



Weekly News Bulletin for Community and Voluntary Groups, Town and Parish Councils, Partners and Hub Update Subscribers

Updates from the Community Support Hub



Local COVID Alert Level “Medium” - West Berkshire continues to be in the “Medium” Level in the new three tier system for local restrictions in England. This means you must adhere to the rule of 6, work from home where we can, and continue to [follow the national COVID-19 guidance](#).

Further areas in England have gone into the “High” or “Very High” alert levels, due to rises in COVID-19 cases. A full list of these areas can be found [here](#).

We do continue to see a rise in cases in West Berkshire and we all must continue to play our part, remembering Hands Face and Space, and self-isolating and requesting a test if we have [symptoms](#). Crucially we must also self-isolate for the full amount of time we are instructed to, including if identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive.



The Council is continuing to work tirelessly to support residents, businesses and visitors during the pandemic. Today’s **Coronavirus Weeknote** from Lynne Doherty, Leader of the Council and Nick Carter, Chief Executive, highlights the various measures and considerations made with respect to our district’s placement in the Local COVID Alert Level “Medium.” To receive this Weeknote direct to your inbox, [please register or update your subscriber preferences](#).

The listing of Covid 19 information and help resources for residents has been updated on the Council’s website on: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Information for Residents](#)

The Local Engagement Board Meeting (Public) held Friday, 23 October 10.00 provided an update on the Covid-19 situation in West Berkshire. The draft minutes will be posted [here](#) as soon as they are available.

Public Events Guidance - Staying Safe - Halloween, Guy Fawkes, Remembrance Sunday and Diwali are almost upon us, but like many things this year adjustments will need to be made to ensure that we’re keeping safe and following Covid-19 rules and guidance.

The current Halloween advice is to forego the tradition of ‘trick or treating’ and instead go on a local ‘pumpkin trail’. Read more about [how the fun 'COVID Safe' Pumpkin Trail works](#).

This year, public firework displays have been cancelled, but if you’re planning a home display or bonfire, please read the [firework code and bonfire safety advice](#) by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

For Remembrance Sunday safety guidance, you can read the Public Protection Partnership's [advice](#) and [the government's event guidance](#).

Free vaccine for eligible groups People most at risk from the complications of flu are recommended to get a flu vaccine every year. This winter it is especially important with flu and Covid-19 both in circulation. Research shows that if you get both at the same time you may be more seriously ill.

Due to high demand for the flu vaccine, there may be some delays getting a vaccination appointment. Your GP surgery or pharmacy should be able to tell you when more appointments are available.

If you are eligible for the free flu vaccine, you may get it either from your own GP practice or any pharmacy offering NHS flu vaccinations. The NHS website explains in further detail [who is eligible for a FREE flu vaccine](#).



Graham Pask, Chairman of West Berkshire Council, invites your nominations for the Community Champion Awards 2020 in Video

A video thumbnail for the Community Champion Awards 2020. On the left is a white box with the text 'Community Champion' in purple and green, a logo of five colorful figures holding hands, and a purple box stating 'Nominations open until 20 November 2020'. Below this is the website 'info.westberks.gov.uk/communitychampion' and logos for Volunteer Centre West Berkshire and Greenham Trust. At the bottom left is the West Berkshire Council logo. On the right is a photo of Councillor Graham Pask, Chairman of West Berkshire Council, wearing a dark suit, a patterned tie, and a gold chain of office with a large medallion. A green banner at the bottom right of the photo identifies him as 'Councillor Graham Pask, Chairman, West Berkshire Council'.

There have been many heroic efforts across West Berkshire by individuals and groups in support of others in our community who deserve recognition. In this video Councillor Graham Pask, Chairman of West Berkshire Council, explains the Community Champion Awards for 2020, and invites you to make your nominations.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

These awards will honour those who have gone above and beyond to support residents throughout West Berkshire. Four new Covid-specific awards have been added to recognise the fantastic contributions by locals. All awards will be judged by an independent panel. The winners will be announced in January 2021.

[See award categories and make your nominations](#). Self-nominations are warmly encouraged. Closing date: Friday, 20th November.

Playing West Berkshire Lottery supports good causes



The [West Berkshire Lottery](#) celebrates its fourth £2,000 winner of 2020 as well as 23 lucky £250 winners. That brings the total winnings paid out to more than £80,000 since the West Berkshire Lottery launched in 2019!

