



OWGRA

Osterley & Wyke Green Residents' Association

eNewsletter – 28th March 2020

Given the seriousness of the current Covid-19 pandemic, this 5th OWGRA eNewsletter of 2020 is dedicated to that topic.

The OWGRA Committee hasn't initiated any specific activities (e.g. organising a network of volunteers) for 3 reasons

1. Unfortunately almost all of us fall into the higher risk groups as we were all born in the last century. So there is somewhat of a limit as to what we can and should do if we are to stay safe in line with government guidance
2. We are like pretty well everyone else; we are still learning ourselves about how to manage this and what to do to keep ourselves and others safe.
3. Well organised mutual help groups are already up and running – (See Community Help section). It is not appropriate for us to seek to replicate this work; it may even be counter-productive by causing confusion were to do so.

However we are relatively well plugged into what is happening locally. So what we've tried to do in this eNewsletter is to pull together the best advice available from the experts, as it pertains to our area. We are like everyone else trying to understand how to keep ourselves safe and help others – we look to the experts. What we have included here covers the following

- **Health advice.** The official sources of information (government and NHS) for the best health advice
- **News sources.** The sources of information from major reputable news organizations on the situation
- **LBH advice.** The guidance from the council on this - and their newsletters on it
- **Local services.** Any news on local shops and services that may be useful.
- **Police Advice.** The Police guidance on scams and repeating our previous guidance on being alert to scams.
- **Community help.** Where people can go to get, or provide, community help.

We will keep sending out information as it becomes available and welcome hearing from anyone as to what more you would like from us.

Please stay safe and follow the advice from the Government – especially on social distancing

Laurence Hawcroft, (Vice-Chair), and the OWGRA Committee.

Health Advice

NHS ADVICE

The single most reliable source of health-related advice on Covid-19 is the NHS. Their website is <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> .

Please use this as your first point of call for any health-related questions about this. It has sections covering

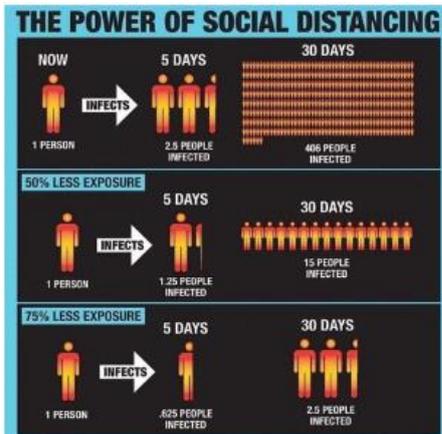
- Advice for people at high risk
- Symptoms and what to do
- Self-isolation and
- Other reputable links.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Keeping a safe distance from other people and minimising the people you do have any contact with is probably the single most important action each of us can do to minimise the spread of this virus. The

government provides specific advice here as to what they want us to do; we should all listen and follow that advice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others> .



This diagram graphically demonstrates how important this is to getting this outbreak under control, and the impact we can all have on it if we do substantially reduce the number of people we have any social contact with.

GOING OUT TO EXERCISE & KEEPING FIT

The government encourages us to go out once a day for exercise, provided we practice safe social distancing (i.e. stay at least 2 metres away from everyone else). Note that all the local sports clubs (Thistleworth, Wycombe House, Grasshoppers, Wyke Green Golf Club) are closed until further notice – so please do not travel to them.

If you're running, cycling or walking social distancing is relatively easy. But please, if you're running, do respect others. We have heard from several people when out walking of runners literally brushing past them as they run past. Such people are being inconsiderate of others.

If you go out to exercise and propose to do so by engaging in a team sport (football, tennis, etc.) it is hard to see how this can be managed. Are you actually going to make sure you're always at least 2 metres away from each other when playing tennis, football, etc., and what about the fact that everyone handles the ball in these games.....??

This is a serious crisis, and everyone needs to change their behaviour in response to it.

Many people are now taking the opportunity of exercising to online classes or You Tube videos. If you have any recommendations for any such classes for particular age groups please let us know and we can include them in future e-newsletters e.g. we hear children are enjoying starting the day to Joe Wicks classes, while the older age group might like Senior Fitness with Tona, and there are numerous yoga and Pilates classes. But please note - if you haven't exercised for a while, please seek medical advice beforehand.

