

# An important update from Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

Protect yourself, others and the NHS

**Dear Resident,**

I know the overwhelming majority of Buckinghamshire residents are following the **stay at home** advice properly and I really **thank you** for doing your bit as we continue to fight the coronavirus pandemic here. The more we do this the more we're reducing the spread of the virus.

Seeing the sunshine is a real tonic but it's absolutely crucial especially at this point in the pandemic that **we all continue to stay at home**. We are expecting the number of cases of the virus to peak in the coming days and weeks so it's absolutely critical everyone observes the rules on this.

Our parks are still open so that people can access an open space easily for taking a walk or other form of exercise only – don't forget to keep your distance, at least 2m which is about the length of a double bed. Children's play areas and outdoor gyms are all closed and shouldn't be used. All of our country parks are currently closed too to discourage unnecessary travel.

## **Exercise at home #StayinWorkout**

There are lots of imaginative ways to exercise at home. I've enjoyed catching up – remotely of course – with Mark Ormerod, Director of LEAP this week, which is the Buckinghamshire organisation that encourages people to benefit from physical activity or sport. He's got some great tips on how to stay active during isolation – you can find out more from [our Vlog yesterday](#) – and there's more online on [Leap's website](#).

## **Olympic Lodge**

I also want to tell you about a really special local success story similar to the immense achievement in London of setting up the 4,000-bed Nightingale Hospital at the Excel Centre.

Here in Buckinghamshire, in the space of just three weeks, Buckinghamshire Council has transformed the Olympic Lodge at Stoke Mandeville Stadium in Aylesbury into a 240-bed special social care facility for vulnerable adults during the coronavirus pandemic. The centre will help free up hospital beds for people who need critical care plus helps keep these vulnerable adults out of hospital and at less risk of catching the infection.

The centre will care for:

- hospital patients who no longer require acute care but are not quite ready to go home and;

- people living at home who, temporarily, are unable to remain there because they have no support.

It's a huge achievement to get this facility up and running so quickly – thank you to all of those who've worked so hard on this project and those staff and volunteers who will be caring for our vulnerable adults during this difficult time.

### Household rubbish collections – Easter changes

All our Buckinghamshire Council colleagues are doing an amazing job and our bin crews are no exception, continuing to do what it takes keep this service running.

Please remember that there will be a revised schedule for bin collections over Easter.



## Easter bank holiday revised bin collection dates

Usual collection day	Revised collection day
Friday 10 April	Saturday 11 April
Monday 13 April	Tuesday 14 April
Tuesday 14 April	Wednesday 15 April
Wednesday 15 April	Thursday 16 April
Thursday 16 April	Friday 17 April
Friday 17 April	Saturday 18 April



The changes are the same for residents across the whole county.

I must remind you too that our waste services are currently operating with a reduced number of staff – please keep checking our website for [the latest collection updates](#) relating to your area. And if you're not sure which bin to put out you can also [check this on the website too](#).

**I want to extend a personal thank you to all our teams working on this, and other vital frontline services – they are keeping the Buckinghamshire Council services that residents depend on running through this crisis and I am extremely grateful to them all.**



We continue to be buoyed by the community response to this crisis and it's been so heartening to hear and see the **#ProudofBucks** stories coming in via social media. There are so many examples it's hard to go into details but I want to say a huge thank you to every single person and organisation taking part in this mammoth community effort.

We have groups like Meals from Marlow and The Risborough Basket providing food supplies and meals to the local community. Groups like Bledlow/Saunderton Parish Council and Stoke Poges Good Neighbourhood Scheme are providing a support network to their local community by keeping in touch with vulnerable residents and delivering food and medicines – and I know there are countless other local groups in our towns and villages doing the same too.

I recommend you keep following the [@BucksCouncil](#) Twitter feed for all our heartening **#ProudofBucks** messages and make sure you post your own examples too. Keep following the Twitter feed too for other important updates from Buckinghamshire Council.

## **A message to families about going to your GP or to A&E during the coronavirus outbreak**

Please remember, **A&E services and your GP practice are still open** for you and your children during the coronavirus outbreak.

GP surgeries are not allowing patients to directly book face to face appointments at the moment, to help stop the spread of the virus. Surgeries are, however, more than happy to discuss your case over the phone and to offer advice and guidance. In some cases GPs and nurses are doing consultations by video link, using mobile phones. If clinically appropriate, you might be able to attend the surgery for an appointment at an arranged time.

It is really important to stay well at this difficult time, so please contact your doctor if your child is poorly with any symptoms that cause you concern. With so much attention on coronavirus at the moment, we are aware you may be concerned your child has a different illness or may be living with a worrying condition like asthma or diabetes.

[This information sheet](#) gives very useful advice on when to use services like GPs, pharmacists, A&E and 999. Please remember – all health staff are still here for you, even if they're having to do things a little differently, so please don't be afraid to use them if you're worried about your own or a child's health.

## **What to do if you're worried about a vulnerable person**

There are lots of ways a vulnerable person can receive support from Buckinghamshire Council and other organisations if they need help during this crisis. Information on this, and more, can be found at our online [Community Support Hub](#).

## **Looking after our mental health**

It's now the third week of lockdown and we're all beginning to adapt to our new routines and finding new ways to get on with our lives.

However, these changes can have a more noticeable impact on some people, especially those with existing mental health problems such as anxiety or depression, compulsive disorders or claustrophobia. They might be worried about how coronavirus could affect their life. This might feel difficult or stressful, but there are lots of things they can try that could help their wellbeing.

There is plenty of help available if you, or someone you know, is experiencing these feelings. A great place to look for support and advice is the [Buckinghamshire Mind website](#).

There's also [information for young people](#) who are worried about coronavirus and want to know how to cope with changes to their lives.

### **Coronavirus business grants – beware of scams!**

Small businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors can now get coronavirus business grants through Buckinghamshire Council. Most businesses in these industries plus businesses receiving Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief qualify to apply for this help. We've written to and have emailed businesses in our business rates system with details about how to apply. If you've not had this letter or email you can still check your eligibility and apply [here](#).

**You should apply to us directly for these grants. We are aware of scammers offering to apply on behalf of businesses. Please do not let them take your money.**

Buckinghamshire Business First can help local businesses with more general support, advice and information. Visit the website at [bbf.uk.com](http://bbf.uk.com) or email [BusinessSupport@bbf.uk.com](mailto:BusinessSupport@bbf.uk.com).

As ever, **stay safe, stay well – and stay home,**

### **Martin Tett**

Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

Buckinghamshire Council  
The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF  
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk](http://buckinghamshire.gov.uk)