

Composite “West Moors: Together” bulletins: **March – June 2020**

Introduction:

- + On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. A novel coronavirus (SARS coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2)) was subsequently identified from patient samples.
 - + It was already known, from effects within China and elsewhere (e.g., Italy, Spain) that Coronavirus / Covid-19 spread rapidly and could lead to severe respiratory problems in already unwell people and / or the elderly. (However, as events unfolded, even previously healthy people and quite young subjects succumbed).
 - + The pandemic is thought to have spread to the United Kingdom in late January 2020.
 - + The Department of Health and Social Care launched a campaign to help slow the virus's spread, and began posting daily updates in early February.
 - + A campaign of personal hygiene was introduced – with people encouraged to cancel / postpone events, meeting etc., that required face-to-face interaction.
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+ At 8:30 p.m. on 23 March 2020, UK Prime Minister [Boris Johnson](#) announced a stay-at-home order effective immediately. All non-essential shops and services were ordered to close, and police were given discretion to break up gatherings of more than two people. The British public was told that they must stay at home, except for exercise (such as running, walking or cycling), shopping for essential items, any medical need, providing care to a vulnerable person, or travelling to work where the work in question was vital and could not be done from home. All schools (apart from special arrangements for ‘key-workers’), businesses, venues, facilities, amenities and places of worship were shut down. Those with symptoms, and their household, were told to ‘self-isolate’ (hence the need for volunteers to help with shopping, collecting prescriptions etc.) and the ‘shielding’ scheme was introduced whereby the most vulnerable (as defined by the DHSC/NHS via local Gps) were required to NOT go out at all – essential food/consumable supplies were arranged. Panic buying in all shops led to much distress – not least to the NHS/Care staff still trying to work and shop!

Week-by-week record

Week-ending Monday 23rd March:

- Pinehurst Community Church arranged for printing and distribution of ‘flyers’ telling those in need of some shopping, contact etc., where to call.
- Web page on Council web site set up with list of telephone numbers of those who have volunteered to help out (follow link below).
- Also on this “Coronavirus Information Hub” is a list of useful (and reliable) links for information – and also links to Facebook pages of various community organisations.
- Most organisations in the village have now suspended activity including ... **Gullivers Farm Shop, Townswomen’s Guild, Flower Group, Horticultural Society, Library, the Council Office** (routine meetings suspended wef 18th March); **Annual/Public Meeting** cancelled), **all routine & special church services ..** and others.
- Normal schooling ceases (some exceptions)
- Bus services (Morebus): will be revamped – awaiting full details but a mix of reversion to non school-day patterns, some ‘normal’ and Saturday services.
- The “pre-9.30am” Monday-Friday bus concession travel block has been suspended.
- Many churches are now interacting via on-line resources: see their web sites and/or Facebook pages for details.
- VE Day anniversary activities cancelled.

- All routine meetings that involve gathering of people have been cancelled.
- Surgeries & Chemist restricting / limiting physical access to buildings – recommend telephone and/or email/web access where possible.

Week-ending Monday 30th March:

- Bus services drop back to 'NSch' (i.e., School Holiday) schedules locally. Essentially, service frequency is unchanged: this may change as buses are running with hardly any passengers!
- The "TooEarly" pre-9.30am M-F concession restriction on local buses is removed. Very little movement on buses though.
- Notification that Wimborne Minor Injuries Unit will only see you if arranged ahead of time.
- Most business premises in WM closed: only Tesco, Spar, Chemist, Surgeries etc., open in Station Road – Pandora & Filling Station on Ringwood/Pinewood Shops.
- Shops etc., enforcing separation between individuals by restricting numbers in shops etc., at any one time: queuing now part of everyday life.
- In line with central guidance, the two Play Areas in West Moors are closed-off; Oakhurst physically (gates remain locked), Fryer Field by advice.
- NHS volunteering organisation is well-subscribed.
- Adam Parrett (Pinehurst CC) reports that calls are now coming in regularly for support help, shopping etc. St. Mary's appeal for more volunteers to help with their effort.
- Roads very quiet generally – especially evenings and nights. Very few people walking about and certainly no large gatherings.
- As well as the roads being quiet – the skies are notably absent of aircraft.

