

Axminster's Experience of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The First Wave: March to September 2020

(Draft for comments)

Compiled by David Knapman

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Health, Illness and Death in East Devon before Covid-19	4
3	Axminster's Economy before Covid-19	8
4	The First Wave of Covid-19	10
	Appendix 1: Businesses in Axminster during the first Lock-Down (March to July 2020)	16
	Appendix 2: Mortality Data from the First Wave	27
	Appendix 3: Covid-Related Mortality Data from the First Wave	33
	Appendix 4: Businesses' Experiences, in Their Own Words	39

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There are bound to be errors in this account, and anyone who spots one is asked to contact me via history@axminsterheritage.org with corrections and omissions.

The collection of comparable information on the Second Wave is under way.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

How we became aware of Covid-19

In January 2020 China acknowledged to the outside world that the city of Wuhan was at the centre of a serious outbreak of a novel coronavirus, which subsequently became known as Covid-19. Previous instances of coronaviruses had included Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), neither of which had spread very far from their points of origin. All coronaviruses known to have infected people have crossed the species barrier, from animals (including bats) to humans. Although the mortality rate from Covid-19 was apparently quite low, it was soon clear that no existing vaccines conferred any immunity, and that no treatments were particularly effective for those individuals whose symptoms were sufficiently serious to require hospitalisation.

Proven cases in other countries were few and far between at first, so it was described and treated as an epidemic rather than a pandemic. After several weeks of public denials regarding the seriousness of the outbreak, the Chinese authorities instituted an aggressive campaign which involved closing down the city of Wuhan (and some other cities and regions), and preventing residents from leaving or returning. At considerable cost in terms of economic and social hardship, within a few weeks they succeeded in reducing the incidence of Covid-19 to very low levels.

However, by late February it was clear that the virus had already spread well beyond China, including into Italy, and that it had the potential to cause considerable disruption to both national health care systems and to the world economy.

By early March the virus was out of control in the Lombardy region of Italy, and the first UK death linked directly to Covid-19 was recorded in the Royal Berkshire Hospital. This involved an older patient with other medical conditions. The British Medical Journal subsequently reported that by 6 March (just after that death) over 20 000 people had been tested for Covid-19 in the UK, of whom 163 had tested positive, 22 of them in the South West (i.e. more than our 'fair share' of the national case-load, based on our share of the national population). These early cases were mostly linked to international travel, both business travel to and from China and Singapore, but more significantly to leisure travel, including people returning from skiing holidays in northern Italy, and from parts of Spain where the virus had become established.

The purpose, and limits, of this document

This account has been written for the benefit of future generations, to contribute to an understanding of how the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 has affected the residents of Axminster, and our local economy. It has been prompted in part by the absence of any contemporary local accounts of the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918/20, and the impacts which that may have had.

It is being compiled and written in late September and early October 2020, after the 'first wave' of infections had been contained, and after the original social and economic restrictions designed to achieve that containment had been relaxed.

However, it is already clear that a second wave of infections is gathering strength, and that it will have comparable effects to the first wave during the coming winter. At this stage we do not know how serious or widespread those impacts will be, either nationally or locally.

This document does not pretend to provide a technical explanation of Covid-19, or to give a complete picture of its effects on the UK, or even on Devon. It is assumed that future historians will have access to comprehensive and expert reports on both of these topics, but those accounts are only likely to mention East Devon (let alone Axminster) in passing.

Sources of information on Covid-19 and the general health of the population

It seems sensible to offer a word of advice to future historians regarding statistics and Covid-19. We, the general public, have been exposed to a blizzard of confusing and contradictory statistics over the past 6 months. Politicians, journalists and others have sometimes been confused and occasionally careless in the conclusions that they have drawn and then disseminated. You should therefore be sceptical about contemporary press reports.

Even the concept of 'Covid deaths' has become contentious. The National Health Service (NHS) changed its definition mid-pandemic, and now defines a Covid death as the death of anyone who

has tested positive for Covid-19 over the previous 28 days. That includes anyone who recovered, and was then hit by a bus. It excludes all those whose symptoms were so clearly those of Covid-19 that scarce testing resources were not 'wasted' on them. It also excludes anyone who tested positive 29 or more days before death, and was under continual treatment thereafter.

Therefore, where statistics are concerned, look at the original source. If you find figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) you should give them much more weight and credence than those from the NHS. The ONS definition of a Covid death is any death where the death certificate includes a reference to Covid-19, either as the primary cause of death, or as a contributory factor. The ONS also releases data more regularly (but less frequently) than the NHS, and with a lag. ONS figures are also subject to continual updating as further information is collected and processed, sometimes affecting events which occurred some weeks earlier. The ONS also uses a consistent set of regional and local geographies, enabling consistent comparisons to be made over time and across the country. Since very early in the pandemic the ONS has made a wide range of reports and data freely accessible to the general public.

This has encouraged an army of 'armchair epidemiologists' to flex their spreadsheet skills¹, but that has been far more beneficial to the public discourse than the alternative of relying completely on press releases and daily briefings.

It may seem ghoulish to use deaths as the main measure of the pandemic's impact, when it is also clear that for about 10% of those who have needed to go into hospital what has become known as 'long Covid' has seriously affected their general health and quality of life. At present we do not know how long their symptoms will persist.

However, even as late as this Autumn there is very limited information on the true level of infections at a local level. The NHS ramped up testing over the summer, but it aims tests squarely at those with actual symptoms or good reasons to think that they might have been infected. The NHS (and politicians) also talk about testing capacity, and the numbers of tests distributed or used, rather than the numbers of people receiving an actual test result. Because not all tests are properly used, and because some people (such as front-line workers in the NHS and other high-risk occupations) are tested much more frequently, it is very hard to interpret the results.

By contrast the ONS runs weekly surveys based on properly structured random samples of the population. In their own words, "The data can be used for: (1) estimating the number of current positive cases in the community, including cases where people do not report having any symptoms; (2) identifying differences in numbers of positive cases between different regions; and (3) estimating the number of new cases and change over time in positive cases. The data cannot be used for: (1) measuring the number of cases and infections in care homes, hospitals and other institutional settings; (2) estimating the number of positive cases and new infections in smaller geographies, such as towns and cities; (3) providing information about recovery time of those infected; or (4) producing a UK estimate (while we now have estimates for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, these cannot be added up or averaged to understand the UK infection rate)."

As regards where people have died, there is again a contrast between the data coming from the NHS and the ONS. The NHS tends to report by hospital, but in Devon there are only four large acute hospitals: in Exeter, Torquay, Plymouth and Barnstaple. Beyond Devon, people from Axminster might possibly be taken to Taunton, Yeovil or Dorchester. However, reports from these hospitals tell us nothing specific to Axminster.

The ONS, by using information from death certificates, tells us where people came from as well as where they died. This is particularly important where deaths in hospital are concerned. It also tells us how many people died of Covid-19, and from all other causes, at home, as well as in hospitals, care homes, hospices and other institutions (such as prisons or army camps, for example). Their main data set provides this information by local government area (i.e. for East Devon rather than town-by-town and village-by-village), but as time went on some information was also provided at a much more local level.

¹ Who knows if spreadsheets will still be around when you read this? They are relatively simple but very powerful computer calculation programs, used to store, manipulate and analyse large and complex datasets.

Sources of information on local economic effects

The primary method of collecting information was by regular observation of those businesses which are generally accessible to the public. This covered the town centre, West Street and Woodmead Road, and the Millwey Rise Industrial Estate.

