

District Councillor Report (11/01/2021) – Matt Jennings

Happy New Year !

SDC Covid Cases –

Here in the Stratford District our numbers are now at 341 per 100,000 (87 when I last spoke to you). This is the highest it has been throughout the pandemic. Our rates are increasing very quickly. Warwick is at 383, North Warwickshire is 408, Solihull 531 & Redditch 590.

Testing Centre

Additional Covid testing for people without coronavirus symptoms is set to be rolled out in the Stratford next week with the aim of protecting those most at risk.

This Lateral Flow Centre opens on Tuesday 12th in Stratford at the Courtyard Theatre (The Other Place) – includes 8 SDC staff volunteers.

The new test centre will be in addition to the testing facilities already running in Bedworth, Leamington, Nuneaton, Rugby and Water Orton.

Those using the site will be tested using fast-turnaround lateral flow test kits supplied by NHS Test and Trace in a bid to identify undiagnosed cases and stop people 'unwittingly spreading the virus'.

This type of test is very good at identifying people who have lots of the virus, and are infectious on the day, but isn't as good at finding the virus in people who aren't infectious yet (i.e. early in the infection), so they are a kind of spot check test.

The tests are available for booking between 8.15am and 8pm, Monday to Friday and 10.15am to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday. The service uses the fast turnaround lateral flow test kits, which can deliver results in around an hour. Tests can be booked at :

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/stratford-upon-avon-covid-community-testing-32080684767>

Please note, only people **without** Covid-19 symptoms should book a test. Anyone with symptoms of Covid-19, that is a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a change to their sense of taste or smell – must self-isolate and book a test via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119 as usual.

Vaccinations

GP's will start working their way down the priority lists – they will contact individuals directly. Please do NOT contact your GP's as they are already very busy – once again you will be called directly. As vaccinations ramp up this may well change – I will update you when I get more information. When people are called for vaccination they are required to take their NHS number with them.

Unsurprisingly, not everyone does this which is leading to occasional bottlenecks and delays. It would be helpful if you can all get a message out to your residents through whatever means you have to gently remind them to have their NHS number with them when they attend for vaccination.

Business Rates Grants update

SDC have made payments of £1,915,333.49 paid to 1,182 businesses.

The payment of grants continues to be a challenge - As of last week we have 5 schemes in play and this week the Chancellors new scheme announced last Tuesday (£9000 per property for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors) will make it 6 which as you can imagine is incredibly confusing for businesses and even we are struggling to keep track of which one(s) is/are applicable to each business.

We are not asking any business who have already claimed under any of the schemes – Tier 3 Restrictions Open or Closed Schemes / Tier 4 Open or Closed Schemes / National Lockdown Scheme / Wet Led Pub Scheme or the Chancellors New Scheme to complete another form as we are going to use the details we already have.

So if anyone asks if they need to complete another form now we are in National Lockdown the answer is 'No'.

However if a business who, for whatever reason, has not claimed yet (at all) then if they fill in the form on the SDC website we will cover all the periods / Tiers and amounts due.

We have plans in place to start paying the 6 weeks National Lockdown Scheme from next week.

We have been told that the Government will issue Guidance on new scheme announced by the Chancellor last Tuesday by the middle of this week. We will be looking at this once we have it and the software is delivered. There was no heads up of that particular scheme being announced so it caught us all by surprise. We will need to develop a further policy based on whatever this guidance says.

We are adopting an approach of paying those businesses who have had no grants first and then stepping back in to provide subsequent payments for various schemes.

If you get any enquiries from Businesses if you could ask them to be patience as we are making every effort to pay the grants as quickly as we can.

Covid 19 Scams

There are reports of people being contacted and asked for Bank details in order to 'identify' them so that they be called in for vaccinations. You will NOT be asked for Bank details by the NHS or your GP – do not give them out !!

Other Council News

Elizabeth House

This will remain closed to the public – however phones are still functioning as are staff who are mainly working from home. Or online of course ! Shop Mobility, the Visitor Information Centre and the Leisure centres are also closed.

Green Waste Scheme in April

This comes into effect in April. For those who want to enrol on the early Bird scheme (reduced price of £35 p/ instead of £40) it is live and you can go online now. If you do not have a Green Bin / cannot access the road from your garden – example a lot those on the High Street – the scheme also allows you to purchase 'Licensed bags' – when you go online please state this.

Venture House

Visit the website – www.venturehousestratford.co.uk - for free business seminars !

On February 15-19th SDC have collaborated with the PopUp Business School (PUBS) to offer a free week long 'online' course on setting up a new business. PUBS aims to support those who would not normally engage with more formal organisations, those who have been made redundant or are long term unemployed. If you know of anyone interested please ask them to get in touch with Anne Solomon (anne.solomon@stratford-dc.gov.uk) and book themselves in !

Stay Safe !