

ESCC Report for Parish Councils February 2021

We are all wondering when residents in our area will get the jab! It seems so quiet around Battle and Rye and all our rural villages! We just aren't hearing anything!!

The Vaccination Programme in Sussex started on 8th December, being led by West Sussex. More than 300 Care Home settings have now been vaccinated (as from January 22nd). This includes 6,368 residents and 8,075 staff. It is expected that all care homes with residents over 65 will receive vaccine by 24th January, and all Care Homes in Sussex by mid-February.

Various sites are being used: Hospital hubs at EDGH and the Conquest, plus 6 other hospital hubs across Sussex, concentrating on health and care staff. GP led centres in East Sussex set up so far include Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Seaford, Bexhill, Crowborough, Uckfield, and Etchingham- for rural Rother. Further centres will start soon in Hailsham, and there is to be a walk in centre in Brighton I understand.

Staff in Mind is a confidential NHS service for staff experiencing emotional or psychological difficulties due to the pandemic. It has been developed by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust on behalf of Sussex health and care partnership-an alliance that brings together all NHS organisations and councils across the county. This service offers priority access to treatment.

Nationally and locally the number of **new cases of Covid19**: 7/day rolling rates per 100,000 population are: England 520, East Sussex 594, Rother 432, Hastings(583), Eastbourne (892) and Wealden(564) are still above the national figure. The 7 day rolling rate for the 65+ year group per 100,000 population: England 827, East Sussex 1024, Rother 690, Hastings 1083, Eastbourne 1454, Lewes 930. This reflects the county's demographics in that East Sussex has 25% of its population over 65 years.

There has been a steep rise in **death rates** from 25/12/20 to 8/1/21.

The Sussex Resilience Forum declared a Major Incident on 6th January. This brings all agencies in Sussex together in a rehearsed escalation to tackle the virus. This response makes more use of volunteer help, prepares for extra capacity and considers extra support from national government.

A correction to my previous report: the new Sussex Police Rother District Inspector is Christopher Varrall , Battle Police Station, North Trade Road, Battle, Christopher.varrall@sussex.pnn.police.uk

In the first week of this third lockdown more than 400 vulnerable people asked for help from victim support agencies across Sussex. **Domestic abuse referrals** have begun to decrease recently which is worrying. The government has made it clear that people can leave their homes if escaping from domestic abuse or violence. **Safe Space Sussex** is an online directory of local services which has a new search tool so that victims of any crime can find immediate help. Sussex Police have a method for a call handler to identify a victim in danger. The “55” technology is for those too scared to speak. They dial 999, followed by 55. **Ask for ANI** is a scheme in pharmacies whereby someone can discretely ask for help. Pharmacists are being asked to sign up to this scheme so they can provide another safe space.

ESCC budget is being discussed at Cabinet on January 26th and, if agreed, at Full Council on February 9th. There are no new savings proposed beyond those agreed last year, an increase in council tax of 1.99% is recommended, and a further 3% increase for social care will occur over 2 years. This will be a balanced budget. Council tax rises are needed to protect vital services including ever increasing demand, but taking into account the Core Offer.

Small and medium sized enterprises across the county will be able to access support for apprenticeship training using a £600,000 fund from the European Social Fund with match funding of £300,000 from ESCC. The **Transform project** aims to increase apprenticeships, traineeships, and skills training .Working with Sussex Council of Training providers (SCTP) the council will engage with 150 SMEs from priority sectors where there is employment growth and skill shortages. Please contact transform@sctp.org.uk

More than 700 Covid-related calls have been made to the county's **trading standards team** since March 2020. The team's Covid-19 work follows a year of success in which residents were prevented from losing an estimated quarter of a million pounds, 300 scam victims were helped, around 10,000 counterfeit products with a street value of £100,000 were removed from the market, 144 businesses were found in breach of animal welfare legislation, 99 businesses were found selling food that was mislabelled, contaminated, illegal or fraudulent, £20,000 worth of tobacco was seized, and fraudulent traders were ordered to pay back £114,000 through the Proceeds of Crime Act.

The **Covid Winter Grant Scheme** has provided £1.5m to help people struggling with food, energy and water bills, and other costs, due to the pandemic. At least 80% of the funding is ring fenced to help households with children. The scheme runs till 31st March 2021. Around £900,000 will be used directly to fund food vouchers during the Christmas holidays and February half term, for vulnerable children in Early Years settings and pupils eligible for Free school meals. Small grants will be available within the Troubled Families and Rethinking Families programmes and support can be provided for vulnerable families known to Children's Services.

For support

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/emergencyplanningandcommunitysafety/coronavirus/coronaviruscommunity-support/>

For Free School Meals

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/school-life/meals/free/>

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