

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL – 2020

PARISH REPORT - April 2020

I post all of these items on the @ErminWard Facebook page. Please could you mention this in your Parish News and Village Website. The Ermin Ward Facebook page is apolitical and contains information for Ermin Ward and occasionally the wider community. It is not a 'vanity' page, although occasionally whimsical!

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Covid-19

What an extraordinary, challenging period this has been. I am surrounded by some truly outstanding people who have been moving mountains to help one another, follow the guidelines, adjust to social distancing and find a new norm.

New levels of technological communication have been catapulted into our homes, communities and families have reinvented themselves. Neighbours who have never met are sharing jokes and tips in Whatsapp groups and clap together on Thursday evenings for our wonderful NHS. It has been heartening to witness the goodness out there and the drive to connect and support the elderly and the vulnerable by volunteers is humbling.

Much of the official advice from the numerous support channels I am tuned in to has been repetitive and equivocal. Filtering has been a challenge and I hope that my updates so far have not left you feeling overwhelmed or neglected - it is a fine balance.

I will refrain from copying links to the CDC, NHS and GOV.UK websites, I am sure you are aware of them and the bountiful resources which can be found there. I have found that the best 'practical' local advice is coming from Neighbourhood Alerts (they have seen an uptake of 25%), the police have excelled themselves in issuing sensible information, the sort we want to hear!

<https://www.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/>

TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR ERMIN WARD RESIDENTS

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeXpLa6acYx5fveeS5yOdR_q_fBkhle5fJz4FVasfQ1QMbCGg/viewform

Lilly is the daughter of one of my Parish Chairs and clearly loves a challenge. We are extremely lucky to have her help. If you or anyone you know needs technological help, Lilly is here to help you. Call me if you can't use the link and would like Lilly to contact you.

If you have a computer which is no longer needed, let Lilly know as she can restore it to factory settings, disinfect it and set it up for calls, video conferencing etc. She will work with families/friends to ensure the right programmes are installed and will see you through the operational process.

If you have any queries, do let me know but otherwise if you could post this on your village website and share the information as appropriate.

This could be a life-transforming opportunity for any residents struggling with computer technology. This is particularly important for those in self-isolation and the elderly who have, up until now, not used modern technology.

ENGAGEMENT BY YOUR COTSWOLD MP - SIR GEOFFREY CLIFTON-BROWN

Sir Geoffrey is liaising with cabinet members and group members of CDC on a weekly basis via video conferencing. He has been answering questions and logging issues to take local concerns back to the central government for answers. Let me know if you want me to ask him something for you.

Friday afternoons between 3-4pm he is holding live streaming sessions at the Barn Theatre. This is helpful to those with questions which can be answered by someone from the central government. You can engage live via Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/geoffreycliftonbrown/?__tn__=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARAYwatYk6GR_QGa8HUfZQSHzbMCxk1SwG7TZb6-A0AXto-AW-_RntRy3UdmJENxwMkY_2byvfDaOna6

Thursday 2 April - some issues we discussed for attention:

- Priority to source PPE and ventilators for Gloucestershire NHS staff
- Police updates show that at the moment there has not been a spike in crime in this area
- Gloucestershire Community Hub is working
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub/>

- Guidelines from Police on driving for exercise or walking dogs. In the absence of approved policy on this issue - informally ... driving a short distance is acceptable, driving 10 miles or so is not. The virus can be picked up from metal gates so please wear gloves when walking.
- Universal Benefit is not fitting into all schemes - he is driving this forward for those individuals/business who 'fall between the cracks'. Please let him or me know if you think this might be you.
- A&E in Cheltenham is closing this Tuesday 7 April. He will be keeping an eye on this as we do not want this to become a permanent measure.
- There appears to be frustration for Small Business Loans where banks are failing to put up collateral and sometimes charging extortionate rates. This is a moving situation.
- Help for business (see link below), this is a moving situation.
- Utilities. We are seeing assurance that those in hardship will not have their utilities cut off.

