances

Stage two (no earlier than 12 April):

- All shops allowed to open, along with close-contact services, including hairdressers and beauty salons (including in people's homes)
- Restaurants and pubs allowed to serve food and alcohol to customers sitting outdoors
- Gyms and spas can reopen, as can zoos, theme parks, libraries and community centres
- Members of the same household can take a holiday in the UK in self-contained accommodation
- Weddings attended by up to 15 people can take place

Stage three (no earlier than 17 May):

- People can meet in groups of up to 30 outdoors
- Six people or two households can meet indoors
- Pubs, restaurants and other hospitality venues can seat customers indoors
- Up to 30 people can attend weddings or other life events, like christenings
- Remaining outdoor entertainment, such as outdoor theatres and cinemas can open
- Indoor entertainment such as museums, theatres, cinemas and children's play areas can open
- Performances and large events can restart, but with limits on audience numbers
- Hotels, hostels and B&Bs can reopen
- International leisure travel may resume
- Adult indoor group sports and exercise classes can restart

Stage four (no earlier than 21 June):

- All legal limits on social contact will be removed
- No legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events
- Nightclubs will be allowed to reopen

What are the four tests for easing restrictions?

Each stage will be a minimum of five weeks apart. Four conditions must be met at each stage before proceeding to the next one:

- The coronavirus vaccine programme continues to go to plan
- Vaccines are sufficiently reducing the number of people dying or needing hospital treatment
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospital admissions
- New coronavirus variants do not fundamentally change the risk of lifting restrictions

Further information can be found on the following websites:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

There is support available. Call the **Coronavirus Helpline** on **0300 790 6275** if you need any assistance during the coming weeks.

Council to observe one-minute silence on National Day of Reflection

Mendip District Council will take part in a National Day of Reflection on 23rd March, to mark the anniversary of the first UK lockdown.

Staff and councillors will observe a one-minute silence at 12 noon to remember those who died during the pandemic.

The purpose of the event, organised by end of life charity Marie Curie, is to acknowledge the collective loss of the nation, to support those left behind and symbolise hope for a brighter future.

The charity explained that with hundreds of thousands of coronavirus deaths, millions of people have been bereaved, and many have been unable to grieve properly or say their goodbyes.

Mendip District Council's Chief Executive, Stuart Brown, said: "The National Day of Reflection is an opportunity to think of those who are sadly no longer with us and also of their loved ones who are now dealing with that devastating reality.

"We've a long road ahead of us to get back to some sort of normality. This seems a fitting time to pause, reflect, and pay our respects together.

"It's important to acknowledge the great suffering experienced as a result of the virus, but also to move forward together, in hope."

If you'd like to learn more about the National Day of Reflection, visit Marie Curie's website here: www.mariecurie.org.uk/get-involved/day-of-reflection

Coronavirus: a year like no other

A year on from the first government instructions to significantly limit social contact because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, [the Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) has published research](#) on what the data tell us about these extraordinary 12 months and the way our lives have changed.

From deaths and the pressure on hospitals, to the number of hours worked and people's expectations of rising unemployment, you can see how the remarkable figures recorded over the past 12 months compare with others and made this a year like no other.

Elections

Notice of election published for councils in Mendip

Formal 'notice of election' of the forthcoming Parish, Town, City and District Council by-elections has been published today, Monday 22 March.

Voters from Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet and Wells will go to the polls on Thursday 6 May to have their say on the by-elections for Parish, Town, City and District Councils. Meanwhile, all Mendip residents will have the opportunity vote in the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

Nomination papers for completion by prospective candidates are now available to download from the Council's website: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9700/Elections-2021

Residents - register to vote before the deadline on Monday 19 April. It takes 5 minutes. Don't lose your vote, register here: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Pre-election period

The pre-election period will run from Monday, 22 March until the polls close on Thursday, 6 May at 10pm. During this time, there are specific restrictions on communication activity from the Council.

Learn more here: www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/pre-election-period

Councillor resignation

Caroline McKinnell, (Lib Dem), has resigned from Mendip, creating a vacancy in Wells, St Thomas Ward. This will be addressed at a by-election on 6th May.

