

The lockdown continues

We were all disappointed that stricter lockdown restrictions had to be reimposed by the government. But it is understandable, even though many of us might disagree with the finer points of the restrictions. The new COVID-19 strain has hit Woking and Surrey hard, and the NHS will be under a lot of strain until the stay-at-home restrictions start to take effect.

This means many of us are staying inside and taking socially-distanced outside walks to get exercise, while relying on online purchases for things we would have preferred to go to the shops to buy.

Where possible, please continue to support our Woking shops that are able to open. Most of our coffee shops and cafes remain open for takeaway service only, and you should support your local ones during these difficult times. Don't forget to wear your mask at all times when you enter a shop, only shop for things you need, and use the supplied hand sanitiser at all times.

Cases of online scams have risen amid lockdown, so be careful if you are purchasing goods online. The main points to remember are the same:

- Buy from reputable retailers supplying goods from within the UK
- Only enter payment details on webpages that start with <https://> (the 's' is important)
- Don't save your card details on any new websites you buy from
- Make sure someone will be available to receive the goods

On that last point, if you must go out, consider picking up your parcels from a nearby pick-up location such as a supermarket or shop. It is rare for couriers to wait to hand the parcel over, which leaves you open to having things stolen from your doorstep. But picking up the parcel from somewhere else is more secure and gets you out briefly for some exercise.

On the subject of exercise, the Basingstoke Canal and some parks have, rightly, become popular walking and cycling routes. They can be busy at times and you may feel safer if you wear a mask all the time. The mask should go over the nose as well as the mouth. You breathe through the nose and so will be much more susceptible if you do not cover that. If you're out cycling, don't forget to ping your bell in plenty of time if coming up behind walkers.

Not everyone can get out and enjoy the fresh air. Let's all continue to keep an eye on the elderly and infirm this winter. If they are struggling to cope there are many organisations and charities who will be able to help.

If your neighbour is feeling low or depressed, contact Woking Mind: <https://wokingmind.org.uk/>

If you or your neighbour needs help go to Woking BC's main "help" page:

<https://www.woking.gov.uk/ineedhelp>

If you feel you have time to help others Woking BC run a volunteering organisation:

<https://www.woking.gov.uk/jobs-and-volunteering/volunteering>

No neighbour should feel isolated during these difficult times.