



# Halkyn Mountain News

Coronavirus Issue 181 - Summer 2020

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## The Lockdown Life

It's all so strange, what's happening here.  
We're shielding now, no one comes near.  
We're all at home, we're all on line,  
The WiFi's working overtime.  
Normal seems a long way off,  
I'm scared to breathe, afraid to cough.

I'm learning new terms all the time,  
Like PPE and C-1-9.  
I Zoom, Tik Tok and bake a cake,  
I'm sick of cooking, need a break.  
It's good to hear the clanging pans  
On doorsteps while we're clapping hands

For our new heroes once a week.  
A weekly highlight, so to speak.  
This virus took us by surprise,  
I hope we learn to recognise  
That "back to normal" might not be  
The finest way to set us free.

In fact, I like the way things are  
In some respects, not all, by far.  
But kindness, shown by friends and  
neighbours,  
Family, sharing, doing favours.  
All these things I now hold dear,  
They've overtaken thoughts of fear.

The lockdown life is not for me  
But actually it's made me see  
That freedom is a state of mind  
And fun and joy and being kind  
Beat normal into a cocked hat  
I hope I will remember that.

7th May 2020  
Jean Kendrick

## Rhosesmor Community Church Garden



Our Garden is a riot of colour with daffodils, tulips and forget-me-nots. As these fade there are lots more surprises ready to bloom to create a wonderful display over the summer months.

During this very difficult time for us all the garden is there for everyone. If you live in walking distance please visit the garden on your daily walk, and pause a while to enjoy and help lift your spirits.

Keep safe everyone.

Vivienne Barlow



**Please submit items by August 1st for issue 182,** which should be out in September 2020.

You can email items to [hmnews@btinternet.com](mailto:hmnews@btinternet.com)

or hand them in to the Blue Bell Inn, Halkyn, in an envelope marked 'For the attention of HMN'.

If you have any questions you can call Jack McIntyre on 01352 780 377

## Editorial

With the country in "lockdown" at the time when we normally send our copy to the printers, we are publishing this edition online only. We would therefore be grateful if readers would please spread the word that there will be no paper copies delivered this quarter.

Given the above, we have also taken the decision that there will be no charge to the advertisers appearing in this online edition. Many of the adverts have been placed in advance and not all advertisers will be currently able to operate normally.

While many people are working from home, others may find themselves with more time on their hands. We always welcome new contributions, so perhaps now is the time to do so for the first time. With the current situation, no public events are taking place, so this will leave a gap in our next edition. Please help us fill it.

These are challenging times and we hope everyone stays safe and well.

With best wishes,

*The Editorial Team*

## Halkyn Community Council

### Coronavirus - COVID 19

The Halkyn Councillors are concerned for the Community during this uncertain time for us all in relation to the Coronavirus outbreak. The Councillors appreciate the measures being taken by both the residents and businesses within the Community - in endeavouring to alleviate the contamination aspect.



There are many individual people, local groups and businesses offering their assistance to residents, and the Councillors thank each and every one of you for this, together with the NHS staff and others who provide a most valuable service, especially during this unprecedented time.

Please stay safe.

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## In Memoriam

Nick Forster of Langholme, Halkyn sadly passed away on the 6th April aged 73 after a year long fight against cancer. His funeral was on Thursday 16th April and he was buried in the churchyard of St Mary's Halkyn. A thank you to Hugh Burgess who performed the service around the grave and also to Sibeon Funeral Directors. He leaves a widow Mrs Jean Forster, two sons Simon and Chris and four stepchildren Angela, Karen, Mark and Paul. Also, he was a baby brother to his sisters Pat and Jane. He will be sadly missed by all. Rest in peace Nick you will always be in our hearts.

*Angela Pettit Jones*

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***The Halkyn Mountain News will be available to read or download in full colour from the Halkyn Council & Community Website - [halkyn.org.uk](http://halkyn.org.uk)***

***The sender of any article and/or pictures that they do not want to appear on the website must tell the editors when submitting the article and it will be removed from the website version.***



## County Councillor

Dear Constituents,

This is a unique period in our country's history though there have been other periods when disease and viruses have attacked humanity with far more serious sickness. The Black Death (1348-9) was most lethal: whole villages were decimated leading to a radical change in social life. There was also the Great Plague (1665) and Spanish 'flu (1919).