Some businesses have kindly produced their own written reports on how the first wave affected them (see Appendix 4), and where anecdotal evidence has been received, this too has been used. Local press reports have also been monitored and used.

Chapter 2: Health, Illness and Death in East Devon before Covid-19

Interpreting statistics

To understand the impacts of a pandemic it is necessary to understand pre-pandemic conditions, so that whatever comparisons are subsequently made in the context of the pandemic are made on a like-for-like basis. If a higher proportion of the population dies in Area A than in Area B during the pandemic, we can only interpret the significance of that outcome if we know what happened in the years before. What we need to know in order to make an objective comparison is by what percentage pandemic-related deaths exceeded pre-pandemic deaths.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the baseline, which is particularly important in an area such as East Devon, where so many factors are different from the national average.

Life expectancy

Data for 2015-17 from the ONS show that life expectancy is higher in East Devon than it is for Devon as a whole, which in turn is better than for the South West as a whole, which in turn is better than for England as a whole, which in turn is better than for the UK as a whole. This applies to both sexes, with women's life expectancy being higher than men's.

The raw data, which are inevitably complicated by the fact that people move from area to area over the course of their lives, are as follows.

Group	Place	<i>Life expectancy / expected age at death</i>	<i>Advantage over UK average</i>
Females at birth	East Devon	84.7	1.8
	Devon	84.2	1.3
	South West	83.7	0.9
	England	83.1	0.3
	United Kingdom	82.9	n/a
Males at birth	East Devon	81.3	2.1
	Devon	80.4	1.2
	South West	80.2	1.0
	England	79.6	0.3
	United Kingdom	79.2	n/a
Females at age 65	East Devon	87.1	1.2
	Devon	87.0	1.0
	South West	86.6	0.6
	England	86.1	0.2
	United Kingdom	85.9	n/a
Males at age 65	East Devon	85.1	1.5
	Devon	84.4	0.8
	South West	84.2	0.6
	England	83.8	0.2
	United Kingdom	83.6	n/a

This is mainly because people in East Devon are generally healthier than their peers elsewhere, with fewer East Devon residents being smokers or obese. Partly because so many people choose to retire to the area, East Devon's older residents in particular are, on average, richer than in many other areas. The two indicators on which East Devon scores uncharacteristically badly are deaths

and serious injuries caused by road accidents, and alcohol-related hospital admissions of persons aged under 18.

Because of the inward movement of retirees and the outward movement of some young people seeking better employment opportunities, the average age of East Devon is among the highest in England. In mid-2017 the median age of residents was estimated by the ONS at 39.8 for England, 43.8 for the South West, 47.1 for Devon as a whole, and 50.7 for East Devon. On this particular measure we also have a figure for Axminster and its surrounds (one of 20 such sub-areas in East Devon), which was 49.8.

Mortality rates

Although good health supports longevity, a higher average age tends to result in a higher local death rate. In our case age profile trumps relative good health, and East Devon has for years had one of the highest mortality rates in the country. In the table that follows this is quantified in three ways: (1) the weekly average number of deaths per 1,000 residents in 2018; (2) the average size of population which will generate one death per week at that mortality rate; and (3) the weekly mortality rate for the area concerned expressed as a percentage of the same measure for England as a whole.

The figures for East Devon and other selected areas of which it forms a part are as follows, together with the same statistics for three population density bands: (1) low population density areas in England (suburban and rural, <1,000 persons per sq km); (2) medium population density areas in England (urban, 1-2,000 persons per sq km); and (3) high population density areas in England (urban, >2,000 persons per sq km).

<i>Place</i>	<i>Average weekly deaths per 1,000 residents in 2018</i>	<i>Local population associated with one weekly death</i>	<i>Local mortality rate as % of England as a whole</i>
East Devon	0.24932	4,011	143.5
Rest of Devon	0.21278	4,700	122.4
Devon as a whole	0.21719	4,604	125.0
South West	0.19964	5,009	114.9
England	0.17379	5,574	100.0
All low population density areas	0.19578	5,108	112.7
All medium pop'n density areas	0.18020	5,550	103.7
All high population density areas	0.14654	6,824	84.3

This importance of this is to show that a high mortality rate compared to large swathes of the rest of the country was characteristic of pre-Covid-19 East Devon, and to a lesser extent characteristic of rural areas taken as a whole.

Axminster, with a resident population of around 6,000 persons, could expect in 2018 to have 1-2 funerals each week, plus roughly the same again from the surrounding villages and hamlets.

East Devon had the second highest mortality rate in Devon (after Torbay), and the 12th highest in England. Most other Devon districts fell into the range from 17th to 123rd, with Plymouth in 142nd place and Exeter in 224th place (out of 313). This is based on Local Authority boundaries as defined in mid-2020, which are changing surprisingly often as smaller authorities amalgamate. Nevertheless, the central point is clear: East Devon had one of the oldest pre-Covid-19 age profiles in the country, and as a consequence one of the highest mortality rates.

Causes of death

We know from the first wave of the pandemic that certain underlying health conditions make people particularly susceptible to Covid-19. According to Public Health England these are (in declining order of significance): diabetes, obesity, stroke or dementia, cancer, chronic heart disease and asthma. The following information provides a very simple indication of how several of these conditions affect East Devon, or Devon as a whole.

ONS data on the prevalence of diabetes in England include the estimate that in 2020 8.9% of the population of England aged over 16 is suffering from diabetes, either diagnosed or undiagnosed. When broken down by area (but not as far down as District Council areas) the figures range from 6.8% in the London Borough of Kingston-on-Thames to 12.0% in the London Borough of Brent. The figure for Devon (excluding Plymouth and Torbay) is 9.6%, meaning that 115 areas have a lower incidence than us, and 35 have a higher incidence. Three London Boroughs are amongst the 10 best performers, and six are amongst the 10 worst performers (as is Torbay).

A factsheet from the British Heart Foundation states that 8,400 adults in East Devon are living with diagnosed diabetes, and that 56% of adults are overweight (some of whom would be categorised as obese).

An interactive map produced by the Stroke Association shows that Devon as a whole is high on the list as far as the prevalence of strokes is concerned. This measure counts the survivors of stroke as a percentage of the population, and gives the figure for Devon as 2.4%. Without access to the underlying data it is impossible to be certain, but the range across England appears to go from around 1.0% to 2.8%, and to be linked to the average age of the underlying population.

The British Heart Foundation also ranks every Local Authority by its rates of heart and circulatory disease, including the narrower category of coronary heart disease (CHD), using data from 2016-18. For both categories, the death rate in East Devon falls into the lowest of their five bands. The rest of Devon ranges from the lowest band to the second highest (Torbay and Plymouth).

Their area profile for East Devon states that about 21,000 residents are living with heart and circulatory disease, including 5,600 with CHD, and that the wider category of heart and circulatory disease causes around 50 deaths each month.

Where people usually die

Where people usually died before the pandemic varied greatly across England. The following statistics come from the ONS and its Covid-19-related data set for 2020, but taken from the first 9 weeks of the year (ending 28 February 2020), before the first Covid death was recognised. They show the percentage distribution of all deaths registered over that 9-week period. Not every line adds up to exactly 100%, because each percentage has been rounded.

What should be emphasised is that this data set records people by their usual district of residence, not by where they actually died. A person normally resident in Axminster who died in the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital (or in Taunton) would be counted in the row labelled East Devon, not in the one labelled Rest of Devon (or South West).

