

MDC Community Briefing



Issue 12

26th October, 2020

Mendip news

Halloween and Bonfire safety

Mendip District Council is urging residents to observe the COVID restrictions this Halloween, and 'remember, remember' to stay safe on Bonfire Night.

Professionally organised firework displays are safer to attend but due to the pandemic, and the 'rule of six' law, most have been called off. The rule against social gatherings of more than six in a household, mean garden fireworks parties at home are also set to be smaller too. And trick or treaters will could be fined if they go out in large groups.

Be responsible, follow the Fire Safety Code, and observe the COVID restrictions is the message this year. We don't want to be putting extra pressure on our police, fire and ambulance services this Halloween or on Bonfire Night.

For more information, visit: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/7290/Fireworks

Contact the Environmental Health team on 0300 303 8588 or email

environmental.health@mendip.gov.uk

If you have concerns that an individual or a business has significantly breached Government restrictions you can report it to our partners at Avon and Somerset Police. Fill in their online form here: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/breach-of-covid-19-restrictions/

Alternatively, call 101 (for non-emergencies) or 999 (for emergencies).

Press release here: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9578/Council-issues-Halloween-and-Bonfire-safety-advice-amid-COVID-restrictions

New £500 self-isolation payments to support Mendip residents

A new £500 cash payment, intended to make it easier for people who can't afford to self-isolate for up to 14 days, is available to Mendip residents.

Mendip District Council is administering the 'Test and Trace Support Payment'. Applications to the scheme are open now, and can be backdated from 28th September onwards, where qualifying conditions are met. The support scheme is due to run until **Friday, 31st January 2021**.

The legal duty to self-isolate came into force at the end of September for people who test positive for COVID-19, or are contacted by NHS Test and Trace.

Contact Mendip for support - help available online and by phone

The Council offices are closed, but you can apply online for Test and Trace Isolation Payments. You'll find full instructions and step-by-step guidance here: www.mendip.gov.uk/ttsp

The Council's Test and Trace Isolation Payments support line is 0800 464 3623. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am-4.30pm. Lines may be busy, so please try our website option where possible.

New town plan: Shepton Mallet

For those of you who'd like a look, Shepton Mallet's new Town Plan 2020-2024 is here: sheptonmallet-tc.gov.uk/town-plan/

Bee good – plant bulbs!

Mendip District Council has launched a 'Plant for Pollinators' guide, encouraging people to plan ahead and plant some spring bulbs to help hungry bees and other pollinating insects next year.

Everyone can take part by planting bulbs this autumn, creating 'nectar cafes' for the insects when they wake up after the winter.

The publication is part of the Council's plan to deliver on its climate and ecological commitment and help local communities make environmentally friendly decisions.

You can find the guide here: [Mendip Climate Action Plant for Pollinators pack](#)

Local COVID alert levels – Mendip is MEDIUM

This means:

- you must not socialise in groups larger than 6, indoors or outdoors (other than where a legal exemption applies)
- businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-secure manner, other than those that remain closed in law
- certain businesses are required to ensure customers only consume food and drink while seated, and must close between 10pm and 5am
- businesses and venues selling food for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- schools and universities remain open
- places of worship remain open, subject to the [rule of 6](#)
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees
- exercise classes and [organised sport](#) can continue to take place outdoors, or indoors if the [rule of 6](#) is followed; there are exceptions for supervised activities for under-18s, and disability sport

You must:

- [wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated](#)

You should continue to:

- follow social distancing rules
- work from home where you can effectively do so
- when travelling, plan ahead or avoid busy times and routes; walk or cycle if you can

Find out more about the measures that apply in medium alert level areas and help ensure we reduce the spread of COVID-19:

www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-medium

www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know

Help available to ensure safer, warmer homes

With winter here and the clocks going back it's a timely reminder to apply for a grant or loan to save energy and money.

Many landlords, tenants and homeowners could be wasting money simply because their property isn't well insulated and needs improvement.

