

This composite summary covers the months of July to September 2021 inclusive, though because I summarised events in 4-week 'blocks', the composite doesn't exactly correspond to monthly breaks.

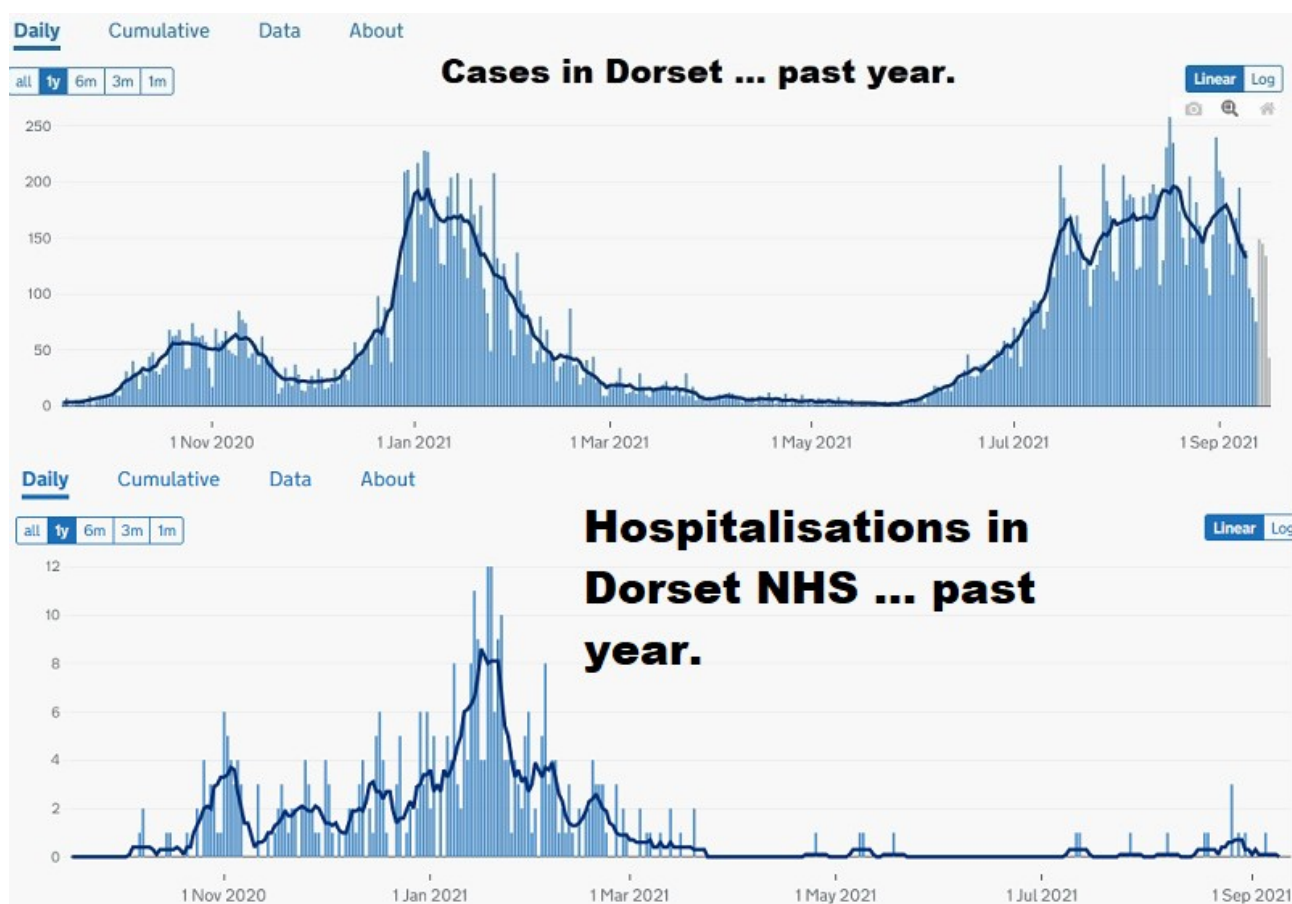
General comment:

In July 2021, there was general optimism that the worst of the virus was behind us: the vaccination programme was going full-pelt, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, remaining legal restrictions were, for the most part, removed – though with strong guidance surrounding face masks, distancing etc.

By the end of September, the optimism was rather more nuanced; indeed, there were dire warnings from the scientific/medical community that we were heading for an autumn and winter of significant strain on the NHS – adding considerably to the record-breaking waiting lists that had been built up during the Coronavirus 'lockdowns' of the previous 19 months or so. And the figures as regards case numbers, hospital admissions and deaths were all very worrying – not as high as during the last winter peak, but still not under proper control. The dramatic link between cases and hospitalisation *had* been depressed – but not eliminated as many had thought back when the vaccine programme started.

