

This composite summary covers much of January, all of February 2022, and the first week of March. Because I summarised events in 4-week 'blocks', the composite doesn't exactly correspond to monthly breaks. This is the last such composite issue – for 'context' see notes immediately below.

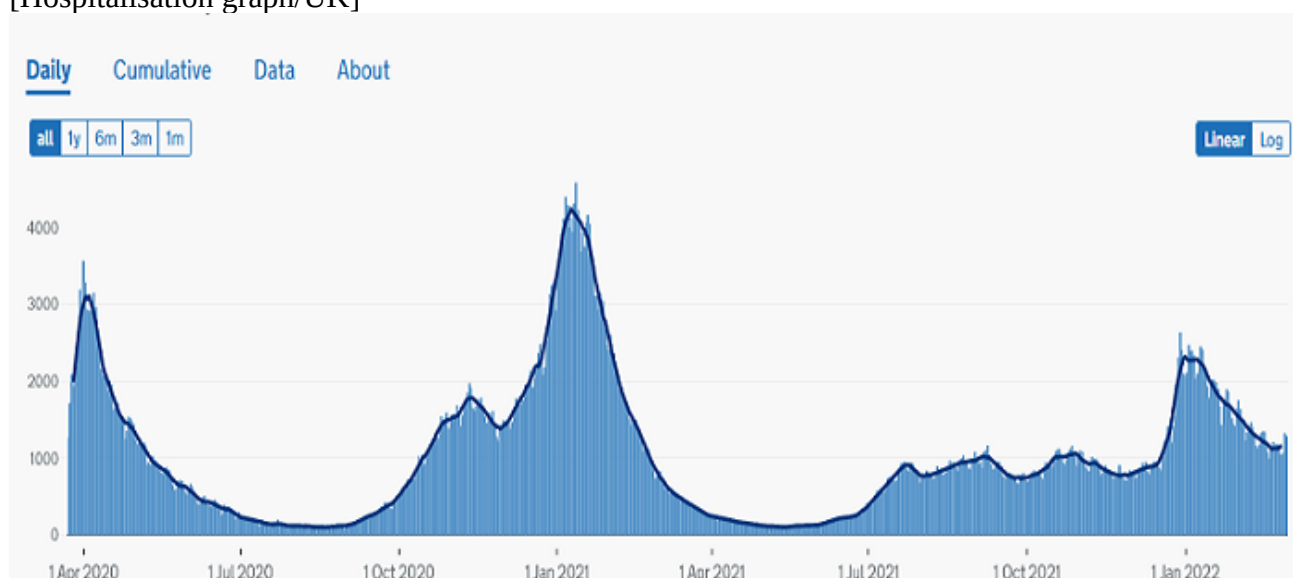
Apparently, we found out later that there was a lot of tension between the senior politicians responsible for England and the scientists over the Christmas period; the latter wanted (as in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) more restrictive activities. But it will be for the historians of the future to decide.

Through January & early February, virus activity meant that absences from schools etc., were often high – and the demand for lateral-flow tests was very high – difficult to obtain at times. However, there was a growing feeling that, somehow, we would have to learn to live with the continual resurgence of the virus and so from the latter half of January, and more definitely during February, regulations were gradually relaxed or withdrawn, and from 24th February, just under 2 years since the complete shut-down of the nation, all 'legal' restrictions (as they applied to England) were to be removed. There was lots of 'advice' such as advisable to wear face-coverings in busy/crowded environments etc., but frankly many people had already ceased to worry about such restrictions. The other nations retained restrictions for longer – some well into March, but this didn't seem to make much difference to the figures; indeed, in Scotland, where restrictions lingered for some time, case numbers remained significantly higher than in England.

In late February, Russia invaded Ukraine. Not the place to go into that, but suffice to say that this changed the political landscape completely. Coronavirus barely got a look-in on the nation's news media.

