Look after your neighbour and your community as COVID-19 cases increase

There has been an outpouring of public support and care for each other across Somerset communities as COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to increase across the UK.

Somerset County Council is delighted to see so many rally around and offer their support to those in communities self-isolating, the elderly or those in identified 'at risk' groups such as the over 70s, pregnant women, a weakened immune system or people with underlying health conditions.

Cllr Christine Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities at Somerset County Council said: "It's truly humbling to see so many of our residents come together in our communities to find ways to plan and support each other as the number of cases of Coronavirus increase. We thank you. We urge you to continue to look out for your friends, family, neighbours and community, but most of all yourself. It's important you stay safe, so you can continue to help others.

"I know many people have signed up to support local groups via social media, which is great to see. We'd like to encourage these groups to link with their local town or parish council as this ensures everyone is kept safe, and help is received by those in the community who need it most.

"Helpful advice has also emerged to protect residents who may need community support. This includes not putting a sign on your door openly stating you are vulnerable, don't share more personal information than absolutely necessary, don't share bank or card details or give people your cards to make purchases and contact the organisers of the group if someone asks you to pay more for something than you normally would."

Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK has started to compile a list of local groups set up on social media sites such as Facebook or WhatsApp in an effort to share learning, resources and support. To find out what groups may be in your area, or to register a group, go to: https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups/

Also check with your local parish and town council or via social media to see if there is already a group operating in your area before starting a new group.

The Community Council for Somerset (community / village agents) are already working in communities with different groups and individuals to make sure the vulnerable are identified and supported. Local village agent details can be found at https://somersetagents.org/somerset-village-agents/

'Spark Somerset' are also looking at what support they can provide to voluntary sector organisations and community groups locally, including looking to identify charities who may be needing help from volunteers. To find out more visit: https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/

Cllr Lawrence added: "Don't forget that latest government advice is to self-isolate for 14 days if you or a member of your household starts to show Coronavirus symptoms of a new, continuous

cough and/or a fever. Also, we can all play our part to reduce its spread through basic hygiene measures such as washing your hands regularly with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, using a tissue when coughing then binning it, wiping down objects and surfaces regularly and avoiding touching your face, particularly your eyes, mouth and nose."

If you have a safeguarding concern or require adult social care support about a vulnerable adult then see http://professionalchoices.org.uk/adults/ or phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224

For more information, visit: https://somersetnewsroom.com/covid-19-well-prepared-plans-in-place/