

Kidlington Parish Council Chair's report January 2021

The national lockdown after Christmas has obliged us to close our tennis and games courts and the outdoor gym (the latter despite contradictory guidelines from the government), but for the time being playgrounds remain open. Office staff continue to work from home, while grounds staff continue to work outside.

As far as Kidlington is concerned, lockdown has not come too soon. Some of you will have looked at the Covid data map at <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/interactive-map>. It makes grim reading for Oxfordshire in general and Kidlington in particular, but with some striking differences. Kidlington North and South had 4 and 3 cases respectively in the week to 11 December. After that numbers increased very rapidly, until the week to 8 January when Kidlington North had 41 new cases and Kidlington South 59. (Kidlington North and South are statistical geography divisions or MLSOAs, not the same as council wards; the border runs very roughly along Yarnton Road and Evans Lane.)

As of 8 January, along with a number of areas in or around Bicester and Banbury, Cowley, Littlemore and Blackbird Leys, Kidlington South is now in the worst band of England cases, North in the next worst. Most of the rest of Oxfordshire is in same band as Kidlington North, or one band better. North Central Oxford, Oxford Central and Summertown are either one or two bands better.

All of this can change from one day to the next, but it brings home the extent to which we have been caught up in the national disaster. The good news is of course that vaccinations have begun. The Kidlington medical practices have chosen Islip as the site that best meets a complex and very demanding set of requirements. But patients with concerns about accessibility can be assured that when they are contacted for the vaccine and they genuinely can't travel, then alternative arrangements will be made at the time. Patients will still receive their vaccine at their allotted time and will be contacted by their practice; they should not contact practices in advance themselves.

The Cherwell Community Larder continues to operate a weekly food distribution market from Exeter Hall for those in need, and the North Oxfordshire Foodbank is distributing food parcels from its base in the Baptist Church. Kidlington and Surrounding Areas (KASA) Coronavirus Community Help is there to provide personal help, and a range of other support services are available by phone or email, provided by Citizen's Advice, Cherwell Council, and other organizations. Up-to-date details of all these services can be found on our Covid help web pages at <http://www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/>.

Despite everything, we are also continuing with our greening agenda and other development activities. We are working on plans for landscape enhancement at Bicester Road cemetery and Lyne Road green, the latter to include measures to prevent a repeat of the traveller invasion last summer. We will be installing more covered seating facilities for young people in Exeter Close, and with the County Council and the medical practices we are moving forward with the Exeter Close redevelopment agenda.

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