The graphs below, covering the entire span of the pandemic, summarise the UK-wide picture – with the final graph showing how Dorset has coped with regard to deaths. You must judge events for yourself.

[Hospitalisation graph/UK]



[Death graph/UK]

Number of people who died within 28 days of being identified as a COVID-19 case by a positive test. Data from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales use different methodologies, so can't be directly compared. Data for the last 5 days, highlighted in grey, are incomplete. Data are shown by date of death.

Daily

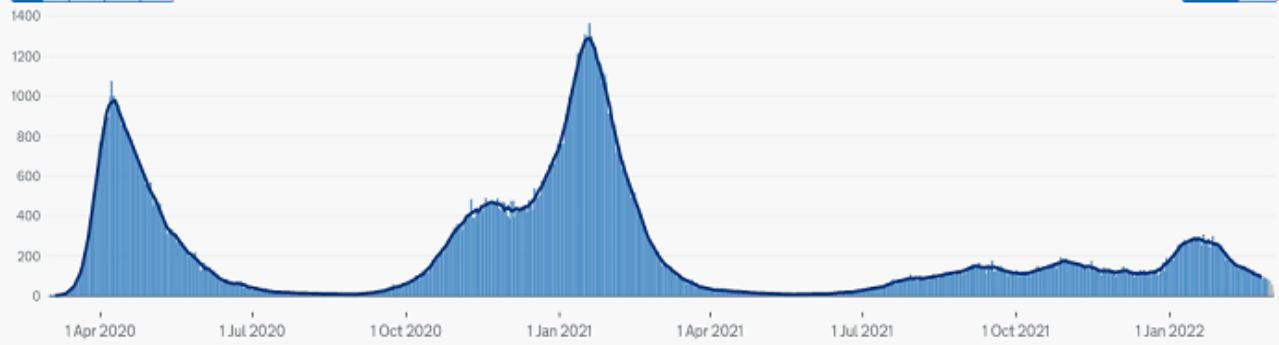
Cumulative

Data

About

all 1y 6m 3m 1m

Linear Log



[Ventilator graph/UK]

Daily count of COVID-19 patients in mechanical ventilation beds, and 7-day rolling average. Data from England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland may not be directly comparable as data about COVID-19 patients in hospitals are collected differently. Data are not reported by each nation every day and England data are not available before 2 April 2020. The UK figure is the sum of the 4 nations' figures and can only be calculated when all nations' data are available.