We are fortunate to have been spared more recent outbreaks of health disasters that have afflicted other parts of the world. This is a new experience in Britain and the consequences could be even more disastrous if we are not careful. One encouraging result is that people have become kinder and more helpful. I would like to say how grateful and indebted I am to the many folk in the area who have rung me to see how I am managing in my voluntary isolation.

Two very important and heart-warming aspects which should be noted:

- 1) Although I have not been able to speak to as many folk as I would like to, the majority of people have commented on the good behaviour generally of local children. It makes one feel very proud of them. It is totally unnatural for children to be cooped up most of their time, even where they have the opportunity to use a lawn: it is almost impossible for adults to realise just how much children need to be outside. Of course, our thanks and commiseration goes out to their parents, many of whom have been forced to work at home with all its restrictions.
- 2) Many of us owe a great debt of gratitude to all those good people who have freely offered to do the shopping and other extramural activities. It is not that easy to shop for someone in normal times: now, with shortages and essential queuing this task is much harder and tricky. Thank you very much for your acts of kindness.

People probably know that most council work is done at home now. The County Council is doing its best under very difficult and trying conditions. 'Hard-copy' notes cascade through my letter box. Councillors have been given details of whom to contact if necessary. A councillor may attend to council matters provided he/she wears their official identification badge. Under present conditions, important council matters are dealt with by the Cabinet (councillors responsible for various departments) sometimes with a helper. Very important matters are held in 'suspended animation' until 'normal circumstances' return.

There has been an increase of bonfires recently, because of the provision of 'garden waste' collections being temporarily withdrawn. It would be a great help if people could choose a time for a bonfire very carefully - not when there is a strong breeze; nor when neighbours have washing on the clothes line. Also consider any neighbours who have chronic chest or respiratory problems. Please check the wind direction.

In a later edition of the Halkyn Mountain News there will be a paragraph or two on the need for all of us to be responsible for the welfare of our farmers. Owing to our exit from the Common Market there are serious problems ahead for our farmers. A problem that we have to be prepared to deal with in the future is the fact that fifty percent of our food comes from abroad.

In closing may I wish, on everyone's behalf, our best wishes and heartfelt sympathy to those unfortunate souls who have suffered, or are suffering, from the present evil virus, or have been made redundant or have lost their business built up over the years, or who have experienced some other devastating disaster?

*Yours most sincerely,*

*Colin Legg (C.C. Halkyn Ward)*



## **Halkyn Mountain Nature Conservation Group**

Spring has arrived on the mountain with many birds and plants returning/emerging from their winter refuges. The bee orchids have been monitored over the winter and up to 6th April this year over 120 rosettes have been found and recorded, many being plants which have regenerated after flowering/being grazed last year. These will continue to be monitored to see how many survive grazing to flower. Last year 18 successfully flowered and produced seed.

Also found by one of our group in the Bryn Mawr quarry area was one Green-winged orchid (*Anacamptis morio*) fully out and about 20 Early Purple orchids (*Orchis mascula*), some out and some in bud. Both species are superficially similar but Early Purples usually have spotted leaves. The Green-winged orchid is on the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland's "Flintshire Rare Plants Register".



On 30<sup>th</sup> April we found a group of early purple orchids, 60+ plants with 100+ flowering spikes near Pant y Pwll Dwr quarry.





## ***Halkyn Mountain Nature Conservation Group - continued***

On April 7th a Stonechat and Willow Warbler were seen. On the following day a pair of House Martins was spotted flying near Pen y Bryn area followed three days later by the first pair of swallows in the same area. Other birds observed are Wrens, Dunnocks, Pied Wagtails, Goldfinches, Skylarks, Meadow Pipits and a Reed Bunting near Bellis's Pond at the Wern, in addition to the Ravens, Jackdaws, Magpies and Blackbirds. We are still waiting for the Swifts to return to the Parish Hall in Halkyn, they arrived on May 12th last year. A Grasshopper warbler was heard in the Wern area On 28th April.

