

Barry O'Leary

Hi everyone,

MDC Member Report –June 2021, For Evercreech Parish Council

Lockdown latest – what changed this month? (from 17th May onward)

- Groups of up to six people and two households can **meet indoors**, meaning that people can now enter each other's homes.
- **Hugging** is allowed between close family and friends, who can choose whether or not to socially distance. However, people are being "urged to remain cautious", and wider **social distancing** rules remain for adult social care, medical, retail, hospitality, and business settings.
- **Pubs and restaurants can open indoors**, and venues are allowed to serve food and drink, but hospitality guidance must be observed, such as individuals remaining seated. There are no requirements for guests to be socially distanced at tables during this stage.
- The **rule of six** and two households' rule was also introduced indoors from this date. It has been lifted outdoors, meaning people can meet in groups of up to 30 in beer gardens or when dining al fresco.
- **Care home visiting** has been eased further, with residents able to have up to five named visitors and greater freedoms to make low risk visits outside of the establishments.
- **University students** can return to face-to-face teaching on campus, replacing online lectures that have been in place for months. They should get tested twice a week upon return.
- **Funerals** are no longer be limited to 30 mourners. Instead, the capacity is determined by how many people could be accommodated in venues such as places of worship or funeral homes while maintaining social distancing.
- The cap of 30 people remains for **weddings** and other types of significant events, including bar mitzvahs and christenings.
- Up to 30 people can attend a support group or **parent and child group**. The limit does not include children under five.

- **Hotels and B&Bs** can open, meaning small group trips are back on the cards, with up to six people or two households able to meet indoors.
- Additionally, **professional performances** can now resume indoors. There is no official guidance on the number of performers permitted, but this is determined based on the capacity of the venue.
- **Indoor sports and gym classes** can also open, along with entertainment venues, including cinemas and theatres. New rules are in place for different sizes of venues.
- **Normal outdoor events** can open for up to 4,000 people or 50 per cent of the venue capacity, whichever is smaller. Similarly, normal indoor events can open for up to 1,000 people or 50 per cent capacity, again whichever is lower.
- For **huge outdoor seated venues**, there is a special limit. Up to 10,000 attendees are allowed or 25 per cent capacity, whichever is lower. This means, for example, Wembley Stadium can open with 10,000 fans in attendance.
- The ban on overseas holidays has now ended, in the first step to reviving **foreign travel**. It is no longer illegal to go abroad, meaning summer holidays overseas are now allowed, with a traffic light system for countries in use. However, ongoing concern about the Indian variant has given the EU pause on whether to lift the travel ban on British tourists.
- The Department for Transport has unveiled a new [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website to provide holidaymakers with clear information on the cheapest, quickest and most efficient Covid test companies.

Coronavirus Helpline: ☎ 0300 790 6275

Self-isolating if you have COVID-19, or are showing symptoms, is one of the most important things you can do to help stop the spread of coronavirus in Mendip.

You also need to self-isolate for 10 days if you've been told to by the NHS COVID-19 app or NHS Test and Trace - even if you've been vaccinated or show no symptoms as you could still pass COVID-19 on to someone else who could become very ill.

But you don't need to feel alone if you have to self-isolate. There is local support available - whether you're struggling with money, need help with practical tasks, or are finding it hard to cope and need someone to talk to. Call the helpline, 7 days a week, 8am-6pm.

District councils give local electors a vote on the future of local government in Somerset

You may be aware that there was a minor error in the recent voter packs issued with regards to Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset. The independently drafted leaflet accompanying the ballot paper omitted the last two letters of the web address for One Somerset.

Full information on both the options for change for local government in Somerset has been and is still readily available at the official websites, and these have been well publicised in the last six months.

The poll will continue so that all Somerset voters have their opportunity to be heard.

The Leaders of the four district councils in Somerset have replied to the questions asked of them by the Local Government Secretary in his letter sent Monday 24 May, which you may have viewed, or seen reported.

In their reply they set out the actions the councils have taken to mitigate the error in voter material sent in support of the local poll on options for change in local government in Somerset.

The Leaders have also written to Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of Somerset County Council.

The letters from the Leaders can be found here:

www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10066/Leaders-send-letters-to-the-Local-Government-Secretary-and-Cllr-David-Fothergill-and-reaffirm-their-commitment-to-continue-with-the-poll-

Voters can find information on the options for change in local government in Somerset under consideration at:

www.onesomerset.org.uk

www.strongersomerset.co.uk

All votes must be received by **4pm on Friday 4 June.**

Council Meetings at Mendip

Arrangements are in place at Mendip to facilitate physical meetings once again. A number of 'hybrid' meetings have already been held successfully. Committee members have to be physically present in the Council Chamber in order to fully participate in the meeting, according to Government legislation. However other elected members and officers can continue to access the meeting virtually.

Numbers in the Council Chamber will be strictly limited to 23 to include Committee Members, essential officers, and a limited number of members of the public who wish to participate in the meeting (by prior arrangement). Everyone else can participate in the meeting virtually via their pc/laptop or telephone (in the now familiar fashion) or watch it on the live stream via the website.