Mendip District Council's housing team are encouraging residents to check if they are eligible and apply now for financial assistance to help keep their home safer and warmer.

Here are just some the grants and loans available from the Council:

- **Free Energy Performance Certificates (EPC):** £100 available towards getting an EPC. This shows residents their current and potential energy rating as well as listing works to improve the property.
- **EPC of D or lower:** £500 available towards energy improvement works to improve the EPC rating. Up to £1000 for landlords where the tenant is on qualifying benefits.
- **Safer Homes Grant:** homeowners can access grants of up to £10,000 towards essential works to their homes including energy efficiency improvements. Available to home owners on a means tested benefit or low income and considered vulnerable.
- **Lendology Loans:** up to £25K available towards works including renewable energy solutions.
- **Green Homes Grant:** a national scheme whereby any homeowner or landlord can apply for vouchers for green home improvements where the government will fund two-thirds of the cost of eligible works, up to £5,000. Low income households will be eligible for up to 100% government funding up to £10,000. Residents must redeem the voucher and ensure improvements are completed by **31 March 2021**.

For information on grants and loans visit: www.mendip.gov.uk/financialassistance

You can contact the Private Sector Housing Team on 0300 303 8588 or email: privatesectorhousing@mendip.gov.uk

Save energy and money – take a look at Mendip's Home Energy Checklist pages: www.mendip.gov.uk/energyefficiency

New key appointments revealed in Mendip District Council reshuffle

A new Deputy Chair for Mendip District Council, Cllr Nick Cottle, was appointed at a virtual meeting of the Full Council (30th September). He replaces Cllr Bente Height who was thanked for her support to the Chair during the past 16 months.

The Chair of the Council continues to be Cllr Helen Sprawson-White who said she was "delighted and honoured" to remain as Chair for another year.

Leader of Mendip District Council, Cllr Ros Wyke, revealed she would be assisted in her role during the next 12 months by two deputies, Cllr Josh Burr and Cllr Barry O'Leary.

A number of Chair and Deputy Chair positions for several Committees and decision-making boards within the local authority were voted on and approved at Full Council. You'll find full details here:

www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9515/New-key-appointments-revealed-in-Mendip-District-Council-reshuffle

www.mendip.gov.uk/article/6581/Political-Structure-and-Portfolio-Holders

Partnership Updates

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

Somerset Waste Partnership's Recycle More service starts in Mendip on Monday 26th October (today), with collections due as follows:

Monday - Frome

Tuesday - Lydford-on-Fosse area

Wednesday - Shepton Mallet and Wells

Thursday - Glastonbury and Street

Friday - narrow access areas, lanes and small villages

You can find lots of information here: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more

This is an important change and we want to do everything we can to help make it a major success for our partners at SWP.

If you are on social media, please do follow and share @somersetwaste content in the coming days.

Citizens Advice Mendip

Citizens Advice Mendip and Mendip District Council are keen to raise awareness of the free services available to those who find themselves in difficulty.

For those who lose their job or risk losing it when furlough ends in October, Citizens Advice can explain employment rights, what benefits people are entitled to and how to cope if they are not able to keep up with paying the bills.

When it comes to accommodation, if falling behind with rent, mortgage payments or Council Tax it is better to find out early what the options are. Citizens Advice and the Housing Options team at Mendip District Council are there to advise on what to do.

You can access free, independent and confidential advice from Citizens Advice in Mendip. Visit www.citizensadvicemendip.org.uk for details of how to contact them online, by email and by phone. Alternatively, you can contact their Advice Line on 03444 88 9623.

For advice on Council Tax, rent arrears, risk of eviction and homelessness you can contact Mendip District Council's Housing Options on 0300 303 8588.

Communities - updates and assistance

Grants of £250 to reduce loneliness at Christmas

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) would like to support community groups that can help to reduce loneliness and spread Christmas cheer through food and festive activities. The Festive Fund for Somerset offers a £250 grant to groups if they can tell SCF how their work can combat the isolation and loneliness that many people can feel in the winter months.

You can find more details and this news story online, [here](#).

