

County Councillor's Report 19th November – Coffinswell

The Leader of Devon County Council, John Hart, said: “None of us wanted another lockdown but I fear it had become inevitable. The support of the vast majority of people in our county and the wider South West has meant that we have seen some of the lowest incidence of cases throughout this crisis, even with millions of visitors in the summer. But we have seen spikes here – at Exeter University for example – and our numbers have begun to rise generally as well, in keeping with the rest of the country.

“We have obviously not been reaching the numbers that would have seen our area go into a local lockdown. But the figures that the Government produced show that our NHS services could have become overwhelmed. So I believe that this temporary measure was necessary even here. And I urge people to continue to follow the guidance and wear a face mask indoors, keep your distance and wash your hands.

“I very much welcome the extension of the furlough scheme but our economy relies massively on small and medium companies and the tourism and hospitality industries and it is vital that the Government also provides support for these sectors.

“It is also vital that the Government provides financial support for local government so we can continue the vital work we did during the first lockdown.”

From Thursday 5 November, everyone must stay at home, and may leave only for a limited set of reasons.

These include:

For education

For work, if you cannot work from home

For exercise and recreation outdoors, with your household, support bubble or on your own with one person from another household

For all medical reasons, appointments and to escape injury or harm

To shop for food and essentials

And to provide care for vulnerable people, or as a volunteer

Non-essential shops, leisure and entertainment venues will be closed.

Click and collect services can continue and essential shops, including supermarkets, will remain open.

Pubs, bars, restaurants must close, except for takeaway and delivery services.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, known as the furlough scheme, will remain open until December, with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500.

[Further guidance on the new measures are available online.](#)

[Details of the extended furlough scheme and other economic support, can be found online.](#)

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick confirmed that moving house will still be allowed during the restrictions, adding that removal firms, estate agents and tradespeople can continue to work but must follow Covid safety guidelines.

It's vital to continue:

↔ Making space

😷 Covering your face

🧼 Washing your hands

It is not all bad news however! An online public consultation is being launched by the County Council on Tuesday 17th November on proposals to complete a missing link of the Teign Estuary Trail between Newton Abbot and Teignmouth.

The County Council is seeking views on its plans for a 5km section of the multi-use trail next to the estuary, starting at the Passage House Inn in Newton Abbot and joining the A381 at La Roche Maurice Walk. From there, a shared use path would link to the junction near Morrisons supermarket, at the western edge of Teignmouth.

As part of the consultation, a webinar will be held from 6pm-8pm on Wednesday 25 November to cover the scheme proposals and provide people with the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback to the project team.

A further virtual 'drop-in' consultation event will be held at 5pm-7pm on Wednesday 9 December enabling people to dial in to talk to the project team. Those wishing to attend either event should email transportplanning@devon.gov.uk for joining instructions.

The scheme aims to improve connectivity between existing strategic trails and promote safe and sustainable travel in the natural environment of the Teign Estuary.

More information on the proposals will be available [online](#) from Tuesday 17 November. The consultation continues until Friday 18 December, and the feedback form can be completed online. For those unable to access the internet, please contact the Transport Planning team at Transport Planning Team, Matford Offices, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4QD or please telephone 0345 155 1015, email transportplanning@devon.gov.uk or write to the above address.

A pioneering new project that supports unpaid carers has been heralded nationally and is shortlisted for a prestigious care award. It involves dedicated staff from Devon Carers, working closely with hospital teams to identify situations where carers are involved, and where support for those carers is needed for patients to return home safely, or prevent hospital admissions.

First piloted at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, the Carers Hospital Service is now also running in Torbay Hospital.

There are an estimated 130,000 people in Devon who are looking after family members, neighbours or friends. Devon Carers, which is run by Exminster-based Westbank, support around 20,000 carers, (around 15 per cent). While support for carers is available, reaching them has always been difficult because people's caring roles are often not identified.

Sometimes people are unable to leave hospital because the person who is caring for them at home has become unable to cope. It might be because the patients' care needs have grown worse and the carer doesn't know what to do, or the carer could be unwell themselves, or simply exhausted from providing round the clock care.

Having identified where there are carers involved, the Carers Hospital Service team works with them to understand what is happening and to see where support would help them, which might avoid a hospital admission or help get the person home more quickly. If the carer's health is poor, or they have developed care needs themselves, the team refer the carer to health or social care services.

Between April 2019 and the end of October this year, 2,193 carers have been helped by the Carers Hospital Service, 1,740 of which were previously not known to Devon Carers.

Finally, the impact of the ongoing pandemic on people's mental health in Devon may currently be difficult to determine, but to help you look after your own wellbeing during the national lockdown, Learn Devon is launching its "Mindfulness Challenge".

The five-day challenge, which launches on Monday 16 November, features a series of short videos that provide an opportunity to take 20 minutes a day to ensure that mindfulness – training techniques for your mind and wellbeing – is part of your daily routine.

Each day will focus on different techniques to help with focus, concentration, relaxation, coping with anxiety, as well as stretches for desk workers and more.

Those who sign up for the challenge will receive an email each morning at 6am with a link to the day's video which they can watch on-demand, in their own time. The email will also include further tips to improve wellbeing in everyday life.

Learn Devon, Devon County Council's adult education service provider, hopes that everyone taking part will enhance their wellbeing, enabling them to better cope with life's stresses and the difficulties brought about by the pandemic and a second national lockdown.

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