



COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S COLUMN

JUNE 2020

This is the biggest challenge of our lifetime, losing loved ones is devastating and not seeing family and friends has been tough. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking everybody not just the NHS staff, Police, Ambulance staff, refuse collectors, cleaners, delivery people, shop workers, bus drivers, postal workers, back office staff in these establishments and anybody else I have missed, for everything they have done to keep residents safe, especially residents in both Shepshed and Hathern who have been supporting their neighbours at this very difficult time. I would also like to thank residents who have been self-isolating. I can still be contacted either via email or phone to sort out your problems, but unfortunately cannot hold my regular monthly surgery. My April report did not get published, due to there not being a publication but this can be viewed on my County Council web page.

Just remember to look after yourself, there is more information about well-being visit Leicestershire.gov.uk/wellbeing-support, or you can join the library and start reading e-books, e-magazines, newspapers and audio books anytime, seven-days-a-week at a time that best for you. Loans are free on most devices and you can get instant access to a range of titles. Audio books are great if you struggle to find the time to sit down and read. They are also a good way to keep children entertained. If you are not already a library member you can join the library at leicestershire.gov.uk/join-the-library.

I have still been doing County Council work and have regular meetings and updates via SKYPE. I have tried to itemise below the works being carried out by County at this very difficult time.

Waste Sites – refuse tips

Residents are well aware that for a period Charnwood did not collect garden waste and Shepshed tip was closed. Due to restrictions of socially distancing still in place County have opened only 7 of the sites in the County, our nearest ones are Mountsorrel and Lount (near Coalville) County are accepting limited types of waste only, residents need to make an appointment to book a time slot to visit this site by either phoning 0116 305 0001 or book on line at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/waste-bookings.



Shielding and Protecting Vulnerable People

There were 23,734 Leicestershire residents identified as requiring shielding from the new list received on 6th May; this was a significant increase since the previous list (9th April 14,837 people). This increase includes GP referrals, specialist clinician referrals and newly identified NHS patients, no further updates have been received.

To date, 13,718 people on the Shielded List have registered for support, of whom 4,717 registered for support obtaining essential supplies and 1,024 with basic care needs. County have contacted over 9,000 people who have registered and district councils have contacted an additional 6,500 people (at 10TH May) of people responding to say that they had existing food networks and no identified care needs.

4,700 people have received a Government food parcel, with over 230 County Council emergency food parcels delivered. Over 40 volunteers, engaged by Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) are undertaking activities including 'safe and well checks' (these figures are correct at the time of going to publication).

Care Home

Care homes in Leicestershire are contacted individually 3 times a week to provide support and gain intelligence on current capacity and status. County estimate that there are 450 care home beds available in the county; of these, over 100 beds are currently available for people who are COVID19 symptomatic. Around a quarter of care homes reported having at least one suspected COVID residents or a person in isolation. Most care home providers are currently reporting sufficient PPE supplies. County are providing support with infection control, PPE, testing of staff and residents and information and advice. (Again these figures are correct at the time of going to publication).

The Council has agreed protocols and a pathway in relation to recovery periods and testing of inpatients prior to discharge into care homes, advising on and checking the isolation requirements following discharge into a care home setting as isolation needs apply to all people discharged from hospital.

As a contingency measure County also had access to alternative interim accommodation (local hotel) specifically for those who are COVID 19 positive or symptomatic and who cannot return from hospital to their home in the community or existing care home residence.



Inspired to care

The recruitment drive is helping care providers recruit staff. It means they are free to carry on providing services to vulnerable people and supporting those discharged from hospital, helping to free up beds for the NHS. So far, more than 1,200 people have enquired or applied for positions – and around 100 have been offered jobs. To date over 100 have now started vital work. This has been a challenging situation and County are doing everything they can to keep critical services going, particularly those supporting vulnerable people.

Keeping people safe

Coping with change and uncertainty during the coronavirus pandemic is challenging, and it is important that we have access to practical support for our mental wellbeing. County has been working closely with our healthcare, public and charity partners to lend a helping hand to those in mental health crisis, and to address a growing need for mental health support across Leicestershire.

Tailored information, advice and support is available on the Start a Conversation website: (www.startaconversation.co.uk/advice-and-support) for those in crisis, who require urgent or emergency help; for those experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety, who are struggling to cope; and for those who are more worried than usual and wish to improve their mental wellbeing.

There are lots of situations that can impact on how you feel but help and support is available if you are struggling to cope. The Start a Conversation website provides advice on:

Mental health problems, Abuse and discrimination, big life changes, financial difficulties, substance misuse, lifestyle, children and young people. Just remember SUICIDE is preventable.

Watch out for children's welfare

County are asking people to look out for signs of abuse toward children in their family or neighbours during lockdown and to report any concerns they may have.

Local safeguarding partners, including the police, councils and health are concerned that, despite a fall in calls since the introduction of social distancing measure, cases



of child abuse may be on the rise, with fewer opportunities for it to be seen, reported and stopped.

To report concerns about children's welfare in Leicestershire call 0116 305 0005 (for urgent situations) or report online [Leicestershire.gov.uk/report-abuse-of-a-child](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/report-abuse-of-a-child).

Signs that may indicate abuse are:- very young children being left on their own, children looking dirty or not changing their clothes, children are withdrawn or anxious, aggressive or repeated shouting, sounds of hitting or banging and things being broken, children crying for long periods of time and relatives denied access to talk to children by phone or video call.

School re-opening

County want children to go back to school as soon as it is safe to do so. In line with the DFE guidance schools will make decisions on an individual basis, following a risk assessment, about how and when this will happen and the local authority will provide support where needed. County know that a number of schools across Leicestershire planned to open to wider groups of pupils from 1st June based on plans set out in light of risk assessments. Schools will be extending their opening when school leaders and governors are clear that all actions possible have been taken to make them safe for children, families and staff.

Schools kept their doors open

Around 230 schools have been kept open, every day around 2,400 children attended. County have been helping schools and early years providers stay up to date through daily bulletins and will continue with their support as and when we move towards a recovery phase.

Communities Fund

There has never been a more important time to support our communities – and County's £1.5m communities fund did just that. The sizeable cash pot helped 160 voluntary groups carry on with their vital work despite the inevitable impact coronavirus had on their finances. I am aware that 3 groups in Shepshed received funding. Charities, voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises were invited to apply for a maximum of £25,000 to provide activities to support vulnerable people and those isolating.



Your help and support

Again I would like to thank the residents who keep me informed regarding issues around Shepshed, such as overgrown hedges, litter, dog mess, inconsiderate parking (on pavements, yellow lines, outside of schools) etc., without your eyes and ears I could not get them reported and sorted.

If for some reason you do not receive your copy of the Eye. I now have my information posted on my web page at County. This will also help you to keep track on road closures etc.

For help and advice on County matters, I can be contacted on 01509 502974 or e mail christine_radford@hotmail.com or christine.radford@leics.gov.uk or due to the lock down I will not be able to have my regular monthly Surgery on the FIRST Saturday of the month in the Town Council Offices, 47a Charnwood Road.