Week-ending Monday 6th April:

- Dorset Waste announce that they will not be able to return within a few days to collect 'missed bins'. The item will have to wait until the next routine collection of that particular bin.
- St. Martin's URC doing 'Community Singalong' on line ... and also via Forest FM!
- Now confirmed that 'Westival 2020' is cancelled.
- The 'Clap for Carers' event on Thursday was successful.
- Telephone numbers on Dorset Council site keep changing as the situation changes: most confusing! I think they've settled now.
- Significant reduction in bus services with effect from Sunday 5th April. No Sunday/PH running of X6 and it will only run every 2 hours (not hourly) and no direct service to/from Bournemouth; 38 re-routed through Heatherlands Estate all journeys with slight reduction in frequency.
- Traffic seems to have increased a little after the very quiet roads of last week – people getting bored?
- However, over the weekend just gone (gloriously sunny) – very quiet: probably as quiet as it was 60 or more years ago!
- Began checking volunteer listing on TC web site. Minor alterations as yet.
- Dorset NHS [in common with most] now only allowing GP, clinics, walk-in centres etc., **by prior appointment** – and then sparingly.
- Don't think I've seen so many couples (of all ages) out walking hand-in-hand since the 1950s!
- Royal Mail/PO warn services may become 'variable'!

Week-ending Monday 13th April:

- Essentially - "Steady as she goes" this week past: lots of messages exhorting people to stay at home (except for allowed exceptions) and to judge by state of roads, shops, supermarkets etc., it seems to be working!

- Easter Weekend Friday 10th to Monday 13th: everyone being exhorted to ‘stay away from Dorset’!
- Good Friday, Saturday & much of Easter Day ... warm/sunny cold/windy Easter Monday, but eventually brilliantly sunny. However, West Moors was like it must have been in the 1950s – people on bikes, smiling at each other – roads virtually deserted!
- PCC community volunteer help again had a busy week.
- The delivery of food boxes provided by the likes of Webb’s, Pandora & Gullivers Farm has continued and is proving very popular. Penn Court Cafe join in with offer of delivery (and some take-away).
- Notice given to early volunteers, whose telephone numbers have appeared on the Council web site for the past few weeks, that those numbers will be deleted as there are now ‘ordered’ systems of volunteering in place.
- Major power cut Thursday evening – network problems.

Week-ending Monday 20th April:

- Council office arranging for delivery of kitchen caddy (food waste) bags on a Wednesday – on application to the Office.
- Still very quiet – a very few people on the buses – lots of cyclists and walkers (family and couples) but adhering to the ‘distancing’ guidelines well.
- Chemist have large plywood screens up now with little holes to pass items through!
- ‘Lock-down’ extended for another three weeks as of Thursday 16th April.
- Pinehurst Community Church report another busy week: 295 people have already received help overall – with over 30 getting continuing support. Plenty of volunteers and more coming forward. 01202 892 776
- DC announce that they will restart Garden Waste collections.
- ‘Clap for Carers’ on Thursday getting louder!
- Town Council Newsletter issued (No. 7): extensive advice & news about current situation.
- Weather overall fine, but short period rain 16th/17th.

Week-ending Monday 27th April:

- The fine weather continues ... as does the relative quiet of the village. Plenty of bicycles about – few people on the buses – which are running to a “50%” level of availability.
- Thursday evening (23rd); fire brigade called to fire in Plantation, thought to have been started deliberately – several appliances called from surrounding stations.
- Pinehurst Community Church again had a fruitful week ... several regular ‘customers’ for their services – plenty of volunteers which is good to hear.
- Newsletters issued by Town Council (No. 7 and 8); former a general issue but heavily influenced by Covid-19 news; latter a special issue for the VE75 anniversary commemorations – which of course have been greatly toned-down due to the emergency.
- More traffic about latter part of week – whether ‘legitimate’ or not cannot tell. Sunday saw plenty of people walking about – but subjectively keeping distance rules and not congregating.

