

Broadwas & Cotheridge District Council Report – July 2021

We have seen a rise in our infection rate but this is to be expected. It follows the national trend.

The rise is mainly being driven by infections among young people who have not been vaccinated (over half of all cases) and some workplaces. There is some information suggesting that young males are most effected, and this appears to come from gatherings due to the football. The good news is it does not yet appear to be placing too much pressure on our local hospitals who are dealing with small numbers of Covid-19 patients. Another sign the vaccination programme is working. There has been no Covid related deaths in Worcestershire hospitals over the last month and last week I was told only 10 covid related patients across our Counties hospitals. Still 10 too many but obviously no where near the figures of January.

This doesn't mean the Covid-19 pandemic is 'over' and restrictions, including social distancing in some settings, may still remain in place – although the Government now believe that the majority of restrictions will be removed for 'Freedom day'.

Current figures show cases per 100,000 at 169 for Malvern Hills which is lower than the county average of 214 and the England average of 287.

Everyone over 18 is now eligible to book their Covid Vaccine.

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/COVIDdashboard>

Within Malvern Hills we are looking to replace our Director of Economy and Environment (who is retiring) and our Director of Communities and Housing (who is moving on). We hope these two positions to be filled in September.

During the Covid recovery CPG we ran last year and we restarted last Friday we highlighted the need to support vulnerable people post covid and business. In terms of the first of those - last Tuesday we held our first Tackling Poverty summit online. The aim was to bring groups together to agree practical actions and look at how we can better work together and create the change needed to further improve the support offered to people in poverty in our district.

This is particularly important due to the impact the pandemic has had on people's income levels.

The session heard from a lot of speakers from groups including Malvern Foodbank which revealed 3,600 people had been given support in the last year, twice as much as the previous 12 months.

The summit is the first of a series with the next set looking at connection crisis support to prevention services, overcoming barriers to unemployment and providing stable homes.

I spoke on the responsibility of employers and the support available to employers and employees to ensure good, safe careers.

The Covid recovery CPG, which is cross party and chaired by myself, restarted last Friday and we heard the measures put in place for our local economy through the plans we've put in place in Economic Development and the new ABCD approach from Communities – which essentially is about allowing communities to determine what they need (Asset Based Community Development). I am confident we have good measures in place for both business and the most vulnerable in society.

Myself and David met with Bloor Homes about the Oak View Way site beside Rushwick. There will be 875 dwellings and the reserved matters are due to be put in soon. They see it as a continuation of nearby Bloor sites.

I've also made visits to local traders within Malvern Hills and am hoping to visit Tenbury and Upton soon. Great Malvern was buoyant throughout with good footfall Malvern. Over the next month we will be initiated a Town Centre consultation, utilising an outside company to really get into what will shape our high streets in the future and what is needed for all of our centres.

Malvern Link and Barnards Green had localised issues that, as always, we're working with them on.

Finally, we had a very successful Great Malvern Food Festival this weekend which was a huge success. Taking place in Priory Park we had over 60 stands of local food and drink suppliers and in a safe environment held a great event which was very well visited and great for the wider town.

We are launching our bursaries for Employees this month too to support those who need extra funding to take on Apprenticeships- our levelling up fund for those businesses taking on apprentices and a new section of the website to support businesses taking on apprentices, to support apprentices and also for information for parents.

<https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/business-support-and-jobs/skills-and-training>

A video will accompany the launch this week which explains why we want to support people continuing training in work through Apprenticeships.

And finally, we had our first face to face meeting at Exec two weeks ago.