

West Moors:	<i>Together!</i>
Bulletin No. 70	Monday 10th January 2022

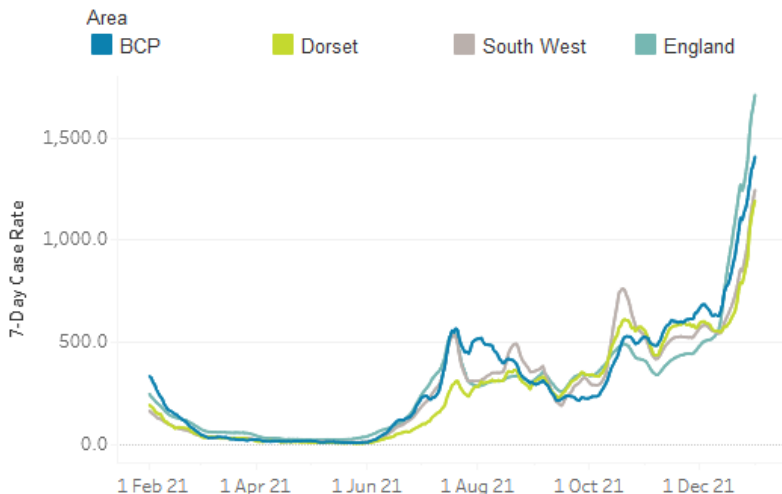
Summary of newsy items from past 4 weeks (to Sunday 9th January 2022: next issue in **four** weeks time – to Sunday 7th February 2022.)

- Following the Prime Minister’s address to the nation in early December announcing the ‘ramping up’ of the Covid ‘booster’ (or third) vaccination campaign, there has been a mad scramble to get these: unfortunately, no-one seems to have told the NHS! West Moors Village Surgery put out an urgent message saying don’t call us, we’ll call you as the receptionists etc., have been overwhelmed with queries!
- However, the roll-out of the ‘third/booster’ vaccination has been a great success in Dorset. As of 9th January, whilst the UK-wide figure was 62% of all adults eligible, for Dorset, the figure was 71% and for West Moors, 78%!
- In WM, at the beginning of this period, Covid-19 case numbers were well below the national average (and falling over 7 days), with deaths across Dorset (already a low number) falling too. However, that wasn’t to last! By the end of this report period, case numbers had risen alarmingly, especially following the Christmas/New Year holiday – with an estimated 1 in 38 having the virus in one form or other by early January. Much speculation about further restrictions, but the government (for England only) have decided to ‘ride out the wave’! Time will tell if this is the right approach ... the NHS is under severe strain – but deaths and ‘severe’ respiratory consequences are fairly stable.
- Following the ‘work from home if you can’ advice from this week, the road traffic has eased. During the week ending Saturday 18th December, a lot of ‘strong hints’ that people should avoid parties, meeting up in groups etc., though no official guidance to that effect. The medical people though would like a stronger message to be issued.

- Notable drop in people about – with anecdotal information that parents are taking their children out of school early to avoid catching the CV19/Omicron variant and ‘spoiling Christmas’.
- Just before Christmas, there was much speculation that the government would enact more stringent restrictions, both for Christmas itself and afterwards ... as Christmas Eve approached, no such announcement was forthcoming. It will be interesting to see what happens after Boxing Day! And in fact, there were NO new restrictions announced for the last week of the old year (hence no additional threats to New Year’s Eve), but it all depends upon the data as regards early January. However, England is now significantly out of step with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (and many European nations) in having only ‘light-touch’ restrictions in place.
- Schools started back ‘as normal’ on the 4th January (or soon after), but with additional testing and other restrictions, such as mask wearing for all secondary school attendees in class (as well as in communal areas). Although no figures have been released local schools have been affected to a greater extent than in previous ‘waves’.
- Regulations to change wef 11th January regarding testing: from that date, the emphasis will be on the Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) rather than automatically needing the PCR version (which is slower but more thorough). Mind you, a lot of local chemists have had problems getting hold of the LFTs!
- And finally ... as a certain ITN newscaster would say ... this end-of-the-week summary for Friday 7th January perhaps sums up the significant problems we’re living through:
- “ Case rates have continued to rise quickly over the past week across Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, and remain higher than at any other point during the pandemic. Infection rates are very high across the country. In

Dorset we have started to see hospitalisations related to COVID-19 rise, up to 74 from 55 in a week. Our hospitals and other critical services are also under increasing pressure due to staff absences related to COVID-19. The number of deaths related to COVID-19 has remained relatively stable and continue to be much lower than during previous waves of the pandemic.”

- See the graphs below ... alarming curves:



Let's hope the government have the strategy right!

- The only specific local impact of the high cases appears to be that the 'reawakened' Dementia Action Group, due to restart in January, has gone back to sleep! I suppose this is precautionary only. I suspect they'll pop up fairly soon. No other club/organisation that I'm aware of has cancelled or otherwise changed their actions.

[***** These 'diary' entries are issued every 4 weeks *****]

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