Due to the delicate nature of the mountain as a ground bird nesting site it is extremely important for users of the mountain to please keep out of the long rough grass areas and keep to the paths and tracks to avoid disturbing the birds, these include Skylarks, Meadow Pipits, Lapwings, all of whom leave the nest when disturbed leaving their young vulnerable.

This also applies to the Hares which have been seen just east of Rhes y Cae, they also leave the form and young leverets when disturbed by people, dogs or horses.

On April 13th I found the first Spring or Vernal Sandwort flower (*Minuartia verna*) growing on the lead waste near Pant quarry. Also known as Leadwort this nationally scarce plant is a metallophyte, a plant with exceptional tolerance of soils contaminated with toxic heavy metals such as lead, zinc or copper and is found in former metal mining areas of the UK; in Wales chiefly in Mid and North-East Wales. Although called the Spring Sandwort, last year it continued to flower into October.



Other plants in flower noticed to date (29th April) are Bird's foot trefoil, Hawkbit spp, Sedges ssp, Cuckoo flower, wild Strawberry, Milkwort, Plantain spp, small yellow trefoil, Germander speedwell, and the Common or European gorse which is in spectacular bloom at the moment with its irresistible coconut smell. It is similar to the Western gorse which flowers later on in the season with very slight differences in the flower's basal bracts, these being longer in the European species.

A few butterflies have been seen, Peacock, Orange Tip, Speckled Wood and Heath. There are a number of Dog Violet plants flowering; these are the larval food plants of the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary which will be flying later in the year.

We are so lucky to have Halkyn Mountain at this very frightening time to exercise on and enjoy. It is an ideal opportunity for people to get out and observe just what a variety of wild life there is on our doorstep and learn more about it. The Group had intended organising events similar to those we did last year, a Bioblitz day, guided walks, etc. but these will have to wait until the current situation is much improved.

Meanwhile the Group would like to send our best wishes to everyone and please keep safe and well.

(You can find us on Facebook)

*Editor's note: spp = Species pluralis, a Latin abbreviation for multiple species.*

## Bluebell Walks

As the effects of the Corona Virus outbreak are felt across the world, we hope that your families and friends are safe and well.

We have been out walking on our own, appreciating the wide-open space of Halkyn Common and thinking of those in cities and densely populated areas not being so fortunate. We have noticed many more people getting out to walk, jog and cycle whilst seeing little traffic. The fine April weather hopefully lifted the spirits and any anxious thoughts held back by trying one or more new interests.

The annual walk in aid of Kidney Wales will wait until next year, whilst support at this time is better directed towards those treating virus victims and those caring for the elderly.

The Rhosesmor pathways south of the village ponds have been well used during the winter months. A new feature is a seat positioned near the Pen Yr Orsedd mine shaft, a resting place whilst viewing the hillfort in the distance. Anyone sitting or passing by can remember those who enjoyed the beauty around them but are no longer with us.

We look forward to the resumption of the Walking for Health Wales in the near future, so until we meet again at the Bluebell, look after yourselves.

*John and Vicky Thomas*

## Rhosesmor Rainbow Garden

Here are some pictures of the Rainbow Community Garden being unveiled 23<sup>rd</sup> April by Dr. Major from Bodowen surgery in Holywell.

Les Buxton came up with the idea to do the garden with members of the community donating plants. The opening was well attended by the community.

If you need any more information please don't hesitate to contact me.

*Debra Buxton*





## Rhes y Cae News

A rather different Rhes y Cae report this time, with very little to tell everyone.

### Village Hall Coffee Morning Tuesday 18th February

There was a good turnout on a bright morning, and everyone seemed to enjoy catching up for a chat over a coffee and a biscuit. A big thank you to Alwena Sherratt for selling her lovely hand-made cards in aid of village hall funds and a local hospice, and thanks to everybody who donated raffle prizes and to all who came along.

Little did we know at the time, but this was to be one of the last events in Rhes y Cae before the current situation. When everything returns to normal, we will really appreciate little things like meeting up with friends for a chat.



