

District Councillor Statement – Lynn Lloyd and Ian White

25th March 2020

So far we have kept quiet, partly because the emerging picture has been changing so quickly and partly because there has already been so much information published that it has been difficult to assimilate, without us adding our 5-penneth worth. Things are now becoming clearer and we thought that now would be a good time to let you know about what we have under way and a few of our perspectives. Bear in mind that this is our understanding now, this minute, but things are very fluid and change rapidly!

You may realise that although most areas between Central Government, led by the PM and SoS Ministry for Housing, Communities and local Government Robert Kenrick (SoS MHCLG), the Parish Council, County, District Councils and local agencies have been working very hard. It's a bit like a swan swimming. Serenity on the surface and frantic activity underneath.

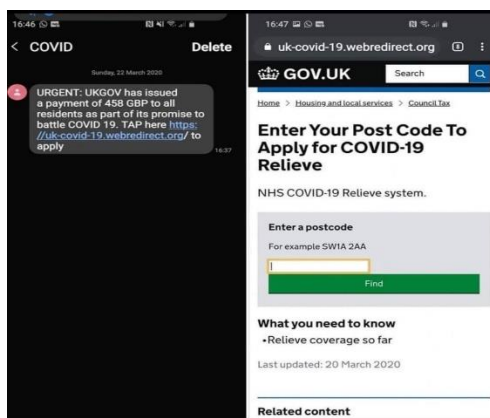
The 'Command Structure' has the PM at the top with COBRA, then the SoS MHCLG which is co-ordinating the big picture and co-ordinating with the other Ministries and Departments who are running their own field of specialisation.

SoS has an equivalent to COBRA known as the Local Resiliency Forum(LRF) and you may see reference to the members of this referred to as GOLD. This deals with the highest level stuff and includes the Local Government Association (LGA), leaders in Local Government (SODC CEO is a member), representatives from business and other governmental bodies etc. as required. Below this, at a more localised level (County and District) is the SILVER level which is responsible for co-ordinating and working across County. The final level is BRONZE which is the District Level.

A conscious decision has been made that at the most local level, Town and Parish Councils are best placed to know their own communities and to act as front line contact and co-ordination. Your Parish Clerks are doing a wonderful job under a great deal of pressure. This enables the other tiers such as social services, housing, etc. to focus their efforts and resources where really needed. As with every civil emergency, the Police are leading here and this structure helps them too. We are not going to touch on the NHS as we think that the media has this pretty well covered.

Please be beware of scams. We are aware of people going around claiming to be official and pressuring deep cleaning services on the vulnerable for a 'fee.' This is a scam. We have also heard of people offering 'official shopping services' too. Please be careful.

On that subject, watch out for this scam:



Council operations

The SoS now has powers that will make decision making easier and for us as councillors, one area of importance is that we will be able to have Full Council and Committee Meetings with voting via video. Details are still being sorted out and it will apply for matters during the emergency, but I expect much of the streamlining will be maintained once things get to some form of normality.

People with small businesses are rightly very worried, and we have just received this from the LGA (Local Government Association) which may be of help

Economy and finances

The Government has published [updated guidance for employees, employers and businesses](#) in providing advice about COVID-19. This covers all the measures of interest to these groups in one place including on the Job Retention Scheme, Business Interruption Loan Scheme, VAT deferral and business rates reliefs.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published [guidance which sets out details of eligibility and delivery](#) of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF).

We've included the relative links in text as well in case the hyperlinks don't work!

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-business-support-grant-funding>

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 23 March regarding travel restrictions, South Oxfordshire District Council has suspended all parking charges with immediate effect – this applies to all district council car parks across the district and the Vale of White Horse.

South and Vale have taken this action to support key workers and those who need to shop for essential food or medical supplies during the Coronavirus pandemic. People should not take this as meaning the present restrictions do not apply.

All charges are suspended until 1 June and during this time you do not have to display a ticket. Any outstanding car park permits, recently expired or due to expire, will also be honoured until that date – permit holders therefore do not need to take any action before then.

This measure is designed to support those who are playing a vital role as we tackle the Coronavirus crisis and assist those who need to run essential errands. If you are not a key worker or are not in need of essential supplies, then you must follow the government guidance and stay at home.

For all enquiries please email carparks.southandvale.uk@sabagroup.com or call 01235 470118.

There is a lot more information coming through and we will try to get out the relevant stuff as soon as we can.

In the meantime, please be safe!

Lynn and Ian.