	<i>At home</i>	<i>In a care home</i>	<i>In a hospice</i>	<i>In hospital</i>	<i>In another setting</i>
East Devon	29.4%	29.4%	3.7%	36.6%	0.9%
Rest of Devon	25.3%	29.2%	4.4%	39.5%	1.5%
Devon as a whole	25.9%	29.3%	4.3%	39.1%	1.5%
South West	25.5%	27.6%	4.3%	40.6%	2.0%
England	23.8%	23.3%	5.4%	45.7%	1.8%
All low population density areas	23.6%	20.2%	5.5%	49.0%	1.8%
All medium population density areas	23.8%	21.8%	5.9%	46.6%	1.8%
All high population density areas	23.9%	25.8%	5.2%	43.2%	1.8%

As can be seen, Devon generally has a low proportion of deaths which occur in hospital. Of all local authority areas in England, the two with the lowest percentage of hospital deaths were both in Devon: South Hams and Torridge. Those same two authority areas were also to be found in the three with the highest percentage of deaths either at home or in a care home. East Devon residents tend to use hospitals more than those from South Hams and Torridge, but East Devon was nevertheless number 8 (of 313) on the national list of deaths at home or in care homes.

There are currently four hospitals in Devon with intensive care wards: in Exeter, Torquay, Plymouth and Barnstaple. The local hospital in Axminster lost all of its in-patient beds about 5 years ago, as did several other towns in East Devon. No local hospitals are able to provide acute care.

It might be thought, based on the above, that in 2020 East Devon has a disproportionately large provision of care home beds. In fact this is not the case. Public Health England publishes a measure of care home bed provision in its Public Health Profiles. Their preferred measure is the number of care home beds per 100 local residents aged 75 or over. By that measure England as a whole has 9.57 beds, and the South West has 9.39. The three local authority areas in Devon with the highest provision are Torbay (12.37), Plymouth (10.82) and Exeter (9.65). East Devon has just 8.76.

All care homes are inspected periodically by the Care Quality Commission. Their reports show that immediately prior to Covid-19 the four residential homes in Axminster had sufficient capacity for 121 persons between them, split between Silverleigh (65 places), Magnolia House (20 places), Tudor Cottage (19 places) and Oak House (17 places). A further 25 places were provided by The Koppers, in Kilmington. There were other local care homes (e.g. The Old Rectory and Barley Close, both at Musbury; and Norwyn House, Raymonds Hill) which cater primarily to younger residents with learning disabilities, rather than to the older residents typically found in the four Axminster homes. Many more homes catering to older residents could be found in the various towns in East Devon, particularly the coastal towns.

Chapter 3: Axminster's Economy before Covid-19

Introduction

Axminster did not go into the pandemic with a very healthy economy. In November 2019 the company that had some time before bought Fields of Sidmouth, and with it Trinity House in Axminster, had closed the Trinity House shop with the loss of all of the associated jobs. This had for some years been the largest shop in the town centre (occupying most of the western side of Trinity Square), but it had been clear for some time that its owners did not really want to keep it. Over Christmas 2019 the premises were closed and vacant, with no clear and settled future, but on 14 January 2020 it was reported in the Midweek Herald that the building had been bought by Axminster Property (owned by the same family that had established Axminster Tools, by 2020 the biggest local employer), and that there were plans to give the building a major facelift and then to rent out the retail space.

Then, on 19 February 2020, it was announced that Axminster Carpets Ltd had changed its name to ACL 2020 Ltd and gone into administration, something which it had previously done in 2013. Losses had been reducing over recent years, but the business had remained fragile.

Between 80 and 90 jobs were lost. Three employees were transferred to Ulster Carpet Mills (Holdings) Ltd together with the 'Axfelt' underlay business, raising £400,000. Three more, together with the factory outlet shop on Musbury Road, were transferred to Axminster Carpets (Factory Outlet) Ltd, raising £25,000. Both of these sales had been arranged before the business was formally placed into administration. On 4 March the main business, with a skeleton workforce, was sold to ACL Carpets for £335,500. Two weeks later, ACL Carpets changed its name to Axminster Carpets Ltd, the same name under which the 'old' business had operated until 18 February.

Apart from the employees who had lost their jobs, the main loser from this process was H Dawson Sons & Co (Wool) Ltd of Bradford, who had bought the Axminster Carpets business out of administration on 23 March 2013, investing £57,800 in share capital, and providing a loan to the business of £2 million.

Employment

Axminster's largest employer is Axminster Tools, and the main centre of employment is the Millwey Industrial Estate. Company-by-company data on employment are not readily accessible, and official statistics mostly report data by where employees live rather than where they work.

For Axminster the most recent local snapshot comes from the 2011 census, the results from which are summarised on the nomis website. This breaks employment data down by ward, and in the case of Axminster there are two wards: Axminster Town and Axminster Rural. Axminster Town includes most of the town plus a large area of nearby countryside, but no villages. Axminster Rural includes the northern part of the town (Millbrook and Millwey Rise) plus Raymonds Hill and Hawkchurch. Neither of these wards cover Smallridge, even though it is in Axminster parish. The figures from these two wards in 2011 were as follows.

		<i>Axminster Town</i>	<i>Axminster Rural</i>	<i>Total</i>
Male	Population aged 16 to 64	1,361	840	2,201
	Employees	729	397	1,126
	Self-employed	276	201	477
	Unemployed	49	34	83
	Not economically active	307	208	515
Female	Population aged 16 to 64	1,334	915	2,249
	Employees	833	426	1,259
	Self-employed	108	95	203
	Unemployed	57	28	85
	Not economically active	336	366	702

From this it can be seen that any event which leads to 50 fewer (or more) jobs is significant, particularly if those jobs are higher-skilled, better-paying ones.

Businesses in the town

Appendix 1 provides a reasonably complete list of those businesses and public services which were trading in Axminster in early March, immediately before the first Covid-19 lock-down. It covers not just the town centre, but the whole of the town including the Millwey Industrial Estate.

It then describes what happened over the first wave of Covid-19, relying primarily on what was evident to the general public. The information covering that period was mostly collected via a series of walks around the town, carried out between early April and the end of July.

In total there are over 200 business premises listed in Appendix 1. In March 2020 almost 50 of them were occupied by shops, with another 11 housing banks, solicitors, estate agents and accountants. Almost 60 housed other private sector service providers (including, for example, hairdressers, health clinics, printers, car repair workshops etc), while 17 comprised pubs, restaurants and take-away businesses and just over 20 housed manufacturers. The remaining premises include residential care homes, public services (e.g. the Guildhall, Post Office and library) and a range of other facilities not covered by the categories above. Finally, there were around 20 vacant premises (most, but not all of them town centre shop units).

This illustrates a general point which is important when understanding the impacts of the pandemic, which is that over recent years the 'rate of churn' of shops and other town centre businesses has been steady, and by no means trivial. Leaving on one side the handful of premises which have stood empty for years, there are usually several well-located shop units vacant at any one time, some of them remaining empty for months at a time.

For every three town centre businesses which have been in their current premises for 5 to 10 years, there are probably two more which have either opened or will close over a similar time frame.

On Woodmead Road and up on the Millwey Industrial Estate the 'rate of churn' may well be lower, but change is nevertheless a constant feature of the town's economy.

Chapter 4: The first Wave of Covid-19

Introduction

This Chapter looks at the local impacts of the first wave of Covid-19, up to early September 2020. In this context 'local' generally means the area currently covered by East Devon District Council, because published data are generally not broken down further than that. However, it is not obvious that this introduces any distortions, because what happened in Axminster, in terms of health, illness and death, appears to have been very much in line with what happened elsewhere in East Devon.

