

## Composite “West Moors: Together” bulletins: **July – September 2020**

### Introduction:

At the end of June ( see previous summary ), things were ( cautiously ) looking-up. Though Scotland & Wales were still very unhappy about relaxing restrictions, across England ( as promulgated by the UK government ) there was a more ‘bullish’ approach from the Westminster government to getting things moving again .... perhaps somewhat optimistic as it turned out.

The summer overall from a weather point of view wasn’t too bad, giving a lot of encouragement to people to get out and about. This may turn out to be a factor in the downturn in handling of the crisis at the end of the summer – together with things like the schools/universities being instructed to open etc.

### Week-by-week record .....

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July ) ....

- West Moors Drama Society, who had to postpone their April production of “ A Tangled Web “, announce that they hope to put it on next year; a November production is also provisionally planned.
- St. Anthony’s (RC) church have resumed public Masses over weekend 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> July, with appropriate ‘distancing’ measures – and using the attached Hall as overflow – as inside the church a 2m separation will be in force. No singing! And no touching books etc.
- The two play areas administered by the Council (Fryer Field and Shaftesbury Road / Oakhurst School) re-open (with appropriate guidance displayed) on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July.
- St. Mary’s Parish Church announce ( July parish magazine ) that they hope to resume public worship on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August – probably with a ‘pre-booking’ system in place, restriction of numbers, sanitisation measures etc.
- Several shops/services open over the weekend 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> or early the ‘new’ week: Penn Court opens for ‘walk-in’ customers on Saturday/4<sup>th</sup> (they had been doing takeaways etc.). Elephant & Castle open Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>, with Tap & Railway following on Monday 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Sunday/5<sup>th</sup>: “Clap for the NHS”; 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of formation & memorial for all staff/carers in recent times of stress & death.

Critical dates/actions this period:

4<sup>th</sup> July: 2m rule → 1m “plus”; pubs/bars, restaurants, hotels, campsites, caravan parks, places of worship, hair salons/barbers, libraries, community centres, theme parks, model villages & farms open ... subject to ‘social distancing’ (as above) and hygiene precautions etc.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July )

- St. Anthony’s (RC) church report (Facebook) that they had roughly half ‘pre-Covid’ attendance at services on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> – around expectations from polling beforehand.
- Barbers/hairdressers looked to be busy on Monday/6<sup>th</sup>!
- Memorial Hall not re-opening for general use at the moment: awaiting guidance.
- A few more people on morning buses now – perhaps people beginning to feel a little more confident about using them? Also a relaxation of the ‘shielding’ regulations.
- Books/videos etc., are piling up behind the Library door as they start to accept them back after 3+ months!
- Dorset Library service start (8<sup>th</sup>) a service of issuing on an ‘order & collect’ basis – books ordered by category – collected to timed slots.
- It appears (Facebook posts) that both Elephant & Castle (Saturday/4<sup>th</sup>) and Tap & Railway (Monday/6<sup>th</sup>) experienced problems with unruly/aggressive behaviour on their respective opening days – at the Tap, the Manager was attacked for refusing entry to a group. Alcohol & responsibility don’t mix.

Critical dates/actions this period:

6<sup>th</sup> July: Shielded persons may meet outdoors with up to 5 others, and single individuals ( or single parents ) able to form 'support bubbles' with one other household.

8<sup>th</sup> July: Dorset Council Library Service re-start a version of 'physical' access to the Service. From 8<sup>th</sup>, registered users will be able to access an 'order and collect' service. It is hoped to return to previous 'walk-in' services at a later date.

11<sup>th</sup> July: team sport can be played.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July )

- Problems with youths throwing glass around on Fryer Field play area previous weekend: council staff had to clear up.
- Several local retailers are now stocking face coverings (aka 'masks') as the government deadline for wearing same in shops approaches: more evidence of people wearing now.
- Most 'public-facing' retail etc., is now open, with the notable exception of Cafe Olivia (Station Road): a message on their Facebook page ... "new management" coming – hope to open "soon".
- Traffic activity as 'normal'; it would be difficult to determine that anything had changed from pre-Lockdown! Saturday/18th notably busy everywhere!
- Announced Friday 17<sup>th</sup> ... timetable for further relaxation of measures to combat Covid-19: from 1st August .. indoor performances (e.g., theatre, concerts) can resume, but with 'social distancing' (which will limit usefulness) .. most remaining leisure settings ( including 'close contact' activities) may resume .. wedding receptions with up to 30 people can take place .. public transport should now be used more widely .. employers can recall staff for 'office working' at their discretion .. from September – all schools, nurseries and colleges to be open on full-time basis .. from October – audiences return to sports stadia and business events might resume (if confirmed).
- St. Mary's parish church announce resumption of services Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August: restrictions in place ( numbers, sanitisers, no singing etc. ): more detail on their web site.
- United Reformed Church ( St. Martin's ) have decided, for the time being, NOT to resume public worship – they await a more 'safe' environment to operate in; they will continue with on-line worship and other activities.
- Seeing that face coverings in shops are to be compulsory from Friday 24<sup>th</sup>, was surprised to see on Saturday/18th no obvious sign of masks on sale!

