

## **Meldreth Parish Council October 2020 – County and District Councillors’ Report**

### **Covid-19 testing for school staff and the general public**

It was not long after schools reopened that the unavailability of Covid-19 testing for staff became a live issue locally. We’ve asked about dedicated and accessible testing arrangements for school staff, in order to prevent unnecessary and long staff absences due to self-isolation requirements when someone in the household develops any symptoms. It’s clear that a significant gap in capacity in Covid test labs means the system simply can’t meet demand. This is why it has been so difficult to secure a local test appointment, let alone create bespoke school testing arrangements. People are being urged not to seek a test unless they are required to do so, in order to protect limited capacity for those who are required to have a test and need it most.

### **Covid-19 case rise**

A concerning rise in cases among young adults in the 18-30 age group has been logged in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and while hospital admissions and deaths have been low, there is concern about transmission to the wider population. On behalf of MCCA Susan attended a recent SCDC webinar for community groups; everyone is being asked to help disseminate public health advice on hand hygiene, social distancing and staying home as much as possible, plus guarding against complacency.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Public Health Intelligence detailed updates on Covid-19 cases and settings are here: [https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus\\_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/](https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/)

### **Government funded top-up broadband vouchers for rural areas**

The Cambridgeshire County Council Connecting Cambridgeshire team has launched a top-up scheme for rural gigabit vouchers – topping up the voucher value for those on the slowest speeds.

<https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/2020/09/gigabit-broadband-voucher-scheme-to-be-topped-up/>

### **Business recovery**

South Cambs District Council has distributed over £25 million of government grants to businesses. The flow of money has now stopped but the Council now has appointed a team of four experts whose job it is to support local businesses in any way they wish - help with a planning application or a trading license or advice on business recovery and diversification and so on. The aim is to create a One Stop Shop at the council for all businesses regardless of size, and to give all business owners a single point of contact in terms of a real person with whom they can communicate. If you are a local business, please do sign up for the newsletter which contains updates on just about everything you could ever want to know as a business owner in South Cambs. Lots of information is available:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>

### **'Call for Sites' & the new Local Plan**

The “Call for Sites” is the first stage in the statutory process of creating a Local Plan - a responsibility of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The process must be transparent and needs to identify as many potential opportunities as possible. Around 600 sites of varying sizes have been submitted by landowners across South Cambridgeshire in response to the Call for Sites. These have not yet been assessed or filtered in any way, and therefore have **no planning status**. It is a list of potential sites that may be used in the plan-making process, after the council has decided on what spatial strategy to use. This is the same process followed in making the current Local Plan.

Following on from feedback received from the public during the Issues & Options First Conversation, there will now be a process of working out which of the spatial strategies will be selected for providing jobs and homes that are affordable for people in the district, whilst meeting our zero carbon and sustainable living objectives. Just as in the previous plan, where only a small number of submitted sites were selected - less than 10% - the district council envisages that only a very small number of sites on this list will be used in the plan.

There will be further consultations with the public later in the process, to present and discuss the preferred spatial options. Until then, **none** of these sites has any planning status.

Lots of background and information here:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/first-conversation-consultation-and-call-for-sites/>

### **Clean stuff only in the blue bin please!**

South Cambs District Council is asking us to make sure that yogurt pots, tin cans, tomato sauce dispensers, fast food trays and anything else going in the blue bin are clean, to avoid contamination of items that can be recycled. For a list of what goes in which bin:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/what-goes-in-which-bin/>

### **New triage pilot at Addenbrooke's**

There is now a new pilot triage system at Addenbrooke's Hospital launched to help make sure patients get the right care in the right place. From 9am to 9pm, anybody who attends Emergency Department (ED) without a referral from a medical professional, who hasn't been brought in by an ambulance, or hasn't called NHS 111 in advance will be reviewed by a senior clinician.

They will assess the patient's symptoms and decide whether emergency is the most appropriate place for their issue. If the patient does not require care from the ED, they will be directed to call NHS 111 or to visit their GP or a local pharmacy.

This pilot supports the new national NHS 111 First initiative that encourages people to contact NHS 111 before going to an Emergency Department in order to ensure they get the right help at the right time.