

# Town and Parish Council

## COVID-19 Update

Issue One – 26 March 2020

### Introduction

Welcome to the first update that is being provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council and CHalc to provide you with important, useful and timely information in our fight against COVID-19. Please circulate this to your members and community groups and organisations.

Your key contacts for any enquiries are:

- [pam.bradley@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:pam.bradley@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)
- [jackieweaver@chalc.org.uk](mailto:jackieweaver@chalc.org.uk)

### In this update:

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### Volunteering and community action

The community response across the borough to the call for volunteers to fight the Corona Virus has been truly outstanding.

The Council is currently busy mapping out what support community groups and charities need and signposting volunteers to them. This is very much an ongoing process as vulnerable residents are going to increasingly need support over the community weeks and months.

We are now launching a new campaign to support and encourage people to be a good neighbour. As more people are now self-isolating and the Government guidance is for people to stay at home, apart from a few exceptions, there is a growing need to focus on what we can do in our neighbourhoods.

To support this, we have put together some [top tips for new community initiatives and good neighbours](#) to make sure everyone stays safe. A PDF document with the top tips is also attached - with this email - for you to share in your community.

In addition new community initiatives are popping up all the time and you can find out what's available for you to join on the [Live Well Cheshire West website](#).



## **Volunteering and community action**

### **NHS Volunteering**

People can now sign up to [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) which is supporting the NHS during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Responders will help the one and a half million people most at risk from the virus to stay well. Once you've registered and checks are complete you will be provided with a log in to the GoodSAM Responder app. Switch the app to 'on duty' and you'll see live and local volunteer tasks to pick up in your area.

### **New guidance from the Government**

The link below will take you to new guidance issued to support community volunteers:  
[Gov Guidance - Safeguarding Factsheet for Community Volunteers](#)

### **Urgent request for support and information**

#### **Burial services**

If your Town or Parish Council provides burial services we would be very grateful if you could email: [angie.edwards@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:angie.edwards@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) with confirmation of this and details of the contractors you use – whether internal or external. We are asking for this information for future planning and co-ordination.

#### **Transport and buildings**

We are currently collating information about buildings and transport that could potentially be available to help us respond to COVID-19.

We would like to know if you or your partners, schools, community organisations etc have vehicles that could be used during the emergency for delivering food packages to the vulnerable. And, if there are any buildings/centres that are not being used that we could utilise if needed e.g. for food and equipment storage.

If you can help or need more information please email: [mark.simmons@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:mark.simmons@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

#### **Good practice request for case studies**

There is lots of amazing examples of community spirit emerging across our borough. We would like to capture this information and share it with you through this Update.

If your council is doing something or you know of a community group in your area that is supporting residents through this challenging time please let us know by simply emailing:  
[pam.bradley@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:pam.bradley@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

#### **Closure of Council-owned play areas and advice for using parks and open spaces**

Following the Government's announcement on 23 March Cheshire West and Chester Council has closed all its play areas.

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Wellbeing, Councillor Louise Gittins said: "Our parks and open spaces remain open for exercise once a day as advised, but visitors should follow social distancing advice and stay at least 2m (6ft) away from other people.

"The Government has also stopped public gatherings of more than two people, except for members from the same household. The police have powers to enforce this, including fines and dispersing gatherings of more than two people.

“I hope our parks and open spaces will be used appropriately to provide much-needed fresh air for many people, as we all take the necessary action to help beat the Coronavirus.”

### **New £2.4 million hardship fund will help west Cheshire’s vulnerable residents**

Cheshire West and Chester Council has secured £2.4 million to help reduce council tax bills for vulnerable residents. The Government has confirmed that the Council will be allocated the money from its hardship fund to support residents struggling financially because of the impact of COVID-19.

Councillor Carol Gahan, the Council’s Cabinet Member for Legal and Finance, said: “During these truly unprecedented times we want to help our residents as much as we can.

This hardship fund will help us to ease money worries for some of the most vulnerable households in the borough as we all work together to battle the spread of this disease.

Scheme will receive up to £150 off their bill. This amount will be automatically deducted. Eligible residents will receive information about how this will affect their payments soon.

For more information about council tax visit: [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/council-tax](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/council-tax).

### **Working at home successfully**

For many of us working at home on a new permanent basis has presented us with new challenges – from overcoming feelings of isolation, stress and managing the boundaries between work home and work life.

To support you there is a wealth of support on live – here are just a few website that can help:

- [NHS - mental health and wellbeing](#) and [NHS – every mind matters](#)
- [Live Well Cheshire West](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation – getting help](#) and [Mental Health Foundation – looking after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Mind – Coronavirus and wellbeing](#)

### **Launch of new Community Fund**

The Council has launched a Community Fund worth £250,000 to help local people and causes in the fight against COVID-19. This includes new community initiatives, as well as those more established groups that will continue to provide a valuable service.

Full details about how you can access this Community Fund will follow.

### **Live well website**

Finally please remember that the central resource for volunteering and capturing groups supporting residents in the borough is the Live Well website:

<https://livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/Categories/4884>

### **In the next update**

- Information about Member Budgets
- Directory of useful website links and contacts