

Dear All,

Could I start by wishing you all a happy new year.

I hope you managed to have an enjoyable Christmas and get some well-deserved rest.

While another national lockdown<<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-national-lockdown>> is not the way any of us wanted to greet 2021, we must all continue to follow the rules to protect those we love and save lives.

The UK's four chief medical advisors<<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-alert-level-update-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers>> have also advised the Covid alert level should move to the highest level - level 5 - indicating that if action is not taken, the NHS may be overwhelmed.

There is information on the government's website<<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>> about what you can and cannot do during the lockdown, so please make some time to have a read and help play your part.

As a Council, we'll once again be offering our support to those who need our help the most.

Following yesterday's lockdown announcement, we:

- Have updated our website to reinforce the 'stay at home' message and will be posting regular updates on our social media channels. We'll also be reminding people how they can get in touch with us if they need help.
- Have met on cross-party basis with senior officers from the Council and Rykneld to review the latest guidance and its impact on our services.
- Will be contacting Care Homes in the District to offer our support.
- Will make contact with those residents we have previously identified as being most vulnerable, to see if they need any assistance.
- Will be contacting a sample of residents on our community support list to gauge what support, if any, is required.
- Will work closely with our partners, including Rykneld Homes, to identify if vulnerable residents need any further help - such as Food Banks etc.
- Explore how we can reach out to other vulnerable groups, such as young families, who need assistance, but may have fallen through the gaps.
- Explore what more we can do to support the vaccination programme across our area.

In addition to the above, we'll also continue to support our business community.

Our website is regularly updated with all the latest information<<https://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses-grants>> on the grants available, so please help to make any businesses in the District aware of the help out there.

As you may have seen, the Chancellor has today announced

£4.6bn<<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/46-billion-in-new-lockdown-grants-to-support-businesses-and-protect-jobs>> in new lockdown grants for businesses across the UK.

We will endeavour to distribute our District allocation to businesses as soon as the details and guidance are forthcoming, so please keep checking our website, social media and gov.uk for updates.

I will write again with any further updates on the Covid situation and on any other Council news in the near future.

I would also like to thank the Parish and Town Councils and their communities for their support to our recent Care at Christmas Appeal<<https://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/news-and-media/latest->

[news/christmas-care-appeal-brings-festive-cheer-to-care-home-residents](#)>, assisting with publicity, donation points and provision of gifts and working closely with NEDDC and Rykneld Homes staff. Over 636 care home residents received a present, only made possible by generous donations from residents, businesses and local groups.

I was honoured to be on hand at one care home delivery and witnessed how much the generosity of our District communities was appreciated.

In the meantime, please continue to do what you can to stay safe and as ever, please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries or concerns in relation to Covid-19 or on any other Council matter.

I know that things are really tough and, as the Prime Minister said, these are the hardest weeks. But we must not lose hope. Things will get better and by continuing to work together we will beat Covid!

Best wishes,
Cllr Alex Dale
Leader of the Council
North East Derbyshire District Council