

# CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

## A COVID briefing from Dr Johnston to help us pray specifically about Covid-19 locally and worldwide.

As viruses go, Covid-19 is relatively manageable. It is easily killed by simple measures such as hand washing using soap and alcohol wipes, it struggles to get passed on when people wear a face covering and especially so if they are 2 metre apart. China has rigorously put these preventative drills into place and is practically virus free.

On the other hand, it is not killed by the current anti-viral drugs, for many sufferers it is just nasty version of flu, but in a sizeable minority it causes an overwhelming infection. In particular it affects the lungs so that, without oxygen intensive-care facilities, many victims suffocate to death. In the early stages of the pandemic about 1/3 of people admitted to intensive care died. With newer treatments this has improved but the death rate continues to rise. The following figures go rapidly out of date.

Geography	Number of cases	Number of deaths
Worldwide	95 million	2 million
USA	24 million	400,000
India	10.5 million	150,000
Brazil	8.5 million	200,000
Russia	3.5 million	65,000
UK	3.4 million	90,000

On Wirral, March and April 2020 saw many deaths but the majority amongst elderly and frail patients in nursing homes. As a result of the first lock-down numbers dwindled. In August and September, as people returned from their summer holidays, the numbers started to creep up again, many of the strains reflecting the fact that they had been imported from abroad. At the start of December, we were seeing 52 new cases a week, but then a new and more infectious strain mutated. By Christmas the weekly rate of new cases had risen to 214, by 8/1/21 it peaked at 982 cases in that week, last week falling slightly to 894. The rise in hospital admissions are reflecting those numbers but lag a couple of weeks behind; and the increase in death rates another week or two later. Covid test results are fed back to GP surgeries and 2 months ago a positive result was unusual; now every day's lab returns includes a long list of positives and we are getting reports of our elderly patients dying in Arrowe Park Hospital. If this is a true peak in incidence of new infections, then the next month will see a gradual fall in both hospital admissions and deaths.

Vaccinations have been started, with the limiting factor being the supply of vaccine. Our main site is at the Woodchurch leisure centre with others being done at Clatterbridge Hospital. The patients and staff in our local nursing homes have all been vaccinated, we are just at the end of vaccinating all our 80+ year olds and now starting on the 75+ year olds. The vaccinations are by appointment only and by early February we hope to move on down the tiers. The result of the vaccine is a high degree of immunity, between 70-90%, but more importantly, for those who have had the vaccine, even if they later contract the virus, very few will become ill enough to be admitted to hospital and virtually no-one will die.