### Rhes y Cae Help group

In mid-March, when it became clear that things were about to become very serious, some residents of Rhes y Cae decided to set up a group to offer help and support to people in and around the village. The group posted flyers through letterboxes to give people a point of contact, and the original three volunteers, Danielle, Wendy W and Wendy H were quickly joined by others who wanted to help out too. Thanks very much to Abi, Kelly, Holly, Rosie, Emma & Tom and Jo & Mike.

If anyone locally needs help with shopping, collecting prescriptions, or just a phone call for a chat, please contact us on the numbers listed on the flyer.

We are very lucky to live in such a beautiful area, with open spaces on our doorsteps for walks. Hope everyone stays safe, and here's to better times and more events to report on in future.

Wendy Hughes

## Rhes y Cae village helpers

At such a time of uncertainty, we want to create a network of support for all in need (those self-isolating, elderly, vulnerable, etc.) to help with small tasks that you may struggle with during a period of self-isolation. Such as:

**Picking up shopping, A friendly phone call, Posting mail, Urgent supplies**

*Just call or text one of us and we'll do our best to help you (for free!)*

### Other sources of support:

Two local stores are running a click and collect service during this time.

*Caerwys shop: 01352 720221 Rhydymwyn garage: 01352 741232*

There may be others too.

### Safety:

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep.

If willing, anyone else in the village locale is more than welcome to assist. Give one of us a call.

### Our details:



Wendy Hughes  
Tegfan, Rhes-y-Cae  
Tel: 01352 780976  
Mob: 07922 181313



Wendy, Mark & Abi Whitmore  
Fernview, Rhes-y-Cae  
Tel: 01352 781771  
Mob: 07715 653558



Danielle McIntyre  
The Stores House, Rhes-y-Cae  
Tel: 01352 781509  
Mobile: 07923 543775

## ***Halkyn Mountain Living Landscape Project Update***

Many of you will have seen some of the work going on across the mountain over the winter months as part of the Living Landscape Project.

We have cut and removed 16.65 acres (6.66Ha) of gorse this winter. That is an awful lot of gorse cuttings to transport! The weather over the winter caused some delays with ground conditions deteriorating to the point where continuing to work would have caused more harm than good. Once the ground dried out, the contractor was able to get back on the mountain to finish the job and tidy up the ruts.

The cattle grid on the B5123 in Berth Ddu has been installed along with some fencing, leaving only two grids left to be installed. Work started on the cattle grids in Brynford, but unfortunately the Covid-19 outbreak caused a few problems. Work stopped part way through installation of the grid by the Pet Cemetery as it was considered non-essential. Hopefully, the restrictions will be relaxed soon and work can continue over the coming weeks.

The main impact of the Covid-19 lockdown has been the cancellation of events. All events have been cancelled until the end of May at the very least. This may be extended as the lockdown continues. We will have to wait and see what the Government recommendations dictate.

Halkyn Mountain is a precious resource in the current times and I am sure many local residents have a new found appreciation of the green space on their doorsteps. Please use the mountain responsibly and maintain safe social distancing while exercising. Unfortunately, I have had reports of some off-road 4x4 vehicles using the common. This is an offence as the common is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. If you do see any vehicles driving on the common, please make a note of the location and if possible the registration of the vehicles and report it to North Wales Police on the non-emergency number 101.

Spring has definitely arrived on the Mountain and the spring flowers are out in force. The fact that this April has been the sunniest on record will no doubt have had an influence on this. Spring is nesting season for the many birds and other animals that call Halkyn Mountain home. Please help to minimise disturbance by keeping dogs on leads while exercising on the common.

I hope having access to Halkyn Mountain has helped you in the current difficult times. Hopefully we will soon be able to enjoy the mountain as we did before.

*Saul Burton*

*Halkyn Mountain Living Landscape Officer*

## ***Spring has indeed arrived***

Here are pictures, taken by Jane, of tadpoles that have hatched in the pond in between Y Ffrith and Wern Road





## ***A few words from Danny the Donkey***

Years go by and each season brings changes although the changes are usually the same as last year. The weather can bring surprises and this year is no exception. However, things feel very different this year and I don't know why.

The first thing I have noticed is that my human friends don't seem to leave their stable or the land around it. They are spending a lot of time outside and seem very busy. It all looks like hard work to me. While they look after me, clean out my stable and bring me food and water, I do little for them but keep watch over the area and if I am concerned about anything I can make a loud noise to alert them.