Distilling an objective picture of what happened during the first wave is not easy. We were exposed to a wide range of facts and opinions from different sources during lock-down. This account uses the actual death rates as the truest measure of what was happening, bearing in mind that there is always a considerable lag between a person becoming infected, and either recovering or becoming ill enough for hospitalisation to be necessary. Those who enter hospital may then either recover, or die without the benefit of intensive care, or deteriorate to the point where he or she enters intensive care. Having entered intensive care, patients either recover or die. Each intermediate stage may last anywhere from a few days to several weeks.

Nevertheless, for the population as a whole the death statistics tended to follow 3-4 weeks after hospitalisation, which in turn followed 3-4 weeks after infection.

The data used here come from the ONS, which reported data both locally and nationally, showing where the casualties lived, and paying particular attention to what was recorded on their death certificates as having contributed to their deaths.

To be objective, any comparisons between different parts of the country need to take account of what would have happened without Covid-19. The best way to do this is to compare the number of deaths recorded in 2020 with what happened in earlier years, using statistics from 2018 as our point of comparison.

As explained in Chapter 2, in more normal times East Devon has one of the highest death rates of all local authority areas in England, which can be expressed as 0.24932 expected deaths each week per 1,000 residents. This is almost half as high again as the average for England, and it reflects the balance between, among other things, our above-average percentage of older residents, and our generally healthy environment.

Dates and phases

In the UK the period up to end of February can be regarded as pre-Covid, not because there were no cases, but because there were no deaths recognised as being Covid-related. By early-to-mid March, however, the Government started to encourage as many people as possible to stay at home, and to reduce social contact to a minimum. This prompted an outbreak of panic buying, focussed on toilet rolls, hand sanitiser, pasta, rice, oats and other items thought by some to be both essential and likely to run out. As a consequence they did run out, but only relatively briefly. Most supermarkets' supply chains proved to be remarkably resilient, and Axminster was less affected by panic buying than some other towns.

It was no great surprise when, on Sunday 23 March, the Prime Minister went on television and said the following (which is quoted directly from the Government's own transcript of his statement):

"From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction - you must stay at home. Because the critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households. That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible;
- one form of exercise a day - for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household;
- any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and
- travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

“That’s all - these are the only reasons you should leave your home. You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say No. You should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home. You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine - and you should do this as little as you can. And use food delivery services where you can. If you don’t follow the rules the police will have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings.”

For the purposes of this account, the phases of the first wave of the pandemic are defined as follows. Because the ONS data come in weekly sets, ending on Fridays, they are generally referred to by reference to the week number.

Phases	Weeks	Start date	End date
Pre-Covid	1 to 9	28 December 2019	28 February 2020
The start	10 to 11	29 February 2020	13 March 2020
The rising curve (of deaths)	12 to 14	14 March 2020	3 April 2020
The peak (of deaths)	15 to 17	4 April 2020	24 April 2020
The falling curve (of deaths)	18 to 20	25 April 2020	15 May 2020
Under control	21 to 36	16 May 2020	4 September 2020

As noted above, the first lock-down started on 23 March, which fell within Week 13. At that point it was clear that the virus was spreading out of control, and the rate of hospitalisation was threatening to overwhelm the NHS. This was diagnosed, announced and implemented during the phase characterised as ‘the rising curve’.

Health and deaths: the numbers

Total deaths

To understand what happened it is necessary to provide some (actually a great many) statistics. Anyone looking at the pandemic many years hence will probably find it very hard to assemble much by way of local data, which is why so much is included here.

The first set of data tables, which can be found in Appendix 2, deal with the total numbers of deaths recorded across the country, irrespective of their cause. The significance of this full data set is that in the early days of the first wave very little was known about how widespread infection was within the community (or even within the main hospitals), nor was it always clear whether or not Covid-19 was a contributory factor in many deaths, so this data set is at least fully consistent across the full 25-week period from 14 March to 4 September.

Although Covid-19 was being detected and treated before 14 March, there is inevitably a lag of between a few weeks and several weeks between infection and death, and it was not until 14 March than any unusual patterns of death were detected, particularly in the South West.

However, by early March the NHS was coming under pressure due to the multiple uncertainties around Covid-19 and the way in which it might spread. This resulted in treatments of many other health conditions being put on hold for some patients. From the point of view of society as a whole what matters is how many people in total died, irrespective of whether their deaths were caused partly or wholly by Covid-19, or by a separate condition in which death was accelerated by Covid-related pressures on the NHS. For this reason, therefore, the total death count constitutes an important indicator.

Appendix 2 contains four tables for each of the four phases of the first wave (the rising curve, the peak, the falling curve and the ‘under control’ phase during the summer), plus a further four tables covering Weeks 12-36 as a whole.

For each phase the first table provides ‘raw data’ to show where people were dying, in East Devon and in other parts of the country. The second table simply presents those same figures as percentages, making it easier to compare different parts of the country.

The third table shows how the percentages in the second table compare with the equivalent data from Weeks 1 to 9 of 2020 (before Covid-19 had become in any real sense established in the UK²).

The fourth table compares total weekly recorded deaths, and for each area shows how many weekly deaths there were per 1,000 residents. It then compares that figure with the average weekly death rate from 2018, and finally shows the 'excess death rate' as a percentage, again allowing comparisons to be made across different parts of the country.

Deaths from Covid-19

Appendix 3 provides a further 20 summary tables which very largely match those in Appendix 2 in terms of their structure, but which only count those deaths which were attributed (on the death certificates) as being in some way directly linked to Covid-19, whether as the primary cause or as a contributory factor. As explained in Chapter 1, the ONS source data attributes each death to the normal residence of the person concerned, not simply to where the death occurred, or where it was registered.

Interpreting the numbers

Readers are encouraged to look carefully for themselves at Appendices 2 and 3. The text below does not attempt to describe everything that is there, but simply to point out some of what currently appear to be the more significant facts and conclusions.

During Weeks 12 to 14, total average weekly death rates across England as a whole were 60% above the annual norm (at a rate of 0.279 per 1,000 people compared to 0.174 averaged across the whole of 2018). Although the tables in Appendix 2 do not show this specific comparison, death rates were over 50% above the equivalent weekly rate from Weeks 1 to 9 of 2020 (which had been 0.181 per 1,000). One other point that the tables in Appendix 2 cannot show is that the rate in Week 14 was noticeably higher than in Week 12, meaning that this was not a short 'blip' returning to normal, but the start of a much higher peak.

The death rate in East Devon in Weeks 12 to 14 was 18.6% above the annual average from 2018, and about 10% above the rate from Weeks 1 to 9. However, in East Devon only 4 deaths (out of 128) were attributed to Covid-19 over this period. This suggests that some of the earliest Covid-19 deaths were not being recognised as such. Deaths in East Devon care homes were at a lower level than in Weeks 12 to 14, unlike the rate in hospitals, which was 15% higher than at the start of the year.

It was widely publicised that to free up beds, and in particular intensive care beds, hospitals discharged as many patients as they could into care homes, or into their own homes, and diverted resources away from routine operations and clinics and into Covid-related care wards. Unfortunately, a severe shortage of testing capacity meant that by no means all of the patients who were discharged were tested before they left hospital. It was not appreciated at that point just how many Covid patients did not display symptoms, even though they could pass the infection on to others.

