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| Dear Resident,  With everything moving so fast I am writing to again update you on how things are in Buckinghamshire, what we are asking people to do to keep us all safe and the campaign we will be running to help keep Buckinghamshire out of the ‘High’ category for COVID.  **The situation in Buckinghamshire**  This week there is a clear message as unfortunately we are starting to see more hospital admissions in Buckinghamshire due to the coronavirus. These are still small numbers but rising.  On a slightly more positive note, in the past week we have seen a small drop in our weekly infection rate overall in Buckinghamshire, from 87 cases per 100,000 people to [76 cases per 100,000](https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-9WYF-30W987-6TCBQ-1/c.aspx). While on the face of it this is encouraging news, fewer tests were carried out in Bucks during this seven day period yet the percentage of people testing positive is around the same as the previous week.  More worryingly, we are now seeing a rise in cases in more vulnerable age groups across the county, with a bigger number of people aged 60+ in Buckinghamshire testing positive. We are also seeing high case numbers in the former South Bucks and Chiltern District areas; South Bucks has a weekly rate of 122 cases per 100,000 people and Chiltern stands at 81 cases per 100,000.  I completely understand that someone ‘testing positive’ does not mean that they are admitted to hospital. Many people, particularly the young, suffer few symptoms and recover quickly. However, amongst the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions, this disease can be serious and even fatal.  **We need to act now**  We know from elsewhere how quickly things can change and with rates remaining high and more people going into hospital locally with COVID-19, we must all do what it takes to bring the virus under control here whilst it is still mainly confined to younger people. With the government currently pursuing a localised approach to restrictions we have the power here in Buckinghamshire to determine our own fate. **I desperately want us to avoid being moved into ‘Tier 2’, the so called ‘High’ infection category. This would mean tighter restrictions** that will harm our local businesses, endanger jobs and stop us doing the things that help make life enjoyable like meeting our friends and loved ones in a safe way.  **What we are asking you to do**  **We all have a part to play in what happens next**. So this week I am writing with a big, but vital ask to stop us moving into Tier 2.  The evidence is that the virus is being spread in Buckinghamshire between groups we don’t live with, such as friends, particularly in people’s homes. Being indoors with the windows closed is one of the worst environments for spreading the disease.  So, we are asking everyone to recommit to observing the current rules in place and, if possible, to voluntarily go a bit further, and especially to consider avoiding meeting people in our homes who we don’t live with. This isn’t currently a legal requirement but more of us choosing to meet people outside or in a COVID safe environment instead could and should make a real difference.  Please do the following, which includes and slightly expands on the current Tier 1 ‘Medium risk’ guidance that applies in Bucks at the moment:   * Don’t socialise with other households at home - meet up outside instead or in a COVID safe environment * Observe the **rule of six** indoors and outdoors * Always **stay 2 metres (6 feet) apart** * **Wash your hands**  thoroughly and often * **Wear a face covering** where required (unless you’re exempt) * **Stay at home** and [book a test](https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-9WYF-30W987-6U6RS-1/c.aspx) if you have symptoms   It’s vital that if you develop symptoms, no matter how mild, that you book a test and isolate immediately. Anyone else you live with must isolate too.  **I also wanted to share with you our guidance on seasonal events** as we move into the autumn.  Throughout 2020 we’ve had to do things differently and it’ll need to be the same for the events we enjoy at this time of year like Bonfire Night, Halloween and Remembrance Sunday.  With the current levels of coronavirus transmission, **the council is strongly discouraging holding or attending any events that physically bring large numbers of people close together at this time**. Even though it’s lawful, gathering people together simply carries more risk at this precarious time in the pandemic locally.  Needless to say, activities like trick or treating or bonfire parties just can’t happen in the same way this year. It’s not all doom and gloom though - there are lots of other ways to mark these occasions in a safe way. Take a look on our website for [ideas on celebrating Halloween](https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-9WYF-30W987-6U6RT-1/c.aspx) this year.  **Please also read our important** [**advice and information about all** **upcoming events**](https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-9WYF-30W987-6U6RU-1/c.aspx)**.**  **Looking after ourselves and each other**  If we do the right thing now, we can turn this around and stay out of Tier 2 - that’s what we all want.  We want to safeguard our jobs, our health and our freedoms so please, let’s pull together and do all it takes to stop the spread of the virus in Buckinghamshire.  Stay safe and protect Bucks,  **Martin Tett**  Leader of Buckinghamshire Council    We have used your contact details to provide you with information from Buckinghamshire Council related to the coronavirus pandemic. This is why this email has been sent to you and this is the only other use of your contact details. Please unsubscribe if you do not wish to receive future emails about the coronavirus emergency from Buckinghamshire Council. |