

County Councilor report March 2021

Covid-19 update.

Monday 29th March was the day the Government allowed a slight relaxation of the lockdown rules with people able to meet outdoors in groups of up to six or groups of two households, while maintaining social distancing. Meeting socially indoors is still not allowed. While this is good news for all of us and is an indication of the hard work people have put in over lockdown to reach this point, much of the County Councils over the past seven days has been to remind people of the importance of continuing to stick to the rules that are still in place and to follow the 'hands, face, space and fresh air' guidance.

Case rates in Fenland and Peterborough have fallen although still well above the national average.

Covid-19 Epidemiology for week ending 1st April 2021

	Average weekly cases per 100,000 population	Rate of change (comparing week ending 1 st April 1000 population with the week ending 25 th March)
England	41	-27%
East of England	30	-33%
Cambridgeshire	32	-36%
Cambridge	28	-22%
East Cambs	33	-12%
Fenland	57	-31%
Hunts	28	-60%
South Cambs	25	-15%
Peterborough	76	-33%

An important change is that anyone who records a positive lateral flow test (LFT) will now require a follow-up PCR test. A COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (*PCR*) test provides an additional check that you have a COVID-19 virus infection. More details can be found on our [website](#).

The number of patients being treated for COVID in our hospitals and the number of people dying from the virus is now much lower than earlier in the year.

The County Council has launched a new #ThisDependsOnUs Spring campaign to remind people that although restrictions have been eased slightly, the basic rules still apply. The communications plan continues to focus on the Government's road map with the message 'this depends on us', reminding people of the need to follow the rules, get the vaccine and get tested.

The Surveillance Cell, Outbreak Management Team, Contact Tracing Service, Rapid Response Teams, and the range of support available for more vulnerable people who are self-isolating

continue with their work to keep Covid-19 case rates down.

The roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme is continuing to progress well and the latest statistics on vaccine delivery for local authorities in Cambridgeshire are available under the 'weekly data' heading on [Statistics » COVID-19 Vaccinations \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/statistics/covid-19/vaccinations)

It is absolutely vital that as many people as possible accept the vaccine when they are offered it - this is a key part of the government's roadmap to a return to a more normal way of life.

VAX FACTS

Vaccines are the most effective medical intervention we have for preventing disease. However, no medicine can ever be 100% effective and the effectiveness of the vaccine will differ depending on how it is made and the disease it is protecting you from.

The British Society of Immunology have put together [a guide to vaccination](#) that explains how vaccines work and answers common questions.

Highways

The footpaths have been cleared and cut back in Westwick enabling the future resurfacing to take place. It also enables our District Council colleagues to keep them clean and to sweep them in the future.

There is in excess of £29 million of new extra County Council funding going into highways and there will be no cuts to the maintenance budgets. This is all within the general council tax rise of 1.9%. More highway inspections around the village will need to be organized to make sure we can get as much from this extra funding as is possible.

Highway Flooding

Work has been continuing on this as it's a large overall project. On top of my comments detailing the action that is to be taken within my last report, I have been dealing with Jonathan Clarke, our Local Highway Officer's boss's boss.....Just one down from the Director of Highways...he has taken on our long running issue and a quote from his last email to me states

"I have asked that I am contacted by the contractor so I can attend site when they are working, so will be able to report back. What I can also confirm is that we will ensure that the highway drainage system is functioning correctly, and any work required to achieve this will be made a priority."

I will forward this email to the Parish Clerk for future reference.



An extension of the Winter Grant Scheme has been announced to provide additional support to Cambridgeshire families until the end of the Easter holidays. The scheme aims to support many people whose lives have become more difficult because of COVID-19 and will allow the County Council to provide food vouchers to children during the Easter holiday. The extension will also allow the hub network to not only provide food vouchers to children, but to offer families financial help with utility bills and household items relating to warmth, hygiene, and cooking.

The Winter Grant Scheme is available to families, children or young people who meet one of the below criteria:

- Funded childcare for 2-year-olds
- Early years pupil premium
- Care leavers
- Educational health and care plans
- Young carers

If children receive Free School Meals or are over 16 years old and receive a bursary, automatically received £30 food vouchers to cover the Easter holiday. To date, over 100,000 free school meal vouchers have been distributed to families in Cambridgeshire since the start of the pandemic.

Further information, including how to apply for further support, can be found on [our Winter Support webpage](#) and [our Coordination Hub webpage](#)



A series of campaigns aimed at reminding people of the importance of lockdown has so far reached over 700,000 residents across Cambridgeshire. The #StandFirm campaign is made up of five films featuring people who have suffered the effects of COVID-19 and are urging others to stick to the rules. Two other films were produced and acted by young people.

The #StandFirm films – commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council feature social workers, IT managers and a loneliness campaign manager. Released over the past two months, each subject talks about catching COVID-19 and how several thought they were going to die and took many weeks to recover. They were posted across social media channels - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The #StandFirm films alone reached 407,000 people with a total engagement of 54,000. The Young People's films – Be Part of the Solution – had a reach of 91,200, with a total engagement of over 20,000. An additional campaign – This Depends on Us – focussed on general advice throughout the pandemic and reached over 220,000. The #Standfirm films can be seen on the Cambridgeshire channels

These campaigns have played a vital part in encouraging people to stick to the rules of lockdown. The films feature real people – not actors – who have had first-hand experience either of catching COVID or in the case of the young people, living in a COVID world. While the future is looking brighter, the focus on COVID-safety will need to continue for some time, and the message from all these campaigns is the same - there is no room for complacency. It's still essential that we stick to the rules in order to progress along the government's road-map - which does depend on us."

Ensuring our children have the very best education!



The County Council is recruiting School Governors to help shape the strategic direction of our schools, to ensure children are safe, and have a great experience whilst at school. The County Councils dedicated governor team will provide full training and support.

For information about the role, including how to apply click this link [School governors - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Oh well, this is my final report, so it's a heartfelt goodbye. The work this Parish Council does is so vitally important to our community, and I thank you all so very very much. Stay safe.....

**Peter Hudson
County Councillor
Oakington, Westwick, Longstanton, Northstowe, and Over.**

