

# Cornwall Councillors' Report for Saltash Town Council February 2021



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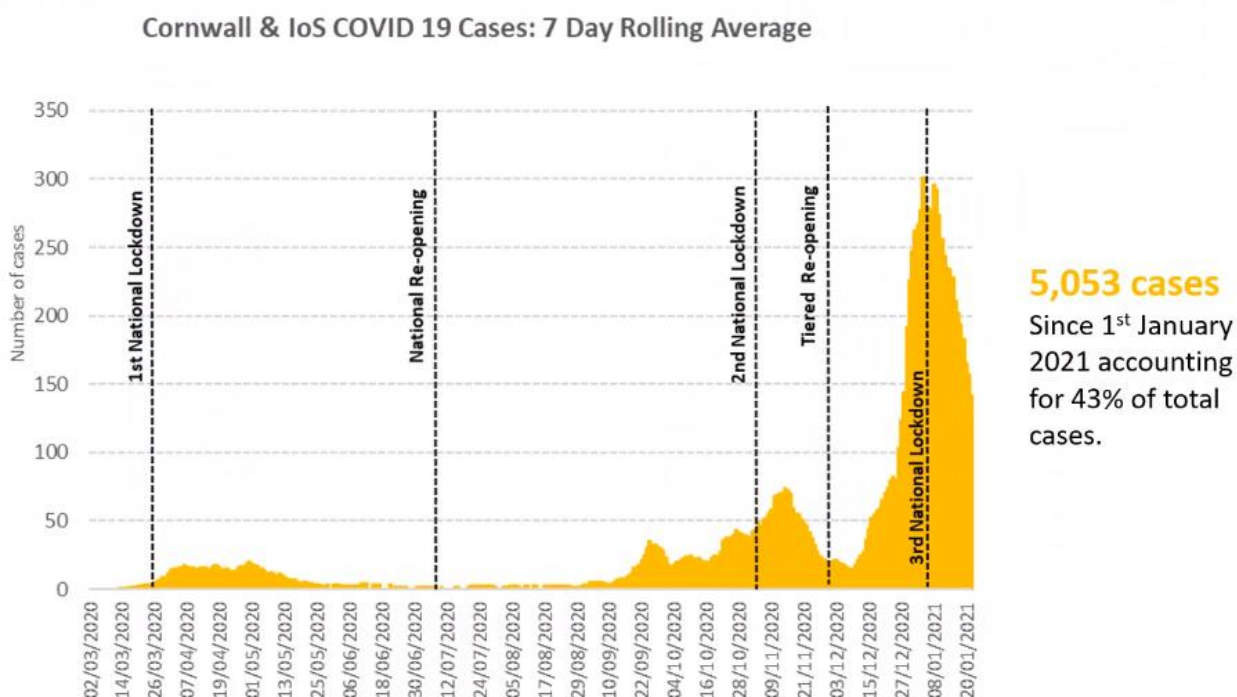
## 1. Lockdown 3 and Vaccine Rollout

As of 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the total number of cases recorded in Cornwall stood at 11,854 with 298 deaths.

Week leading to 27<sup>th</sup> Jan: 504 new cases (298 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 13<sup>th</sup> Jan: 1,196 new cases (257 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 6<sup>th</sup> Jan: 1,184 new cases (254 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 1<sup>st</sup> Dec: 95 new cases (227 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov: 175 new cases (213 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 6<sup>th</sup> Oct: 78 new cases (210 deaths in total)  
Week leading to 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept: 5 new cases (210 deaths in total)

7-day rate on 28<sup>th</sup> January = 183.3 per 100,000  
7-day rate on 21<sup>st</sup> January = 278.8 per 100,000  
7-day rate on 12<sup>th</sup> January = 338.9 per 100,000  
7-day rate on 21<sup>st</sup> November = 90 per 100,000

We have seen a decline in cases over the last two weeks, but 43% of all cases have occurred since the beginning of January:



NHS colleagues have been making a herculean effort to get people in Cornwall vaccinated. Data from the NHS shows that all staff and residents in care homes in Cornwall who are able to receive the vaccination had received it by 26th January. National guidelines, however, state that people in a care home where there is an ongoing outbreak cannot have the vaccination, so not all staff and residents of care homes will actually have had the vaccination.

The Royal Cornwall Showground at Wadebridge has been signed off as a large vaccination centre and will be starting injections in the first week of February. This follows Stithians Showground and Plymouth Argyle, which are also large vaccination centres vaccinating Cornish residents. In addition to the vaccination clinic at Pensilva, East Cornwall Primary Care Network (PCN) is now running vaccination clinics at China Fleet Country Club, the Council Chamber in Rame and the Millpool Centre in Looe, although there are difficulties with supply of the vaccines.

There is a new, dedicated mail address for questions about Covid vaccines in Cornwall: [nhskernowccg.ciosc19vaccine@nhs.net](mailto:nhskernowccg.ciosc19vaccine@nhs.net)

The current priority order is:

- **Older residents in care homes and care home workers All those 80 years and over and front-line health and social care workers**
- **All those 75 years and over**
- **Those 70 and over, and clinically extremely vulnerable people - including those with cancer and kidney disease**

- All aged 65 and over
- All individuals aged 16 to 64 with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
- All those 60 years and over
- All those 55 years and over
- All those 50 years and over
- The 40% remainder of the population, with order of priority to be determined

- This is where the NHS is now – and have not yet finished.
- Not everyone has been contacted yet but the NHS is working as quickly as possible to contact and book people in.
- New guidance means the NHS is focusing on first doses before second which will come later – some people who have had their 1st dose will still have their 2nd but most will have a new date agreed

- We have **vaccinated more than 40,000 people**
- This **includes at least 70% of people over 80** across Cornwall
- Vaccinations are being administered in **Hospital Hubs, Local Vaccination Service sites (e.g. GP practices) and Vaccination Centres** with more sites coming online each week
- We have been to all of our care homes and are revisiting where residents were not able to be vaccinated
- More and more of our front line health and social care staff are being vaccinated every day

 [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

## 2. Covid Enforcement

While Devon & Cornwall Police has responsibilities covering the wearing of face masks, gatherings, travel and second homes, Cornwall Council has compliance responsibilities to ensure that business premises are following Covid guidelines. Cornwall Council has a dedicated Covid Enforcement team that works 7 days a week, alongside the police, and in February, there will be joint Cornwall Council/police visits to supermarkets and smaller convenience stores.