Out of every £1 ticket purchased, 50p goes directly to the lottery player's chosen charity and 10p goes into the Council's good cause fund. More than £92,000 has been paid out in funds to good causes so far. There are 125 local good causes signed up as recipients of West Berkshire Lottery ticket sale proceeds, with almost 1,030 residents currently supporting the lottery each week.

Each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance to win a prize in the weekly draw at 8pm. The winnings range from free tickets to the top prize of £25,000 and being in the draw on the 31st October also means entry into a national-draw for a Staycation with Forest Holidays.

To buy tickets and support a good cause in West Berkshire, visit the [West Berkshire Lottery website](#) or call 01635 597 111. Winners are notified by email.

For occasional news about the West Berkshire Lottery residents can subscribe to the [lottery's e-newsletter](#) and receive news direct to their inbox.

It's FREE, quick, and easy to register as a good cause on the West Berkshire Lottery. If you are part of a not-for-profit local organisation or group or if you know of a local charity or cause that could use the lottery to raise funds, please ask them to register today on the [West Berkshire Lottery Website](#).

REMINDER: Is there someone you would like to nominate to receive a gift from the West Berkshire Community Santa?

The Community Santa deadline for nominations for gifts is Monday, 9th November.

This year has been difficult for so many of us but some local people have been particularly impacted by Covid-19. For this reason, West Berkshire Council is organising a "Community Santa" gift giving project to let those who are struggling know that others are thinking of them. Once the project has formally launched in mid November, residents will be able to go to a confidential online platform to select an anonymous person for whom they will then buy a gift.



Before the online platform goes live, we need nominations for people to receive the gifts and volunteers to distribute them. So we're calling on YOU - the very groups who have been supporting your neighbours through this difficult time - to nominate someone in your community who would benefit from a special treat this festive season. Perhaps you know someone who has been self-isolating alone for a long period of time, or someone who has lost a loved-one recently. Maybe you know a family who have been experiencing unemployment as a result of the current situation or someone whose mental health has suffered during lockdown.

Following your nominations, an anonymous description of the nominee (age/gender) will be posted on the Community Santa gift-giving site. Residents will be invited to visit this confidential platform to let us know who they'd like to purchase a gift for, and then drop off the gift they buy at designated collection points.

If you feel someone of any age/gender/faith in your town or village is having a difficult time and deserves a treat, and you are willing to be responsible for distributing the gift purchased by a resident, please email your nominations to communitysanta@westberks.gov.uk and we'll do the rest. Please do NOT include any personal details such as name or address – we only need to know the age and gender (male/female/not specified) of each recipient, and contact details for the group. Deadline: Monday, 9th November.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email the team at: communitysanta@westberks.gov.uk

New Free Training opportunity for Volunteers & Practitioners working in West Berkshire; “Energy Advice & Awareness Webinar,” Tuesday 24th November from 10am – 12pm

This course from Connecting Communities in Berkshire aims to provide training, advice and useful information to practitioners and volunteers who work with low income and vulnerable individuals, including families, those with long term health conditions and the elderly. The training will be run by CCB’s Energy Expert Helen Dean.



Offering support & advice on energy bills

The sessions will ensure learners know and understand:

- The definition of fuel poverty, and how to advise and support the clients you work with
- How to compare costs and switch supplier to get the best deal
- The discounts available to those on low incomes
- Funding for insulation and boiler improvements for low-income households from 3 sources
- How to reduce costs by reducing energy usage
- Information on the Priority Services Register
- How best to deal with debt and support available
- Useful sources of further information



Places booked on a first-come, first-served basis. To book please click here for the [Eventbrite page](#). This training is supported by West Berkshire Council Adult Community Learning

Good news stories – please keep them coming in!

We love to feature your good news stories on our social media and [Hub Facebook](#) page and you can find more about the wonderful work of West Berkshire’s volunteers on our [Local Heroes](#) website. Please contact us to share your stories and volunteer photos. It’s a great way to say a public thank you to your volunteers and your local community.

With our grateful thanks and best wishes, The Hub Team

*Please ensure that all queries about any individual cases are directed to the Hub via the general email westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk or by calling **01635 503579**. This is to ensure they are dealt with promptly, effectively and in line with guidelines on dealing with vulnerable adults.*