I do also worry about them when I notice any change in routine. They have started behaving strangely. Every so often, usually during an evening, they will stand by their gate and slap their hands together to make a noise. I can only think it must be a new way of communicating as I can hear others responding down in the village below. I have wondered what this ritual signifies. It could be to tell people that the grass is lovely and green and available to graze. In a moment of selfishness I did hope it might be a way of signalling "please bring carrots for our donkey", however, after giving this more thought it is probably unlikely.



When I think about it, there was another new ritual they performed just last week. A man arrived in a donkey-less cart and carried a box. He spoke to my human friends, and they pointed to the ground and he placed the box down in the middle of the yard. After he left, they walked around it and sprayed it with liquid from bottle. I think it might be a religious ceremony as they then got down on their knees, opened the box and carefully polished each of the items inside with a little cloth.

My human friends have been very kind to me and I cannot help worrying when they act so strangely. My late Mother once told me that humans can behave strangely if they start "mixing with the wrong crowd". I don't know quite what she meant but given that my human friends don't appear to go anywhere, I don't think that this can be the case.

The other recent difference is the number of people walking on the mountain. People who normally come alone but with their dog are now joined by several others. I often overhear conversations, and more often than not, don't understand them. Occasionally I pick up on a conversation and recently a couple walking alongside my field were talking about "having difficulty getting a home delivery". I neither heard the full conversation nor understood what I did hear, but I am quite certain that I heard the line "...and even carrots are in short supply". Now that sent shivers along my back and had me worrying for several days. Then I realised why my human friends have been so busy. They must have heard this news and are busy planting carrots for me.

Stay safe and may you always have carrots.

Bye for now,

**Danny**

*Danny lives on the side of Moel y Gaer in Rhosesmor and receives many visitors.*

## ***Halkyn and District Bowling Club***

Yes we are in lockdown, it's not good but we have to be patient. Our bowling green is being well looked after, a lot of work has been done, and we were looking forward to bowling on this good green. Our opening day should have been on the 5th April, a beautiful sunny warm day - just our luck. It's been beautiful weather ever since. We will bowl again, hopefully soon - trying not to think it will probably be in the pouring rain, sorry.

This picture is a poor substitute but I had to try. I had a match between my virtual self and me. My virtual self won 21v18. So you now know what I have to do.

I hope our teams have been keeping fit. That's important because we will start again there's no doubt about that. Hope there will be better news in the next edition.



*Keep safe, Jo Woodruff*

## ***Halkyn Cricket Club***

Firstly we hope that everyone is well and have stayed safe in these difficult times.

Normally this time of year we would be at least a month into the cricket season but for obvious reasons this has not happened. We are hopeful that we will get a few games in the later part of the season but as yet this is unconfirmed.

We were hoping this year to continue the success of last season where both the 1st XI and midweek teams gained promotion, but that will now have to wait until next year.

We were also hoping to be able to reinstate our junior section and had entered an under 11 team in the league. It is highly unlikely that any junior games will take place but we are hoping to get in a few training sessions before the autumn comes and we will be looking at holding winter training session with children of all ages being welcome to attend.

Whilst we have had to close the clubhouse to all functions at present we are still able to take booking for later in the year. We have a fully licensed bar which is ideal for parties, christenings, wakes, weddings, meetings and Christmas parties. We offer a competitive rate of hire and will always try to accommodate requirements where possible. Also, please note that for community groups or schools we offer the clubhouse free of charge and this includes the bar if require and we also offer a reduced rate for children's parties under the age of 13.

Please keep an eye on the notice board at the top of our drive for any updates.

For any information on any of the above or the club in general please contact Jane Williams on 01352 781523 or 07732 325033



## **Holywell Golf Club**

### **Holywell Ladies**

The Lady Captains team versus the Lady Vice Captain team is usually a good start to the season but this year it was the last game they would play for a while.

The picture shows Lady Captain Sue Collingwood presenting the trophy to the winning team's Captain Gill Harrison (Lady Vice Captain). Hope everybody will all be back playing soon.