Many societies, clubs and other organisations are opening up now ... and of course the schools & colleges are back full-time. The opportunity to spread the virus is all around us.

By the time I write the next 3-month summary, we shall know. Will we have another 'Christmas lockdown'?



These graphs are taken from the official government web site and show the link between cases and hospitalisations: note that in our 'second' high phase, the link has, frankly, been comprehensively broken! All due surely to the good uptake in vaccines locally.

Summary of newsy items from past 14 days ( to Sunday 11th July 2021: next issue in *two* weeks time – to Sunday 25th July. )

- The UK government ( though applies to England only ) announced on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> that the major removal of restrictions from 19<sup>th</sup> July will go ahead (to be confirmed in a legal way next week, with statements ‘firming-up’ the plan Monday or Tuesday).
- There is much concern surrounding the significant increase in Coronavirus cases across the UK: however, the situation with the widespread roll-out of the vaccine is markedly different than heretofore. For example ... on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, the case numbers were = 28K, with hospitalisations 1.8K and deaths = 22: the last time we had a similar number of case numbers ( on a rising trend ) was in mid-December, before the vaccination regime properly kicked-in. Then, the hospitalisations were 24K (13x current figure), and deaths = 675 (over 30x current figure).
- The major talking point is that the relaxation / removal of regulations will allow people NOT to wear masks indoors in ‘public’ settings. This has caused much consternation and many feel that the guidance to ‘expect’ mask wearing is not strong enough. It remains to be seen how this will play out.
- Summary published Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July .... “ As cases continue to rise nationally, we have seen an increase in COVID-19 cases over the past week across Dorset. Dorset Council's case rate remains below the averages for the South West and England. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council's case rate is higher than the South West average but below the England average. There are currently 14 people in hospital with COVID-19 across the county. Hospitalisations have increased over the past few weeks but the number of people requiring hospital treatment for COVID-19 remains at a much lower level compared to when we were experiencing similar case rates in previous waves.” As noted immediately above, hospital / death numbers have not been horrendously high when compared with previous episodes. However, the situation is of significant concern!
- For West Moors specifically, the case numbers are very low ... somewhere around 2 to 5 depending upon day of analysis, and well-below the national average.
- No significant Coronavirus-related local news ... except that the Council quietly re-opened the office, without the requirement for prior booking: not announcing it, just putting it in the latest newsletter!
- [ **Forthcoming changes** ]
- From **19 July** - *postponed once from June 21st* ... It's hoped all legal limits on social contact will be removed - No legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events - Nightclubs will be allowed to reopen. If the data allow, then the “ work from home where possible “ guidance will be scrapped ( which would help towns/cities to recover trade ) and the “1m+” distancing guidance would also go ... this would allow all venues the run to their pre-Covid capacity. Mandatory mask-wearing will cease, though still advised in certain settings, such as public transport & “crowded” indoor settings. Further relaxation to visiting rules in care homes. Communal singing returns!

Summary of newsy items from past 14 days ( to Sunday 25th July 2021: next issue in **four** weeks time – to Sunday 22nd August. )

- From **19 July** - (*postponed once from June 21st*) ... All legal limits on social contact removed - no legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events - Nightclubs allowed to reopen. The “ work from home where possible “

guidance is scrapped ( which is supposed to help towns/cities to recover trade ) and the “1m+” distancing guidance is removed ... this allows all venues to run to their pre-Covid capacity. Mandatory mask-wearing has ceased, though still advised in certain settings, such as public transport & “crowded” indoor settings (\*see below). Further relaxation to visiting rules in care homes. Communal singing returns!

- As far as I could tell ( remember: I don't get out much! ), there was no particular ‘problem’ in the pubs with rowdy behaviour as there was last July when we had a significant easing of regulation.
- Memorial Hall now “fully open” in the sense that all restrictions are removed ... though they point out that individual clubs, societies etc., may impose restrictions.
- \* List of ‘legacy’ requirements where known:
  - ... **WM Village Surgery:** will *continue* with masks, social distancing, sanitisation, staff isolation measures etc. [ This the wider approach of all ‘health’ settings. ]
  - ... **Sainsbury's, Tesco (among most others):** will generally follow the July 19<sup>th</sup> guidance, BUT they are also strongly advising that masks should be worn within the stores – not sure how that's going to work! Presumably, if the ‘big boys’ are playing thus, many retailers will join in. From my visits to local and larger shops, everyone is broadly wearing masks - a few in Sainsbury's not, but then we don't know if they're exempt: all staff are wearing face covering.
  - ... **Buses/Trains:** the national bodies representing transport have said that they will follow the guidance re: masks ... that is, it's up to the passenger! However, Morebus say they will ‘strongly encourage’ users to wear masks – and maintain other precautions (driver screens, sanitising etc.), though no control on numbers on a vehicle. From the buses passing through WM, the vast majority of passengers are wearing masks.
  - ... **Gullivers Farm – Farm Shop:** asking customers to keep masks (protect the vulnerable staff of the Sturts Community).
  - ... **Churches:** sung worship is now permissible but churches appear to be keeping the mask requirement ( so a bit tricky! ) and many of the other precautions are being observed such as hand sanitisation, caution over distance apart etc. No restriction on numbers attending now though and where after-service refreshments were a feature, they are re-starting.
- The **Dorset/BCP summary** below is useful ... and shows how far we've got to go to get this virus under control ....

