

Dear Councillors

Were we surprised being moved into Tier 4 let alone 5? I leave that question for you to ponder. For now I have copied below Norfolk's Director of Public Health rationale for the move to 4 and which pertains to 5. Also copied the usual websites which I am assured are updated regularly – this means that whatever changes come into play you can check out the latest and what is happening where your family and friends live.

As to why tier 4 (and 5??) Louise Smith, Director of Public Health in Norfolk said 'What is really clear, over the last six or seven days the numbers have really taken off and are now rising very quickly. "It may be the new variant and we think now just after half of the cases are the new variant but it's also worth remembering that all our predictions and scenarios did predict we were in for a tough winter and unfortunately this does look the direction in which we are heading. When we look at the data by district area we are seeing the numbers rise in every district.'

Below I have also copied information as to what is available for people struggling to cope with lock down and other Covid related problems. The good news is that there is a range of assistance available and if appropriate please share the information but first:

Holt Hall: By the time you meet you will know the outcome of the full council meeting of Norfolk county councillors called for Monday 11 January to request that Cabinet urgently revisit and reverse its decision to dispose of Holt Hall and instead develop a plan to secure the future of outdoor learning at Holt Hall together with the investment required to ensure its long term sustainability.

COVID-19 Information: Information on the national tiers is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

www.norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus: this site includes local services as well as the latest regulations for Norfolk and reference to many if not all of the government schemes

www.gov.uk/coronavirus: all the government schemes are to be found on this site

www.nhs.uk/coronavirus; separate site if required but linked with the government site.

Support for Families: A reminder that Norfolk County Council has developed a package of support to help families over the winter months. For information and advice go to www.norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus or call 0344 800 8020. Please share this information and the following:

Free school meals: check if your children are eligible: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-meals-and-milk>.

Extension of Norfolk Assistance Scheme: provides support for food, fuel, clothes and other essential household items.

Visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/NAS or if no internet call 01603 223392 (option 5) (you can leave a message if the line is busy).

Power Cuts - Call 105 free of charge to report power cuts and damage to the electricity network, or 0800 3163 105 (from a corded landline phone or mobile phone). Also visit the following sites: www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk for the latest updates (on a mobile phone), www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut type in your postcode to view the live power cut map and Tweet @ukpowernetworks to report power cuts or to receive updates.

Roadworks: Up-to-date information about roadworks in Norfolk is available on the County Council website at www.norfolk.gov.uk/roadworks

Avian Influenza: Measures regarding Avian Influenza were enhanced at least twice over the past weeks so however few birds you have please check the latest update: www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#latest-situation

Christmas Lights: For the first time ever I persuaded Michael (spouse) to retrieve our Christmas lights from the loft in time to switch on for 1 December. I know several villages planned to get their lights up early and we hope those passing our home were cheered by our lights, as we were by others on dull and wet nights. I now working on retaining our lights as long as possible - watch this space.

Good works: Whilst I have copied above various forms of official assistance yet again I would like to applaud the immense amount of valuable work being carried out by volunteers, neighbours and simply good people.

Warm wishes to you all.

Marie

County Cllr Dr Marie Strong
Wells Division

Barshams & Houghton St Giles, Binham with Cockthorpe, Blakeney, Brinton with Sharrington, Field Dalling & Saxlingham, Glandford with Letheringsett, Great Snoring, Great & Little Walsingham, Hindringham, Holkham, Langham, Morston, Sculthorpe, Stiffkey, Stody with Hunworth, Thornage & Little Thornage, Warham, Wells-next-the-Sea, Wighton, Wiveton