Mendip News

Check out our latest press releases, including news on EV Charing points for Mendip car parks, our mutli-user path plans, and our donation to purchase 500 trees for the Mendip Hills AONB.

This link will take you straight to the news: www.mendip.gov.uk/news

Partnership Updates

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

Garden waste subscribers – it is time to renew

Spring is in the air which means it is time for garden waste subscribers to renew quickly and easily online.

Reminder letters and emails are on their way to 50,000 green-fingered subscribers from district councils. But there is no need to wait, you can log-on now and sign-up for the coming year.

Subscriptions can be renewed through the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) website (somersetwaste.gov.uk/garden-waste-collections) or any district council website. Online payments available 24/7 are the quickest and easiest way to renew.

Due to the Covid disruption to garden waste collections last year, current subscriptions were extended. Renewed and new subscriptions will run for 12 months from 10 May this year. To guarantee uninterrupted collections you need to renew by Friday, 7 May.

This year the garden waste service is going stickerless for the first time thanks to new technology. Stickers will no longer be issued for bin lids, with the crews instead using in-cab tech and real-time information to know who has subscribed and needs a collection – making it even more important for you to renew on time.

The 25-collection annual service costs £57.20.

New subscribers can sign up at any time but will not get a service until their first scheduled collection after 10 May.

Cannot wait until then? A 10-pack of garden waste sacks cost £28.30 from 1 April. These can be ordered, and collections requested, via the My Waste Services menu at somersetwaste.gov.uk.

For more information on garden waste services, go to:

www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/garden-waste-collections/

To keep up to date with waste services, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter at somersetwaste.gov.uk or follow **somersetwaste** on Facebook or Twitter.

Communities - updates and assistance

Somerset Coronavirus Helpline: 0300 790 6275

Please remind residents to contact the helpline if they should need any assistance during the coming weeks.

Business updates

Mendip business grants

We will be adding further information at www.mendip.gov.uk/businessgrants as it becomes available. We recommend businesses bookmark this page and check back regularly for updates.

Legionnaires' disease – businesses beware

Businesses reopening after lockdown on April 12th have been warned about the potentially fatal Legionnaires' disease by environmental health experts.

Shops, cafés, and other services that have been closed for months are being urged to carry out "vital safety checks" to avoid increasing the risk of the disease, as the chances of bacteria forming in the water system becomes more likely when such systems remain unused for long periods of time.

With lockdown soon to come to an end, the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (CIEH) has published guidance for businesses. Advice includes flushing cold-water systems with fresh mains water as well as increasing the temperature of hot water systems to above 60°C.

You can find it here:

www.cieh.org/media/4208/legionella-guidance-covid-19.pdf

Legionnaires' disease can be contracted by breathing in small droplets of contaminated water in the air, and it can cause fever, a dry cough, and pneumonia. There were 295 recorded cases of Legionnaire's disease between January and October 2020, despite the closure of many businesses for much of the year.

New raft of measures to prepare our high streets and seaside resorts for summer

Measures to support a safe and successful reopening of our treasured high streets and seaside resorts ahead of a great summer were announced by Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick.

- £56 million Welcome Back Fund to help boost the look and feel of high streets and seaside towns
- Funding will help councils prepare for the safe return of shoppers and tourists, including employing extra staff to keep festivals and events covid secure
- Pubs, restaurants and listed buildings given more flexibility to use their land to help more people meet up and enjoy themselves, including erecting marquees in pub gardens for the whole summer

As the nation looks forward to life beginning to return to normal, with people making plans for domestic holidays and days out with friends, the Communities Secretary announced a comprehensive package of support to help kickstart local economies and businesses and give people reassurance they can shop and socialise safely.

A new £56 million Welcome Back Fund will help councils boost tourism, improve green spaces and provide more outdoor seating areas, markets and food stall pop-ups – giving people more safer options to reunite with friends and relatives.