### **Holywell Juniors**

A Junior competition was held before our Junior Presentation day for the 2019 season. They played with a Lady and Gentleman member and there were many comments from these members on how well the Juniors played and also how well-mannered they were. Well done Juniors and also parents, who should take credit for the children's great behaviour.

The Results were:

- 1) Tommy Comber, Tom Griffiths, Jo Jones, Steve Jones 28-4.9-23.1
- 2) Owen Elliot-Jones, Joyce Eakins, Dave Hughes, Mal Reed -28-4.7-23.3

Well done winners and everybody who took part. It was a great competition; all of the scores were very close.

This was then followed by a buffet and the Junior presentation for the 2019 season. It went really well, with many medals, trophies and vouchers given out.

We also had a presentation by our President Alan Williams and Captain Mike Green, to Sian, Georgia and Harrison for some outstanding golf during the year.

We said goodbye and thanks to our outgoing Junior Captain Haydn, who did a great job and we welcomed our new captain, Sian. Our Junior Vice- Captain for 2020 is Cian Hughes. We wish them both a great year.

The season was then brought to an abrupt end; the AGM was held by email also the election of the new officers for 2020-2021. The drive in also had to be postponed. The Club Officials are Mr President Geoff Evans, Mr Captain Terry Petrie and Mr Vice-Captain Mr Russ Gittins. Lady President Shirley Williams, Lady Captain Sue Collingwood and Lady Vice Captain Gill Harrison. We all hope the season starts soon so they can enjoy their term of office.



## ***Hannah Blythyn M.S.***

Recently, we have been living through unprecedented, different and difficult times that have meant we've all had to significantly change the way in which we live and work as well as placing personal distance between us and our friends and family – myself included. I want to thank everyone who has adhered to the stay-at-home restrictions and cut out non-essential travel to help tackle the spread of Coronavirus to date.

Every Thursday evening I have clapped along with you all in gratitude for the work of our carers and key workers. Each day key workers and community champions are going above and beyond. From our amazing NHS and care sector staff, to our shop keepers, posties, delivery drivers, council workers, police and firefighters - everyone keeping us going and taking care of us.

We are also seeing individuals and community groups coming together to support one another as well as the more vulnerable in our communities, and have seen the many local businesses that are diversifying and are reaching out to support residents. I've pulled together a hand guide for constituents of services and support available locally – if readers would like a copy, please do get in touch on the contact details below.

### **Continuing to support and serve constituents**

My way of working – like most other people, may have changed but my work to support and serve constituents continues at pace, including regular online and phone meetings with the Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. These calls, as well as regular calls with the Leader and Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council provide an opportunity to both raise anything brought to my attention by constituents but also to ensure that we are all working together to the best of our abilities in the interest of our people and communities.

As my traditional face to face surgeries are on hold because of the situation with Coronavirus, I am instead offering twice weekly online advice surgeries – via Zoom and Skype – and phone sessions, to offer advice and signpost residents to support available. These sessions are not limited to those seeking advice, people who are experiencing loneliness and feeling isolated are also welcome to contact me for support and someone to talk to. If you would like an appointment, please contact me at

**Hannah.Blythyn@assembly.wales** or 01352 762102.

I also continue to post regular updates and share information on my Facebook Page – [www.facebook.com/hannahblythynam](https://www.facebook.com/hannahblythynam) If you would like to be added to my mailing list to receive updates or would like a copy of any of the helpful documents I've produced then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

### **Support for our superb social care workers**

The Welsh Government will fund a £500 extra payment for all social care workers in Wales, in recognition and appreciation of the hard work and dedication of an amazing and valuable workforce who are providing the invisible scaffolding of services, supporting both our NHS and wider society.

It comes after the Welsh Government has provided an initial £40m extra funding for adult social care services to help meet the extra costs associated with responding to the Coronavirus pandemic.

I firmly believe this additional payment should not be taxed nor should it impact negatively on people's benefit entitlements – the UK Government needs to act to make sure this is the case.

### **Further financial backing for businesses**

We know that this pandemic has the potential to hit businesses hard right across Wales. That's why, the Welsh Government has made available almost £2bn of support for businesses in Wales, in addition to the support provided by the UK Government. I have been writing directly to local businesses informing them of the grants and support available as well as sharing information through traditional and social media.