Week-ending Monday 4th May:

- Brook View Nursing Home (Riverside Road) reports three confirmed cases of Covid-19 in its residents.
- First significant rainfall for some time overnight Monday/Tuesday – marking the change from extended dry/warm conditions to something more ‘normal’ for an English spring!
- Three week checks on local / community help organisations carried out – all carried over for another 3 weeks.

- St. Mary's church has been busy these past weeks – being one of two 'hubs' for local support for things like shopping, collecting prescriptions and general contact. Andy Muckle (Vicar) reckons at least 60 people have been helped.
- Pinehurst Community Church hub also steady ... fewer requests for assistance past week, but 37 receiving help.
- All four local churches, have run 'on-line' services during the emergency – including URC 'Singalong'!
- Subjectively, local shops (Spar, Tesco Express) along with Sainsbury's (Tricketts X) all getting stock under control. Some 'lack' [e.g., flour, eggs – i.e., home baking!] but broadly, after the panic of a few weeks back, things on the shelves back to near-normal - lots of queuing though.
- A minute's silence held on Tuesday 11am to honour those who've died in the Health/Care sector.
- Chemist staff wearing (for a time) *full* face protection (i.e., anti-moisture visors), similar to that in ICU in a hospital! Understandable, but frankly frightening – also difficult to communicate.

Week-ending Monday 11th May:

- (*This should have gone in the previous issue*) ... West Moors Town Council held its first-ever Full Council meeting 'virtually' (using Zoom application) on the 30th April. Seemed to work OK.
- More bicycles about – family groups especially quite evident – also, I've not seen so many tandems since my childhood in the 50s! Halfords still open – but with restrictions on access/movement outside and inside.
- West Moors parish church, St. Mary's, held an on-line service to commemorate VE75 on Friday 8th May at 3.00 pm: it was streamed live via Facebook.
- West Moors Town Council chairman laid a wreath on the War Memorial to mark 75 years since Victory in Europe (VE) day 8th May 1945.
- Plenty of bunting around the village to mark VE75.
- 'End of drive' parties held in various places for VE75 on Friday 8th (re-scheduled Bank Holiday).
- Pinehurst Church have now helped over 500 people since the emergency started; they now have spare food which is being distributed to vulnerable families in West Moors.
- PM (England only) announces (Sunday/7pm) 'variation' in original 'Lock Down' message: too early to assess if it's got local impacts – the coming week will no doubt bring clarity; in the meantime ... carry on Together West Moors!

+ On 13 May those in England were allowed to meet one other person not from their household outside whilst maintaining a 2-metre social distance.

Week-ending Monday 18th May:

- Following government advice, it looks like face coverings will become more evident! (Though by the week's end, the overwhelming majority were still 'open-face')
- Play areas are set to remain closed 'for the foreseeable future'
- Morebus required face-coverings for passengers from Tuesday – following government advice (above): not sure that's made much difference.
- Another fire at the Plantation Tuesday evening. Local youth (again) thought to be the culprits, but unfortunately everything is very dry at the moment.
- Another fire closed A31 St. Leonard's (NHS facilities evacuated) Sunday afternoon/evening. Bonfire in the dry conditions?

- Traffic flow seems (subjectively) to have increased but not back to pre-emergency levels as yet. Still lengthy periods with little/no vehicular movement. However, by Sunday obviously more cars about.
- Seafoods Fish & Chips re-opened during week for pre-ordered collection and deliveries only: no 'walk-in'.
- Pinehurst Church have helped over 620 people since they began their operation; distributing stocks of food that they have accumulated to good causes.

