

Dear Resident,

We are now well into week five of 'Lock Down'. I just want say that, although challenging for us all, particularly for those who live in small flats or without gardens, this is helping to save lives and protect our NHS and those who care for us. Let's make sure we show our appreciation this evening at 8pm.

### **Advice on household waste**

Recycling rates across Buckinghamshire remain high so this is great news, and thank you for continuing to dispose of your household waste responsibly. I know it's frustrating that we've had to suspend garden waste services for the time being but please bear with us – we are trying to get this service back up again as soon as we can.

I know too that just by being at home a lot more, households are producing more general waste, or you might have chosen to use this time to have a good clear out. Can I please encourage you that while our Household Recycling Centres are closed, please do not be tempted to make use of services like 'a man and a van' who offer to take your waste away for you without checking first if they're legitimate.

If you want to pay a private contractor to take your waste away, follow the SCRAP code to make sure your waste doesn't end up being illegally dumped:

- **Suspect all waste traders**
- **Check they are a registered waste carrier**
- **Refuse unexpected offers to take away your waste**
- **Ask what will happen to your rubbish**
- **Paperwork must be given**

The best thing to do for now is to store any excess general waste you might have that won't fit into your kerbside collection.

### **Domestic abuse**

The lockdown situation will be having many knock-on effects in different ways for different people. Many people may be welcoming a slower pace of life and more time with family, but I also know these restrictions, while absolutely necessary at the moment, may also be putting an extra strain on home life.

For some people, the added isolation, job losses and health concerns puts a lot more stress into the home and sadly may leave some people more at risk of experiencing domestic abuse.

So during this crisis, it's more important than ever that everyone is aware of the signs of domestic abuse and how to get support if needed.

**I wanted to remind you that anyone experiencing domestic abuse can leave home and seek help, even under the current restrictions on movement.**

Local domestic abuse services in Buckinghamshire are still offering support during the coronavirus emergency and there is also help available to people who want to control their abusive behaviour.

Please use the following contacts for any help and support and of course, if you feel you or someone you know is in immediate danger then please call the police on **999**. If you're unable to talk during this 999 call you can press **55** from your mobile and this will transfer the call to the police without you having to speak.

- The 24-hour **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** is available on **0808 200 0247**.
- Anyone worried about causing harm to others can get help by calling the **Respect Phoneline** on **0808 802 4040** or go online [here](#).
- Wycombe Women's Aid is on 01494 461 367 and [www.wycombewomensaid.org.uk](http://www.wycombewomensaid.org.uk).
- Aylesbury Women's Aid is on 01296 437 777 and [www.aylesburywomensaid.org.uk](http://www.aylesburywomensaid.org.uk).
- Young people affected by domestic abuse can call Childline on 0800 1111 or go online at [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk), or can call SAFE on 0800 133 7938 or go online at [www.safeproject.org.uk](http://www.safeproject.org.uk).
- And finally, there is the organisation 'Reducing the Risk'; info at [www.reducingtherisk.org.uk](http://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk).

### **Helping the homeless and rough sleepers**

Our housing teams have now provided accommodation for more than 80 vulnerable residents who had either been living on the streets or who would otherwise have found themselves homeless during this crisis. The teams have also been offering support to those who've said no to offers of accommodation, helping with prescription needs and food.

Sadly, we are still aware of some people who are begging around the county. It can be really hard, but can I remind everyone that the best way to help anyone begging is not to give them money, but to support the local charities and foodbanks working hard to support these vulnerable people. We have offered direct support to everyone who is begging and handing over money also poses a health risk in terms of potentially transferring the virus to these already vulnerable people, so can I urge people please to try to help in different ways by donating to local charities instead. To find out more about how to do this, please see [this information on our website](#).

## Ramadan and Covid-19

I know that Ramadan – which begins today – will feel very different this year for our Muslim residents. For example, not being able to go to congregational prayers or breakfast with family and friends outside the household due to the necessary restrictions on movement.

I also wanted to share some important guidance from our Public Health team for anyone observing Ramadan this year, especially given that it's more important than ever that people do all they can to look after their physical and mental health.

- Some groups of people are exempt from fasting, including anyone who is unwell, frail or has an existing health condition. You can contact your GP if you have any questions or concerns.
- There's some important guidance from [Diabetes UK](#) on fasting during Ramadan for people with diabetes.
- Make sure you keep drinking plenty of fluids before fasting to reduce the risk of dehydration.
- Ramadan is an excellent time to focus on ways to eat and live more healthily. There is some great advice on healthy eating during Ramadan from the [British Nutrition Foundation](#).

It's really important that people continue to keep in touch with friends, family and members of their communities online and over the phone. The Muslim Council of Britain has [extensive guidance on their website](#) on maintaining spiritual connection and togetherness during Ramadan while the country remains in lockdown.

I wish everyone Ramadan Mubarak and I hope this holy month brings you peace and good health.

## Video updates

In this week's video updates, I've had a great update from one of our Waste Services managers, Andrew Jenkins, who was able to expand on the information above. I was also able to feedback on the very first Cabinet meeting of the new Buckinghamshire Council which happened earlier this week.

This meeting was one of the first local government meetings in the country held over video conferencing. It is available to watch via [this link from the Buckinghamshire Council website](#).

This week in one of my Vlogs I also enjoyed another look at the fantastic musical tribute to all key workers that I mentioned in my last email – put together by local singing teacher Sophie

Juge and 34 of her students from the Marlow area to the tune of Abba's "Thank you for the Music."