CORONAVIRUS AND THE COMMUNITY

 <p>Think of others, consider your actions & be kind</p> <p>People in every community will face the challenges of Covid-19 in some way – from needing basic provisions to help while they are unwell.</p>	 <p>Connect and reach out to your neighbours</p> <p>As self-isolation increases, we need to find new ways to stay connected and check in on one another for our physical and mental wellbeing. Share phone numbers and stay in touch.</p>	 <p>Make the most of local online groups</p> <p>Keep up to date, share information and be a positive part of your local community conversations.</p>	 <p>Support vulnerable or isolated people</p> <p>Different groups in our communities are at increased risk and social isolation and loneliness are key concerns for all ages. There are things you can do like volunteering for local support services or donating to food banks to help.</p>	 <p>Share accurate information and advice</p> <p>Support anyone who may be anxious about Covid-19. Sign post them to the correct advice from Public Health England and encourage people to follow the correct hygiene practices.</p>
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Think of others, consider your actions & be kind: People in every community will face the challenges of Covid-19 in some way – from needing basic provisions to help while they are unwell.

Connect and reach out to your neighbours: as self-isolation increases, we need to find new ways to stay connected and check in on one another for our physical and mental wellbeing. Share phone numbers and stay in touch.

Make the most of local online groups: Keep up to date, share information and be a positive part of your local community conversations using platforms like Nextdoor.

Support vulnerable or isolated people: different groups in our communities are at increased risk and social isolation and loneliness are key concerns for all ages. There are things you can do like volunteering for local support services or donating to food banks to help.

Share accurate information and advice: Support anyone who may be anxious about Covid-19. Sign post them to the correct advice from Public Health England and encourage people to follow the correct hygiene practices.

LANYARDS




I know that most of our residents' needs are being met by local neighbourhood support groups. In order to help those wonderful individuals whilst shopping or carrying out other services, volunteer badges (see pic attached) are being produced by CDC for you to distribute to known groups in your area. Please only give them to those groups, and not to any individuals who are not affiliated to one.

Please let me know (email: erminward@gmail.com) if you would like to order some of these badges and I shall order them for you, I will need a postal address, please. I do not know how long it will take before they will actually be delivered.

Thank you again to all our volunteers across the District looking out for one another.

Older residents of Gloucestershire from Help The Aged UK.

Please Stay Safe

Support for older people to resolve specific issues	Support to older people to stay connected	Support to Communities
<p>Help Team 01452 422660 Mon-Fri (9am-4pm)</p> <p>For older people and those around them who need guidance on wide a range of issues. (We will prioritise more urgent issues, over non-Covid19 related enquiries)</p>	<p>If you want a friendly conversation Freephone 0800 2980579 Mon-Fri (9am-4pm)</p> <p>Your call will be answered by a member of AUKG staff and then matched to a volunteer who will call you back for a 20 min chat. Call again any time</p>	<p>Advice to mutual aid groups on supporting older people safely and effectively</p> <p>Advice / signposting to individuals who want to offer help. Contact Chris Walker CWalker@ageukgloucestershire.org.uk</p> <p>We will maintain links to latest advice and guidance on our dedicated webpage</p> <p>https://www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire/our-services/coronavirus-covid-19-and-older-people/</p>
<p>Out of Hospital Service 01452 420937 or 420928 Mon-Fri (9am-5pm)</p> <p>For older people <u>recently discharged from hospital</u> who need guidance to stay well back at home. Our OOH Team, supported by volunteers, will make contact by telephone</p>	<p>We are also compiling resources and ideas from older people and communities in Glos and beyond on staying well. We will share these in the days and weeks ahead</p> <p>Also look out for our “Greet Your Street” campaign</p> <p>www.ageukgloucestershire.org.uk</p> <p>@AgeUKGlos www.facebook.com/AgeUKGloucestershire</p>	

COUNCIL MEETINGS and Parish Meetings

As of 3 April, Councils have been given new powers to hold public meetings remotely. Local authorities in England handed new powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology. More details are yet to be released about which platforms are 'safe' to use etc. but this is a huge relief that our democracy can be held together.

<https://www.gov.uk/.../councils-given-new-powers-to-hold-publ...>

I have been using Zoom for group meetings and it is very effective. It can be run from a mobile phone or a laptop (better). You can see everyone at the same time and as someone is speaking, their image is framed in green light so people are not encouraged to all speak at the same time. I recommend that you hold a 'practice' meeting so that everyone can gain confidence using it.

If you want to give it a go, I recommend you set up an account and you can then send invitations to your committee - they then set up an account, click into the meeting with a number which they are sent and away you go!