Week-ending Monday 25th May:

- Dorset Council plan to open schools (subject to conditions at the time) AT THE EARLIEST 1st June: at this time, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are involved; in parallel, Secondary/upper schools are working to hold some 'face-to-face' sessions for Year 10 and 12 before end school year. Not known how this affects local schools, or indeed whether it will happen! Also not known is how the local Academy schools will operate (lots of 'politics' involved as well as the obvious health issues).
- The fine weather continues: plenty of bikes, but also marked increase in vehicular traffic (all classes – 70-80% subjectively from pre-emergency levels) during this first full week of 'try to get back to work' phase. The mix of bicycles (some very young people) and increasing car/lorry use is a concern.
- St. Mary's Parish Church and Pinehurst Community Church (PCC) continue to provide welcome support to the community (3-week check carried out). The 'call' on their services is stable now – PCC have spare food to distribute to those in need.
- All four of our churches are using 'social media' to full extent to provide Services – very popular to judge from 'views' on FB.
- Despite 'advice' to use face coverings, little evidence on buses (or indeed anywhere else).
- And extended dry/sunny (and for a time windy) weather has led to a major fire in Wareham Forest – the effects of which were felt here in West Moors!

+ From 28 May groups of up to six from different households were allowed to meet outside.

Week-ending Monday 1st June:

- All local schools have now published procedures etc., for returning Reception, Years 1 and 6 pupils back to 'physical school' either first or second week of June. Oakhurst & St. Mary's in the week beginning 1st June (Oakhurst 'phased') and Middle School week beginning 8th. 'Distance Learning' continues for all other pupils, and of course the children of "key workers" will still be in school, as they have been for several weeks.
- Some local retailers that have been closed since late March have announced plans to re-open around mid-June: this follows government relaxation of shut-down regulations on 25th & 29th May.
- Morebus announce that wef Sunday 31st May, X6 returns to hourly service (and close to previous timings), but still no Sunday/PH service. 38 remains restricted service. Slight increase in passengers noted by week's end.
- "Clap for Carers" on Thursday (28th) possibly the last in the series; the lady that started it all off has indicated that perhaps its purpose has now ceased to be. Good effort from West Moors that evening (8pm).
- General traffic by Saturday very close to pre-emergency levels: also a lot of *gross* speeding!
- The month (and extended period of 'lockdown') ends as it began ... dry and sunny: record-breaking lack of rain & abundance of sunshine in May.
- Residents report highly variable water pressure past weeks: possible variations due to more people being at home / altered pattern of water use / garden watering.

+ From 1 June, English schools were encouraged to re-open and vulnerable people shielding at home were allowed outside for the first time in approximately two months.

Week-ending Monday 8th June:

- Apparently a lot of gathering on Fryer Field, noise, litter etc., over the weekend 30th/31st May, which was fine/warm.
- Local First Schools returning to Nursery, Reception & Year 1 (phased) as well as continuing with 'key' workers children.
- Wool shop re-opens on Station Road: the shops at the end of Pinehurst Road are much busier now (especially Pandora's & McColl's) so parking is back to being a 'problem'!
- Some people about who've been 'isolating' for many weeks – finding the changes a bit confusing!
- X6/Morebus back to hourly service: not many passengers – hardly any face-covering.
- No (apparent) 'Clap for Carers' on Thursday. Weather has turned cooler with occasional (welcome) rain.
- Road continue to get busier: more 'commercial' traffic about. By Friday, subjectively the traffic was within 90% or more of 'pre-lockdown' levels: evenings though continue quiet with few 'evening' venues active (pubs, restaurants etc., still closed).

Week-ending Monday 15th June:

- Travellers on Memorial Hall car park on Tuesday (9th) temporarily but they moved away the same evening.
- Preparations for re-opening of 'non-essential' retail from Monday 15th: also plans announced for Secondary school children in Years 10 & 12 (along with Further Education establishments) to receive some 'face-to-face' tuition from next week.
- Dorset Council, BCP Council and Hampshire CC revert back to *not* allowing concessionary travel before 9.30 am M-F (effective 15th); presumably the 'East Dorset' exemption is still valid?
- Churches open for 'private prayer' from 13th (Saturday). St. Anthony's do their first 'live' streamed Mass on Sunday. Other churches using YouTube (and have been for some time).
- Advice regarding 'Support Bubbles' with one other household (restricted) announced.
- The routine three-week check with St. Mary's and Pinehurst churches undertaken; still offering support – lessened considerably now but a steady 'background' contact with some who are struggling – especially given how long the emergency is lingering: both intend to carry-on for the foreseeable future.
- Panels smashed in bus stops in village – bored youngsters?
- Figures issued by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) during the week showed that two people had died within the West Moors council area in the period 1st March - 31st May.