Published: 23 July 2021

This week's overview

We have seen a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases across the county over the past week, particularly in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area where the case rate has more than doubled in a week to 534.5 per 100,000. Dorset Council's case rate has risen from 153.4 to 265.8 in a week. The average rate for the South West is 513.5 and for England it is 529.1. Case rates are highest amongst younger people, but we are seeing cases increase across all age groups. The number of people in hospitals in Dorset with COVID-19 has increased from 17 to 27 over the past week, and we have started to see a small number of deaths related to COVID-19 in the county.

Summary of the most recent data:

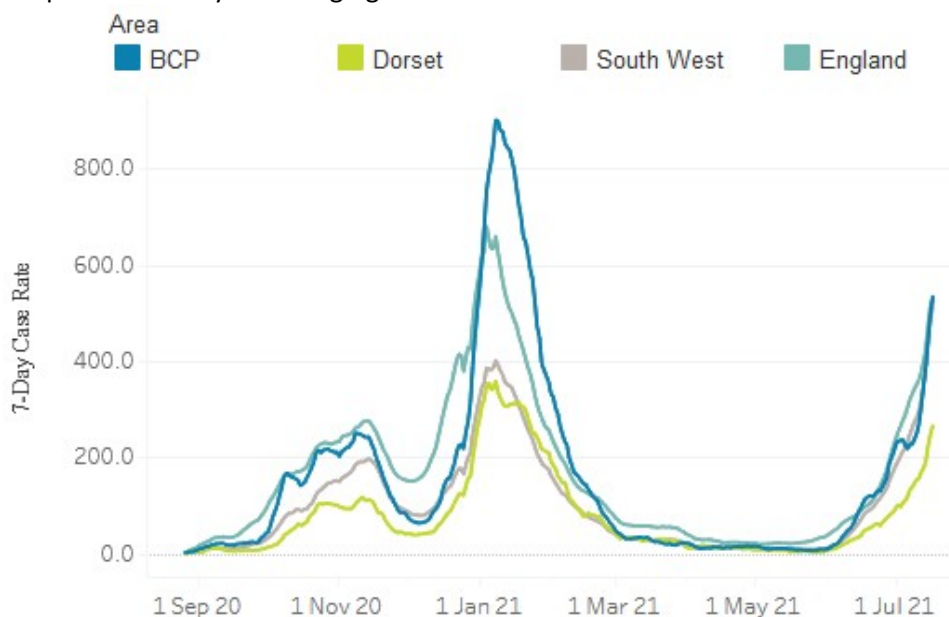
7 day case rates per 100,000

BCP: 534.5 (compared to 247.6 in last update on 16 July)

Dorset: 265.8 (compared to 153.4 in last update on 16 July)

Current COVID-19 patients in hospital beds in Dorset: 27 (compared to 17 in last update on 16 July)

Note from the graph below how Dorset is *rapidly* approaching the 7-day case-rate of the Christmas/New Year period – hardly encouraging.



Schools: now closed for the summer break, and unless I've missed something, we in WM have come through unscathed.

- Latest vaccine figures: as of (24<sup>th</sup> July), 88% had had one vaccine dose, with 70% 'fully' vaccinated with two doses. The rate of vaccinations has slowed markedly now, as younger people (18+ into early 30s) are apparently reluctant to take up the offers. For Dorset specifically, up to the (22<sup>nd</sup>), the take up of both vaccine doses in those aged under 35 was under 40% and under 30, just 32% ( or 1 in 3 ) had been so 'jabbed'. As these are the age groups that tend to 'mingle' socially and boisterously, it is a worry.
- West Moors situation: As for the rest of Dorset, West Moors has seen an increase in case-rates, but nothing too dramatic. The figure up to 20<sup>th</sup> July = 236/100k, which is below the all-Dorset figure and also well below the all-UK average. However, with BCP such a 'hot spot' not far away, it might be a struggle over the coming weeks.
- On a positive note, the death rate across Dorset has been either zero for lengthy periods, or just 1. Also on a positive note ( though with a hefty dose of caution ) as of the weekend figures just published, there are signs that a peak of infections occurred in mid-July and are now falling UK-wide. Also, deaths show signs of declining day-on-day. Long may it continue!