The £500m Welsh Government Economic Resilience Fund was introduced to plug the gap for those businesses that are not covered by the other available schemes. Micro businesses, including start-ups, employing up to nine employees could be eligible for up to £10k support. Small and medium sized firms with between 10 and 249 employees could be eligible for grants of up to £100,000 and funding will also be available to support large businesses with more than 249 employees. Eligibility for the COVID-19 Economic Resilience Fund can be checked at <https://fundchecker.businesswales.gov.wales/> The application process for businesses qualifying for financial support from the Economic Resilience Fund is open and available via the Business Wales website. Further support and advice to businesses can be found on the Business Wales website or by calling Business Wales on 0300 060 3000.

As of 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1,825 business grants worth £22.5m had been awarded in Flintshire, along with over 1000 businesses benefiting from business rate relief.



## **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

The Welsh Government Council Tax Reduction scheme supports around 300,000 low income households each year, to help cover their Council Tax bills. With COVID-19 placing lots of uncertainty on families, particularly financial worries, I would encourage you to check if you are eligible for support. To find out if you qualify or to get advice on your Council Tax contact Flintshire Council on 01352 704848 or at [local.taxation@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:local.taxation@flintshire.gov.uk).

Further information can be found at [flintshire.gov.uk/CouncilTax](http://flintshire.gov.uk/CouncilTax) or [gov.wales/council-tax-discounts-and-reduction/low-income-households](http://gov.wales/council-tax-discounts-and-reduction/low-income-households)

## **Enabling democracy to continue in the current climate**

The National Assembly for Wales continues to sit (as it did throughout what should have been the Easter recess), albeit virtually and is currently scheduled to meet on Wednesday afternoons in 'virtual' plenary to ensure essential parliamentary business relating to COVID-19 carries on. The sessions can be viewed <http://www.senedd.tv/>

Alongside this, the Welsh Government has laid regulations to allow local democracy to continue during this period of social distancing. The regulations provide flexibility to enable county, town and community councils to operate safely, effectively and lawfully, while retaining the principles of openness and accountability to the public. This includes enabling meetings to be conducted on the basis of full or partial remote attendance and by making provision about the electronic publishing of certain documents. The regulations are available at <https://www.cynulliad.cymru/en/bus-home/Pages/Plenary.aspx?assembly=5&category=Laid%20Document&startDt=21/04/2020&endDt=21/04/2020>

In addition, the Welsh Government holds daily briefings covered live on BBC One Wales at 12.30pm and are streamed online via the Welsh Government Twitter and Facebook accounts. You can also find the latest updates online at [www.gov.wales/coronavirus](http://www.gov.wales/coronavirus)

## **The road towards recovery**

Since first becoming Assembly Member for Delyn, I've been keen to make sure that our agenda shapes that of our Assembly and devolved politics in Wales. That's why I've not only hosted events down in Cardiff Bay that showcase all that our corner of the country has to offer but also a series of events here at home in the constituency.

My 'Future Flintshire' events in communities across the constituency, heard directly from residents, organisations, representatives and businesses, about how they want to shape the future of Flintshire. Whether it's support for local businesses, transforming our town centres or health and social care in Delyn, it is important to me that I get to hear your views and ideas.

At the end of April, the [Welsh Government](http://www.gov.wales) announced that they were looking for the people of Wales to feed in ideas of how our country could look as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic. They are asking for people's ideas to be emailed in to [ourfuturewales@gov.wales](mailto:ourfuturewales@gov.wales) and I'd be keen to know your ideas as your local representative, so please do copy me in at [Hannah.Blythyn@assembly.wales](mailto:Hannah.Blythyn@assembly.wales).

But I want to go one step further to best ensure that your voices are front and centre as we move forward and will be setting up a series of 'virtual' Future Flintshire events, so that we can reshape and rebuild our future together. If you would be interested in getting involved to share your experiences and ideas, please get in touch via email at [Hannah.Blythyn@assembly.wales](mailto:Hannah.Blythyn@assembly.wales) or by calling my office on 01352 762102.