Week-ending Monday 22nd June:

- Card (3-Wishes) shop in Station Road report good customer attendance! Other retail outlets either open or planning to open soon.
- Following change in government regulations effective 15th, local churches have been arranging for 'private prayer' sessions to be available. St. Anthony's (RC) have opened their building during defined periods – with stewards in attendance – and restrictions on what members can touch, advice/availability of hygiene procedures etc. St. Mary's (CofE) don't feel able to open the church as such – but have dedicated a bench outside for private reflection – inviting people to bring a single pebble to add to a collection for the future – perhaps building a post-Covid 'cairn'.
- Denewood House held a 'socially distanced' meet-up between residents & families early in the week; weather good and lots of happy (and tear-strewn) faces. A wonderful effort.

- Eyestyle opticians (Station Road) announce they hope to re-open wef 1st July.
- With anticipated reduction of the “2 metre” rule next week, it looks as if a lot of people are practising this already! Traffic is also virtually ‘pre-emergency’ levels.
- Yesterday (Sunday/21st) traffic & pedestrians very ‘normal’ – Trailway busy.

Week-ending Monday 29th June:

- Announced Monday/22nd ... Shielding eased from 6th July (meet up in groups of [maximum] 6 outside and ‘bubble’ with one other family) and from 1st August, **shielding advice suspended/removed (support ceases)**.
- Gulliver’s Farm Shop open for customers.
- Station Hair (Station Road) ready to re-open to judge by signs in window! Also, Leanne’s in Penn Court hope to re-start from 7th July.
- Tuesday/23rd ... **major changes announced ... effective 4th July**, pubs/restaurants, hotels and hairdressers/barbers can re-open, subject to meeting “Covid-Secure” guidelines. Also campsites & caravan parks (but strict cleanliness & social distancing to be observed).
- Libraries, community centres, ‘open-air’ play areas may re-open soon – need to watch for DC Library service advice.
- Weddings allowed to have up to 30 people attending & churches may open, but no singing!
- The 2m/6feet distancing rule/guidance will be relaxed to “1+metre/3+feet” – but stay apart as far as possible!
- Other measures, such as two households may meet indoors (but no hugging!) & overnight stays allowed.
- Buses not as busy as I would expect: I suspect many ‘elderly’ aren’t comfortable coming out with current restrictions & health risk in place.
- Local doctor (WM Village Surgery) now requiring all to wear ‘face covering’: chemist ‘advisory’ only – though that might change: science is weak on effectiveness of same.

The following message was posted by Pinehurst Community Church on their Facebook page on Friday 26th July, 2020: a useful summary of their activities!

Dear #WestMoors,

As promised, here is your monthly update on the COVID-19 support hub:

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have now helped over 850 people in and around West Moors. Our volunteer list (of those who have helped in the past and those who are helping now) stands at 54 people.

Things have started to slow down now and we are only delivering medication on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. As many of our volunteers have gone back to work, we are prioritising those who have been shielding or who have needed to isolate.

We have honestly loved being able to take up this role for our community and coordinate the support hub. We would never have been able to do it without our amazing volunteers, so a BIG thank you to them. We also would have never been able to do it without the support of the West Moors community. We love where we live and we love that it has a real community spirit.

Remember that we are always here if you need us. We always try to help as many people as we can. We can help with practical jobs/errands or we can be here to be a listening ear if you need us. As more places begin to open, and life begins to pick back up again, do remember that if you need us, we’re just a phone call away. Call 01202 892776 and leave us a message.

Stay safe and have a lovely weekend!