

Please find below the latest update regarding COVID-19 and other council matters.

On Monday 12 October, the Prime Minister made a [statement to the House of Commons](#) on the response to the coronavirus pandemic, in which he set out a new three-tiered system of local COVID Alert Levels in England – set at medium, high, and very high.

The new system will see different parts of the country placed under varying restrictions depending on their rates of infection. The government has published [information on local COVID alert levels](#), including what they mean, why they are being introduced and what the different levels are.

The restrictions in each tier are:

Medium

- Follow the rule of six if meeting indoors or outdoors
- Pubs and restaurants to shut at 10pm

High

- No household mixing indoors
- Rule of six will apply outdoors
- Pubs and restaurants to shut at 10pm

Very High

- No household mixing indoors or outdoors in hospitality venues or private gardens
- Rule of six applies in outdoor public spaces like parks
- Pubs and bars not serving meals will be closed
- Guidance against travelling in and out of the area
- Further measures which may be agreed locally

The Government has also made available an [interactive map](#), which allows people to browse data for specific areas within the UK. The map displays weekly data including seven-day case rates and direction of change.

What tier is Wiltshire in?

Wiltshire is currently in the **medium** (lowest) tier of the COVID-19 alert levels. This means current restrictions will stay the same.

Some posters about the medium alert level are attached for your information and use.

What is the council doing?

The council's top priority remains the same – to continue to support Wiltshire residents and businesses through this pandemic so that the county emerges as strong as possible when we reach the other side.

We have focussed our resources and way of working to give us the best possible opportunity of achieving this.

What should Wiltshire residents do?

Although local COVID-19 cases are rising, the spread of the virus locally is still comparatively low in Wiltshire. However, we must all play our part and not be complacent as we've seen in other areas how quickly the situation can change for the worse. That means keeping washing hands, wearing face coverings where required and socially distancing.

People must self-isolate when told to so, and this is now a [legal requirement](#).

You should self-isolate if:

- you [develop symptoms](#)
- you have tested positive for COVID-19
- someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive
- you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app.
- [you arrive in the UK](#) from a country with a high COVID-19 risk

Stay up to date with GOV-UK COVID-19 guidance and advice

All the latest guidance and advice published by government can be sent directly to you by clicking the following link: [GOV.UK COVID-19 updates](#).

Remembrance Day events

Yesterday (Thursday 15 October), the government published [guidance on holding Remembrance Day events](#), including [new legal requirements](#) on how to ensure those hosting local Remembrance events can do so safely.

The guidance (applicable across all local COVID alert levels) and includes information on:

- Who can organise a Remembrance Day event?
- What can a Remembrance Day event involve?
- Who can attend a Remembrance Day event?
- Communal worship – Remembrance Sunday services

Remembrance Day event organisers must take reasonable steps to record the contact details of those attending (including those present in a working capacity, and members of the public who stop to spectate).

Event organisers must keep a temporary record of attendees for 21 days, in a way that is manageable, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks.

Further details can be found in the [current Test and Trace guidance](#).

Many organisations already have systems for recording their attendees. You can find details of [how to maintain records](#). There is also an [NHS App](#) which can be used to log in attendees.

Please note the legal requirement on recording contact details does not extend to Places of Worship, however it is strongly advised that recording is put in place where possible.

Covid-19 Schools update

Precautionary COVID-19 measures taken at schools in Wiltshire

Following advice from public health professionals, 18 education settings including independent and boarding schools in Wiltshire, are currently taking precautionary COVID-19 measures due to positive cases being confirmed in their settings. This information is correct as at 9.00am on 16 October.

Whilst the number of positive cases are very low in each setting, a total of 1,092 pupils are currently being asked to self-isolate to ensure any risk of transmission is kept as low as possible. The self-isolation of the pupils is very precautionary to minimise any risk to others and to reduce onward transmission of the virus.

The schools are working closely with the Public Health team at Wiltshire Council to ensure high standards of hygiene and social distancing are maintained and all the necessary measures are in place.

All school pupils currently self-isolating are continuing their learning at home during this time.

Scheme to financially support people on low income who have to self-isolate

There is now financial support available to people on a low income who are required to self-isolate due to COVID-19.

The Government's COVID-19 Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is now live and people may be eligible if they are required to self-isolate because of COVID-19, are on a low income, and will lose money because they cannot work.

The scheme is locally administered by Wiltshire Council and can provide qualifying people with a lump sum of £500.

For more information and to apply

People should visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/benefits-test-and-trace or call 0300 456 0110. People can also email benefits@wiltshire.gov.uk for more information.

Help us, Help you' Public Health campaign (posters attached)

NHS England and Public Health England has launched the 'Help Us, Help You' campaign.

The campaign, which is targeted at all patients but especially aimed at cancer patients and pregnant women, will seek to address barriers that are deterring patients from accessing NHS services and encourage the public to contact their GP if they are worried about any symptom.

