

## **Cherwell Parishes Update Bulletin – 4 May 2020**

Dear Colleagues

Please find below my weekly update on a range of issues that will be of interest to you or your residents. As ever, please do forward this update to your councillors and encourage them to forward to any group or individual who might benefit from the information.

Best regards

Steve Jordan

Corporate Director for Commercial Development, Assets and Investment, CDC and OCC

### **Access to Cemeteries, Parks and Recreation Grounds**

Many thanks to you all for responding to my request for information on your parks, recreation grounds and cemeteries. Out of the hundreds of facilities across the district's 79 parishes, just five are closed, which is testament to the parish councils, sports clubs and local recreational charities working to ensure that residents are able to safely take their daily exercise during lockdown.

### **NHS Volunteer Responders – Self Referral**

Individuals who are in the vulnerable category (have received a letter asking them to self-isolate) can now self-refer for help from the NHS Volunteer Responders. This can include services such as shopping and 'check in and chat'. The number to call is 0808 196 3646 and this can be done by the individual or a family member.

### **Support for Village Halls and Community Buildings**

Many village and community halls should be eligible for two forms of support:

- 100% business rate relief (the Expanded Retail Discount or ERD), which is available to places of public assembly and;
- The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant (RHLG)

Further detail is in the attached information sheet prepared by Tessa Hall at Community First Oxfordshire.

## Support for Local Voluntary Organisations

[OCVA](#) is supporting groups in the voluntary sector across Oxfordshire through the COVID-19 crisis by providing advice and information on funding, governance, volunteering and guidance on many issues currently facing charities. They are also working with other local and national agencies to provide up-to-date and relevant information to assist groups and volunteers. If you know of any groups, charities, trustees or volunteers who need advice and support both in the current crisis and also looking to the future to help groups recover and build resilience, please ask them to contact OCVA by email at [admin@ocva.org.uk](mailto:admin@ocva.org.uk) or by phone on 01865 251946.

## Domestic Abuse

Due to the restrictions placed on everyone in relation to COVID-19 it is anticipated that stress within the family environment will increase. Some people may experience Domestic Abuse for the first time. News stories have already reported rising incidences of domestic abuse. It is important for victims to know that there is help out there. Our Community Safety Team is promoting the attached A4 flyer that explains the help available and how to access it. I would be grateful if you would consider putting copies on your public notice boards. If you would like us to print and send copies to you, please email [community.safety@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

## Local Testing Sites for COVID-19

The government's COVID-19 testing programme continues to develop. Arrangements are now in place to test frontline staff who believe they may be displaying COVID-19 symptoms. The test is recommended between day two and four of you experiencing symptoms. Details can be found [here](#).

As part of the Department of Health & Social Care's (DHSC) intention to widen access to Covid-19 testing through Mobile Testing Units (MTUs) [run by the military](#), Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TV LRF) has been working closely with partner local authorities to identify, select and develop suitable sites. There are 12 sites in the Thames Valley area, including the following in and around Cherwell district:

Carterton Leisure Centre - OX18 1AA  
Chipping Norton New Street Car Park - OX7 5NF  
Buckingham Swan Leisure Centre - MK18 1AE  
Banbury Bodicote House Council Offices - OX15 4AA  
Bicester Village - OX26 6WD  
High Wycombe Park & Ride, Handy Cross - HP11 1TJ

Key workers can get tested at one of the Government-run testing sites. Bookings for these testing sites will be managed in line with current [DHSC guidance](#). Further information can be found at the [.gov.uk](#) site.

Online booking is available at <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>. Please be aware that the website is currently experiencing very high volumes of traffic and may not be accepting bookings. If you are not able to book, please do check back later

## Staying Up To Date

For the latest information about the council's response to Covid-19 regularly check your emails, visit the [council website](#) and follow our social media accounts.

*This is a briefing emailed to all Cherwell Parishes*