Cornwall Council Enforcement Activity between 11<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January:

- Responded to 483 Covid enforcement enquiries
- Carried out 300 business compliance checks
- 78 businesses have been required to close
- 1 fixed penalty notice of £1000 served on an alcohol-licensed premises that was serving 5 persons at the bar

The 'Covid Ambassadors' initiative was due to end in January, but has been extended to May. The Ambassadors are making daytime and evening patrols in more than 15 towns across Cornwall, including Saltash, supporting shops and licensed premises, assisting the public and businesses to comply with Covid regulations, and helping keep our communities safe.

### **3. Virtual meetings**

All meetings of Cornwall Council are still being held online using MS Teams. These meetings can be watched by the public live, or as a recording via the Cornwall Council website. All meetings will remain being held remotely until at least the end of March, when the situation will be reviewed.

Although there are challenges in chairing meetings with large numbers of participants (more than 130 people were involved in the February Full Council meeting), remote meetings have provided flexibility for councillors who have other employment and/or caring commitments. There is also a positive environmental impact, and it has been noted that public participation has generally increased. Going forward, it is thought that remote meetings will encourage a greater diversity of people to stand for election.

The current regulations enabling remote meetings, however, have a sunset clause of 7<sup>th</sup> May. Unless the position changes, the ability to hold virtual meetings will cease on 7<sup>th</sup> May, and all councils will be required to resume holding physical meetings.

The Local Government Association sent a letter just before Christmas to the Secretary of State, lobbying for councils to be able to continue to hold meetings beyond 7<sup>th</sup> May. In response, Luke Hall MP (Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government) said :*"To extend the facility for councils to continue to meet remotely, or in hybrid form, would require primary legislation. There is no option to extend the current regulations under the Coronavirus Act 2020 as section 78 (3) contains the sunset date of 7 May 2021. There is considerable pressure on the Government's legislative programme. However, I appreciate the arguments you have put forward and I will consider the case for this with colleagues in the Government."*

Recognising all of this, Cornwall Council Leader, Cllr. Julian German was directed by councillors to lobby the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and sent a letter from Cornwall Council on 26<sup>th</sup> January, asking for ability to hold virtual meetings to be carried forward past May.

### **4. Free Parking**

Cornwall Council has suspended parking charges in all of its 133 car parks from Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January until the end of this current national lockdown.

Free parking will ease the number of cars parked on residential roads, which was becoming an issue as increased numbers of people work from home. It has the added advantage that Enforcement Officers will not need to be out and about, reducing their risk of contracting Covid, and meaning they can be redeployed to other areas to support Cornwall Council's Covid-19 response. It also means that key workers and carers will not have to pay for parking, and drivers will not have to touch payment machines - reducing the risk of the virus spreading.

## **5. MHEND (Mental Health Employment Needs and Debt advice)**

A new project called MHEND (Mental Health Employment Needs and Debt advice), has been funded by Cornwall Council to provide both mental health support and practical advice on money, jobs and housing. The MHEND project aims to provide a single point of contact for people, and will see three teams each with two advisors working across Cornwall offering support in several ways including telephone and face-to-face consultations and web chats.

The project is launched as the recent Cornwall Council Insights report highlighted a doubling in the number of people claiming Universal Credit - from 23,000 in January 2020 to 49,000 people in October 2020. Local surveys also show that job insecurity and other concerns related to the pandemic have doubled the risk of suffering from anxiety and depression.

People can be referred to MHEND, or can refer themselves, by contacting Pentreath on 01726 862727 or by completing the referral form available on the Pentreath website: <https://pentreath.co.uk/>

Information on mental health support is available on the Cornwall Council website, but anyone wanting to talk to someone about their mental wellbeing can call the 24/7 NHS mental health helpline on 0800 038 5300.

## **6. Kit4Kids**

Following a survey of schools in Cornwall, it has come to light that more than 1,800 children are without access to a computer or affordable data connection, even after the Department for Education provided 500 laptops to local schools in January 2021.

So Cornwall Council has teamed up with the Digital Skills Partnership and Crowdfunder to launch a campaign called Kit4Kids. The campaign is asking as many businesses, community organisations and individuals as possible to help raise money for laptops and data dongles for Cornish primary and secondary schools to loan to families in need.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has kicked off the campaign with a £20,000 contribution, which is enough to provide 100 laptops. Crowdfunder is waiving its usual fees, and will be making a matched donation of up to £4,000 as an additional contribution.

Kit4Kids has an initial target of £75,000 which would be enough to buy around 375 devices. If the campaign goes well it will set a stretch goal of £200,000. People making donations can specify the geographical location where they would like their donation to be used, and money will be passported straight to schools for them to spend on the technology they feel best suits their needs.

[www.crowdfunder.co.uk/kit4kidscornwall](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/kit4kidscornwall)

**Councillor Hilary Frank**

**Councillor Derek Holley**

**Councillor Sheila Lennox-Boyd**

**Councillor Sam Tamlin**