The NHS has introduced a range of measures to ensure the safety of patients, including COVID-secure wards. The campaign will urge patients to keep routine appointments, even if coronavirus hospitalisations increase, and reassure patients that they can receive medical care safely.

Other matters:

Microsoft Licenses

For those Parish and Town Councils that are interested in using Microsoft Teams, [please see details online here](#) about the different Microsoft licenses and potential discounts available to parishes as government organisations.

Please note that parish councils unfortunately cannot purchase licenses via Wiltshire Council's Microsoft Enterprise Agreement.

Library Service update

Five more libraries will reopen in Wiltshire over the next three weeks. These libraries will be fully reopened for people to browse for up to 30 minutes, to select and loan books and book a computer for up to 45 minutes.

Wiltshire Council has worked closely with the library service volunteers to enable these libraries to re-open sessions operated as usual by staff and some by volunteers.

The libraries will reopen on:

- **Pewsey** - Tuesday 27 October
- **Wilton** - Thursday 29 October
- **Mere** - Friday 30 October
- **Cricklade** - Tuesday 3 November
- **Downton** - Friday 6 November

Here's the key information customers need to know:

- Loan items continue to be renewed automatically, currently to the end of October, so there is no rush to return items
- People can attend one of these libraries and browse for up to 30 minutes
- People are advised to be sensible and not pick up and put back lots of books
- Social distancing measures will be in place, with clear signage
- Customers and staff are asked to wear face coverings
- Hand sanitiser will be available at each library
- Depending on how many people are using the library, people may have to queue outside upon arrival
- Computers in the libraries can be used for 45 minutes, but people must book them in advance. They can be booked by phoning the relevant library during their opening hours
- People should bring their library cards
- Returned books will be stored for 72 hours before being put back on shelves. You will not incur fines as a result of the short delay.
- Screens will be in place at main customer service desk

- People will be asked to provide contact details as part of the COVID-19 test and trace system. Details will be handled in accordance with GDPR law

Mobile libraries also returning

The mobile libraries providing services to rural areas and residential homes will also be hitting the road again from Tuesday 20 October.

Having looked carefully at how to operate mobile libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic, they will re-open with the following measures to help keep people safe:

- Social distancing measures are in place, with clear signage
- Only one customer at a time can access the mobile library. Depending on whether someone is already using the library, you may have to queue outside upon arrival
- Browsing will be limited to five minutes if other customers are waiting. People are advised to be sensible and not pick up and put back lots of books
- Customers and staff are asked to wear face coverings
- Hand sanitiser is available on entering the mobile library
- People should bring their library cards
- Returned books will be stored for 72 hours before being taken off their account and put back on the shelves. People will not incur fines as a result of the short delay
- Screens will be in place at the customer service desks
- People will be asked to provide contact details as part of the COVID-19 test and trace system. Details will be handled in accordance with GDPR laws

The mobile library timetables are available on the council's website at

<https://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/MobileLibrary/>

Some minor alterations to the mobile library timetables such as adjustments to the arrival/departure times at some stops may be necessary to accommodate new procedures. Customers at affected stops will be notified.

City Hall, Salisbury update

Wiltshire Council has confirmed that, subject to the decision being called-in by councillors, its live entertainment venue, City Hall in Salisbury, will remain temporarily closed for the foreseeable future until it is deemed safe and financially viable to reopen.

With the future of indoor performances currently uncertain, the council has made the decision now to suspend the current programme of events, scheduled to begin again next year, and will look to reopen the venue when the industry is on a surer footing.

This means that any events currently on the schedule will not take place, and customers will receive a full refund on any tickets they've bought.

Staff from City Hall will start to contact customers soon to arrange refunds on any performances booked, so there is no need for people to request refunds or make contact. People's patience is very appreciated while this work is carried out.

Staff affected by the decision have been kept fully up to date on the situation and some will be redeployed where possible.

Melksham bypass project

On Tuesday 13 October, Wiltshire Council's cabinet approved plans for a non-statutory engagement exercise into a proposed A350 bypass around Melksham.

The council is currently exploring the case for a new bypass to take the A350 around Melksham to create a more reliable, less congested transport network; support economic and planned development growth at key locations; reduce air pollutants and emissions from transport; and also improve safety for all road users.

Later this month will be seeking the views of residents, businesses, town and parish councils, and other stakeholders on the progress made so far, and the proposed route options.

The council will present the progress of the project at the Melksham Area Board public meeting on Wednesday 4 November, and then give people the opportunity to take part in an initial engagement exercise. More information on the engagement exercise and how people can have their say will be available soon.

The engagement exercise will seek feedback on the early stages of the scheme development as the council creates an outline business case. It will be followed by further consultation later in 2021.