Wessex Water Recovery Fund offers support to COVID-hit communities

Wessex Water is providing financial help for community groups in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic in partnership with the Somerset Community Foundation.

Particular priority will be given to those groups that are working to:

- support people in financially difficult circumstances
- help build stronger communities
- support the green recovery with new initiatives
- restore and protect nature and wildlife for community health and wellbeing.

You can find more details online, [here](#).

Be a good neighbour – sign-up today

Somerset Good Neighbours is run by CCS (Community Council for Somerset) and is supported by funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. CCS can provide advice, training, and a small grant to go towards set-up costs.

The scheme can help local groups, who want to keep that incredible Covid-19 community spirit alive, to be sustainable for the future and able to face the challenges now and in the months and years ahead.

For those considering setting up a Good Neighbours Scheme, a useful toolkit is available by visiting the CCS website ccslovesomerset.org/somerset-good-neighbours-scheme and any community in Somerset interested in setting up a scheme should contact CCS by emailing marie@somersetccc.org.uk or by calling 07746 340536.

Let's Connect

Health Connections Mendip is now offering a range of Let's Connect training opportunities, available to everyone in the area who is interested in being more informed about the support available for the community so they can help share that information.

As part of this work, Let's Connect have put together a series of very short training courses for the general public to join in and learn how they can pass on information to people in their communities; whether they are your friends, neighbours, family, colleagues or anyone you chat to in the community.

These training courses include:

- Community Connectors – understanding and sharing opportunities for support
- Digital Connectors – reducing digital exclusion and helping others get online
- Healthy Lifestyles Connectors – sharing simple messages for improved wellbeing
- Warm Homes Connectors – reducing fuel poverty and promoting energy efficiency
- Hearing Connectors – promoting hearing aid maintenance and hearing support

All these short one-hour training courses can be attended for free via Eventbrite and run on a monthly basis. Have a look at our website for full details of these training opportunities www.healthconnectionsmentip.org/training or email mentip.healthconnections@nhs.net

COVID-19 business updates

Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities

Guidance for those managing community centres, village halls and other community facilities on safely re-opening multi-purpose buildings.

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

COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of council buildings

Updated to reflect changes in rules on gatherings, and on track and trace.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings/

How to shop safely advice

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has published advice for people to abide by store guidelines with regards to social distancing and face coverings.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1309494707639050240>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DefraGovUK/posts/3457041541000548>

Pubs and restaurants advice

Defra has published advice for people visiting pubs and restaurants to abide by the venue's guidelines with regards to things like contactless payment and social distancing.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1309175816010584066>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DefraGovUK/posts/3454195711285131>

Business Grants

Additional funding to support cash grants aimed primarily for businesses in the hospitality, accommodation and leisure sector who may be adversely impacted by the restrictions in high-alert level areas.

www.gov.uk/government/news/plan-for-jobs-chancellor-increases-financial-support-for-businesses-and-workers

Working safely during coronavirus

Find out how to make your workplace COVID-secure.

Here: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

Guidance for food businesses

You'll find guidance here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses

Local traders must register to carry out green grant works

Mendip District Council is encouraging local tradespeople to register for TrustMark or Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accreditation, to be able to carry out works for the Government's Green Homes Grant scheme.

Only tradespeople who sign up to the TrustMark accreditation or MCS will be able to undertake the green home improvements.

Register for Trust Mark Accreditation here www.trustmark.org.uk/

Register for the Microgeneration Certification Scheme here

<https://mcscertified.com/>

For more information about the grants, visit the Centre for Sustainable Energy

www.cse.org.uk/advice

Learn more about the Green Homes Grant scheme here

www.gov.uk/government/news/quality-assurance-at-heart-of-new-2-billion-green-homes-grants

Help and support if your business is affected by coronavirus

Watch videos and register for the free webinars to learn more about the support available to help you deal with the economic impacts of coronavirus.

www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-is-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19

Coronavirus information for farmers, landowners and rural businesses

The latest information for farmers, landowners and rural businesses during the coronavirus outbreak.