Summary of newsy items from past 4 weeks ( to Sunday 22nd August 2021: next issue in **four** weeks time – to Sunday 20th September. )

- Hadn't been to the Library since the 19<sup>th</sup> July ('Freedom' Day!), but on a visit subsequently, found that apart from the absence of checking in/out etc., very little has changed – still wearing masks, hand sanitising and no clubs meeting.
- Local clubs/societies/activities very slowly coming back to life ... Youth Club returning, Horticultural Society plan something for October & the 'fitness' classes now appear to be in full swing! The United Reformed Church (St. Martin's) is re-starting Community Sing-a-long soon.
- From Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August, the need to 'self-isolate' if warned about a close contact (i.e., 'pinged' by the NHS application) is removed, as long as you have had a full 'double-jab'. Self-isolation is still required if you have symptoms and in connection with overseas travel.

- Latest vaccine figures: UK – almost 88% have had one vaccination, with around 76% having 2/'fully' jabs: for Dorset, the figures are even better, with 89+% 1<sup>st</sup> and 82% 2<sup>nd</sup>. 16 and 17-year olds are now eligible for vaccination. Dorset take-up in the younger (18-24 age) group is well up at 77% for 1<sup>st</sup> vaccination, but 2nds are only 41%.
- UK cases are rising through this past 4 weeks – but as yet not translating into a major threat to hospital places. In Dorset specifically, despite the cases being close to the January peak, the hospitalisations and deaths are no-where near those of the winter peak.
- West Moors situation: numbers have increased, but again, as for Dorset this has not translated into significant problems. Mind you, it is summer (despite the weather!)
- Apart from mask-wearing on buses and in shops (both technically 'voluntary' but most seem to be doing so), you wouldn't know there were 'virus problems'. What the autumn & winter will bring though could be problematical.

Summary of newsy items from past 4 weeks ( to Sunday 19th September 2021: next issue in **four** weeks time – to Sunday 17th October. )

- Very little has changed 'on the ground' as regards the virus impacts in West Moors over the past 4 weeks; mask wearing in shops is generally observed, though there are more without in the larger supermarkets than heretofore. The chemist (as a 'health' facility) does require masks, though it's noticeable that because people aren't used to wearing them elsewhere, the staff have to keep reminding customers. Also, the 'maximum of 3' rule still applies there – it doesn't in Boots/Sainsbury's though. Most distancing restrictions are being maintained in places like the chemist, surgeries, library, shops, small shops/butcher's etc.
- Several long-standing clubs, societies, activities are restarting as are some Library activities. During this period, the following are re-starting: Here is a summary:
  - + **Library clubs partially return in September**
  - + **West Moors Lunch & Friendship Club restarted in September**
  - + **Community Sing-a-long, St. Martin's coffee morning & various concerts, [harvest concert](#) etc., also re-start or take place in September & October.**
  - + **Youth & Community Club - restarts 14th September.**
  - + *Townswomen's Guild meetings resume in September (16th)*
  - + *Litter-pick around West Moors - first of a routine event September 26th*
  - + **St. Mary's parish church ... Harvest Fayre** in October
  - + **Horticultural Society ... restarts** October 11th
- The UK government (though applies to England only) made several announcements on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September regarding future 'controls'. Provisional plans will remain in place to re-instate mandatory mask-wearing in certain settings and 'working from home where possible' may also return. The vaccine 'push' is to be extended to providing 'booster' jabs to all those over age 50 within a week or so – essentially 6 months after you've had your second 'original' dose. The day before (Monday 13<sup>th</sup>) it was announced that Covid-19 vaccinations (single dose only) would be offered to all youngsters age 12-15.
- Case numbers are remaining stubbornly high and have been generally increasing, as have hospital admissions, though the latter are not at the levels of previous problem periods. With the full holiday ( Bank & Air show) periods now ended, it's to be hoped that some improvement will be observed, though the return to school on 6<sup>th</sup> September may work against that.
- Mind you, we haven't had notice of when the delayed flu jabs are to take place yet!
- By the last week of this summary though, there is sign of a reprieve – at least locally. West Moors & Dorset-wide case numbers were below the national & regional average, and all the 'numbers' (over 7 days) were down ... cases down 23%, deaths down 56% (very low numbers – between 2 and 4) and hospital admissions very low – just 28 in the past week.

- There is now speculation that some sort of ‘break’ with a return to mandated restrictions may be needed as autumn and early winter take hold. There is an additional problem that transport problems have delayed the seasonal flu vaccination programme. A perfect storm? The next four weeks will determine what the future holds.

**Visit: [westmoors-tc.gov.uk/](https://westmoors-tc.gov.uk/) and select “Covid-19”**