Critical dates/actions this period:

13<sup>th</sup> July: 'Close contact' services can re-start (e.g., nail bars, salons etc).

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July )

- A near-normal (i.e., pre-lockdown) week as far as road traffic goes; out-and-about, very little evidence of 'face coverings' above that of recent weeks, though probably changing from Friday (24<sup>th</sup>) when mandatory in all retail environments.
- On my shopping expedition to Sainsbury's on Saturday/25th, near-100% use of face masks in the store.
- Memorial Hall announce re-opening from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July.
- St. Mary's church publish requirements for re-start of services from Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

Following from Pinehurst Community Church (via Facebook) posted on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July:.....

Dear WestMoors,

On Friday 17th July we brought our COVID-19 support hub services to an end. This was due to restrictions being eased and also many of our volunteers returned to work. We are so grateful to be able to support our

community and to have so many volunteers stepping forward to offer their help. The final totals stand at...

- 17 weeks acting as the COVID-19 support hub for West Moors
- 55 volunteers stepped forward to offer their help
- 885 people living in and around West Moors have been helped during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have helped with numerous tasks such as collecting and delivering medication, delivering food shopping, being a friendly voice on the phone to those who were lonely and much more.

This has been a difficult period for many in our community but we find it so inspiring to see how the West Moors community stepped up to help one another and look out for one another in this challenging time. We can't thank our volunteers enough for all their help. We never would have been able to help as many as we did without your support. We love West Moors and the community it has. It's been lovely to meet and interact with (even if it's on the phone) so many new faces.

We may no longer be running a support hub but we want West Moors to know we are always here for members of our community. If you need support or a friendly chat, please know that you can always call us and we will always do our best to help.

Critical dates/actions this period:

24<sup>th</sup> July: Face covering mandatory in shops/shopping centres from this date.

25<sup>th</sup> July: Indoor sports, dance facilities, gyms, indoor swimming etc., can re-start.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August )

- Memorial Hall re-opened for business on Monday 27<sup>th</sup>: the Hall opened in 1929; given that clubs / activities ceased abruptly third week of March, this past four months must be the longest it has not been available in its history (*see note from John Bartley below*). As of Monday, only a small selection of clubs shown as functioning on the MH calendar.
- The near-total absence of civil air traffic overhead from late March to early June meant lack of high cloud – more / stronger sunshine; from mid-June onwards more cloud up aloft. Also, the air quality now declining somewhat after the return of near-normal road traffic.
- New (returning) restrictions announced on 31<sup>st</sup> July – face covering will become more widespread in enclosed public spaces, not just retail/transport, from 8<sup>th</sup> August.
- Considerable concern about a resurgence of the Coronavirus in the community leading to talk of more (rather than fewer) restrictions!

[ *Note from John Bartley, Secretary of the Memorial Hall committee, who is a long-time resident and knows a lot of history!* ]

“ As far as I am aware the Hall never closed during World war 2. It was, I believe, commandeered for a short period by the Home Guard and may also have been unused at various times when villagers had other things to worry about, but it was never officially closed. Following Govt guidelines we closed the Hall on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March but we took full advantage of the break by having the interior completely redecorated. With normally around 1,100 sessions a year it seemed sensible to take advantage of the enforced break. It will be some time before bookings return to previous levels but we hope that users will appreciate the refurbished surroundings. ”

[ *Note posted on St. Mary's parish church Facebook page ( 28<sup>th</sup> July ): St. Mary's, together with Pinehurst Community Church ( see earlier summaries ) provided the bulk of 'church-based' support to the community since late March 2020. ]*

“ As life returns to some degree of normality we are finding that we are no longer being called upon to provide shopping and help for the lovely

people in West Moors. Our Community Support Team however will remain in place in case anyone is in need. Thank you to all our lovely volunteers who helped with Community Support during the lockdown. Your love and support of those in the community was inspiring to see. A huge thank you as well to John Reid and Alan Butler who co-ordinated the volunteers. You were all a real blessing."