Read this page for regular updates: www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-farmers-landowners-and-rural-businesses

COVID-19 health updates

COVID-19 data for each local authority

You can see a weekly report providing COVID-19 data for each local authority in England listed by number of people tested, case rate per 100,000 population, local COVID alert level and weekly trend. www.gov.uk/government/publications/lower-tier-local-authority-watchlist-epidemiological-data-2

Get your flu jab

Flu spreads easily. It kills on average 11,000 in England each year and hospitalises many more. The free flu vaccine is more important than ever to help protect people in the Mendip area this winter and ease pressure on the NHS.

People aged 65 and over, those with long-term health conditions and pregnant women will be offered the flu vaccine first through their GP or pharmacy, along with two and three-year-old children.

All primary school children and, for the first time, Year 7 children will be offered the flu 'nasal spray' in schools to reduce community transmission.

The flu vaccine will also be offered to household contacts of people on the NHS Shielded Patient List and all health and social care workers who have direct contact with the people they care for.

Once the most at-risk groups have had their free flu jab, the newly eligible 50 to 64 year olds will be invited to get theirs later in the season

Find out more here: www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/

Events and Campaigns

Remembrance events

Remembrance Day - also known as Armistice Day - is marked annually in the UK to remember those who have died in service. It is held on November 11th, the day of the First World War armistice in 1918. Mendip will be marking the day. Look out for a press release coming soon, plus social media on the day. Our website will carry the latest information, as and when events across the district are confirmed.

www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9576/COVID-19-Remembrance-day-2020

The Government has produced some guidance and offered suggestions on how local events can be adapted to reflect COVID-secure needs.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday/

Holocaust Memorial Day 2021

The UK Commemorative Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 will take place virtually on Wednesday 27th January 2021 at 7pm. Please register your virtual attendance to the online Ceremony by Friday 4th December.

www.hmd.org.uk/take-part-in-holocaust-memorial-day/

'Right tree, right place' for Mendip Online Information Event on 4 November 6.30pm - 8.00pm

Experts from Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust will provide advice in this online event that aims to help landowners and communities in Mendip plan successful tree planting and woodland creation projects.

Ash die-back Online Information Event on 12 November 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Join Ian Turner from First Ecology for an information evening for landowners in Mendip who are likely to be affected by the spread of this disease. Ian will be giving advice on the current situation and management options, followed by a question and answer session.

Agroforestry Online Information Event on 25 November 6.30pm – 8.00pm

This event gives farmers and land managers the opportunity to discuss the benefits and practicalities of agroforestry. Chaired by SWT's Mendip Hills Facilitator Eleanor Higginson with speakers from the Organic Research Centre and The Woodland Trust. Places are available to book online here:

www.somersetwildlife.org/events/2020-11-25-agroforestry-online-information-event

Contact: pippa.rayner@somersetwildlife.org. For information and events visit:

www.somersetwildlife.org

Useful numbers, links and helplines

Mendip District Council: www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus

Stronger Somerset: www.strongersomerset.co.uk/

Government information on coronavirus: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Coronavirus cases: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Local lockdowns guidance: www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-covid-19

NHS information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

LGBTQ+ services helpline and counselling service:

www.intercomtrust.org.uk/item/214-we-are-here-for-you

Mind in Somerset, available on 01823 276 892:

www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/adult-one-to-one-support/mindline/

Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice-partnerships/money-advice-services/

Next Edition: Monday, 2nd November

Submissions to: media@mendip.gov.uk

Keep connected

These briefings are produced by Mendip's Marketing and Media Team. We're doing everything we can to make sure we're directing you to the most up-to-date information and advice. A version of these, suitable for publication, is available as a pdf, a Word document, and a web link. The shareable version can always be found here: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/mdcbriefings>

Mendip District Council's corporate Facebook page

www.facebook.com/mendipcouncil

We are also on Twitter twitter.com/MendipCouncil

And LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/mendip-district-council

Finally, here's our official website: www.mendip.gov.uk