The council was initially awarded Department for Transport (DfT) funding in March 2020 to further develop the case for the A350 Melksham bypass, having considered its initial submission in July 2019.

Since then, the council has been undertaking technical exercises to enhance the evidence base for a bypass, with this work, along with public feedback, due to inform the outline business case.

The scheme is being promoted through the DfT's Large Local Majors Fund, which is intended to support a small number of large local highway authority road schemes that could not be funded through normal routes. If approved, the scheme could cost around £135m in total, but this would depend on the route option chosen.

People Friendly Salisbury Scheme (image attached)

Free permits that will allow some vehicles to enter People Friendly Salisbury's Low Traffic Zone (LTZ) are available now. People Friendly Salisbury will see pedestrians and cyclists prioritised in several city centre streets as a result of restricting through traffic movements.

Residents and commercial vehicles that are loading and unloading, plus Blue Badge holders, can access the LTZ in motor vehicles, including motorcycles, but they will need to apply for a free permit. Vehicles over 7.5t are not able to access the LTZ between 10am and 4pm, and outside of these times they will also need a free permit.

The scheme starts on Wednesday 21 October, and any residents, businesses and Blue Badge holders that wish to access the LTZ in a motor vehicle from that date will need to apply for a free permit here: [Apply for a free permit, and read FAQs](#).

Chippenham train station investment scheme

A new scheme to provide pedestrians and cyclists with improved access to Chippenham train station has commenced this week.

The work involves the removal of the existing zebra crossing on Cocklebury Road and the installation of a new toucan crossing in its place. It is anticipated the work will be completed on 23 October 2020.

To manage the safe flow of traffic during the works, three-way traffic signals will be in operation. The footpath will be temporarily closed but an alternative diversion will be provided for pedestrians to travel through the area safely. Local businesses will remain open and will continue to operate as normal.

A later phase of work to install a shared pedestrian and cycle path between Cocklebury Road and the new Sadlers Mead car park entrance is expected to commence on 9 November 2020 for a period of around three weeks.

Full details of the Chippenham Station Hub project can be viewed at: <https://swlep.co.uk/projects/project-detail/chippenham-station>

Gypsies and Travellers development plan consultation

Wiltshire Council's Cabinet agreed on Tuesday 13 October, to take forward the council's Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan document, which will help to address the accommodation needs of Wiltshire's travelling communities.

The consultation, which will take place in January and February, will seek engagement with Wiltshire's traveller communities and invite people to have their say on the proposed objectives of the plan. It will also look at travellers' accommodation needs, and how to meet these needs, and will include proposed site assessment criteria. The council is also running a 'call for sites' to identify potential land that may be suitable for new sites.

At the same time, Cabinet made provision for £1.3m of capital budget to fund the delivery of three emergency stopping place sites, which will give the travelling communities more places to stop within Wiltshire and help to prevent illegal encampments.

This consultation will enable us to develop our draft plan to meet the accommodation needs of our traveller communities up to 2036.

The council will seek people's views on its proposed approach and also ask people to put forward any potential sites that could be suitable for use at some point in the future, though no sites are proposed at present.

When it takes place in early 2021, the Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan consultation will also be aligned with a consultation on the wider Wiltshire Local Plan Review.

Autumn holiday childcare and activities for 5 to 12 year olds now available

Parents looking for childcare and activities during the Autumn half term for their 5 to 12-year olds can now find a wealth of opportunities on the Wiltshire Council website: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/school-holiday-activities-provision>.

Wiltshire Council has asked local providers to send details of their activities including charges, venues and dates to help parents plan how to keep children busy during the Autumn holiday.

The resource has been developed to support those families with vulnerable children and children of key workers who may need to organise additional childcare during the holiday.

The list of activities is online, and people are encouraged to check in regularly as the information will be constantly updated as new providers finalise details of their activities.

Wiltshire Council has also asked all providers to ensure they have the necessary protocols and checks in place including procedures that enable them to adhere to the latest government guidance on social distancing. Parents are reminded to always thoroughly research any childcare provision themselves before booking places for their children.

Families are advised to keep up to date with latest government guidance as they plan their half term holidays.

Organisations who wish to be part of the listing can contact karen.linaker@wiltshire.gov.uk for advice on how to get their activities added.

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall visits Wiltshire Council

Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall visited Wiltshire Council on Monday 12 October to thank staff for their work to support the COVID-19 response.

The visit, hosted by Wiltshire Council Chief Executive Terence Herbert, at County Hall, Trowbridge, highlighted the integral role of the council during the local response to the Coronavirus pandemic, including the successful partnership working with education and healthcare providers community groups and public sector partners.

Update from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service has produced a short video which summarises some of the major incidents they have attended and the good work being achieved across all of its departments over the last quarter.

Here is a link to the latest video: <https://youtu.be/lvGQnREW9zE>

May I wish you an enjoyable weekend.

Regards,

Cllr Philip Whitehead