News Services

SOCIAL MEDIA

Please do NOT use Social Media as your main source of information regarding this crisis. For every useful piece of information or advice, there are dozens of misleading, unhelpful and in some cases downright dangerous advice posted up there. Examples we have seen include

- Social influencers claiming that this is not a serious problem
- Claims you can tell if you have Covid-19 by holding your breath for several seconds and
- Numerous claims for “cures” and “ways to make you immune” which are simply not true.

Social media is good to communicate – but please don't use it as your source of fact on the crisis. This crisis is serious and we need to follow the best and most reliable information – and on social media there are too many people who feel they are an expert on things they actually know very little about. It is one thing to pass opinions about music, or sports, or concerts in such a case – it is completely different when such opinions (not facts) could result in readers making a life or death decision.

NEWS SERVICES

The following news services have good sources of information on the latest state of play

- The [BBC has a dedicated page](#) for the latest news on the outbreak.
- [Sky](#) doesn't have a dedicated page but does have a lot of stories and news about it.
- [ITV](#) also has a lot of information, with a number of stories under the “Health” menu option.

All the national newspapers also have a lot of information on their respective websites (Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mirror, The Guardian, etc.).

GOVERNMENT

The government has a very comprehensive website here <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> . This has a wide range of information about the crisis and the actions being taken by the government. This is the “official” site to use if you want non-health-related official guidance, with topics covered including, as examples

- School closures
- Employment and financial support and
- Travel
- Plus a number of other areas.

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Mayor of London also has [a website here](#). It essentially provides links to other websites we have already referenced elsewhere (the government, NHS, etc.). The information unique to this site are statements as to what the Mayor is doing specifically, updates on planned major events in London (all cancelled or postponed), and information for non-UK nationals.

LBH Advice

LBH WEBSITE

Hounslow Council is maintaining a very useful and comprehensive website (<https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/coronavirus>) on the Covid-19 epidemic detailing their advice and a summary of the help they can provide. When we last looked (evening of 24th March) it had the following information

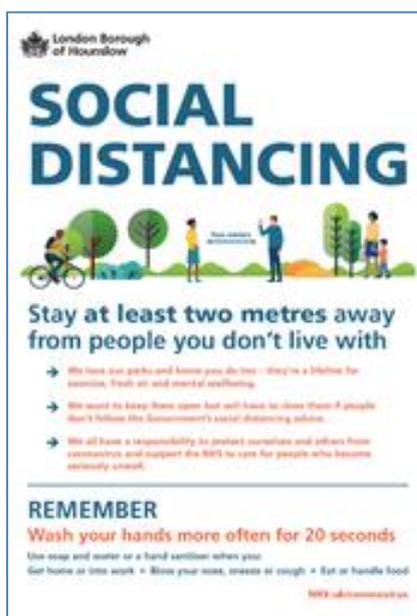
- Summary of the latest government guidance
- Steve Curran explaining what the council is doing to help
- Summary of what council building are closed, key services available and how to contact the council
- Symptoms of Covid-19
- Keeping yourselves and others free of infection
- Reducing unnecessary contact
- How to seek medical advice
- Financial support for those in need
- Support for businesses and employers
- Services provided by the Community and Voluntary sector
- Cyber Scams
- Useful links.

This is a comprehensive website for you to access if you need any information.

LBH NEWSLETTERS

The council are also sending out daily eNewsletters providing useful guidance to Hounslow residents. You can sign up to receive this newsletter at the website in the article above. The only information you need to provide is an email address.

USING COUNCIL PARKS



Council-run parks remain open, but people are strongly advised to practice social distancing when using them, and to only use them for their daily exercise. This does not include having a picnic in them, sitting in a group enjoying a beer, or playing sports such as football !

The council state that *“Hounslow has some of the best parks in London and we want you to enjoy them. We recognise that they are a lifeline for residents needing to get some exercise or fresh air, and great for physical and mental wellbeing. However, we will have to close them if people do not follow the [Government’s social distancing advice](#). If you need to leave your home, you must try to keep two metres from people you don’t live with.”*

However all playgrounds and play areas within them have been closed, to support social distancing. Further details are here ; [playgrounds and play areas within parks have been closed](#).