The consequences of this are evident in the statistics from Weeks 15 to 17, which marked the peak (in terms of deaths) across England as a whole. During these three weeks the excess death rate across England as a whole was 171.5% (i.e. there were 2.7 times as many deaths as normal). In East Devon it was 43.6%, and in low population density areas as a whole it was 117.9%.

From a single Covid-attributed death in East Devon care homes in Weeks 12 to 14 (out of 35 in total), East Devon recorded 10 (out of a total of 56) in care homes in Weeks 15 to 17, and 15 (out of 47) in Weeks 18 to 21. Over the same period the number of Covid-attributed deaths for East Devon residents in hospital were three out of 54 (Weeks 12 to 14), seven out of 46 (Weeks 15 to 17) and 3 out of 30 (Weeks 18 to 20). As can be seen, the total number of deaths in hospital fell significantly over this time, due in part to the fact that seriously ill patients were having to be kept in hospital much longer than usual because of the characteristics of Covid-19. Nevertheless, it is very hard to avoid the conclusion that in East Devon at least, some of the problems associated with Covid-19 were (no doubt unintentionally) shifted from hospitals into care homes. It was also well

² Weeks 10 and 11, when the very first deaths from Covid-19 were being reported, are treated here as being neither pre-Covid nor as part of the rising curve. Were they to be included in the pre-Covid baseline data, they would slightly skew the data which is then used to represent 'normal times'. Similarly, were they included as part of the 'rising curve' they would significantly reduce the average weekly death rate, which would give a false impression of just how quickly death rates in some areas did actually accelerate.

publicised at the time that care homes were not supported with personal protection equipment (PPE) and testing to the same degree that NHS facilities were, despite their high risk status for a disease with acknowledged risk factors arising from age and underlying medical conditions.

During Weeks 18 to 20 there were 47 deaths in East Devon care homes (15 of them attributed to Covid-19), compared to 30 deaths (three of them attributed to Covid-19) of East Devon residents in hospitals. This ratio was more extreme than the equivalent figures for the rest of Devon and the South West region, and very different from the country as a whole, where both Covid-attributed deaths and all other deaths in hospitals outnumbered those in care homes. For East Devon the excess death rate over this 3-week period was just 1.0%, compared to 69.1% for England as a whole.

The ONS has also published an interactive map showing where the victims of Covid-related deaths lived during the four calendar months from March to June. East Devon is broken up into 20 local areas, and the one that covers Axminster and Hawkchurch showed 10 deaths, five of them in April and five in May. April and May accounted for all of Weeks 12 to 20 plus about two weeks before and after them.

Axminster's total of 10 Covid-attributed deaths in April and May compares with 10 in Seaton, six in Sidmouth and Sidford, eight in Exmouth and nine in the rest of East Devon. This largely reflects where towns with care homes are to be found (though Honiton, with just three deaths over the two-month period, performed very well indeed). The monthly totals for East Devon as a whole were one Covid-attributed death in March (in Exmouth), 29 in April, 14 in May and five in June (making a total of 48). The total number of 50 Covid-attributed deaths in East Devon given in the tables in Appendix 3 covers July and August as well, emphasizing the point that by July the outbreak genuinely was under much better control.

Looking at the first wave as a whole (Weeks 12 to 36), deaths at home and deaths in hospices were lower than usual across the country, and Covid-attributed deaths at home were relatively few and far between. Covid-attributed deaths in East Devon amounted to 5.6% of the level of all deaths in 2018, compared to 20.4% for England as a whole. There were no excess deaths in East Devon over the 25-week period as a whole, compared to 29.6% for England.

Whereas East Devon residents were for the most part much less affected by Covid-19 than residents of most of the rest of the country, the experience of care homes was much harsher. One of the main causes of this was the relatively low provision of hospital beds (which affects the South West in general), which meant that there were fewer beds per capita in hospital to receive patients of all types during the first wave, and a corresponding higher pressure to discharge patients who were not obviously suffering from Covid-19 back into the community, and particularly into care homes.

When the full data set is analysed district-by-district East Devon performed very well indeed by many measures, as did other rural districts in Devon. Across the country as a whole rural districts did better than suburban ones, with high population density urban districts suffering many more deaths and serious illnesses. This reflects the difficulty of social distancing in large conurbations, the concentration of large and overcrowded households in urban areas, some of them with multiple generations sharing space, and the concentration of unhealthy lifestyle factors (notably obesity and lung diseases) in those same areas.

Impacts on regular health care

For the much larger number of persons who did not catch Covid-19 there were clear impacts on medical, dental and other health care services.

All dental surgeries were instructed to close at the start of lock-down, mainly because of the impossibility of controlling aerosol formation as an inevitable by-product of basic dental hygiene and treatment work, and the importance of aerosols as a vector in spreading the coronavirus in very small droplets. Pressure from insurance providers will also have played a part in ensuring a complete closure of services. Dentists, like care homes, do not benefit from the immunity from certain claims which applies to the NHS.

On 18 April the BBC News website carried an item about an Axminster man who had pulled out one of his own teeth after he was refused an emergency dental appointment due to the lock-down. Billy Taylor, a 33-year-old aircraft fitter told the BBC that with his normal dentist closed, he had called the NHS 111 service to find out about getting an emergency appointment. He said that he was not told about any accessible dental centres in the area, and was told that unless he was unable to

breathe, or his airway was becoming blocked, he would not qualify for emergency treatment. With the pain becoming excruciating, and one side of his face swelling up, he made the decision to extract the tooth himself, which he did with the help of his 11-year-old son, Leo.

In mid-July 2020 'Axminster Nub News' carried an item about the St Thomas' Medical Practice on Church Street. This was prompted by comments and questions on social media suggesting that General Practitioner services were closed. The Axminster Medical Practice was keen to reassure patients that it was open, and had been open throughout lock-down. 'Axminster Nub News' quoted a statement on the Practice's own social media account which described in some detail how the Surgery had been operating, as follows.

"In order to play our part in reducing the risk of infection spread, we have installed a 'total triage' system, where all initial GP consultations are digital or telephone. Matt Hancock has recently confirmed that this system will remain from now on. Most people have been really understanding and found the benefits from our new system. For example, busy people no longer have to wait for an appointment or take time off work when we can manage the problem remotely. By taking a few minutes to fill out an eConsult, you are enabling us to help you much more efficiently and we will get back to you on the same day, rather than previously where you may have had to wait weeks for an appointment. If we feel you do need to see a GP or nurse, we can now be much more flexible with the appointment time, and give you longer than 10 minutes if you need it.

"However, we have been concerned by the escalating levels of abuse that our staff, and particularly our dispensers and receptionists, have been receiving. Please remember that we are all human beings, trying our best to get through this together, helping you as best we can. There will be aspects of the service we provide that you do not like, and we will make mistakes, for which we are sorry. We can understand frustration, but cannot accept abuse of our staff who are performing a very difficult, and sometimes impossible job." It was then reported that by the end of July Axminster Medical Practice had completed 6,893 eConsults and 4,414 telephone requests. It had also delivered 1,134 GP face-to-face appointments and 4,698 nurse appointments. A total of 71,250 prescriptions had been processed.

Social and economic effects

Introduction

When the details were published over the following few days it was made clear that churches, sports facilities, exercise classes, libraries and other elements of social infrastructure would all be directly affected by closure. Schools and nurseries were asked to remain open for the benefit of the children of key workers and vulnerable families, but most children stayed at home, with parents being encouraged to oversee an element of home learning.

