

Arreton Parish Council Newsletter

March 2021 – Covid and Council edition

I am looking forward to the time when there is no need to issue separate newsletters. In the meantime, here we go again.

First of all, here is some news of schemes designed to help. This information has come from either the IW Council or AgeUK-IW.

Help Through Crisis scheme

Please do encourage people to apply for assistance from **Help Through Crisis** if they are experiencing hardship.

The fund aims to assist island residents who are in genuine hardship, enabling them to quickly access help with essentials such as food, gas and electricity, and replacing white goods and furniture.

There is also a small pot of money to help families who might need help to buy school uniform, shoes and coats and also money for people needing to move quickly due to being in Domestic Abuse situations.

Applications can be made by the families themselves or by someone referring them by filling in this [webform](https://www.islehelp.me/contact/) (<https://www.islehelp.me/contact/>)

Signing up to Priority Services Registers held by energy suppliers

Citizens Advice IW has a funded project which can support people to sign up to the Priority Services Register, and also support with other energy and utilities issues, including:

- challenging incorrect billing;
- supporting those on low incomes to access Southern Water's discount schemes;
- British Gas's new offers - free gas connections for certain people, free carbon monoxide alarms and gas valve locks for vulnerable people etc.

Call Citizens Advice IW on **0800 144 8848** and ask for Yvonne, or fill in the [webform](https://www.islehelp.me/contact/) (<https://www.islehelp.me/contact/>)

Some recent information we've [the IW Council] received from the MHCLG around CEVs falling within the definition of '[customers in a vulnerable situation](#)' as set out in Ofgem regulations. As such they can be added to Priority Services Registers held by energy suppliers, to become eligible for additional support. The support available varies depending on the supplier but includes accessible billing; safety measures when someone from the energy supplier needs to enter their home; pausing debt repayments; stopping disconnections; and sending prepayment top ups if they cannot leave the house (FAQs attached). CEVs should be advised to contact their energy supplier if they want to be added to the register, and they should not need to provide evidence of CEV status.



Southern Water also have a Priority Services Register and the Watersure scheme to help support customers who are potentially vulnerable, may have additional medical conditions that warrant the use of more water and who could also be suffering financial hardship. They are specifically looking to help support customers that may have a medical condition that warrants them to use more water by potentially looking to cap their charges so that they can use as much water is necessary to manage their condition without the worry of huge bills.

The medical conditions that are covered include:

- Desquamation (flaky skin disease)
- Weeping skin disease (Eczema, Psoriasis)

- Varicose ulceration
- Incontinence
- Abdominal stoma
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Renal (kidney) failure where there is a need for home dialysis
- Bowel Cancer (Colon Cancer)
- Bladder Cancer
- Leg ulcers
- ADHD
- Autism/ Asperger's
- Arthritis
- Diverticulitis
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome -(IBS)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Rheumatism
- Spondylitis
- Osteoarthritis
- Lichen Planus
- Fibromyalgia
- Epidermolysis Bullosa
- Diabetes Insipidus
- Polycystic kidney disease
- Ehlers-Danlos syndrome
- Acromegaly/ pituitary macroadenoma
- A medical condition that would be managed and would benefit from the use of extra water

Whilst on the subject of **Southern Water**, those of you who were affected by the recent cut in the water supply may find this information useful. If anyone has lost water for more than 12 hours, then Southern's GSS standards are relevant, and financial compensation payable in the form of a credit on the water account.

Unplanned

Clearly, we [Southern Water] cannot notify you before an unplanned interruption, such as a burst. However, we aim to restore your supply within 12 hours.

If the interruption extends beyond that, we'll automatically compensate you for this and each additional period of 12 hours during which the interruption continues.



If we believe the interruption period is going to be significant, where possible, we'll arrange an alternative supply.

If we fail to restore the supply within 12 hours, we'll automatically credit your water services account with £30. A further automatic payment of £30 will be made for each additional period of 12 hours during which the interruption continues.

Identifying all properties and customers affected by an interruption can be difficult. Where this is the case and you've been affected by an interruption but we haven't contacted you, to obtain any compensation, you must make a claim (either orally or in writing) within three months following the date on which the supply was interrupted or cut off. If you'd like to make a claim, please complete the web form at the bottom of the [contact us](#) page.

If we were aware you had been affected by an interruption and we fail to advise you of the compensation due to you within 20 working days of the date of interruption, you may be entitled to a further penalty payment of £20, which we'll automatically credit to your water services account."

More useful information from AgeUK-IW ...

Pharmacies

A document listing the opening times of local pharmacies over Easter will be sent out with this Newsletter.

Optio Voluntary Car Service

With second vaccination jabs about to start happening for older, less mobile members of our community, the Optio voluntary car service is available to help those in need of transport support.

So, if you are aware of people in need of transport to access their appointment, please refer them to the Optio, where **free** transportation will be provided, subject to availability of volunteer drivers.

The number to call is **01983 522226**

The Optio telephone line is open from 9.30am to 3pm Monday to Friday.
Transport availability will cover Monday to Sunday all throughout the day.

The next piece of information comes from the IW Council.

Community Collect

'Community Collect' is now available for households of school and nursery-age pupils and school staff.