Critical dates/actions this period:

27<sup>th</sup> July: Memorial Hall re-opens (see note above).

1<sup>st</sup> August: shielding restrictions 'paused' ... support packages cease.

1<sup>st</sup> August: employers encouraged to recall staff.

( **Originally**, most remaining leisure settings were to re-open: .. live theatre / concerts etc., [but all with 'social distancing' / hygiene precautions in place] .. and small wedding receptions up to 30 people BUT this was all cancelled at short notice on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July due to an 'upsurge' in CV19 cases elsewhere in the country. )

2<sup>nd</sup> August: St. Mary's resume a version of 'physical' worship, with considerable restrictions, pre-booking & face masks!

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 9th August )

- Buses seem to be busier this week: not sure what's changed but perhaps more people feel confident about coming out. Also, some employers are asking more people to come back to ( physical ) workplaces.
- Very busy out and about over the hot weekend ( Friday 7<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>):
- Face-covering now required in more (indoor) situations than before (see check list below).

Critical dates/actions this period:

8<sup>th</sup> August: Face covering mandatory in a wider range of indoor settings, such as Libraries, Churches, Community Halls, non-retail outlets (e.g., solicitors' offices, estate agents).

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 16th August )

- Significant woodland /heathland fire broke out ( cause unknown – probably shop-bought barbecue sets ) late afternoon Monday 10<sup>th</sup> in Ringwood Forest, with large areas affected by smoke ( including West Moors ). In the period 7 – 9 am Tuesday morning, thick, acrid smoke spread over West Moors ( as well as other areas ) and it was difficult to breathe for a time. In addition, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue had to attend a major RTA incident at Palmersford roundabout where a lorry had overturned, spilling diesel on the carriageway – traffic severely affected ( diversions through WM ) for much of the morning.
- None of the local charity shops have yet opened: presumably problems with hygiene and quarantining donated goods; however, Waggy Tails at Tricketts Cross has been open for several weeks – you have to leave donated goods around the back to be sorted.
- VJ Day commemoration took place Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August – only Vicar, Deputy Chairman WMTC and Town Crier present due to Covid-19 assembly restrictions; wreath laid, with 2 minute silence at 11.00 am.
- WMTC Newsletter Issue 9 put on Facebook. No other sources for this issue.
- Delayed relaxation (originally 1<sup>st</sup> Aug) enabled as of Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August: for West Moors, the important point is that indoor performance ( with appropriate restrictions ) and small wedding receptions / celebrations may go ahead.
- Shopping at Sainsbury's Saturday – not much sign of 'social distancing'! People getting lazy because they're all wearing masks.
- Buses a bit busier AM, but near-deserted at other times.

- Spate of ASB among local youngsters.

Critical dates/actions this period:

15<sup>th</sup> August: ( among other ) bowling alleys, indoor play / soft-play areas, indoor performances, close contact services including facial treatments and small wedding receptions (up to 30 people) can go ahead. Originally planned for 1<sup>st</sup> August.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 23rd August )

- Subjectively, people are not observing the strict letter of 'social distancing' in all things: although no obvious breaches, it's obvious that the feeling is that we've got other things to worry about! Like exam results!!
- Since the pandemic was declared in early spring, the SW Area of the NHS has done reasonably well in terms of low death rate and incidence of infection. 'Greater Dorset' ( e.g., Dorset Council & BCP combined ) have done particularly well: figures released this week (Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>) show that the weekly number of cases per 100 000 people = 3.2 for DC (c.f., 4.9 for the SW, and 12.2 for England). West Moors council area, along with huge swathes of the SW and CS England, had NO positive test case in the 7 days to 16<sup>th</sup> August – continuing a trend of many weeks past.
- Pinehurst Community Church are preparing to re-open for physical services soon (closed-down latter part of March): they, in common with other churches, have been 'on-line' more-or-less throughout.
- PramaCare will re-open Monday 24<sup>th</sup>!
- Standard of driving is very poor – lots of inconsiderate parking & excessive speeding.

Critical dates/actions this period:

None.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 30th August )

- Morebus announced on the 25<sup>th</sup> August that they intend to revert to pre-CV19 service levels as of Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September; this mean that West Moors will once again have Sunday buses & a direct service to Bournemouth. It has to be said though that the passenger 'take-up' of current services is still sluggish, especially in the afternoon.
- Cafe Olivia re-opens Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>: Penn Court Bistro has been physically open for some time – and at the height of the 'lockdown' were also utilising take-outs/deliveries.
- Town Council announce that they intend to re-open the office in Park Way as of Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September. It has been closed to the public since late March.

