

January 2021, Meldreth Parish Council, District and County Councillors' Report

Local covid rates rose sharply over the holiday period. School outbreaks became widespread across South Cambs toward the end of term.

County Council and Rapid Lateral Flow Testing for schools: Government has directed secondary schools to carry out rapid lateral flow testing. The first signal came just before the holiday break and caused considerable concern as to organisation. There is no mandate for County Councils or local authority Public Health teams to become involved in the exercise except in an advisory role. The County Coordinating Hub is now considering the matter; because Govt advice is that community volunteers can support the process. However, the exercise raises immediate questions of safety for all, as pupils would be congregating both on transport to school and in the testing venue including the 30-minute wait period for results. If the result is positive the child would require transport home and a further wait while this is arranged; not every child will have access to private transport back home.

County Council and schools reopening: As of time of writing, government has required schools to reopen; County Council does not have the power to close them. Schools have undertaken individual risk assessments and from that stance must make individual decisions about partial or full closure.

Thank you Meldreth Community Food Bank: The Food Bank successfully distributed the Christmas cheerboxes to about 75 households, young and old in Meldreth and helping many on free school meals, in Sheltered Housing, or regularly accessing the Food Bank. In addition, food boxes were prepared for those in need; and on December 23 the Food Bank coordinator personally distributed South Cambs District Council provided Christmas meals to 20 individuals. Thank you to all who contributed to this effort including the cheerbox fundraising.

Drainage: We toured the core area of concern with the Highways and the contractor in mid-December. A number of points of concern were established, including:

- no system for blocking off streets from parked cars, or returning to tend to drains inaccessible due to parked cars or missed out for other reasons.
- lack of resource to check-up on jobs commissioned and carried out.
- web reporting page map doesn't work on some mobile phones
- web reporting page response system unsatisfactory

To start again from scratch:

- Every gully in Whitecroft Rd, High Street, Fenny Lane, Elin Way and Station Road will be emptied. Meldreth PC – please confirm that these are the key roads of concern.
- If pooling/problems arise on any of these, please report. Team will return for jetting.
- If pooling/problems arise on any of these, please report. Team will return for underground investigation.

The same exercise will be undertaken in Melbourn which has experienced very similar issues.

Pot holes: Thanks to all for reporting. County Council staff are required to take annual leave over the holiday period and so there is always a long queue of Highways faults greeting the team in January.

South West Cambridge New Town: Verbal update.