

COVID-19 UPDATE – Monday 27 July 2020

Good afternoon

Please find below the latest update on COVID-19 and other council matters:

Parishes can apply for the Rural Community Energy Fund

The Rural Community Energy Fund provides non-capital grant funding over two stages to help community organisations with the development of renewable energy projects, and interested groups can apply now. The fund offers feasibility funding of up to 40,000 under Stage 1, and a further 100,000 for full business plan development at Stage 2.

Find out more: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/south-west-energy-hub-rcef/>

Free online Speed Indicator Device training

We now have free online training for volunteers who wish to be accredited to erect Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). The course is mandatory learning for anyone wishing to undertake SID deployment and will cover important safety matters including:

- Hazards and risk assessments
- Temporary traffic management
- SID deployment responsibilities
- Self-knowledge check

Anyone wishing to access the training should email integrated.transport@wiltshire.gov.uk with their name and details of the proposed location of the SID (e.g. town/parish/village or locality). There is a limit to the number of logins that can be provided at any one time, so there may be a wait before you are provided with login details.

School holiday activity provision 2020

Parents looking for summer activities for their 5 - 12 year old's can now find a wealth of opportunities all in one [handy brochure](#).

We asked local providers to send details of activities including charges, venues and dates to help parents plot how to keep children busy over the summer holidays.

The activities are aimed at 5 - 12 year old's and are particularly to help those families with vulnerable children and children of key workers who need support over the summer.

The document is online and people are encouraged to check in regularly as the information will be constantly updated as new providers finalise details of their activities.

[Read more](#)

Fit and Fed

We are working closely with a local school and partners to continue to run a summer programme to help children stay active during the holidays.

Fit and Fed is a national programme combining sport with healthy food choices, as a response to the threat of hunger, isolation, and inactivity that some children experience during school holidays.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be delivering it a little differently this summer, in partnership with Studley Green Primary School, Selwood Housing Group, The Trussell Trust, Anybody Can Cook and Active Trowbridge, ensuring families on lower incomes and those accessing free school meals continue to receive support during the holidays.

[Read more about the programme](#)

New SEND school in south Wiltshire takes major step forward

Plans to ensure more school places are available for pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) in south Wiltshire have taken a major step forward.

Last April it was announced there would be a new free school for 150 pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) in the south of the county. This will prevent the need for pupils to travel long distances to access the right educational setting to meet their needs.

Now it has been agreed by the Department for Education that Reach South Academy Trust, which already runs a special school in Wiltshire, will operate the new school in the south. Reach South runs Springfields Academy which is based across two sites in Calne and at Sarum Academy in Salisbury. The Salisbury site is known as Springfields South and opened in February 2019 for pupils with ASD and SEMH.

The new school, which will teach children aged 4-19, will have strong links with mainstream schools, nurseries and children's centres. Details on where the new school will be based are due to be shared shortly.

[Read more](#)

Support available for people who use prepayment gas and electricity meters

A service that aims to help residents live in safer and healthier homes has secured additional funding to provide vouchers to households that use prepayment gas and electricity meters.

The Warm and Safe Wiltshire service is provided by Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Energy.

The vouchers are available to those who:

- Have been affected by the impact of COVID-19, either socially or economically
- Are at risk of self-disconnection (i.e. they may run out of credit before they are next able to top up for themselves
- Are struggling financially and find it difficult to top up their meter

Every eligible household can receive 98, with the possibility of a further 49 if they are in particular hardship. All households that take up this offer would be expected to speak to a Warm and Safe energy advisor, who can provide useful advice about budgeting, energy efficiency and income maximisation. For more information people should contact Warm and Safe Wiltshire on 0800 038 5722 or go [online](#).

Annual canvass continues

The next phase of the annual canvass got underway this week, with around 58,000 letters being sent to Wiltshire households, with people being encouraged to respond electronically.

Each year we ask all residents to complete the annual canvass to check who is eligible to register to vote, but this year it's being done a little differently.

Some residents have already been contacted via email and asked to confirm the details for their household, and of the responses received, 95% were done electronically.

We are encouraging all residents respond to the annual canvass electronically if they can. It's more convenient for the resident and saves the council money and time. Last year, 200,571 responses were received during the annual canvass.

Local Authorities given new powers to shut down pubs, cafes, restaurants etc locally in areas affected by COVID-19

The Government has given new powers to local authorities to help contain COVID-19 locally. The new powers came into effect on 18 July and allow us to restrict local public gatherings and events, and close local businesses premises and outdoor spaces.

These measures are intended to give us the power to respond to local outbreaks if and when they happen by closing down certain premises if there is an outbreak.

The Government has also published a [COVID-19 contain framework](#), a blueprint for how NHS Test and Trace is working in partnership with local authorities, Public Health England, the NHS, other local business and community partners and the wider public to take action against outbreaks.

Further data is also being provided daily on GOV.UK on the [number of positive cases](#) at both an upper and lower-tier local authority level. This data is now broken to local areas of 5,000 to 15,000 people, which will be published weekly.

The Government will also be publishing a weekly watchlist summary of specific areas of concern, this will form part of the weekly [PHE COVID-19 surveillance report](#). This will enable us to spot things very early and act quickly, as currently we review all new cases and data on a daily basis, in partnership with Public Health England.

[Read more about the new powers given to local authorities](#)

Returning to the work place

We are not encouraging all our staff to return to our offices as yet. However, where it is critical to the role, some officers have returned to our hubs.

The majority of officers are still working from home and we are asking residents to continue to do things online or over the phone rather than visit our hubs, if possible at all possible.

Chancellor launches Comprehensive Spending Review

On Tuesday the Chancellor launched the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The Review, which will be published in the autumn, will set UK Government departments' resource budgets for the years 2021/22 to 2023/24 and capital budgets for the years 2021/22 until 2024/25, and devolved administrations' block grants for the same period.

[Read more about the Comprehensive Spending Review](#)

Face masks and coverings to be compulsory in England's shops

Wearing a face covering in shops and supermarkets in England will become mandatory from Friday 24 July.

Shops and supermarkets will be expected to encourage compliance with the law and can refuse entry. Those who fail to comply with the new rules could face a fine of up to 100.

The move will bring England into line with Scotland and other major European nations like Spain, Italy and Germany.

Since mid-May, the public have been advised to wear coverings in enclosed public spaces, where they may encounter people they would not usually meet. It has also been compulsory on public transport in England since 15 June. Children under 11 and those with certain disabilities will be exempt.

[Read the latest Government guidance on face coverings](#)

Next virtual member briefing

The next virtual member briefing will take place on Thursday 30 July, 11.30am-12.30pm. You will receive an invitation for this meeting shortly.

We hope you are able to join us. We have left a slightly longer gap than usual between briefings as we have had Cabinet and Full Council meetings recently.

Please do send Democratic Services an email in advance to Committee@wiltshire.gov.uk with any thoughts / questions you may have so that we may discuss these in the meeting and respond

Regards,

Cllr Philip Whitehead