Critical dates/actions this period:

None.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 6th September )

- Although schools nationally, on a 'nominal' basis, started back this week, for a couple of days it was mainly staff / support systems up and running. However, from Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> onwards, a trickle of pupils, mainly Reception, Nursery & Year 1, have returned: main return is Monday 7<sup>th</sup> onwards.
- Road traffic on the Bank Holiday ( a notably chilly day ) was lacklustre – but people made up for it the rest of the week as road traffic was up to pre-emergency levels; buses also seem

much more used – in fact I saw one bus with the indication “ full “! This is because half of the seats have been taken out of use to preserve distancing between passengers. I suspect that’ll have to be reviewed.

- Gullivers Farm mounted an open air cinema experience over the Bank Holiday weekend (ABH Monday = 31<sup>st</sup> August this year) which was apparently well-attended, despite indifferent weather.

Critical dates/actions this period:

1<sup>st</sup> September: schools/nurseries and colleges to re-open fully for all children/young people on full-time basis [ local schools probably from the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> with ‘INSET’ days to prepare for the changed environment ]. Universities will also aim to resume courses.

1<sup>st</sup> September: nominal re-opening date for West Moors Library, though given that they are only going to be open for ‘walk-ins’ Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the ‘true’ first day will be Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>.

6<sup>th</sup> September: Morebus revert to pre-Coronavirus timetables ( mostly ).

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 13th September )

- At the start of the week, an alarming increase in UK detected cases of Covid-19 sparks talk of pause or reversal of eased restrictions. However, across Dorset, and specifically West Moors, cases are well below the national and regional averages, though they *are* rising.
- Town Council office opens for the public on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Announced on Wednesday – new restrictions on numbers meeting indoors/outdoors for ‘social’ reasons. Lots of exemptions though: in a Facebook post on Wednesday, the Memorial Hall committee announced that they were suspending bookings for more than 6 people & WI also not planning to meet soon.
- Oakhurst play area ( adjacent to Oakhurst School ), which had been re-opened a few weeks before, had to be closed-off during the school week to enable ‘social distancing’ with the adjoining school grounds: open at the weekends only for the time being.
- Morebus seem to be running additional (‘relief’) buses in the busy morning period – but also have removed ‘on bus’ tapes to restrict numbers boarding buses.

Critical dates/actions this period:

8<sup>th</sup> September: Council office re-opens.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 20th September )

- St. Martin’s URC announce that they hope to re-start ‘physical’ services ( on a fortnightly basis ) with effect from Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October ( 10.30 am service ). Only Pinehurst Community Church now remains closed – at one point they were confident of re-opening, but latest news is that they are holding-off for the time being – perhaps a wise move?
- It was announced ( via Minutes of the Town Council ) that there would be NO Remembrance Sunday parade ( organised by the Council ) or ‘Carols on the Petwyn’ ( organised by the Youth Club ) this year. There will be a small ceremony on Remembrance Sunday with wreath laying and a short service; roads will not be closed off.
- A gradual realisation that Coronavirus cases are rising sharply across the UK, though locally, we remain at a low level: the England figure is 592/100k, SW NHS region is 288/100k, whilst Dorset Council area is 192/100k.

Critical dates/actions this period:

14<sup>th</sup> September: restrictions on numbers meeting ‘socially’ indoors and outdoors (6 or fewer) come into force: this follows a rise in infection rate across England.

Summary of newsy items from past 7 days ( to Sunday 27th September )

- Following speculation over the preceding weekend, people are ‘panic buying’ again! Toilet rolls and paracetamol seem to be in great demand: how many toilet rolls can you use?
- A further tightening-up of restrictions following increase in cases nationally ( though not particularly locally ). One important change for the drinkers: pubs/restaurants having to close at 10.00 pm sharp!
- Public Health Dorset issued this statement ... “ Cases of COVID-19 remain low in Dorset. Between 16 and 22 September, there were 18 confirmed positive cases in the Dorset Council area. “
- The new Town Council web site was enabled over the weekend 26th/27th.

Critical dates/actions this period:

None (locally)

The graph below, taken from the official government statistics web site, shows the rise, decline then rise again pattern of the pandemic across the UK (so far). Concern was already being expressed during July about a possible ‘second wave’, but as you can see, we had to wait until early September for the main ‘uptick’. At the date of this composite summary ( 28<sup>th</sup> September ), a significant proportion of the UK is under ‘local lockdown’ with fairly dramatic restrictions ... though as yet this does not apply to Dorset.

