

Axminster Division Report October 2020

COVID-19 continues to dominate most aspects of our everyday lives where tuning in to news bulletins or reading the papers is enough to frighten anyone and heighten already high levels of anxiety.

However, people in East Devon are overwhelmingly 'playing by the rules' currently in place. Putting COVID-19 cases in to some context Devon, including East Devon has very low numbers of cases currently - let's keep it that way....

I am sure that you would have seen in the media - numbers of cases in Exeter, (most associated with the University) where people work in Exeter, but live in East Devon.

Clearly there is no room for complacency or letting down guards but evidently risks are very low in terms of contracting COVID-19 and even lower in terms of a much worse outcome. There have been no deaths in East Devon for the last 3 weeks, although regrettably 3 out of area, in care homes situated in Plymouth since the 12th of September. The following web site gives you numbers of cases reported for the past week and which may be of interest to members of the Council; see www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=47574f7a6e454dc6a42c5f6912ed7076

Wider picture/snapshot of Coronavirus in the South West Peninsula

Below are some recent figures for September:

- 23rd to 29th September there were 134 laboratory confirmed cases in Devon.

East Devon 10; Exeter 78; Mid Devon 7; North Devon 10; South Hams 9; Teignbridge 13; Torridge 3; West Devon 4.

[29 in Torbay; 36 in Plymouth; 137 in Cornwall and c31,000 in England]

So, currently confirmed cases per 100,000: Devon 16.7; Torbay 21.3; Plymouth 13.7; Cornwall 24; England 54.8.

- Jan 31st to 29th September there has been 1,722 confirmed cases in Devon and 218 deaths.

(Torbay 366 cases and 58 deaths; Plymouth 938 cases and 89 deaths; Cornwall 1,383 cases and 208 deaths; England 393,818 cases and 42639 deaths).

There were 0 deaths in the Peninsular attributable to Coronavirus in the period 12th to 18th September. 139 recorded in England (that is still only 0.2 per 100,000 residents).

Please note that all deaths are not necessarily caused by Coronavirus, just that the person tested positive at some stage – at this time it is impossible to separate the cases without going back and scrutinising each death certificate. Later figures are markedly more accurate than earlier in the Pandemic.

Confirmed infection cases show a marked increase in Devon and Cornwall. The Devon County Council figure includes a spate of positive cases at Exeter University (78) making up over 60% of the Devon figure with more expected, although there is no evidence as yet of wider community transmission. The Cornwall figures rise seem to be due significantly to one food processing factory in Redruth.

With autumn here and less people affected to date in the Peninsula, it does really highlight the importance of social distancing, hand hygiene and good local communication in keeping a potential second surge in check.

Schools

Our local schools have done a fantastic job with staff putting in hundreds of extra hours work to ensure it is as risk free as possible for pupils and staff to return to school with attendance figures extremely good. As an example, locally I quote from Honiton Primary School Headmaster Christopher Tribble from a meeting yesterday.

“Currently our attendance is hugely positive (despite the pandemic) at 97.6%.

It is a notable success that we have managed to bring back the overwhelming majority of the populous back, which was above the national average of only 88% - by nearly 10%. This is a notable success to add to the attendance success we secure during the pod/bubble era.

I believe that this is due to the strength and continued trust in the relationship we have within our parent body and wider school community. This has been no easy feat and has been achieved by building bridges and being very proactive with communications, continued visible actions relating to safety and a strong physical school presence. The staff should feel proud of that achievement”

The school like others in our area undertakes a regime of permanent and ongoing risk assessment which in itself is no small undertaking.

Healthcare

For those of you over a ‘certain age’ please remember to book your flu jabs as soon as possible with either the G.P. or one of the local pharmacies (many of which offer online booking) with further details at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/>

Please stay and well.

Best Regards
Ian Hall
Axminster Division