

SCC CORONAVIRUS UPDATE 1ST MAY 2020
County/District Councillor Linda Vijeh

- Public Health – current Covid-19 numbers are unconfirmed at the time of writing, but last week Somerset came bottom for the total number of cases, and new cases are in decline. There have been 482 cases in Somerset, but this has not yet been validated, as exact data is being awaited.
- The re-vamped care home in Hendford, Yeovil, will be open for patients next week.
- Work continues on persuading vulnerable children to attend school. There is concern that across the country numbers remain low.
- No guidance has yet been received on the re-opening of household waste centres, but plans are in place for when this is permitted. It is likely to be a phased opening, possibly with timed slots being booked. Social distancing is likely to be difficult to achieve. One of the key challenges will be the onward transportation of waste from centres when it is expected that initially volumes will be high.
- Work is continuing with military support to increase the ability to carry out testing.
- The Somerset Community Foundation Coronavirus Fund has now reached £565,000, with 112 grants made so far to community groups to support activities. Details are available at Tel: 01749 344949 email: info@somersetcf.org.uk
- Concern has been raised about the impact of the relaxation of lockdown and the possible increase in traffic to the SW. Until the national strategy is known it is difficult to plan for this.
- Whilst libraries remain closed for the time being a range of services and activity suggestions have been made available online.
- The Registration Service is now offering a telephone service for registering deaths but at present are unable to register births or marriages this way. 200+ marriage services have been cancelled.
- There continues to be a huge increase in the re-cycling of kerbside household waste. Additional staff and vehicles have been put in place to cope with this.
- Plans are in place to re-introduce garden waste collections in the near future.
- Business recovery – SCC is working jointly with district councils and other organisations to give out grants. 7,500 grants have been paid out so far, to around 60% of eligible businesses, totalling £90m.
- There has been a slight delay in the delivery of compost bins.
- Multi-agency working continues with regular meetings covering such issues as how to deal with the storage and burial of excess deaths. Current focus is now on testing, contact tracing mechanisms, and the supply of PPE.
- Purchasing and procuring PPE has been on a massive scale. The government has been providing approx. 30%, with SCC providing the other 70% required, mainly from local providers.

For care homes alone – 274,500 surgical masks have been bought at £1.18 each, (which will decrease to 40p now that they can be obtained from China). Overall spend on PPE, just for Care Homes, so far has been £546,000 per week. Once the national distribution scheme begins this will reduce significantly. There is no expectation that Care Homes will be required to contribute financially towards costs.

- 103,000 face masks
- 119,000 face masks with shields
- 46,400 boxes of gloves
- 135,000 aprons
- 662,000 safety glasses
- 107,000 litres of sanitising gel