



COVID-19 and the easing of lockdown in June

This month heralds the partial relaxation of the coronavirus lockdown, as announced by the government. With primary schools being allowed to reopen, and outdoor markets, estate agents and some ‘non-essential’ shops opening their doors, the risk rises that people may crowd the high street. Please continue to take care. From 1st June, if anyone has the misfortune to test positive for coronavirus it is now mandatory to report all their contacts (face to face of 15 minutes or more). The public is keen to see how the practicalities will play out, and how ready people will be to quarantine themselves for 14 days if they are not sick themselves, and if this means time off work or inability to be with friends or relatives for two-week stretches each time someone names them as a contact. As Boris Johnson exhorts us all – it is everyone’s civic duty to abide by the rules, so let’s hope people show personal responsibility in doing so.

Even though the regular Thursday evening ‘Clap for Carers’ has officially come to an end we, as a community, must continue to offer help and psychological support to NHS frontline workers and for those who work in social care. Stress is rising among frontline healthcare workers, with mental health problems such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder the most common. Preliminary data from China and Italy (reported in the British Medical Journal on 23rd May) suggest that over 50% of workers reported depression, almost 45% reported anxiety, and a third insomnia. Financial stress and caring for children or dependent family members at home were added factors. But it is not just frontline NHS workers who are suffering added stress during the crisis; let’s not forget the many non-medical staff and hospital cleaners, delivery men, bus drivers and others also on the front line of possible contact with the virus.

PS: Did you know that France has just ruled that the COVID-19 is feminine? It is “*la Covid-19*” according to a pronouncement by the Académie Française. Thankfully, in the English-speaking world there is no gendering of the virus or else the editor is sure there would be an uproar from women (and too right!).

We all need water

A call to help our hedgehogs

Hedgehogs have been suffering badly during this dry spell. Rescue centres report many dehydrated and dying hogs are being admitted to their care. Please would you consider providing a shallow dish of fresh water for all wildlife, including birds, and replenishing on a daily basis. You may also like to put out food such as commercially available hedgehog food or (cheaper) meaty cat/dog food or cat biscuits for the hedgehogs. Further information is available from www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk



SE Water has sent us a reminder that the long spell of dry hot weather has put a major strain on reservoirs and bore holes. Gardens are desperate for water, but water is also key for the hospitals and care homes across the South East region.

So, SE Water says, “We’re asking everyone to help make sure there’s enough water to go around by taking two simple steps – let your lawns go brown, and be proud of your dirty car.”