The roads and skies became eerily quiet, and train and bus services were cut right back. People started to comment on birdsong and other sounds which would normally have been drowned out by general background noise. Fortunately, after a dismally wet Winter and early Spring, lock-down was characterised by beautiful weather, encouraging people to go walking in the surrounding countryside. Some footpaths were unilaterally closed to stop people walking through farmyards where residents were reported to be 'shielding', but the majority of paths remained accessible.

Although more children were returning to school by the Summer, facilities such as Axminster New Youth Club, which operates from The Pippins Community Centre, Lyme Road, had to remain closed until 22 September, and even then numbers had to be limited to a maximum of 15 children at a time, fitting in with the concept of 'year bubbles' at school.

Axminster Community Emergency Response

With the Prime Minister's announcement having been trailed for some days, by 18 March 2020 Axminster Town Council, Axminster Hospital League of Friends, Axminster Care Services, Light up Axminster and other local community groups had come together to set up Axminster Community Emergency Response (ACER), with the support of East Devon District Council and the NHS. Initial funding was provided by the Town Council, but an on-line community fund raising effort was also established.

ACER's focus was on supporting the most vulnerable local residents, including those who had been instructed to 'shield' (this being the strictest level of lock-down, with no non-emergency movements outside the home allowed), and those families with the least resilience in terms of income and savings.

Over the following 6 months, but particularly during the first 3-4 months, ACER's volunteers provided a wide range of assistance to meet the community's needs; including food supply, shopping and prescription collection and delivery, and the organisation and manning of a telephone help-line.

The number of volunteers was almost 200, with 120 households identified as needing the most support. ACER collected and delivered over 1,500 prescriptions, and undertook hundreds of shopping excursions as well as providing hundreds of food parcels.

When the service was put into hibernation in mid-September its performance was reviewed by the organisers. Steve Holt of Axminster Hospital League of Friends acknowledged that there had been a few challenges along the way, with ACER sometimes being regarded by some as the default organisation for information and support in dealing with anything out of the ordinary. Despite this, he concluded that ACER's volunteers had risen to the challenge and responded to all requests. Even when ACER had been unable to help, it had directed people to those who were better placed to do so.

The impact on businesses

It has been mentioned above that in the immediate run-up to lock-down there was an element of panic buying in supermarkets. Although the supermarkets knew that their supply chains were robust, they were physically unable to cater for levels of demand of several times the normal level for a few products, and as a response they placed limits on the number of certain items that individual shoppers could buy at one time. This was accompanied by unreasonable and aggressive behaviour by some shoppers who resented any suggestion that their personal freedom to buy whatever they wanted could be curtailed, and there were many stories in the media (though none that emanated from Axminster) of check-out staff being harassed and abused.

At this stage everyone was required to use hand sanitiser in shops, and some one-way systems and controls on the number of persons entering a shop at one time were imposed, but the advice on face coverings was neutral (they were neither required nor discouraged), in line with guidance from bodies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Over time everything calmed down. Face coverings became mandatory, one-way systems were removed, and queueing reverted to normal. Most supermarkets, including those in Axminster, instituted specific times of day, generally at the start of the trading day, when only the more vulnerable customers were allowed to shop.

A combination of commercial supermarket home delivery services, delivery services newly provided by other food shops (such as Complete Meats, MacSorsons, Project Food (HALFF) and Ganesh), plus the community support work provided by ACER, all assisted in reducing demand for actual supermarket visits.

Most local non-food shops were closed from 24 March for at least 3 months, and in some cases longer. Exceptions included chemists, banks, Post Offices and petrol stations.

Initially RKL, Axminster's hardware shop remained open (which was allowed), but then concluded that the challenges of social distancing were too great. Most restaurants and quite a few pubs switched to offering take-aways and deliveries.

Those businesses which were already set up for on-line ordering and home delivery emphasised this element of their offer. Others which had not previously had an on-line presence did their best to catch up.

Most manufacturing businesses carried on, often (but by no means all) at a lower level of output.

Appendix 1 reports on a business-by-business basis which premises in Axminster remained open, or partly open, and which ones closed down, and for roughly how long.

By the beginning of October eight town centre shops and businesses which had been active in mid-March had not re-opened, and most can be considered lost to the town as walk-in businesses. These eight were: Brainwave (West Street), Dreads Audio Workshop (Chard Street), Foot Friendly Clinic (Milton's Yard), Red & Ginger (Milton's Yard), Robot Pizza (Lyme Street, though a replacement business had been identified), Sub-Lyme Café (Milton's Yard, though its closure is not believed to have been solely due to Covid-19), The Wardrobe (Silver Street, nor had the intending replacement business, Legendary Brows PMU Studio, opened), and Yapp & White (Chard Street).

In addition, neither the Guildhall nor the Senior Citizen's Centre (Old Court House) had re-opened to the public by early October.

On the Millwey Industrial Estate it was announced in late July that the factory of Goulds Pumps, a division of ITT, would be closing by the end of 2020, with the loss of 50 jobs. The work is being transferred to another factory belonging to ITT, in Germany. The direct cause of this move was not Covid-19.

Two other incidents which were not related to Covid-19 affected two well-known businesses in the town centre. During the evening of Sunday 9 August a fire was started at Chris' Tat Shack Tattoo Studio on Lyme Street, either in the letterbox or by breaking a window. An accelerant was used to encourage the fire to spread, and damage was caused to the door and to curtains inside the shop. The police reported that spray paint had been used to obscure CCTV at the front of the building, and threatening graffiti were then daubed on the outside of the shop. Nevertheless it was possible to identify the suspects as older teenagers, wearing tracksuits, masks and hoods.

A similar incident caused serious damage to the Arts Café, and the adjacent Courthouse Makers shop on Church Street in the early hours of Monday 19 October. Damage was estimated at 25% fire damage and 90% smoke damage.

At the request of Axminster Heritage a small selection of local businesses recorded their experiences of lock-down, and these are set out in Appendix 4.

Appendix 1: Businesses in Axminster during the first Lock-Down (March to July 2020)

This Appendix seeks to identify as many as possible of the local business premises which in early March 2020 (i.e. in the weeks before the first lock-down) housed (or would normally be expected to house) a shop or other retail premises, a publicly-accessible office, a workshop or a factory. It does not cover businesses which are run from people's homes.

It then describes what happened next, over the first wave of Covid-19, relying primarily on what was evident to the general public. The information was mostly collected via a series of walks around the town, carried out between early April and the end of July. The walks around the less central areas were slightly less frequent, and did not continue as long, because most manufacturing and service businesses returned to something approaching normal faster than did shops.

For future reference, the businesses are arranged below as a series of walks, or circuits. Unless clearly stated to the contrary, the circuits stick to one side of each road or street at a time, and it is made plain where the route crosses a street and heads back in the opposite direction. The intention is that future researchers, even 100 years hence, will be able to work out the precise location of enough points along each route to be able to divine where the intervening businesses were as well.

In the lists that follow each business is numbered, but it should not be assumed that businesses with adjacent numbers are physically side-by-side. Many are separated by residential properties, which are not identified here. Each circuit starts with X01 (where X is the number of the circuit), and at some points there are extra numbers, and even some gaps in the sequence, to make allowance for uncertainties and possible future changes (e.g. in the number of shop units which may eventually occupy Trinity House).

The first three circuits cover what might loosely be termed the town centre. The others work their different ways towards (and, in a few cases just beyond) the edge of the town. None of them cover businesses in the surrounding villages or countryside.