HOUNSLOW COMMUNITY HUB

Hounslow Council has launched a [Community Support Hub](#) to ensure the most vulnerable residents get the support and help they need throughout the coronavirus pandemic. They state that *“The priority of the Hub for now is to protect the most isolated and vulnerable individuals identified and contacted by the NHS to be ‘shielded’.* These residents have

serious long-term health conditions and it is vital that we ensure there are support networks in place to make sure they're looked after. The Hub is also there for anyone else vulnerable and isolated who may not have been contacted by the NHS.

Working with voluntary and community partners, businesses and local volunteers, the Hub will connect people with each other and ensure food, supplies and other support reaches those most in need. “

The Hub can be contacted on 020 7084 9697 or email hub@hounslow.gov.uk. The Hub is also the place for people, community groups and businesses to volunteer to help, and there's an online form to register.

TRAVELLER INCURSION



Unfortunately, we have had another traveller incursion in the last few days, initially in the DFS Carpetright car park on the A4, then in the Tesco Osterley car park and then in the Homebase overflow car park (along Syon Lane).

The Police and Council Enforcement Officers are involved, and the travellers have been issued with a code of conduct and advised about their behaviour. The Police will obviously monitor and take action where possible but with the current climate this is making things a little more difficult.

The travellers are still on the Homebase site as of Saturday afternoon 28 March. There is a mobile police CCTV van on site monitoring the activity.

Local businesses and sports clubs have been contacted and told to be aware that alternative sites are likely to have been identified and to advise of any sightings so that LBH Enforcement can follow up.

In the meantime if someone comes to your door offering to take away some waste for a fee

- ask to see their Waste Carrier Registration Certificate (as without such a registration they are breaking the law)
- satisfy yourself that they will properly dispose of the waste (because if they fly-tip it / leave it on a traveller-occupied site and it is traced back to you, YOU will be prosecuted as you remain responsible for its proper disposal even after paying them to take it away).
- If in any doubt DO NOT accept their offer.

Also, are you confident they are practising social distancing.....?

Local Services

ONLY BUY WHAT YOU WILL USE

I'm not going to comment on panic-buying. People need to decide for themselves whether being a good neighbour and looking after older and more vulnerable neighbours and local residents squares with buying 6 months' worth of toilet rolls in one go.

But what we all should be careful of is only buying food and other consumables that we will actually use. So if you buy 4 weeks' worth of fresh fruit and vegetables in one shop, quite a bit of it will have gone off by the time you get round to trying to use it. If you feel you must stock up, then buy frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables instead; at least these will still be usable months later when you discover them at the back of the freezer / in a box in the garage.

TESCO EXTRA OSTERLEY

I'm sure a lot of us have gone shopping in Tesco Osterley and have found it rather stressful, and not very successful. Tesco are doing all they can, but some ranges of produce are being cleared from the shelves the moment they are put up. And there are a LOT of people in the store.

Tesco have now implemented a number of changes to improve the situation, as explained in the following message from the store's General Manager, Rob Wynter

"We're all in this together.

We've introduced social distancing measures. Please leave at least a 2m gap between you and other customers and colleagues.

There is now a queuing system outside the store to ensure that the store is not overcrowded inside. There are Tesco colleagues outside showing people where to queue and there are lines drawn to ensure that 2m social distance is kept in the queue. There is also a new queuing system for the tills, so please follow directions as instructed by colleagues.

To help give everyone access to essential items we're limiting every product to a maximum of three per customer.

To help our elderly and most vulnerable customers who need extra support we're opening for them at the following times, Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays 0900hrs to 1000hrs.

To help the NHS colleagues we're opening for them at the following times, Tuesday, Thursday and Sundays 0900hrs to 1000hrs.

Thank you for your help."

