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# 11th November 2020

Dear all,

In the light of publicity about the growing number of COVID 19 infections I am grateful for the opportunity to write about the situation locally. It has been recognised for some time that despite an older than average population, the southwest has fewer hospital beds and fewer intensive care beds per head of population than elsewhere in England. Nevertheless, here in Mendip our COVID infection numbers continue to be relatively low - about 80 per 100,000 - and therefore our hospitals are still able to provide non COVID urgent care as well as deal with any COVID cases. While the lockdown measures recently introduced are unwelcome it remains important that everyone complies with them to keep the infection rate low and protect our community.

I recognise that the effect of the pandemic and the restrictions necessary to combat it are having a damaging effect on businesses and people’s livelihoods. Our District Council continues to support local people and businesses where we can, providing access to business grants, isolation payments, community grants and the council tax hardship fund. In addition, the Council is supporting those community groups and voluntary sector organisations that are helping to address the COVID crisis. You can find all the details on the [council website](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/8672/Information-on-Coronavirus-COVID-19-) or contact me directly.

Meanwhile we have seen the rollout of the new recycling vehicles and new processes intended to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill. While overall the transfer of 55,000 Mendip households to the new system has been successful, I know that implementation in Westbury has been patchy. Some collections have been missed but people who have reported a missed collection [on line](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/waste) have seen a prompt response. I will be monitoring the situation and hope to be able to share the numbers showing an increase in the proportion of waste that can be recycled soon.

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