The funding can also be used by councils to:

- Boost the look and feel of their high streets by investing in street planting, parks, green spaces and seating areas to make high streets as beautiful and welcoming as possible
- Run publicity campaigns and prepare to hold events like street markets and festivals to support local businesses
- Install signage and floor markings to encourage social distancing and safety
- Improve high streets and town centres by planting flowers or removing graffiti

www.gov.uk/government/news/new-raft-of-measures-to-prepare-our-high-streets-and-seaside-resorts-for-summer

Reopening the economy : COVID-status certification

The government is reviewing whether COVID-status certification could play a role in reopening our economy, reducing restrictions on social contact and improving safety as the UK recovers from the pandemic.

COVID-status certification involves using testing or vaccination data to confirm that a person has a lower risk of getting sick with or transmitting COVID-19 to others. Such certification would be available both to vaccinated people and to unvaccinated people who have been tested.

The government will assess how effective certification would be in reducing risk, and its potential uses in enabling access to settings or relaxing COVID-secure measures.

The consultation is open until 11.45pm on Monday 29 March.

Please visit the government's website for information:

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/covid-status-certification-review-call-for-evidence/covid-status-certification-review-call-for-evidence

Tackling cyber security

Cyber security needn't be a daunting challenge for small business owners. Following five quick and easy steps from the National Cyber Security Centre could save time, money and even your business' reputation.

Download the NCSC's handy guide to reduce the chances of your business becoming a victim of cyber-crime.

www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide

Businesses encouraged to register for workplace testing

The Government has announced that over 48,000 businesses have now registered their interest in the Government's free workplace testing programme, using rapid lateral flow tests that can give a result in 30 minutes.

Over 9,000 businesses have already completed the sign-up process, and all other businesses are encouraged to register by **31 March**, even if they're not yet open or are not able to start using the tests straight away.

Read about the routes available for asymptomatic workforce testing, as well as the changes to the existing workplace testing offer - now available to all businesses in England, including those with fewer than 50 employees.

Announcement: www.gov.uk/government/news/48000-businesses-already-registered-to-offer-workplace-testing

Register: www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests

Green funding for South West

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has announced over £1 billion of funding to drive down emissions from industry and public buildings as part of the Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy. Over £109 million of this funding has been allocated to the South West.

You can read the full press notice [here](#).

EU transition

Latest information on transition: www.gov.uk/transition

100 days to go – EU settlement scheme

Tuesday 23 March will mark 100 days to go until the deadline of 30 June 2021 for applications to be made to the EU Settlement Scheme. You can find more information on who should and should not apply to the EU Settlement Scheme [here](#).

Grant help for imports or exports to EU

SMEs can apply for a £2k grant to help them with the new rules when trading with the EU: www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-sme-brexit-support-fund-opens-for-applications

This is part of the Government's £20m SME support package that will help small businesses who trade with the EU or move goods between GB and NI.

The grant can be used for training about customs, rules of origin and VAT aspects of imports and exports and to seek professional advice in these areas. More information can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/grants-to-help-small-and-medium-sized-businesses-new-to-importing-or-exporting

Support for businesses

Webinars and videos about trading with the EU are available for councils to share with local stakeholders and businesses. Businesses can also use the Brexit Checker tool on GOV.UK, which will provide a personalised list of the most up to date actions that businesses need to take.

Calendar: www.gov.uk/guidance/organisations-that-trade-with-the-eu-webinars-calendar#march-2021-11

Webinar: www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-trades-with-the-eu

Videos: www.workcast.com/ControlUsher.aspx?cpak=1070296099921910&pak=9337744963736776

Guide: content.govdelivery.com/attachments/UKDECC/2021/03/09/file_attachment_s/1716964/Business%20Travel%20One-Pager.pdf

Checker tool: www.gov.uk/transition

COVID-19 health updates

Get your vaccine

The programme has now expanded so that anyone 50 or older is able to book an appointment. Those in the [eligible groups](#), which includes some carers and people with learning disabilities, are advised to book now.

Appointments for first doses are available for the rest of March but are filling up fast. You can book by visiting nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or calling 119 if you can't get online. You don't need to have received a letter from the NHS. The vaccines are free on the NHS and are safe and effective.