It's well worth a listen on YouTube if you haven't done so already. **You can see it and all our [daily video updates here](#).**

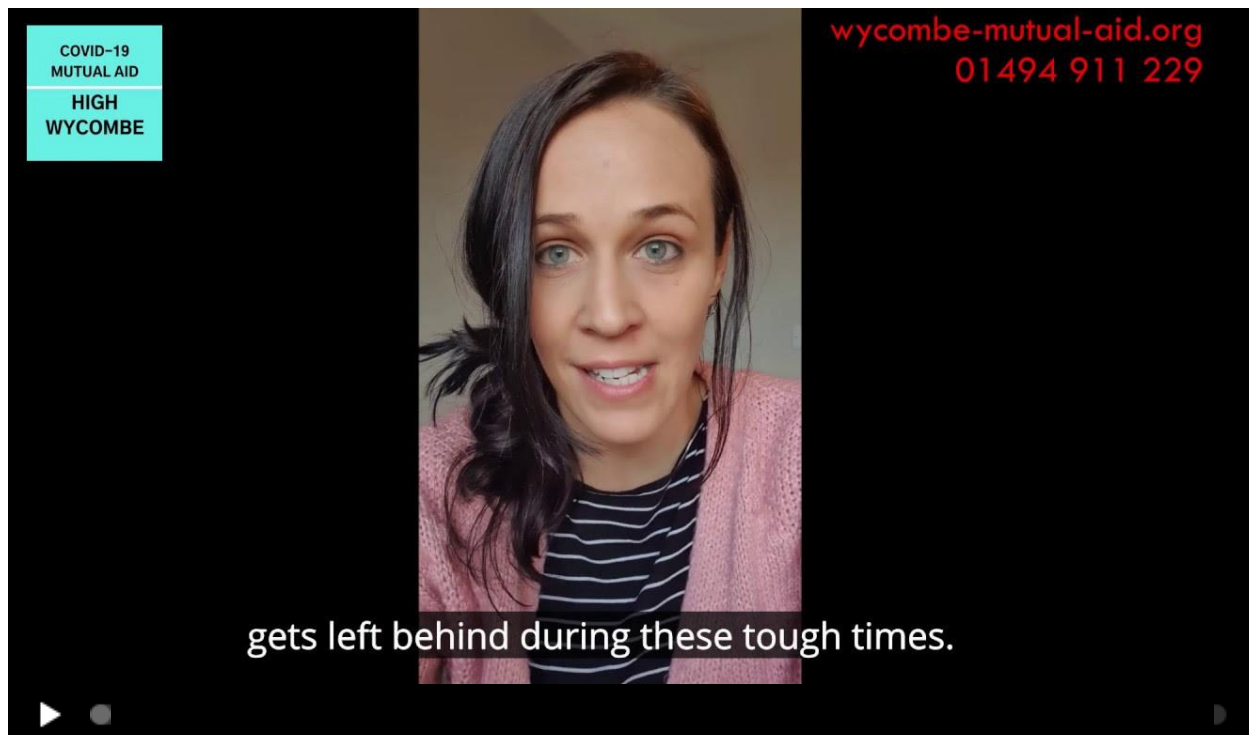
Lastly, today's Vlog was about the youth scheme launched in Wendover. Lockdown can be particularly difficult for teenagers and this initiative can be really valuable to break down the lack of contact with friends. Is there something similar in your area?

**Our Adult Social Care team is checking in with all vulnerable residents we are aware of by making many regular phone calls and by supporting in other ways too. Please tell us if you know of someone who might need our help by calling the Adult Social Care team on 01296 383 402.**

**Please also carry on using our [online community hub](#) for details of local support and how to volunteer to help.**

### **#ProudofBucks**

We have a **#ProudofBucks** focus on High Wycombe today – and a massive thank you to the 300+ volunteers who've signed up to High Wycombe Coronavirus Mutual Aid, supporting their local community. They've been delivering shopping, fetching prescriptions and reaching out with friendly phone calls. The group has even produced a video about what they're doing and how people can help.



If you are in the High Wycombe area and want to get in touch with the group then [go online](#) or call **01494 911 229**.

Again, this is just one example of so very many right across Buckinghamshire and it really is a delight to keep reading more and more **#ProudofBucks** stories. As ever, keep letting us know via the **#ProudofBucks** hashtag on social media. (@BucksCouncil on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#))

### **Business grants**

Local businesses – we still want you to come forward and claim grants from the government that you might be entitled to. As a local authority, we are processing these grants and have worked across the last two weekends to get these applications processed and the much-needed funds paid as quickly as possible. This means we've so far paid out nearly £58 million in grants to local firms.

**If you run a small business, or a business in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors and think you may be eligible, you can find out more and apply at [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/businessgrant](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/businessgrant).**

### **Heart of Bucks grants**

Heart of Bucks is a local community foundation which awards grants and loans to local charities and community groups. They have launched an appeal to raise funds to support

people and charities in Buckinghamshire who are most affected and vulnerable at this time of crisis. There are more details about donating or applying for support from the fund [on their website](#).

## DO NOT STAY GLUED TO THE NEWS

Try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone.

Set a time each day to catch up and use trustworthy sources – such as [GOV.UK](#) or the [NHS website](#).



I hope these short tips are proving useful in helping you and your family cope with this huge change to our ordinary lives.

As ever, stay safe and stay well.

**Martin Tett**

Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

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