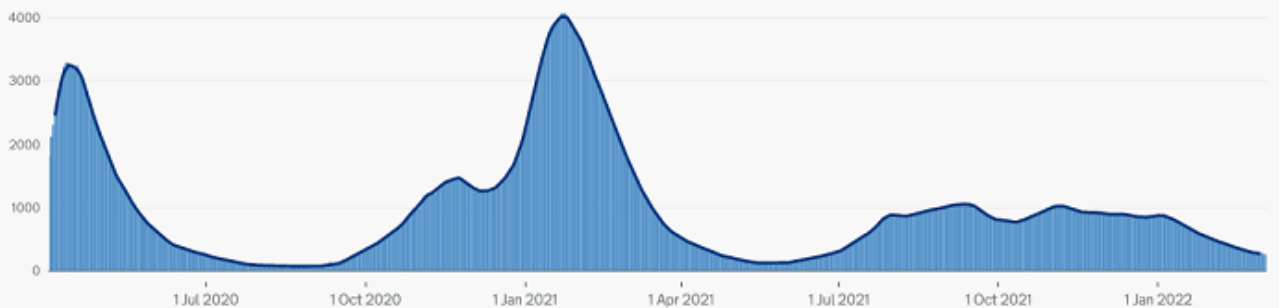
Daily

Data

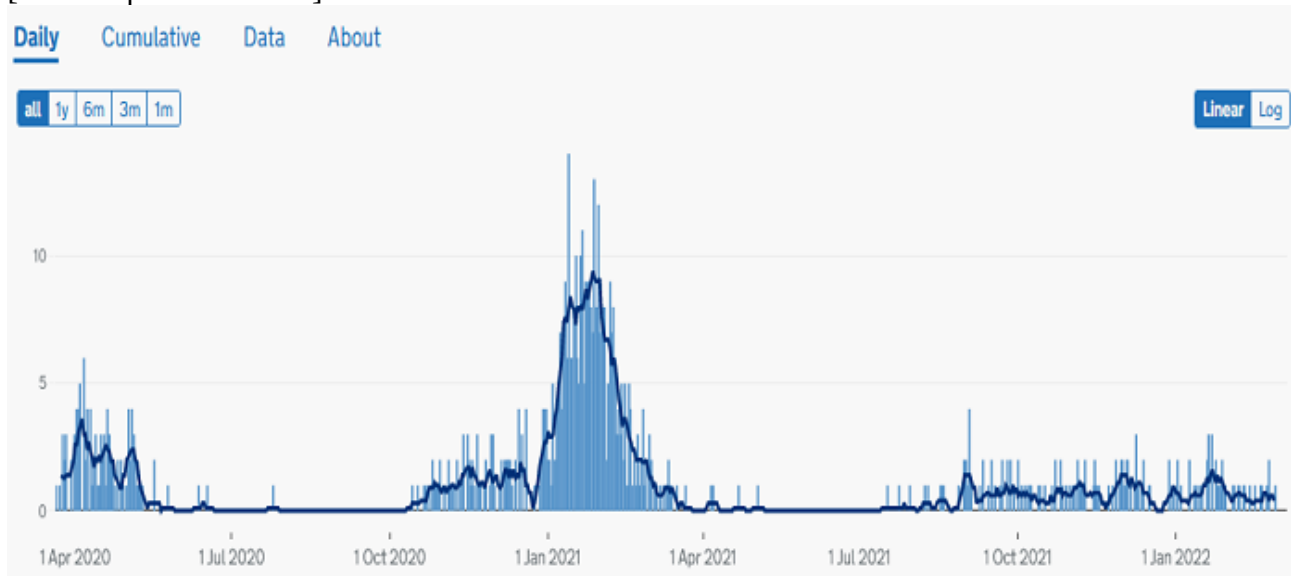
About

all 1y 6m 3m 1m

Linear Log



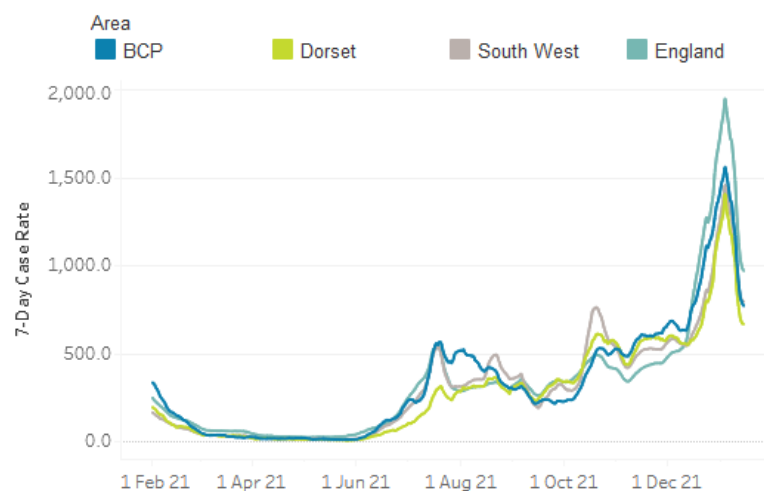
[Dorset-specific: deaths]



Here are the individual four-week summaries:

Summary of newsy items from past 4 weeks (to Sunday 6th February 2022: next (AND LAST – see note at the end of this note) issue in **four** weeks time – to Sunday 6th March 2022.)

