



## **Chairman's Report**

On Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October I attended a Zoom meeting organised by Liz Noakes, Director of Public Health for Telford and Wrekin Council, concerning the recent increases in cases of Covid-19 among students at Harper Adams University. The meeting was attended by representatives from the university, police, T&W council and town / parish councils.

Liz Noakes set the scene regarding the local statistics. At the present time it is believed that there are around 80 “live cases” of Covid-19 among the student population, although there have been around 137 cases identified in students in the Newport area between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month. Some new cases are coming through still, although it is believed that they are now reaching a plateau. The cases amongst 18-24 year olds in the Newport area are much higher than in the rest of the borough. If 18-24 year olds are excluded, the rates in the Newport area are the same as the rest of the borough. It is clear that the majority of the transmission is student to student. However, rates are rising in general across the borough, and so it is essential for everyone to follow the Covid guidelines, including Hands / Face / Space.

Kate Baker, a university representative, explained that they were working closely with the Health Protection Hub to ensure that all Covid measures are in place. There is close communication between staff and students, and all social activities are conducted in a Covid-safe manner. Nicky Minshall of the Health Protection Hub explained that they have been ensuring that high standards of contact tracing have been applied.

The police representatives explained that compliance and enforcement activities have been undertaken, including meetings with licensed traders. Police officers have been on Newport High Street on Saturday nights, and there have been joint patrols of PCSOs and Harper Adams security staff around the university grounds. A PCSO was assigned to work at the university (although unfortunately he contracted Covid-19). There have been around 50 tickets issued for breaches of the Rule of Six and house parties, but an effort has been made to strike a balance between engagement and enforcement. There has been a taxi marshalling scheme on the Newport High Street to ensure that the students are dissipated quickly after the licensed premises have closed. They ensure that people do not congregate, and that social distancing is maintained.

A walk-in Coronavirus testing facility has been introduced at Harper Adams University (which still requires an appointment via NHS 111), to complement the drive-through testing at Randlay and Ironbridge sites.

David Llewellyn, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, explained that the importance of good community relations has been emphasised to the students. In addition, repeated breaches of the Covid-19 safety guidelines could lead to suspension or even exclusion.

Liz Noakes emphasised that everything possible is being done to contain cases, and that the key is to follow national guidelines to minimise infection rates.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bryan P Rothwell". The script is cursive and fluid.

**Bryan Rothwell**