

Update on fighting coronavirus in Buckinghamshire



Dear Resident,

I hope many of you are being able to enjoy more time outdoors safely now the government has eased restrictions on this part of the lockdown. There is some very useful information about what we now can and cannot do [on the government's website](#).

It's vital that we carry on with what we've been doing to stay safe - this is what is meant by 'Staying Alert'. It means we should still stay at home as much as possible, however, we can now go out when necessary but we have to be sensible and always keep our distance from other people when outside our homes.

Vulnerable people

It's also really important to remember that vulnerable groups still need to take extra care. For many people, unfortunately, it's not the time to be making any big changes to how they have been self-isolating. So please continue to support vulnerable people in your communities and protect them from possible infection. This is especially important for people in the 'shielded' category who are most at risk from the virus. **There is more advice for vulnerable groups, the over 70s and people who are 'shielding' [on the government's website](#).**

If you are worried about a vulnerable friend, relative or neighbour and you think they might need some support, please call our Adult Social Care team on 01296 383 204.

Country parks

It has been great this week to open our country parks again to allow people some fresh air and exercise in these lovely places. We are continuing to work on how we can safely open the toilets at all the sites and the beautiful Rhododendron Temple Gardens at Langley. Please bear with us and I'll update you as soon as I can on this. If you want to visit one of our country parks you can get detailed information about which areas and facilities are open [on our website](#).

Household Recycling Centres

Thank you again to visitors to the five Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) that we have now opened. We appreciate you being patient and bringing your ID to show that you live in

Buckinghamshire. **If you do need to come to get rid of waste, please can you arrive closer to the site opening times?** We are seeing large queues from early on, which is causing problems for staff getting onto the site themselves.

The HRCs at Amersham, Aston Clinton, Beaconsfield, Buckingham and High Wycombe are all open **every day** from **9am** until **6pm**, so there is plenty of time for your visit. For more information [check the details on our website](#).

Travel safely

It's really important that if you're using your car again after a few weeks that you make sure it's safe to drive again. Highways England has issued some advice on basic safety checks you should do before you drive somewhere, like checking your tyres and oil. [You can read more about it here](#).

Council Tax Hardship Fund

I know this crisis has caused a strain on finances in many households. We are giving extra help to working age council taxpayers on low incomes that are already eligible for a reduction to their council tax. These customers will receive an extra reduction in their council tax bill of up to £150. Those residents will get a letter with an updated bill for 2020/21.

Council tax pays for many essential services like care for vulnerable adults and children, waste and recycling. It also goes towards local police and fire services. The coronavirus crisis has added significantly to our costs as we provide extra support for residents and businesses. So for those residents who can afford to pay their council tax, your ongoing payments mean we can carry on providing essential and regular services as well as the additional coronavirus support.

If you don't qualify for the reduction but are having difficulty paying your council tax, please contact us to talk about payments options:

- Aylesbury area: phone 01296 585 299
- Chiltern area: email cdcrevenue.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or phone 01494 732 077
- South Bucks area: email SBDCctax.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or phone 01895 837 500
- Wycombe area: email localtax.wyc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or phone 01494 412 226

Getting tested for coronavirus

Many people are now able to get tested for coronavirus if they are showing symptoms, including essential workers, people who cannot work from home, and anyone aged 65 or over.

Another mobile testing centre is coming to Buckinghamshire from tomorrow (Friday 15 May). It will run for up to three days at The Chilterns Pools and Gym in Bensheim Way, Chiltern Avenue, HP6 5AH.

Next week is [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) and you will be able to find lots of information on our social media channels about looking after your mental well-being which will hopefully help you cope better during these difficult times.

Keep checking our [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages for tips, advice and how to get some extra support if you need it.

Finally

Thank you to one resident who replied to one of these emails reminding me about John Milton who, 360 years ago, escaped the plague in London and took up residence in Buckinghamshire in Chalfont St. Giles. The resident suggested others who may have more time at the moment, might like to look up and enjoy John Milton's works that he continued writing during another period of national trauma, which, of course, include 'Paradise Lost' and looking forward positively, 'Paradise Regained'! A nice idea, thank you!

Many thanks to everyone else too who takes time to reply to these emails; even if we don't get back to you directly, all feedback and comments are read and are noted, and acted upon where needed.

Stay safe, stay well and stay alert!

Martin Tett

Leader of Buckinghamshire Council



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