

SODC ward councillor's report

Shiplake – 5th May 2021

Limited report

Because of Covid and the expiry of scope for remote meetings this meeting of Shiplake PC is happening soon after the previous one on 19th April. Furthermore, due to elections on 6th May, we are presently in a period of "Purdah"; there is therefore a limited amount to report.

Unfortunately, the Courts have now decided that remote meetings for decision-making purposes can only continue if and when the Government provide primary legislation to enable it. Although the MHCLG ministry supported the continuance of remote meetings in the Courts the case was lost and suitable primary legislation has not been planned and actioned by the Government in time. Therefore for the foreseeable future Local Government etc meetings must proceed in person; there is no provision for any hybrid arrangements.

Covid-19

Covid cases continue at a very low level which is encouraging.

At 29/4, Oxford City was at a weekly rate of 31 per 100k population. By comparison, Cherwell DC was 15, West Oxon DC at 10, SODC at **14** and Vale of WH DC at 19. Reading BC (to 29th April) was at 22.

It would appear that the next relaxation of lockdown on 17th May will proceed as anticipated. From then the rule of 6 or two households is anticipated to apply indoors and with cinemas/theatres etc re-opening.

The vaccine programme continues apace.

Increased testing is being provided in centres and with at home testing to be provided via pharmacies. As yet it is believed that having had a vaccination is not a guarantee against being infected by the virus or indeed against passing the virus to others – though it is expected to improve matters.

However elsewhere in the world in India, Chile (and South America generally) and Africa a new Covid wave is all too apparent. Thus with the progression of new variants – notably the Brazilian, South African and "double-mutation" Indian one – nothing can be taken for granted for the autumn and beyond. However it is intended that if necessary booster vaccines will be available by autumn to address the currently known variants. Moreover even with variants the existing vaccination reduce the severity and risk of the disease if infected.

I will provide a fuller report for the next parish meeting – after Purdah.

Keep safe!

Leigh Rawlins

District Councillor