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHOPS

I'd encourage you to also consider your local shops for some of your needs. I've found them to be far less busy, whilst also being better stocked. Ones I have tried (and there are others just as good) include

- The convenience store in the Osterley Parade on Thornbury Road (wide range of goods)
- The convenience store on London Road close to the station housing the Post Office (wide range of goods)
- A traditional greengrocers ([Isleworth Greengrocers](#)) in the small square off South Street in Isleworth which has an excellent range of fruit and vegetables. They also now do home delivery (email rowan@southstreet.biz with what you'd like and your address).

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL RESTAURANTS

In closing all restaurants, the government has allowed them to provide a takeaway service instead (normally this requires a separate licence). So if you would like a meal from one of our local restaurants, see whether they are offering this. Ones we are aware of include

- Memories of India on Thornbury Road (deliveries via UberEats and Deliveroo)
- Tiger Lily on Thornbury Road (the same)
- Burchells cafe in Isleworth is offering ready meals delivered in our area, menu changing every week. One of our committee members has tried them and was impressed by the quality. Contact details are info@burchells.co.uk.

In addition we hear that Lam's Kitchen Chinese takeaway on Thornbury Road also do fish and chips.

OSTERLEY PARK AND SYON PARK

Unfortunately both Osterley Park and Syon Park have closed.

- Osterley Park state that "*All our houses, gardens, parks, toilets, cafes and shops are closed from Sunday 22 March to further restrict the spread of coronavirus. Osterley Park and House is closed, please do not travel here.*" We hear reports this could be for at least 12 weeks.
- Syon Park state that "*We have made the decision to close Syon House and the gardens to the general public as of Friday 20th March.*"

FRUIT AND VEG FROM NEW COVENT GARDEN MARKET

New Covent Garden Market is normally a wholesale-only market supplying trade customers. Given the current situation, a number of the market suppliers are now offering to supply fresh fruit and vegetables delivered to your home address. Each supplier has their own arrangements for how this will work. If you are interested, [further details can be found on this website.](#)

Police Advice

COVID-19 – POLICE ADVICE

The Police have issued [guidance regarding Covid-19 scams](#) they are hearing about (yes, sadly some people really will stoop that low to make money illegally....).

The key bits of guidance they give are

- Online shopping scams where members of the public have ordered and paid for personal protective equipment, which has then never arrived. Guidance : look critically at the online vendor. If they are a company you have never heard of, and/or they seem to be selling something unavailable elsewhere / cheaper than elsewhere, then remember – if it's too good to be true, then it IS too good to be true.
- Unsolicited home visit from anyone offering a service and asking for payment or to be let into your home. Guidance : Immediately request and check their ID and credentials carefully. **If you are not convinced or you still have suspicions, shut the door and report the matter to police by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency.**
- Contact from someone you don't know, online or in person, and are being pressured to buy something you feel unsure about. Guidance : Take a moment to assess the situation and talk to someone you trust before committing.

In short, please apply the same caution as you would normally. They have also issued a [follow-up message here with more details](#).

The Police have also produced the postcard below – please take note of it.

Wash your hands of coronavirus scams!

Friends Against Scams aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams.

<p>Be aware of people offering or selling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Virus testing kits - these are only offered by NHS.■ Vaccines or miracle cures - there is currently no vaccine or cure.■ Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products.■ Shopping or medication collection services.■ Home cleaning services.	<p>Protect yourself and others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Don't be rushed into making a decision. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.■ Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.■ Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.■ If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front. If someone attempts to pressure you into accepting a service they are unlikely to be genuine. Check with family and friends before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.	<p>Be a good friend, help to protect your family, friends and neighbours from scams.</p> <p>Read it. Share it. Prevent it.</p> <p>#Coronavirus #ScamAware</p>
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Contact
For advice on scams call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 11 33**
To report a scam call Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**
Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.

NATIONAL TRADING STANDARDS
Scams Team

To learn more about the different types of scams visit www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk

SCAM TEXT MESSAGES - 1

The Police have also warned of text messages, seemingly from legitimate numbers, being sent saying things like “As part of the response to COVID-19, the UK Government has issued a goodwill payment of XXX – Follow this link to apply...”. These are scam emails – the link would then ask you for your bank details to allow the scammers to then empty your bank account.

