

**CHICHESTER**



**CITY COUNCIL**

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Mayor of Chichester: Councillor Richard Plowman

## An open letter from the Mayor – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

It is time to prepare for a long, dark winter. I hope you have had your 'flu jab and downloaded the NHS Covid-19 App on your smartphone. I had to upgrade my iPhone, which was a bit annoying, but it can now read those funny QR symbols which tell me exactly where I am. At my age that can be quite useful! Apparently QR stands for quick response: what a shame the Test and Trace system doesn't live up to the same claim.

Chichester is in the lowest 10 per cent of infection rates in England (the new Tier 1), but the local figure is creeping up. I feel for all the parents whose children have gone to university and immediately found themselves in lockdown. I use the word 'children' deliberately as, even at 18, many have left home for the first time and are finding it difficult to cope.

I have been following my own advice and going out only when necessary. We did, however, travel up to Leicestershire to support my son. It was the first time in more than eight months that we have ventured more than 20 miles from home. I admit I was quite apprehensive.

In September we usually visit the Yorkshire Dales, but everywhere was booked-up this year. The cottage in West Burton where we often stay is owned by the local farmer and butcher. He told me that at 55 he had never been further than Leeds. To be honest, he said, he was not 'fussed' (impressed) by the place and was perfectly happy in Wensleydale. Maybe we need to think how lucky we are to be in Chichester in these difficult times. Someone described Chichester as a City in a Park and the absence of an evening economy of clubs and bars perhaps contributes to the risk of infection being lower here; but we cannot be complacent and must follow the rules to protect everybody in our community.

At home, stocks of Vitamin D to boost the immune system in the winter months have suddenly appeared and whether or not it is Brexit or another lockdown possibility, the supplies of toilet rolls and other basics seem to be building again in the spare room.

This year Remembrance Sunday is going to be very different from past occasions and further information from the City Council will be issued shortly. However, the past arrangements such as the large parade cannot be considered this year and we would ask for people to remember from home or to consider using the whole of the day to lay wreaths at Litten Gardens. I will be laying a wreath on behalf of the City at Litten Gardens at the conclusion of the Two Minutes Silence. However, anyone coming to the War Memorial should accept that this is their personal decision and must follow the current guidance – presently the Rule of Six, no mingling and to wear a face covering where social distancing is not possible. I will also be laying a wreath at Chichester Cemetery and at the War Memorial Gardens in West Street.

**Twinned with Chartres, France and Ravenna, Italy**



Christmas this year is going to be hugely important for our wellbeing and emotional health. For our families, friends and, above all, the children who find Christmas a special and magical time, I hope we can keep Christmas in the city centre as normal as possible, with the wonderful street lights and the Rotary Tree of Goodwill at the Cross; street entertainment, including the Snow Queen and Father Christmas; and the shops with festive window displays. All this can be achieved with social distancing. Outdoors there is, of course, less risk, but we should avoid events that cause crowds. Nevertheless, we must not let Covid-19 cancel Christmas.

With my elder son's family in Japan and my younger son in Leicestershire, we are not sure whether it will be turkey or chicken nuggets for Christmas lunch. My letter to Father Christmas will be a request for a vaccine so that we can get on with our lives. Whatever happens, we can still remain thankful for being here in Chichester, with its enviable community support.


Let me remind you of some of the initiatives from the Chichester Community Network:

**The Mayor's Hardship Fund** (Telephone: **07740 621812**) has now helped many who, as a consequence of the virus, were left with nothing. We believe that from the end of October many more will be in need of help.

**Opening 4th November: The Chichester Restaurant** (Telephone **07740 621812**). In 1940 British Restaurant communal kitchens were created to help people who had been bombed out of their homes, had run out of ration coupons, or otherwise needed help. Eighty years on, once again many are struggling. So a similar service for families will be offered at the Boys' Club, Little London.

Please stay safe, well and strong.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Plowman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Councillor Richard Plowman  
**The Mayor of Chichester**