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Friday 15 January 2021

Weekly Update from the Leader and Chief Executive
Warwick District Council

Dear Friends

This week we passed a grim milestone with the number of deaths from this second wave of the pandemic exceeded the number of lives lost in the first. Also, hospital intensive care admissions now include more younger people, with no underlying health conditions. The painful truth is that even if we feel well, it is possible to be carrying coronavirus, so let's continue to 'act as if we've got it' and stay at home except to attend to essential matters.

Thankfully our Covid infection rate looks like it may be steadying at **324 cases per 100,000 residents,** with Coventry at 550 cases and an average of 622 across England. This is a highly changeable situation, so there is no room for celebration. We must continue to remain vigilant, follow the guidance and be alert for Covid symptoms. If you're concerned about carrying the virus, you can book a test whether you have symptoms or not - visit our website to find out more, here.

The vaccine roll-out is now well underway with the over 80's, those in care homes and classified as clinically vulnerable receiving their first jabs. There are more venues now administering the vaccine and we will continue to directly support the local Primary Care Networks with the programme. Assistance is also available should you need transport to and from the clinics for your vaccination appointments – more details are available, here.

We're continuing to provide direct support across our communities, including:

Businesses –many continue to suffer the impact of remaining closed, so we're once again working round the clock to ensure that the latest round of grants are paid out as quickly as possible. Ten different grant schemes available, all with different criteria, so please visit our website to find out what is available and how to apply. So far we've distributed over £4.2m in grants to local businesses.

Charities – the amazing community spirit has lived on throughout this pandemic and we know there are many organisations who have adapted or changed their work to support the most vulnerable in our community and at additional cost. If you know of a charity or even a local business that has provided essential services during this time, grants of up to £3,000 to help with their costs are available – just visit the website to find out more.

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Lifeline Response – our unsung heroes have continued to offer a 24/7 emergency response service, taking pressure off the ambulance and the NHS. Officers have dealt with 180,000 calls since the first lockdown, responding to the elderly and vulnerable who press a button to request help, reassurance and support, and co-ordinating the response to homelessness, housing issues and general health and safety.

Another ray of hope this week was news from the Rotary Club of Royal Leamington Spa that their 2020 "Trees of Light" appeal has now raised a staggering £13,500. This generous response, breaking all previous fundraising records, was given a real boost by the virtual Christmas light switch-on organised by our colleagues. We'd like to pass on their thanks to everyone who contributed and gave timely support to our heroic Myton Hospices.

And here's something that might 'Spark' your interest! Following the success of last year's inaugural event at the Royal Spa Centre, which showcased the vibrant and expanding Creative Sector in the district, we're delighted to announce that they are returning once again this year, Spark 2021; Ignite. The exciting programme will run on a virtual platform from 22 to 26 February, so why not check-out the programme and book-in for a fascinating experience.

Keep smiling and stay safe

Andrew Day
Leader, Warwick District Council

Chris Elliott
Chief Executive, Warwick District Council

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