

BICTON PARISH COUNCIL REPORT – APRIL 2021

It is relatively quiet at present due to the elections being held on 6th May. However, work continues on many of the big projects, but no new policies or projects will be confirmed until after the new Council is confirmed later in May.

As the Covid infection rates continue to drop and we follow the “Road Map” out of lockdown, many of the council staff, who were seconded to the Community Reassurance Teams, are now slowly returning to their substantive roles. This is especially true of staff across Culture & Leisure who have been working across the Testing and Vaccination centres. Our Leisure Centres are already open for outdoor activities and the indoor facilities along with libraries will open on Monday 12th April. Theatres and cinemas will open later in the year, although the café underneath the Old Market Hall will reopen on Monday 12th April.

LITTER PICKING

The litter picking along the main routes has taken place and there will be sessions on other roads scheduled soon. However, the litter problem is not going away, no matter what the Council do to clean up, it seems that more and more litter appears on our roads, verges, parks and open spaces.

In May/June Keep Britain Tidy are running another Great British Spring Clean event. Details can be found at <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/> Many of the parishes in the Tern Division are looking to take part.

If you would like run an event and encourage residents to take part, I can arrange to borrow the picking equipment.



FREE PARKING IN SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL CAR PARKS FROM 12 TO 25 APRIL

Parking will be free from 8am to 6pm in all Shropshire Council car parks from Monday 12 April to Sunday 25 April 2021 inclusive, to provide the county's town centre traders with a welcome boost once non-essential shops and personal care providers reopen, and pubs and restaurants are able to serve customers outdoors.

It's hoped that the free parking will encourage people to visit local businesses once the current third Lockdown measures are eased in line with the Government's roadmap and with social distancing measures set to be back in place in the county's town centres, visitors will also be able to visit towns safely, as well as for free.

On-street parking charges will remain so that the parking bays can be used for those needing to use the 15 minutes' 'pop and shop' free parking, and to provide short-stay and easy access to essential services in the town centres – especially for those who find it difficult to walk significant distances.

Parking is already free in all surface car parks after 6pm – but charges will continue to apply in Raven Meadows Multi-Storey in Shrewsbury after 6pm and overnight. Current season ticket and residents’ permits for Shropshire Council car parks will be extended by two weeks.

RAPID TESTING SITES, WALK-IN SERVICES AND HOME TEST KIT COLLECTIONS

From Tuesday 6 April 2021, all council-run testing sites will offer Lateral Flow Tests as a walk-in service – meaning people can get their speedy test without an appointment.

Rapid Testing Centre Opening Times				
From Tuesday 6 April 2021, all council-run rapid testing sites will be operating as a "drop in" service - no booking required.				
Day	The Stanier Hall, Wem (Due to change on the 10th April to Stage Door)*	The Lantern, Shrewsbury	Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury	HALO, Craven Arms Community Centre
Monday	11.30–19.30	8.00 – 18.00		11.30–19.30
Tuesday		8.00 – 18.00	8.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 16.00
Wednesday	8.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 18.00	8.00 – 16.00	
Thursday	8.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 18.00	8.00 – 16.00	
Friday		8.00 – 18.00	8.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 16.00
Saturday	9.00 – 15.00	8.00 – 16.00	8.00 – 16.00	
Sunday		8.00 – 16.00		9.00 – 15.00

Rapid home testing kits are also available for collection at these locations.

Council-run symptom-free testing centres are located at:

Theatre Severn, Frankwell Quay, Frankwell, Shrewsbury SY3 8FT

Will now be open Tuesdays–Saturdays, 8am-4pm

The Lantern, Meadow Farm Drive, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, SY1 4NG

Mondays-Fridays –8am-6pm

Saturdays, Sundays – 8am-4pm

Free rapid Lateral Flow Tests are available for people with no COVID-19 symptoms.

People are also being encouraged to complete a test on site to gain an understanding of what you need to do. The Lateral Flow Tests are self-administered, with a simple swab of the throat and the nose. Test results are available within 30 minutes.

Several Shropshire pharmacies also offering rapid testing for people who cannot work from home. Tests can be booked online using <https://www.1centralhealth.co.uk/shropshirelft>

People with symptoms of COVID-19 should NOT go to any of the rapid testing centres. Instead, they should stay at home and book a PCR test [online](#) or by calling 119.

As of Monday 12th April the government guidance is as follows:

STEP 2

At least five weeks after Step 1, no earlier than 12 April.

 <p>Indoor leisure (including gyms) open for use individually or within household groups.</p>	 <p>Rule of 6 or two households outdoors. No household mixing indoors.</p>	 <p>Outdoor attractions, such as zoos, theme parks and drive-in cinemas.</p>	
 <p>Libraries and community centres.</p>	 <p>Personal care premises.</p>	 <p>All retail.</p>	 <p>Outdoor hospitality.</p>
 <p>All children's activities, indoor parent & child groups (up to 15 parents).</p>	 <p>Domestic overnight stays (household only).</p>	 <p>Self-contained accommodation (household only).</p>	
 <p>Funerals (30), wakes, weddings, receptions (15).</p>	 <p>Minimise travel. No international holidays.</p>	 <p>Event pilots begin.</p>	

RIGHT HOME, RIGHT PLACE

When there isn't the right mix of homes available in a parish, local employees and young professionals often leave their area in search of more affordable housing elsewhere.

This has a knock-on effect on the services available in that parish; pubs and schools could close, bus services may be reduced, local businesses can suffer, and communities face an imbalanced age structure.

Shropshire Council will seek to address the growing need for affordable housing across the county, and to explore how they plan to achieve this they have put together a new *Guide to Affordable Housing in Shropshire*.

In this guide, you'll find out about all the different ways the Council is delivering affordable housing, as well as the types and tenures of the different types of housing available. The guide can be found by clicking the link below:

<https://www.righthomerightplace.co.uk/rhrp-guide-addressing-housing-need-in-shropshire/>

LOCAL MATTERS

Speed Sign on Holyhead Road

A new battery was sourced but unfortunately, once fitted, it transpired that the sign is defective and a new one needs to be sourced. The order has been made.

The future of Council Meetings

It was very disappointing that the Government did not allow a change in the legislation to allow virtual or hybrid meetings to take place. A legal challenge has been mounted by Hertfordshire Council and the result of this may be known by the time of this meeting.

Hopefully I will see you at your next meeting in May.

In the meantime, stay safe.

Lezley Picton, Shropshire Councillor for the Tern Division,