

Buckinghamshire County Report for July/August

The government has given more details on the further easing of the lockdown measures for the wider public. Going forward, keeping our distance, following signs and guidance when out and about, and most importantly, washing hands regularly for at least twenty seconds will make a big difference in helping us to carry on controlling the virus locally and to keep Buckinghamshire open. If you have coronavirus symptoms, it's essential you get a test as quickly as possible.

Coronavirus mobile testing sites are returning to Amersham, Aylesbury and Buckingham over the coming days.

The Amersham site will be running from Thursday, 2 July, for up to two days, and then again on Monday, 6 July, for up to another two days.

The Aylesbury site will be open from Saturday, 4 July, for up to three days.

And the Buckingham site will also be open from Saturday, 4 July, but this will be running for up to two days.

These are in addition to other local and regional coronavirus testing sites, which are still available for residents in Buckinghamshire to use.

Anyone with coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste) is currently eligible to be tested. An early test will also help us trace anyone you have been in contact with if your test is positive, so they too can isolate and we can stop the virus from spreading further.

If you book on days 1-4 of having symptoms, you can book a drive through/walk through test or a home testing kit. However, if you wait longer, then it will be too late to order a home test. By day six, it's too late to have a test at all.

For more information and to book a test, go to the government's website. You can also book a test by calling 119 if you don't have access to the internet.

However, tests for essential workers, such as frontline healthcare staff, are being prioritised over tests for the wider public at this time. Tests at these mobile sites should be booked first and are not available on a 'drop-in' basis at this time. Further details of the testing sites will be provided to people when they book their test.

To arrange a test, go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus and click on the appropriate link for you within the 'testing' section of information. The booking process is slightly different for members of the public to that for essential workers.

You can find out more about getting tested as a member of the public with symptoms here - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

And you can find out more about getting tested as an essential worker here - <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>

Continued support for our most vulnerable residents

The government recently announced changes in the guidance for people shielding. Shielded individuals will be able to go outdoors and meet others at a distance from Monday 6 July and will be able to go out more from Saturday 1 August, such as to the shops or to work or school. Government food parcels will stop from this date. The full guidance issued by the government yesterday is here. Everyone who was identified as needing to shield will be getting a detailed letter from government in the coming days.

Nearly 18,000 Buckinghamshire residents have been shielding for the past three months, but I can confirm that Buckinghamshire Council will carry on supporting clinically extremely vulnerable residents who may still need assistance during the coronavirus pandemic, helping them to get back to a more normal lifestyle.

Through eight support hubs, we've co-ordinated a wide range of support, such as organising emergency food parcels, helping people set up priority supermarket deliveries, delivering medication and taking people to medical appointments. We will carry on helping anyone needing our support.

We are putting in plans to make sure that all support can be scaled back up at very short notice if there was a further spike in cases.

For up to date information keep checking the online support hub on our website for information on community support, business support and also the Buckinghamshire plan for localised outbreaks.

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

If you are worried about a vulnerable friend, relative or neighbour . . .

Our Adult Social Care team is checking in with all vulnerable residents we are aware of by making many regular phone calls and by supporting in other ways too. Please tell us if you know of someone who might need our help by calling the Adult Social Care team on 01296 383 204.

Please also carry on using our online community hub for details of how to find support in your local area.

Freight Strategy

The attached link is available on the Buckinghamshire Council website for residents and parish councils who are concerned about periods where HGV movements may appear to increase through our local villages.

As I have received quite a few emails recently from residents and parish councils alike regarding HGV movements which I have reported to our Freight Strategy officer, he has explained how it is helpful to first capture information about the trucks, dates, timings and the operators' livery to allow his team to identify which companies may be using which routes.

The freight toolkit which is available on the webpage via the link below includes useful information and a survey template for capturing this information.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/policies/limits-and-routing-for-heavy-goods-vehicles/>

Please do note that there is some safety information in the toolkit for residents and representatives to carry out the survey.

Once we have more specific information to hand, our Freight Strategy officer will be in a better position to reach out to operators to discuss how best to take things forward for the benefit of both residents and businesses alike.

Community Boards

Our first Wing and Ivinghoe Community Board meeting took place online on the Teams platform on the 14th July and I'm pleased to say we are off to a good—albeit socially distanced—start! We now have an appointed dedicated coordinating officer, Katrina Kelly, who comes to her new role fresh from having worked for the past months as a coordinating officer for the Aylesbury Hub. The Hub has been involved in assisting shielded residents and helping to coordinate local volunteer groups for the provision of food, medicines and other essential items during the Covid lockdown period. Katrina knows the area, local parishes and volunteer groups very well and is ideally placed to help get the Community Board off to a good start. She will be contacting parish clerks over the next two weeks to invite parish council representatives to the meeting and to get a feel for local priorities.

It's important to stress that the Community Boards are about putting parish councillors, residents, Buckinghamshire Councillors and officers, and external partners such as public health groups, Thames Valley Police, the ambulance service, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (the MASH), charities and volunteer organisations and together to enable a coordinated approach to tackling local community problems. We all know that some problems tend to get passed from pillar to post, with no single entity having the expertise or resources to tackle it alone. We hope that the Community Boards will allow for essential networking so that we can help communities to coordinate their efforts and get to the root of some of these issues in depth through the help of partner organisations.

To do this the Community Boards will work through a variety of informal subcommittees who can work together with external partners to properly explore the problem and its causes, and then come up with proposals for projects to tackle these. Those projects can then be put to the Community Board at one of its five formal meetings per year for formal funding requests.

Whether you are a resident or parish councillor, we are very interested to hear your ideas for priorities and what you would like to see improved both locally and across our wider community of parishes across Wing and Ivinghoe wards. Please get in touch with me, Cllr Chris Poll or Cllr Peter Cooper and let us know your views. You can also get in touch directly with our dedicated Community Board Coordinator, Katrina Kelly at the email address below.

Katrina.Kelly@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

I know I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we very much look forward to working together with our parishes and external partners to ensure that the Community Board is a vibrant, adaptive and ever-evolving forum through which we can work constructively to address local challenges and needs.

Buckinghamshire Cllr Anne Wight.