|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | District Councillor’s Report |
| **Author** | Cllr Robin Bennett |
| **Parish** | Dorchester Parish Council |
| **Date**  | 9th February 2021 |

**Covid rates across Oxfordshire**

Oxfordshire cases of Covid-19 are continuing to decrease, but at a much slower rate than they increased. These numbers are still significantly higher than they were in December.

The latest weekly Covid-19 rate for South Oxfordshire in 142.2 cases per 100,000 population. With our hospitals remaining under tremendous pressure the message continues to be - cases may be dropping but we must still stay vigilant.

**Vaccinations in Oxfordshire latest**

Invited members of the public over the age of 75 have begun receiving their jabs at the community vaccination centre at the Kassam Stadium as of Monday this week. Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the centre, began the roll out of public appointments having initially used the location to vaccinate priority frontline patient-facing NHS staff first.

Whilst the message from our health colleagues is that the roll out has been running smoothly, they have asked for everyone’s help in reiterating to residents that appointments are by invitation only and not to turn up to the stadium without a booking.

The vaccinations that are being delivered via GP surgeries and other healthcare locations in Oxfordshire are also progressing well and on track to meet their milestones. So far Oxfordshire is not experiencing any issues with non-attendance.

**Mobile Testing Units for those with symptoms**

To test people with symptoms, the Mobile Testing Units continue to rotate around various locations in the county. They are for pre-booked appointments only and will be at Milton Park and on Dalton Barracks in February. This is for your information only.

Testing at these sites is only available for people with symptoms, so anyone with a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste, should book a test at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) or by calling 119.  For information on booking tests see the current [DHSC guidance](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested&data=02%7C01%7CAndrew.Messenger620%40mod.gov.uk%7C8e270072370848451f9f08d84045db68%7Cbe7760ed5953484bae95d0a16dfa09e5%7C0%7C0%7C637330016056527188&sdata=EZOortFhOnQ%2B6fH457CtuFvTC6ShBjW4FS4Anu2ewhg%3D&reserved=0).

**An update from our Community hub**Immediately after Christmas our community hub saw a brief surge in requests for support with 76 in the first week, but that decreased over the course of the month to just 24 in week four. In total, the hub received 193 referrals for the month of January. From these, ten resulted in the delivery of food parcels or help with medication.

We’re in the second week of delivering our Winter Support Grant scheme and have already supported 133 individuals and households with children. That’s more than £32,000 in supermarket vouchers and utility bill payments provided through our local advice centres.

Please continue to refer residents to [our website](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/coronavirus-community-support/) for more information on the scheme and other Covid-19 support, advice and guidance.

**Lockdown and Tier 4 grants update**

We have already paid out more than £4.6million (South) to rate-paying businesses that were forced to close during the Tier 4 restrictions at the end of last year, and as a result of the current national lockdown.

The application deadline for the [Christmas Support Payment](https://www.svbs.co.uk/christmas-payment-pubs/) for wet-led pubs that have been severely impacted over the Christmas period due to temporary local restrictions has been extended by a month to 28 February 2021. This one-off grant provides £1,000 to pubs that receive less than 50 per cent of their income from food sales.

The latest **Additional Restrictions Grant** scheme for businesses is now open for applications.This is the discretionary scheme to provide financial support to businesses who have been excluded or unsuccessful from other government grant schemes. We’re processing applications on a first come, first served basis, so please encourage businesses to apply immediately. To find out if they’re eligible and to apply for the grant, local business owners should visit the [Additional Restrictions Grant](https://www.svbs.co.uk/additional-restrictions-grant/) page of our business support website.

**Please continue to encourage local businesses to sign up at our business support website:**[**www.svbs.co.uk**](http://www.svbs.co.uk)

**Garden Waste**

We are still currently unable to resume our garden waste collections. We may have good news for you next week, although this is dependent on us having fewer staff shortages than we currently have. We’ve had to delay the restart of the service as many of our bin crews are off sick or are having to self-isolate due to COVID-19. In the meantime, we’ll provide a weekly update on our [website](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/garden-waste/).

**Flood warnings**

With sustained heavy rainfall, we have very high river levels across the district and there are currently a number of flood warnings in place.

Please direct residents to the [Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit](https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/), which helps them understand what they need to do to protect their homes.  Residents can also keep an eye on the latest warnings via the [Environment Agency’s website](https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings?location=+oxfordshire) and [Oxfordshire County Council’s website](https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/flooding-in-oxfordshire/) for road closures.

**Anyone for (Table) Tennis?**

Would your community benefit from new table tennis equipment?

We’re making preparations to keep people active after lockdown, and so we’re working with Table Tennis England on a project to help parish councils like yourselves fund the sport.

 If you already have table tennis clubs or sessions in your communities or you can demonstrate a need for it, then Table Tennis England will match any funding you put up to purchase tables and equipment.

If you’d like to know more or to submit an application, please get in touch with our Leisure Development Officer by emailing Cath.Dale@southandvale.gov.uk or calling 07801 203551.

**Councillor Community Grants – deadline extended**

I’ve now allocated all my funds – thanks to all who applied.