<https://zoom.us/>

PLANNING APPLICATION OBSERVATIONS

Please continue to comment on Planning Applications via the CDC portal (link below). Whilst physical Planning Meetings have been suspended, applications with even one objection will be brought to my attention. I will liaise with residents/parish councillors and the head of planning and officers where appropriate. I strongly encourage any of you who wish to object, support or make other observations to an application to make comments via the preferred Public Access route on the Council's website. The CDC website was updated in February 2020, links saved before then will no longer work.

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/view-planning-applications/>

Find the application you want to comment on, click into it and click on the COMMENTS tab where there is a form for you to fill in the details. Occasionally comments are submitted by other routes and this can lead to misunderstandings and/or a lack of formal record being made on the system, which in turn can lead to lack of formal communication & notification regarding procedures (e.g. Committee dates, public speaking, etc.)

CIRENCESTER CAR PARKING

Car parking charges have been suspended until further notice.

Community Activity Support Grant scheme

The Community Activity Support Grant scheme has been suspended until further notice.

ROADS

08000 514514 gloucestershire.gov.uk.
Email: william.bellerby@gloucestershire.gov.uk

EMERGENCY 3 TONNE WEIGHT RESTRICTION 3/190 GREEN DRAGON INN COCKLEFORD TO HIGH CROSS ELKSTONE

Cockleford Bridge for a distance of approximately 15 metres. The restriction is necessary due to a bridge inspection showing a possible weakness.

Alternative Route – not applicable, however restriction signs will be in place at the junction of the A435 and at the junction of the 400862 Green Dragon Inn to Cowley Manor.

The road was originally restricted for 21 days by notice commencing 11th March 2020. However, as the works to remedy the problem have not been completed it is necessary to extend the restriction by notice for a further 21 days commencing 31st March 2020 after which it will be necessary to make an Order.

Winstone and Duntisbournes

The reason for the closure and restrictions are for carriageway surface dressing. The roads are expected to be closed and restricted during various times on a rolling programme commencing 11th May 2020 where the presence of approved signage will indicate whether the closures and restrictions are in force. Further advance warnings of dates/times will be displayed on site prior to the closure/restrictions taking effect. This order can permit the closure and restriction of the roads in any order, or simultaneously as required and it is anticipated all works will be completed by 28th August 2020

Jackbarrow Road	Junction with Pike Road	Junction with Bull Banks	Winstone	1 kilometres
Jackbarrow Road	Junction with Bull Banks	Junction with Jackbarrow Farm Lane	Duntisbourne Abbots	1.5 kilometres
Road from Jackbarrow Farm to Edgeworth Hill Road	Junction with Jackbarrow Farm Lane	Junction with Crabtree Lane	Duntisbourne Abbots	450 metres
3/190 Edgeworth Hill Road to Park Corner	Junction with Crabtree Lane	Junction with 3/190 Park Corner to Sapperton	Duntisbourne Rouse	2.2 kilometres
3/190 Park Corner to Sapperton	Junction with 3/190 Edgeworth Hill Road to Park Corner	Junction with Daneway Lane	Duntisbourne Rouse/ Sapperton	2 kilometres

BIN COLLECTIONS AND UBICO

20 March 2020 - The new system is now in operation. Green bin licences have not been issued.

As many of you will have experienced, Ubico has struggled to provide a 100% service. There has been an increase in recycling as residents adjust to social distancing, particularly of food waste. If your collection fails, please report it on the CDC website - this is the most efficient way of bringing it to the Ubico crews.

- Green bin collection are suspended until further notice.
- Food waste levels have increased by over 25% during the period so lorries have had to 'empty' more which has led to staggered collections.
- Ubico lost 20% of its staff since lock-down. They have shifted skilled staff around and recruited more drivers to fulfill collection commitments where possible.

- I now get daily updates if a service is going to be disrupted and will distribute to parish clerks where appropriate.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Abuse Support During Covid-19 Lockdown

Staying at home can be stressful. If you're concerned that a neighbour, friend or family member could be experiencing domestic abuse please do something. Give them a call or a text and set up a code word if they're in need of urgent help. Please remember never to confront a perpetrator or talk to a victim in front of them.

If you're concerned about someone or need help tell us at www.gloucestershire.police.uk, by calling 101, or in an emergency by calling 999.