- Following a perceived easing of cases etc., the government announced on 19th January the relaxation of ‘PlanB’ that was introduced in late November/early December. This means that from 19th January, people can work ‘normally’; from 20th January, staff/pupils (secondary level) will not be required to wear face covering in class (but still required in ‘communal’ areas); from 27th January, face covering no longer generally required but remain ‘strongly advised’ in crowded and/or indoor settings [remaining mandatory in ‘health’ settings] and no longer need to show a Covid Pass to enter venues and events. The local impact on West Moors will be minimal I fancy – most people will carry on wearing masks in shops and Morebus (among others) have strongly advised mask wearing on the buses.
- Anecdotally schools/colleges are experiencing problems with staff and pupil absences but there is no suggestion of a return to closing / restricting schools or similar as in 2020.
- The figures at the end of the week Friday 21st January showed much encouragement and are best summed up by the following diagram



Data source: Downloaded from <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/> at 21/01/2022 09:21:14

Hospitalisations are slowly stabilising (never as high as when all this started), but it may be a couple of weeks before a dramatic fall in those figures show up. Unfortunately, other hospital admissions are high (non-Covid) and there is thought to be a massive backlog of cases needing attention, as well as people coming in with worse conditions than if there had been no Coronavirus. It will take many years to unwind from this pandemic.

- By the first week of February, the hopeful note struck by the entry above had reversed somewhat: there has been an increase in cases, deaths and hospitalisations, though the comparisons are complicated by the fact that the data are being ‘re-evaluated’! The key point though is that the virus is still with us. However, ‘on the ground’, day-to-day life continues fairly well – health settings (chemist, GPs, hospitals etc.) still require masks and a measure of strict control, but elsewhere life goes on fairly steadily. The roads are busy – nightlife is back and the buses are often as busy as they have been for a couple of years.

[*** As I intend to cease maintaining the Community pages of the Council web site in the near future, I shall bring these summaries to a close too: the effect ‘on the ground’ of the virus has tended to fade into the background of life – so unless there is a major reversal of regulatory regime, the next summary will be the last. *****]**

Summary of newsy items from past 4 weeks (to Sunday 6th March 2022): ***THIS IS THE FINAL SUMMARY IN THIS SERIES.***

- The Prime Minister announced, before PMQs on Wednesday 9th February, that subject to the ‘figures’ moving in the current downward direction, all statutory Covid-19 measures will cease for England (only) one month early, a few days after 21st February (when Parliament returns after the half-term break) rather than 24th March. Not everyone is happy with this ... felt by some to be a political move.
- And true to the anticipation on Monday 21st Feb, the PM announced that from Thursday 24th February, ALL government-mandated regulations would be lifted, including the need to self-isolate if infected with Covid-19. This has not gone down well with a lot of scientists (and the general public) but with access to free lateral flow tests being stopped from 1st April (already difficult to get hold of) it is a moot point whether people will *know* that they are infected!
- Mask-wearing in retail and other indoor settings, where it is left to personal discretion, is beginning to be patchy – though health/NHS sites still require same – and of course other locations such as care homes can ask visitors to wear face-coverings before entry.
- From late February, attention turned to events in Ukraine and the Coronavirus pandemic / ? endemic? got little or no coverage. As of the end of this summary, case numbers (if accurate – reduced testing remember), hospitalisations and deaths continued downward, but showed signs of levelling-off somewhat. Whether this is ‘significant’ or not remains to be seen. However. The country appears to be ‘moving-on’ and ‘living with Covid’ as the politicians would have it. With hopefully better weather ahead and more outdoor mixing etc., perhaps we can relax just a little.
- As noted, this is the final issue: in years to come perhaps these notes will act as a useful background to research into how one community ‘coped with Covid’!

Martin Rowley, West Moors, Dorset.
Tuesday 8th March, 2022

[*** As I will be ceasing to maintain the Community pages of the Council web site, I am bringing these summaries to a close too with this issue: the effect ‘on the ground’ of the virus has tended to fade into the background of life. *****]**

