

Cherwell Parishes Update Bulletin – 19 April 2021

To: All Cherwell Town Councils, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings – 19 April 2021

Dear Colleagues

Please find below my update on a range of issues that will be of interest to you or your residents.

As ever, we rely on you to **forward this update to your councillors** and encourage them to disseminate it to any group or individual in your parish who might benefit from the information.

Best regards

Steve Jordan

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

Elections Update

There are three sets of elections taking place on 6 May across the whole of Cherwell District:

- Cherwell District Council (one seat in each ward plus two by-elections)
- Oxfordshire County Council (all seats)
- Police and Crime Commissioner

Additionally, there are scheduled elections in a third of Cherwell parishes, plus the Weston on the Green Neighbourhood Plan referendum.

The deadline to register to vote is 11.59pm, Monday 19 April (today), and the postal vote deadline is 5pm, Tuesday 20 April. Anyone who wants to vote by proxy must apply by 5pm on Thursday 27 April.

The polls will be open on Thursday 6 May from 7am to 10pm. Verification of all ballot papers will take place on Friday 7 May at Spiceball Leisure Centre. The count for all of the local elections will be on Sunday 9 May, and the count for the PCC election will be on Monday 10 May.

Due to COVID-secure measures, attendance at the verification and counts will be restricted (details will be provided to candidates and agents) and will take much longer than usual.

Further information is available on the CDC website: [Elections 2021](#)

Covid-19 Local Infection Rates and Testing

In Cherwell, there were 22 new cases in the seven days up to 09 April, (down from 28 the previous week), which is equivalent to a weekly rate of 14.6 per 100,000 residents. 2 of these new cases were in people over the age of 60 (down from 3 the previous week). You can access a [COVID-19 dashboard](#) on the county council's website for daily COVID-19 statistics.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you must self-isolate immediately and [book a symptomatic \(PCR\) test](#) at one of Oxfordshire's five symptomatic testing sites as soon as possible. Do not attend a symptom-free site or use a lateral flow device. More information is available on OCC's [symptom testing pages](#).

If you don't have symptoms, you can book free rapid lateral flow device (LFD) tests at one of four symptom-free sites across the county, access tests through your workplace or school, collect home test kits from any local testing site (symptomatic or symptom-free) in Oxfordshire, or order test kits for home delivery. All the [symptom-free testing information](#) is available on the county council's website.

Village Halls & Green Spaces – Updated Guidance

Last week the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) updated the guidance for those managing community centres, village halls and other community facilities on safely re-opening to reflect changes to national lockdown rules which came into effect on 12 April. Also published (by DEFRA) was updated guidance on green spaces (including sports facilities and countryside access).

Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-on-accessing-green-spaces-safely>

Organised Events – Updated Guidance

On 06 April the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published advice for councils in England on organised events being held during the coronavirus outbreak.

The guidance is designed to assist councils in ensuring that events are able to go ahead safely, in accordance with what is permitted at each step of the roadmap out of lockdown.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-events-guidance-for-local-authorities>

Connecting With Nature

Do you want to take positive steps for wildlife in your Parish? The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) is working with partners to support parish councillors, clerks and volunteers to discover how they can improve the local area for wildlife and residents <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/wildparishes>

The Council is encouraging people to connect with nature which is widely recognised as being beneficial for our health and wellbeing. We have created a Wild Communities calendar, in which every month has a different theme, and will be featuring resources and activities as well as publicising related projects and events. April's theme is 'Growing Together' which celebrates people coming together to grow food as well as growing plants to provide food and homes for wildlife - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/532/community-nature-plan>

Are you interested in what other communities are doing for nature on their patch? Wild Oxfordshire features inspiring examples of grassroots nature recovery projects - <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/community-groups-conference-2020/>

Awards – Nominate Volunteers from your Community

Cherwell Volunteer Awards: Nominations are open for the 2021 Cherwell District Council / Sanctuary Housing Volunteer Awards (see attached flyer). There are six categories: Volunteer of the Year; Voluntary Organisation; Year; Lifetime Volunteer; Young Volunteer; Community Venue. Nominations close on 12 May and can be entered online at: <https://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk/cherwell-awards>

High Sheriff's Covid-19 Heroes Awards: Incoming High Sheriff for Oxfordshire, Imam Monawar Hussain, is inviting award nominations to honour those who have played their part in the battle against COVID-19.

The awards will celebrate those we have most to thank as the county comes to terms with the last year. While there has been great suffering and sadness caused by the pandemic, there have been many tales of hope and heroism.

He said: “We have seen many inspirational tales of altruism and love from across our communities towards those who are needy and to keep our county moving, despite the personal risk. I want to highlight their stories by dedicating the high sheriff heroes awards to those making contributions, be they individuals, voluntary groups or businesses. But I need your help in nominating those who have carried out exceptional acts, during but not exclusively through the pandemic.”

To nominate, email oxfordshire@highsheriffs.com for an application form.

CDC Council and Committee Meetings

Virtual meetings currently scheduled for the coming month are:

- Annual Council at 6.30pm on Wednesday 19 May
- Planning Committee at 4.00pm on Thursday 20 May

To view a CDC council meeting– go to the [Browse Meetings Page](#) of our website, select the relevant committee and the meeting date. Click on “View the webcast” on the agenda webpage.

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