Helpful links:

<http://www.gdass.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/.../report-a-child-at-risk/>

<https://www.hopehousesarc.nhs.uk/>

<http://www.glosrasac.org/>

BUSINESS

<https://mailchi.mp/0501137bc79f/covid-19-business-matters-cotswold-03-april-2020?e=c8b02e39ee>

Some useful Coronavirus notes for Homeowners

The following notes have been collated for the holiday rental home owner. Everyone's circumstances are different and for this reason a number of the items listed below might not be applicable. Please do take independent advice.

The government has announced a series of packages in the last two weeks. Access to the information is via the gov.uk website.

Business rates holiday and cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses

Key features of the scheme

A holiday from business rates for the 2020-2021 tax year. This applies to all businesses in these sectors.

Small businesses with a rateable value below £15,000 (in England) will receive a cash grant of £10,000.

Cash grants of £25,000. These will be given to businesses in these sectors with rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000 (in England).

The reliefs will be administered by local authorities. Cash grants will be paid automatically. In Scotland, businesses will need to apply.

Businesses will receive a bill showing no business rates charge for the 2020-2021 tax year. Those who had already received bills for the 2020-2021 tax year will be rebilled. You should contact your local authority for further details.

Deferral of Self-Assessment payment and time to pay helpline due to coronavirus
The self-assessment payment on account, that is ordinarily due to be paid to HMRC by 31 July 2020, may now be deferred until January 2021. For those who are unable to pay due to coronavirus, HMRC will discuss your specific circumstances to explore:

Agreeing an instalment arrangement

Suspending debt collection proceedings

Cancelling penalties and interest where you have administrative difficulties
contacting or paying HMRC immediately

The helpline number is 0800 024 1222 - and is in addition to other HMRC phone contact numbers.

Opening hours are Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm. The helpline will not be available on Bank Holidays.

Mortgage Payments

Most mortgage lenders have confirmed that anyone who is suffering financial hardship as a result of the Coronavirus may request up to a 3 - month payment holiday from their mortgage. Please speak to your individual mortgage lender who will offer you further advice on this.

Water Bills

Ofwat, the water regulator, have assured people that they are expecting firms will offer payment holidays, and moreover, some water providers are running a scheme for those who have built up large debts, where the utility provider will contribute £1 for every £1 you pay towards the arrears. Please speak to your water provider for more details.

Gas and Electricity

The big six energy suppliers have said that they are likely to push back bill dates for customers who have been affected by the Coronavirus or remove debt charges for late payments. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis, although the support particularly applies to vulnerable customers.

If you have a prepayment meter, most utility suppliers are advising customers to top up on the phone using its automated service or online where this is possible.

Customers with a traditional prepayment meter can potentially access emergency credit on their meter, which may last during an isolation period. If you run out of emergency credit before your isolation period ends, make sure you contact your energy supplier to discuss your options.

Phone/Broadband

The leading mobile phone networks (EE, O2, THREE and Vodafone) and broadband providers have all confirmed that for those suffering financial hardship as a result of Coronavirus, there are options available to customers to support with payment plans.

In addition, most providers have also “zero rated” any NHS web page, meaning that it will not come from your data allowance if you need to access NHS information. In addition, O2, whether they are pay as you go, or a monthly customer can call NHS 111 free of charge from their mobile.

Welfare Benefits

Universal Credit – The Chancellor announced that Universal Credit will be increased by £1,000 per year for the next 12 months.

Ensure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. Use the following link to determine the benefits you are entitled to:

<https://www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home?cid=f436a549-5374-4728-9cb2-31bd9c4b2c0a>

Memberships

Most major gyms, leisure centres, clubs etc. who are now closed are approaching their customers to confirm suspension of subscriptions. You may wish to approach them directly in respect of future payments if you face financial hardship.

Rent Payments

Rent support may be available via housing benefit. In addition, please be aware that since 18th March 2020, landlords can no longer apply to evict tenants for the next 3 months for rent arrears.

Fraud alert

In these difficult times you need to remain alert to scams. If someone texts, calls or emails claiming to be from HMRC or a utility, saying that you can claim financial help or are owed a tax refund, and asks you to click on a link or to give information such as your name, credit card or bank details, it is a scam. If in doubt please hang up the phone and contact your adviser, or the utility company directly.