Circuit 1: Start on Silver Street, close to the East window of the Minster Church. Walk down Silver Street, heading away from Trinity Square. Look at the buildings on your right.

101	Abbeyfield, sheltered housing (this was already in the process of closing before Covid-19)	During April: No public access for health reasons. Not until the end of July was some movement evident, but even then very limited.
102	Stamford House Dental Surgery (ground floor, part of same building as Abbeyfield)	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Signs of impending opening (advertising for patients by 25 June). By the end of July: No change.
103	MacSorsons, fishmonger	During April: Shop closed. Sales from a trailer in Trinity Square on Market days, plus home delivery service. By the end of July: No change.
104	Axminster Inn, pub	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Open.
	<i>Cross to the other side of Silver Street, and head back towards Trinity Square. Look at the buildings on your right.</i>	
105	Silver Street Barber's Shop	During April: Closed. Late June: Notice in window to say re-opening in mid-July. On 4 July: Re-opening delayed until 1 August. By the end of July: No change.
106	Bevis & Beckingsale, solicitors	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. By the end of July: No change.
107	Axminster Heritage Centre, museum	During April: Closed. By the end of July: Notice announcing re-opening to visitors in early August.
108	Thomas Whitty House, offices	During April: Closed. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Open.
109	Axminster Conservative Club	During April: Closed, but offering twice-weekly cooked meal collection or delivery service. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Open.

110	Former Register Office (part of Conservative Club)	See No.11 (above).
111	Milford & Dormor, solicitors	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. By the end of July: Notice announcing re-opening on 1 August.
112	Lloyds Bank	During April: Open 10:00 to 14:00, Monday to Friday. By the end of July: No change.
113	Symonds & Sampson, estate agents	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. By mid-June: Notice announcing that public access will resume on 25 June. On 4 July: Open, but with controlled entry. By the end of July: More accessible than before.
114	River Cottage Kitchen & Deli	During April: Offering 'Produce box and supper club', collections by appointment. On 23 May: Notice on window advertising Thursday-only take-away service for coffee and cakes, which was operating on 28 May. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Notice announcing full opening on 10 July. By the end of July: No change.
115	The Sweet Shop	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open, 09:00 to 14:00. By the end of July: Notice announcing more complete opening from 1 August.
116	Collate, new & vintage homewares	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open by appointment only. On 4 July: More fully open. By the end of July: Open 10:00 to 17:00..
117	Vacant (formerly / briefly Far from the Madding Crowd, bakery and bistro)	By the end of July: Still vacant.
	<i>Return to road crossing, cross, and carry on opposite No.19, but the head South along the other side of Trinity Square.</i>	
118	Morton's Pharmacy	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.
119	Boots, chemist	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.
120	Vacant (1 st floor of former Trinity House, department store)	During April: In process of refurbishment. By the end of July: No change.
121	Vacant (part of ground floor of former Trinity House, department store)	During April: In process of refurbishment. By the end of July: No change.
122	Vacant (part of ground floor of former Trinity House, department store)	During April: In process of refurbishment. By the end of July: No change.
123	Vacant (part of ground floor of former Trinity House, department store)	During April: In process of refurbishment. By the end of July: No change.
124	Vacant (formerly café, southern end of Trinity House)	During April: Vacant. In process of refurbishment. By mid-June: Notice in window announcing re-opening on 18 June as Lou La Belle (fashion). On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.
125	Market stalls (Thursdays only)	MacSorsons (fishmonger, see No.3 above) was there throughout with a van. The Fruit & Vegetable stall, normally the largest single vendor, was back by 14 May, with extra space. Lyme Butchers returned by 21 May. Bovey Down (farm shop) returned by 28 May. The books and card stall was back on 4 June. The other stalls made a gradual return from mid-May onwards. The plant stall (whose established pitch was at the end of Coombe Lane, beside the car park, returned in June or July. The Country Market (in the Masonic Hall) remained closed until the autumn.
	<i>Cross the junction with Castle Street. Start again with the first building on Castle Street, but then head South along West Street.</i>	
126	Fox & Sons, estate agents	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. Preparing to re-open by mid-May. Open by 28 May, but office not always manned. By the end of July: Open, but apparently still sporadic.
127	Axminster Printing, copy shop and stationers (accessed from West Street via a passageway)	During April: Shop closed, but printing work continuing at reduced capacity. By mid-June: Open (both shop and print works). By the end of July: No change.

128	Bennett & Rogers, opticians and contact lens practitioners	During April: Closed, but a notice in the window gives a phone number for emergencies. By mid-June: Open. By the end of July: No change.
129	Vacant (formerly Santander, bank)	By the end of July: No change
130	The Bakehouse, bakery and sandwich shop	During April: Closed (not offering deliveries, remote sales etc). By mid-June: Open. By the end of July: No change.
131	Shelf Life / ELF - Exeter Leukaemia Fund, charity shop	During April: Closed. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Open.
132	Brainwave, charity shop	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Shop cleared and closed for good. By the end of July: Vacant.
133	Post Office / Stationers	During April: Open for PO counters only (everything else in convenience store: see No.34 below). By the end of July: No change.
134	The Fabric Shop, fabrics and haberdashery	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Notice in window announcing re-opening on 23 June. On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.
135	Vacant (formerly Barclay's Bank, on the point of becoming Axe News)	During April: Axe News convenience store / newsagent had opened. Also selling and delivering bread, milk, eggs. By the end of July: No change.
<i>Turn right through the archway into Milton Court</i>		
136	Sub-Lyme Café, accessed from the courtyard	During April: Closed. By the end of July: Still closed, possibly due to some form of property damage.
137	Red & Ginger, lifestyle store for dogs, accessed from the courtyard	During April: Closed. On 4 July: Closure appears permanent. By the end of July: No change.
138	Arcade unit: Foot Friendly Clinic	During April: Open. By mid-June: Closed. By the end of July: No change.
139	Arcade unit: Jurassic Coast Cleaning Co, office	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Has moved to South Street. By the end of July: Vacant.
140	Most units inside building arcade vacant (the most recent having formerly been Chiropractic Clinic)	By the end of July: No change.
<i>Return to West Street and carry on in the same direction as before.</i>		
150	Axminster Jewellers	During April: Closed By mid-June: Notice in window announcing re-opening 09:00 to 14:00, Wednesdays to Saturdays, from 17 June. On 4 July: As above. By the end of July: No change.
151	The Community Waffle House, social enterprise	During April: Closed. Some indications that a take-away service is pending. By mid-June: No change. By the end of July: Open for take-aways, and serving customers at tables on Minster Green.
<i>Turn left and cross the road into Church Street, and look at the buildings on your right.</i>		
152	Le Pisani, restaurant	During April: Closed. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Open Wednesday to Saturday, 16:00 to 22:30, plus take-away service.
153	Courthouse Makers, craft shop (This was closed from 19 March, just prior to the Covid-19 lock-down. It was the successor business to 'Little Bits of Lovely')	During April: Closed. By the end of July: Still closed, but scheduled to re-open on 19 August, Wednesday to Saturday, plus Tuesdays by appointment.
154	Arts Café (accessed from the Courthouse garden)	During April: Closed. By the end of July: Open, for limited hours.
155	Senior Citizens' Centre (accessed from the Courtyard entrance)	During April: Closed. By the end of July: No change.
156	Archway Bookshop	During April: Closed. On-line / postal sales encouraged. By mid-June: Occasionally open for collections. Planning to re-open 1 July. On 4 July: Open, restricted access. By the end of July: Much more open than before.