Similar arrangements will occur for all Committee Meetings between now and the 21 June when the arrangements will be reassessed following the Government's latest decision on the Roadmap to lifting restrictions.

Two new funds available for community and eco projects in Mendip

Mendip District Council has launched two new grant funds – one for communities and one for climate and ecological emergency projects.

Voluntary, community, not-for-profit organisations and City, Town and Parish Councils are invited to apply for the funding.

Applications opened from noon today (1 June) until midnight on 31 August 2021.

Details can be found here: www.mendip.gov.uk/cf and www.mendip.gov.uk/ccf

The Communities Fund will support project ideas that improve community resilience, build capacity, and promote wellbeing, as well as support communities recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. The amount of money available for this is £350,000 in total. Groups can apply for up to £2,000 for smaller projects or up to £30,000 for larger schemes.

The Council has also put aside a total of £50,000 for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Fund, where community organisations can apply for up to £2,000 to

fund green projects. Applications for this fund must demonstrate how projects impact on net-carbon emissions and / or the ecological benefits to the community.

Another round of business grant help opens at Mendip

Mendip District Council opened its Additional Restrictions Grant (Round 4) on May 17. It's available for businesses that are not business ratepayers and were required to close by law due to COVID lockdown. It is also for ratepayers who were not required to close but who were nevertheless severely impacted by the national restrictions and were ineligible for Restart Grants.

Apply today! Full details can be found here: [COVID-19: Business Grants](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10042/Another-round-of-business-grant-help-opens-at-Mendip)
<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10042/Another-round-of-business-grant-help-opens-at-Mendip>

Business Advisors

Mendip District Council is launching a new grant scheme to boost local businesses as we recover and rebuild after the COVID-pandemic. It's called the **Business Revitalisation Grant for Mendip**.

Businesses from across all commercial sectors will be able to apply for the grant of between £5,000 and £20,000 to develop a recovery idea for their firm. As part of the grant process, eligible businesses who express an interest will be offered an hour-long one-to-one business health check and advice session. Business Advisors will be working from July to early September 2021; however this may be extended to the end of March 2022 and beyond. It's anticipated these one-to-one sessions will initially be conducted virtually.

Further details about the Business Advisor role and the grant are available:

 [Business Revitalisation Grant information for Business Advisors \[243.7KB\]](#)

If you are interested in supporting the Mendip economic recovery and can help the Council with its roll-out of the exciting Business Revitalisation Grant for Mendip, please complete and return an application form.

Send this to revitalisegrant@mendip.gov.uk by 4 June 2021:

 [Business Advisor Application form \[185.88KB\]](#)

And if you have any queries, or would like an informal discussion about the role, please email revitalisegrant@mendip.gov.uk

New housing partnership plans to tackle social homes shortage

A new partnership aims to provide more social housing provision, beginning in Frome - and leave a lasting legacy of high-quality homes offering fair rents for residents in the town.

Frome Area Community Land Trust (FACLT), Selwood Housing Group (a not-for-profit housing association), and Mendip District Council have joined forces to address and deliver much-needed homes for local people.

Called the Fair Homes Project, the partnership believes 'everyone deserves a home' and has identified a number of potential plots on Mendip District Council land suitable for the plans.

Up to 30 homes could be delivered across several sites, for those most in housing need, including young people who have grown up in Frome, those with family and friends in the town, carers and the cared-for, and people working and contributing to the community.

Consultation is taking place with residents neighbouring the locations ear-marked for possible development, and engagement with Frome Town Council and local parish councillors has begun. Further face-to-face consultations on each proposed plot are planned post-COVID restrictions. Details will be released shortly.

A Fair Homes Project website has also been launched providing full details and location maps, and there's an area where people can feedback their comments. The online consultation ends on June 11th, 2021.

Those seeking social housing provision are particularly encouraged to visit the new website, as they will find details on how to register their interest online.

Find out more: www.selwoodhousing.com/

Census - closed on 17th May

The response to Census 2021 exceeded all expectations, with 97 per cent of households across England and Wales making sure they count when it comes to local services like school places, GP surgeries and hospital beds.

This is above the pre-census target of 94 per cent, while all local authorities have seen over 90 per cent of households respond, exceeding an 80 per cent target.

Mendip Partnership Updates:

Shepton Mallet Lido reopened Saturday 22nd May

Fusion Lifestyle is pleased to announce the reopening of Shepton Mallet Lido for summer season on Saturday 22nd May. The outdoor pool, popular with both adult and family swimmers, has been closed since 2019 due to lockdown restrictions, but is now ready to welcome both residents and visitors back to the water. The centre will be open daily, but please refer to the website for opening hours. Bookings can be made up to seven days in advance, via download of the Fusion Lifestyle app or visit www.fusion-lifestyle.com to register and use the online booking facility.

Finally- Your views matter!

Many of you will have seen a monthly survey from me through your door- I encourage you to fill this out in paper or on line and get back to me- I am here to help you and help make Evercreech and surrounding communities a better place to live!

Stay Safe

Barry

Your Mendip Councillor,  here for you
Cllr. Barry O'Leary

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