

Replies from Paula 16th April 2020

I live in the City of London - where about 9000 people live but hundreds of thousands normally work - so it is not like other parts of London and the streets are quieter here than elsewhere. Numbers of people go up as soon as I get to the Thames paths. We have loads of convenience stores, mainly selling things commuters will want to eat for lunch or take home to make an easy supper (it is an ongoing joke amongst my colleagues here that you can't buy frozen peas locally as no-one wants to take frozen peas on the tube). These are closing one by one, but there are a few (usually the larger ones that have a wider range) still open, and my nearest 'proper' supermarket is Waitrose at the Barbican which is about 2/3 the size of the Wells Waitrose. My walks and cycle rides usually take me out of the City, and I am aware that most of the supermarkets that I pass have queues outside.

I am noticing a discernible rise in the number of masks that I see - this time a week again I saw only a few, but now about 1/3 to a 1/2 of the people I see wear them.

I am very aware that many people do not have gardens or balconies. Most of the parks are still open, which I think is so important for people, but I often see police 'policing' open spaces. Increasingly benches in parks and along The South Bank are being taped over to stop people sitting on them. I have recently cycled round Regents Park (and near Primrose Hill) and Hyde Park, all places where there have been issues about too many people in the past, but they looked ok to me. Have lingered more in the smaller parks I have walked through and thought people were behaving sensibly and keeping a distance from each other.

I guess people in my book group are getting books through amazon or other on line sources. Yes we use Zoom for meetings.

You might be amused to hear (this used to be a secret but it is now common knowledge) that the Church Plate (ie all of the valuables) of many of the churches has gone to The Tower! That is particularly important in the City as there is fear of looting as so few people live around the churches. St Paul's Cathedral still have some security guards.

Hope that helps! Happy to respond to more questions
Paula