In addition, the First Minister has also set out seven key questions that would need to be addressed, to help us out of the pandemic and help determine when the right time comes for the stay-at-home restrictions to be eased. More information can be found at <https://gov.wales/first-minister-announces-path-lead-wales-out-coronavirus-pandemic>

## **Useful contacts and information**

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Flintshire County Council Contact Centre – 01352 752121

Flintshire Local Voluntary Council - 01352 744000

Public Health Wales (latest advice and information) - <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Welsh Government dedicated Coronavirus website - <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

## **Thank you**

And finally, once again, thank you for everything you're doing - together we can and are making a difference.

## **Mark Isherwood M.S.**

We are currently living in extraordinary times, with Covid-19 having turned our lives upside down.

We are all at risk from this Coronavirus, but, by adhering to the guidelines outlined by the UK and Welsh Governments, we can all help to keep it under control.

Many of us are fortunate in that all we have to do to play our part is “stay at home”, however, this is not a privilege bestowed to everyone. Our NHS staff and other key workers have no choice but to go out, putting their lives in jeopardy every time they do.

At a time when there is so much to be depressed about, it is important for us all to recognise and celebrate the valiant work that is happening around us at this critical time.

Our NHS staff have been getting much praise, and rightly so. I don't think they have ever been appreciated as much as they currently are, and it is heartening to see everyone come out of their homes every Thursday evening to give them a much deserved round of applause. They are doing truly courageous work. Many of them have families – in many cases young families - and loved ones of their own who require care, reassurance and support throughout these troubled times. Nevertheless they are working flat out under immense pressure to ensure that anyone affected by this pandemic will have the best chance of recovery. I commend and thank each and every one of them.

However, they are not the only ones doing such sterling work. Thousands of other key workers are also putting the needs of others before their own health and well-being and we must pay tribute to them too.

Our care workers in both the public and independent sectors are doing tremendous work. Many have gone above and beyond the line of duty, with reports of them leaving their own families and moving in to care homes so as not to put the elderly residents at risk.

In addition to thanking Health and Care staff, I have been using my social networking sites in recent weeks to thank other workers whose roles are vital at this time. Our postmen and postwomen who continue to work hard in difficult circumstances, whilst following public health guidance to protect their customers and colleagues; Postmasters and Post Office staff for keeping Branches open wherever possible, ensuring that customers, especially the vulnerable and elderly, can continue to access vital services while protecting their health and wellbeing; and retail workers for putting their own health at risk to ensure that we can access the essential goods we need.



Brave Council staff have also been putting their lives at risk to enable key services to continue and ensure that the most vulnerable people in our communities are looked after.

I have also praised Openreach Engineers for playing their part in keeping the country going, limiting the impact that Covid-19 has on society and the economy, and our region's Policing Team, who are working with communities and partners to support both the National effort to tackle the pandemic and their local NHS colleagues.

Huge praise is also due to all our supermarket staff who have been working vigorously to ensure that the shelves are stocked and we can access all the supplies we need.

Further, thanks must go to all the freight drivers who are spending long hours on the empty roads, transporting cargo to or from overseas, and of course to our supermarkets and hospitals.

And, while schools have been closed since March 23rd, some teachers still have to go out to work in school settings, delivering educational provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children, including some with Autism and special educational needs, again risking their own health and that of their family. Again, hugely commendable.

In recent weeks, I have also given credit to the increasing troops of volunteers who are helping to ensure that people are getting the help and support that they need right now - all those that are shopping for the elderly and vulnerable, making and delivering vital PPE, and generally being a good neighbour and looking out for those around them.

We are extremely fortunate as a country to have such a dedicated and magnanimous workforce and we all need to be showing our appreciation to them more than ever right now – whether it be a thumbs up to your postie, a message of support in your window, or applauding on the doorstep – let them know you value their hard work and give them the encouragement and strength to carry on. We could not get through this pandemic without them.

Once again, thank you to each and every one of you!



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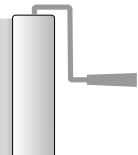
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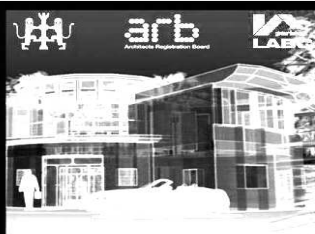
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