Anyone not in the current eligible groups should wait to be contacted. The NHS will let you know when it's your turn.

If you have an appointment booked for your second dose please attend as this is needed to give you maximum protection.

Once you've had your jab it's still important to continue following the advice about social distancing, face coverings and hand washing.

You might receive a text message inviting you to book an appointment. You can trust your text message is genuine if it comes from 'NHSvaccine', includes a link to the NHS.uk website and gives you the option of phoning 119. Always remember that the NHS will **never**:

- ask you for your bank account, card details, PIN or banking password
- arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine
- ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport, driving licence, bills or payslips

Find out more here: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/

COVID data daily

All you need to know in one place. The official UK Government website for data and insights on Coronavirus information: coronavirus.data.gov.uk/

If you look after someone who is older or clinically vulnerable, who couldn't cope without your help, you could be eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine.

If you receive carers allowance or you're already registered with your GP as an unpaid carer then you will receive an invite to book a vaccination appointment. You don't need to do anything. If you don't receive this allowance or your GP doesn't know that you have this role, then you can find out if you are eligible and book a vaccine on the [national vaccine booking website](#).

Don't suffer in silence

Suicide in the workplace is relatively uncommon but can have a profound impact. Employers have an important role to play in suicide prevention. If you or someone you employ is experiencing suicidal thoughts, don't suffer in silence. There are resources available to help and support you.

Reducing the risk of suicide: A toolkit for employers

This toolkit - developed in partnership with Public health England and Samaritans - is designed to help organisations adopt a strategy to reduce the risk of a suicide that would impact on the workplace.

www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/bitc-wellbeing-toolkit-PHESuicidePreventiontoolkit-Feb2020.pdf

Staying safe from suicide

The website provides vital 'Safety Plan' guidance tools jointly funded by NHS England, with easy to print / online templates and guidance video tutorials purposefully designed to help people through the process of writing their own Safety Plan.

www.stayingsafe.net/home

You can also call one of these helplines, for free, confidential support

Samaritans: 116 123 call for free, they are waiting

Mind in Somerset: 01823 276 892 open 24/7 www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM): 0800 58 58 58



Health and Wellbeing in Mendip

www.mendip.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing

Events and Campaigns

Anniversary of the first national lockdown

Mendip will be supporting [Marie Curie's National Day of Reflection](#) and a minute of silence at 12 noon on Tuesday 23rd March.

The Census

You should have received a letter with an online code explaining how to complete your census form. If you haven't had one, please get in touch with the census contact centre on 0800 141 2021. It takes just 10 minutes and if you can't get online, there are paper forms available.

Operating in line with the Government's latest Covid-19 guidance, from 22 March, field officers will be deployed across the country to contact those who have not responded and to offer help and advice. They will also be reminded that their census response is required by law.

Visit: <https://census.gov.uk>

Mendip Meetings – MAY

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| Scrutiny Board – Quarter 4 Reports | Monday 17th | 6.30 pm | Virtual |
| Planning Board | Wednesday 19th | 6.00 pm | Virtual |
| Full Council - Annual | Monday 24th | 6.30 pm | Virtual |
| Asset Management Group | Wednesday 26th | 4.00 pm | Virtual |
| Cabinet | Wednesday 26th | 6.30 pm | Virtual |
| Somerset Building Control Partnership | Thursday 27th | 2.00 pm | Virtual |

Useful numbers, links and helplines

Mendip District Council: www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus

Stronger Somerset: www.strongersomerset.co.uk/

Government information on coronavirus: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Coronavirus cases, your daily dashboard: coronavirus.data.gov.uk/

Lockdown lift-off: www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home

NHS information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

LGBTQ+ services helpline and counselling service:

www.intercomtrust.org.uk/item/214-we-are-here-for-you

Mind in Somerset, available on 01823 276 892:

www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/adult-one-to-one-support/mindline/

Citizens Advice:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice-partnerships/money-advice-services/

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www.facebook.com/mendipcouncil

We are also on Twitter twitter.com/MendipCouncil

And LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/mendip-district-council

Finally, here's our official website: www.mendip.gov.uk