SCAM TEXT MESSAGES - 2

We’re just hearing of another such scam. In this one you are warned that you have been fined after having been spotted by a police drone for going out too often / for a non-permitted reason / not practising social distancing. Again you are given a link to click on. DON'T – it’s a scam. The Police do not issue fines by email or text message..

PEOPLE NOT OBEYING SOCIAL DISTANCING

If you witness or observe people or groups of people blatantly flouting government guidelines around social distancing to avoid the spread of the coronavirus, please report this to the police using the 101 non-emergency number or report it online as anti-social behaviour. Report it to --> [Met Police](#)

It is simply not the case that people can go outside and rub shoulders with friends and the general public. Not even the Prime Minister or Monarchy is immune to Covid-19. Simply stay at home unless you have a legitimate, urgent need to shop for food, pick up medication or exercise once a day alone!

For the guidelines for staying safe, click -> [Here](#).

If anyone feels this seems a bit too close to Big Brother ... Yes, it is, but this is a national crisis and we all need to do our part. People flouting government guidelines are not only putting themselves at risk; they are putting you at risk by fuelling the epidemic.

SIGN UP TO OWL

[OWL](#) helps to keep communities safe, reduce crime and keep people informed of what's going on locally. It's a shared, secure platform for the public, police and local authorities to maximise the potential of Neighbourhood Watch, Rural Watch, Business Watch and dozens of other schemes. OWL sends you the latest local crime alerts and provides management tools for maintaining and expanding watches. We recommend local residents sign up for it; you will then receive regular emails from the police with information on crimes in the area, crime prevention advice, and more.

Community Help

NHS VOLUNTARY RESPONDERS

The government launched the NHS Voluntary Responders Scheme earlier this week, with a target of getting 250,000 people to sign up. In just 24 hours, 504,303 people signed up to the scheme. If you are interested in signing up, [the link to do so is here](#). The page details what sort of roles you would be doing, and who can join up for the scheme. If you meet the criteria, then the link to register for the scheme is under the “How do I join” section.

This is a national scheme, which carries out a range of checks on volunteers (Criminal Record checks, etc.) and is run by a national volunteering charity.

LOCAL COVID-19 MUTUAL AID SUPPORT GROUPS

There are also some local support groups that have been set up on Facebook - so you need a Facebook account to access them. The ones covering this area are

- Osterley Area (from the junction of Osterley Road and The Grove northwards).
Name – Osterley COVID-19 Mutual Aid.
Contact details www.facebook.com/groups/OsterleyAid/ .
Email : Osterley.Aid@gmail.com
- Isleworth Area (covering Isleworth and Osterley & Spring Grove).
Name : COVID-19 Isleworth Helping Others Group.
Contact details www.facebook.com/groups/3604442796294359/
- Hounslow borough-wide Group.
Name – Hounslow Covid-19 Mutual Aid.
Contact details www.facebook.com/groups/HounslowMutualAid/ .
Email: hounslow.covid19.aid@gmail.com

We do not know what checks these groups carry out on volunteers and/or what safeguarding controls they have in place.

NEXTDOOR OSTERLEY

[Nextdoor](#) is an online (and phone) application that groups people in areas e.g. there is a Nextdoor Osterley group. It allows people in an area to post up information and message other people on the site in their area. There have been several posts of people offering to help with deliveries, etc. We have no specific knowledge about any such services offered. If you are thinking of using any of these, please carry out sufficient checks before doing so, and do not assume they are genuine because they have posted on the website. Anyone can post on the website.....

DONATE TO YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL

Our local hospital, the West Middlesex, is run by the Chelsea & Westminster and West Middlesex Hospitals Trust. If you would like to make a donation to them to thank them for the great work they are doing, you can do so via the [COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund](#) .

DONATE TO A LOCAL FOOD CHARITY

If you want to make a donation to a local charity that provides emergency food and support and advice to those who are in need and live in the London Borough of Hounslow, then consider [Hounslow Community Foodbox](#).

NATIONAL COVID-19 APPEAL

There is also a national appeal underway for funds to help those most affected by the epidemic. Further details are here <https://nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/coronavirus/>