With the full return to school underway, regular coronavirus testing is available for free, for all households with nursery, primary, secondary and college age children and young people. This includes households in associated childcare and support bubbles, and those with school staff and adults working in the wider school community, such as supply teachers, school bus drivers, and after school club leaders.

Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health at the Isle of Wight Council, said: "Seeing everyone return to face-to-face learning is an important step on the journey towards a cautious easing of lockdown restrictions.

"We know that around one in three people with coronavirus do not have symptoms but can still pass it on to others, which is why it's crucial we support regular COVID-19 testing for people without symptoms, to help keep our educational settings, staff and families safe.

"This ensures we can detect positive cases within households quickly, break chains of infection, and prevent the virus from spreading. I urge anyone who is eligible to take part in this free, voluntary scheme, to help keep themselves and others safe and well."

Who can use 'Community Collect' home test kits?

This voluntary testing is for people without COVID-19 symptoms (asymptomatic), and is being offered in line with the government's roadmap out of national restrictions. The following groups can collect free asymptomatic test kits for use at home twice each week:

- Households with nursery, primary school, secondary school and college age children, including those in their childcare and support bubbles.
- Households, childcare and support bubbles of nursery, primary, secondary and college staff.
- Adults working in the wider school community, including supply teachers, bus drivers and after school club leaders.

If an eligible person is unable to collect test kits to do at home, they can book an asymptomatic test at a community testing site or order a home test kit for home delivery.

Where to collect home test kits

Test kits are available to collect from:

- Newclose County Cricket Ground, Blackwater Road, Newport, PO30 3BE.

Kits can be collected in the afternoon only, from 12.30pm until 4.30pm, seven days a week and no appointment is required.

Anyone aged 18 or over can collect two packs of seven lateral flow device kits (a total of 14 individual tests) per visit. Identification is not required to pick up the kits. Each kit comes with full instructions for use and explains what to do if your test result is positive, negative or void, and how to register your result with NHS Test and Trace.

If you are unable to go to one of the above testing sites to collect test kits, or cannot attend an appointment at a Community Testing Site, you can order a home test kit online. Anyone testing positive at home will need to isolate and book a follow-up PCR test as soon as possible.

Testing for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms

The home testing scheme should not be used by anyone who is experiencing any of the symptoms of coronavirus.

Any adult or child of any age with symptoms must follow self-isolation guidance and book a PCR test.

From Island Roads – one of the locations is Merstone Lane.

Safety schemes to begin next month

A major safety programme to lay anti-skid surfacing at locations across the Island is to start next month (April). The most significant work will be undertaken on various sections of the new St Mary's junction in Newport. In common with most other sites in the programme, this work will be undertaken at night time in order to minimise disruption. The work is being undertaken in April as temperatures need to be above freezing – and conditions dry - in order for the anti-skid surfacing to be laid effectively. Another programme will be undertaken after the main summer season – probably around September time.

As well as installing new anti-skid measures – or high friction surfacing (HFS) - on the approaches to junctions and traffic lights, the work will also include pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes and the introduction of bands of coloured HFS at several locations as a visual reminder of a change in speed limit between sections of the same road. Details of the schemes will be put out on information signs at each location a day prior to work commencing.

Given the impact the weather can have on the schedule, the programme is subject to change at late notice, but the intention is to start the major work around the St Mary's junction – which is scheduled to last eight nights - on April 12. A local diversion will be in place during these night-time closures.



Finally, on the subject of Council Tax, the officers of the IW Association of Local Councils have issued the following press release. IWALC is part of the larger National Association of Local Councils (NALC), which is the representative organisation for town and parish councils.

Isle of Wight Council passes the buck to local councils

Our local parish, town and community councils are concerned about the increasing financial burden that the Isle of Wight Council is placing on them. At a recent meeting of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC), members noted that they are being put in a difficult position: if they want a service to continue, they must pay for it.

This is not a new phenomenon. In recent years, local councils have had to take over several functions previously undertaken by the Isle of Wight Council, like public toilets, libraries and youth services, and to contribute to the cost of many others, such as the maintenance of parks, gardens and playgrounds and the emptying of waste bins.

However, the trend is now escalating. Because of the increasing financial pressure on the Isle of Wight Council due to Covid, local councils will be required to contribute to even more services in the coming financial year, including such things as the maintenance of beaches and buoys. And to make matters even worse, the Council will no longer give them a share of the Local Council Tax Support Grant it receives from the Government.

This has forced many local councils to increase their 'precept' - that is, the money they collect from the public through council tax. In other words, taxpayers will have to pay more tax to their local council as well as to the Isle of Wight Council in the coming financial year. And this is at a time when many taxpayers have themselves been hard hit by Covid.

However, it is not just the financial implications of this trend that has upset IWALC members. It is also the way in which it is being done. They maintain that the Isle of Wight Council does not consult with them adequately before making such demands and gives them little or no control over the assets and services to which they contribute.

They also consider that the timing is unfair, given the important role they have played in supporting vulnerable people during the Covid outbreak. The Isle of Wight Council acknowledges that they couldn't have provided such support without their help – but then rewards them by imposing further burdens on them.

IWALC believes that the Island Council should recognise that it needs the support of parish and town councils and treat them as equal partners. It will be arguing this case to the new Isle of Wight Council after the May elections.

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT DETAILS

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