- 157 Axminster Medical Practice, St Thomas' Court During April: Strictly controlled access, with chairs outside for people queuing for clinic appointments and/or the pharmacy. Telephone and on-line consultations being encouraged. By the end of July: No change.
- 158 Silverleigh Care Home, main entrance During April: No public access for health reasons. By the end of July: Minimal change.
Continue past the junction with Silver Street. Cross to the left-hand pavement and look at the buildings on your left.
- 159 The Wardrobe, 2nd hand clothes (this was already on the point of closing before Covid-19) (Silmart building) During April: Notice in window to say premises will become 'Legendary Brows PMU Studio'. By the end of July: No evidence of opening.
At the junction with South Street cross into Combe Lane and head gently up-hill. After a block of garages, look to your left.
- 160 Access to Coombe Lane Clinic, cognitive behavioural therapy and hypnotherapy; and Ruth Freya, intuitive medium, psychic and therapist During April: Clinic closed. Video and Skype sessions available. By the end of July: No change.
- 161 TCAS Chartered Certified Accountants During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. By the end of July: No change.
Return down Combe Lane looking at the buildings on the other side of the road.
- 162 RPC, technical consultants During April: Office apparently closed, staff probably working remotely. By the end of July: Open.
- 163 Coombefield Veterinary Practice During April: Open, but with restricted access. By the end of July: No change.

Circuit 2: Return to Trinity Square and to No.20 (see above). Start there, walking away from Trinity Square and looking at the buildings on your left, starting with the four units which form the ground floor of Old Bell House.

- 201 Karen's Hair Fashions & Barber's Shoppe During April: Closed. By mid-June: Taking bookings for re-opening on 7 July (which was achieved as planned). By the end of July: No change.
- 202 Cloud Nine, florist During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open. By the end of July: No change.
- 203 Glynis George Interiors, soft furnishings During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open (from 16 June). By the end of July: No change.
- 204 RKL Tools & Hardware During April: Closed (after initially remaining open at the start of lock-down). Open again 11 May. By the end of July: No change.
- 205 Costa Coffee, café and take-away service During April: Closed. By the end of July: No change (but did re-open not long thereafter).
- 206 Acorn, gift shop (Mazowattee House) During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open. By the end of July: No change.
- 207 Axminster Taxis (on the corner of Victoria Place and Market Square) During April: Office closed. By mid-June: Being re-decorated - clearly still in business but office still closed. On 4 July: Increasingly active. By the end of July: Open.
- 208 The Regent Hall / The Recycling Shop (in centre of Market Place, also facing Victoria Place) During April: Closed. Limited opening by early June. By mid-June: Open. By the end of July: No change.
Cross the road and return towards the George Hotel, looking at the buildings on your left.
- 209 Castle Inn, pub During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.
- 210 Hooper's Café (Castle Mount) During April: Closed. By the end of July: No change, but had re-opened by 13 August.
- 211 Kadel Solutions, chartered accountants and tax advisors, and NB Sports Therapy (Castle Mount) During April: No clear evidence to suggest that the offices were open, though they may well have been. By the end of July: No change.

212	Vacant (formerly The Marle Gallery, and also sometimes used by Light up Axminster, charity)	By the end of July: Still vacant.
213	Labels for Less, fashion	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Vacant (has become Lou La Belle, Trinity Square). By the end of July: Still vacant.
214	Morgan York, estate agents	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. By mid-June: Door closed, but more evidently active than before. On 4 July: Open, unless out with clients. By the end of July: No change.
215	George Hotel (had re-opened after a long gap during 2019) <i>Cross to the other side of Victoria Place, and then head towards South Street, looking at the buildings on your right.</i>	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.
216	Vacant (formerly McColl's Newsagents) (building with curved frontage)	By the end of July: Still vacant.
217	Vacant (formerly NatWest Bank) <i>Cross the entrance to the NCP car park.</i>	By the end of July: Still vacant
220	Atkins Auctions <i>Follow the edge of the South Street car park, and turn right into South Street.</i>	During April: Closed. Notice giving 1 June as re-opening date. By mid-June: Open On 4 July: Open By the end of July: No change.
221	Post Office Sorting Office	During April: Public access, but very limited hours. By the end of July: No change.
222	The Granary (not an active shop, but the base for sandwich making and deliveries) (in Banffshire House)	During April: Sandwich delivery service still operating. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Now has a shop sign for 'Sandy's Sandwiches'. By the end of July: No change.
223	Ganesha Wholefoods, health food shop	During April: Open, with on-line sales added, and collection / delivery service. By the end of July: No change.
224	Charity Togs, Axminster Care Service (charity shop)	During April: Closed. By late May: Evidence of activity (preparing to re-open). By mid-June: Accepting donations again, but shop still closed. Sporadic opening by late June. On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.
225	Co-operative Food Store	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.
226	The HALFF Food Hub (food shop and base for local charity)	During April: Open, emphasising delivery service. By the end of July: No change.
227	Masonic Hall (including Country Market on Thursday mornings)	During April: Closed. In late June: New kitchen being installed. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Open for Country Market.
228	Comfort Linen Ltd (formerly called Allendale Cleaners)	During April: Closed. On 4 July: Preparing to re-open. By the end of July: Open.
229	The Nail Studio	During April: Closed. By end of July: No change.
230	Vacant (formerly Footsteps Chiropractic & Podiatry)	By the end of July: Still vacant.
231	Complete Meats, butchers <i>Cross the road and return on the other side, still looking at the buildings on your right.</i>	During April: Open, with some limits on hours, but an expanded delivery service. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Normal opening hours. By the end of July: No change.
232	Cinnamon, Indian restaurant and take-away	During April: Restaurant closed, but with a full take-away service. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Restaurant also open.
233	Thomas Westcott, chartered accountants	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. By mid-June: No change. By the end of July: Office more accessible.
234	Vacant (formerly, but not recently, Pullman's newspaper office)	During April: Being re-furbished for residential use. By the end of July: No change.
235	West Country Higgler, packaged tea and coffee, plus café	During April: Closed, but with on-line sales of tea and coffee being promoted. By mid-June: No change. Refurbishment / decorating in evidence in late June. On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.

236	Hospicecare, charity shop (Buckland House)	During April: Closed. By the end of July: Open (since about a week earlier).
237	Vacant (formerly TL Bridal Boutique)	During April: Vacant. By late-June: Being re-furbished as 'Rabbit Hole' barber's shop (opened mid-July). By the end of July: No change.
238	Axe Valley Kebab House, including adjacent part called 'Boardwalk'	During April: Open, with collection by timed appointment encouraged. By mid-June: No change. Late June: Refurbishment / decorating under way. On 4 July: Part now more clearly badged as 'Boardwalk', but still being refurbished. By the end of July: No change.
239	Love's Furniture Restorer, off-street workshop (accessed via walkway)	During April: Working, but not readily accessible to the public. By the end of July: No change.
240	Tudor Cottage Care Home	During April: No public access for health reasons. By the end of July: Minimal change.
241	Axminster Library	During April: Closed. On 4 July: Notice announcing that collections and returns will be possible by appointment the following week. By the end of July: No change. Fuller access re-established soon thereafter.
242	Vicary & Co, property letting agency	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. By mid-June: No change. Office open some days by late June, but still mostly remote working. By the end of July: No change.
243	Vacant (formerly Wagg'n'Purr pet supplies)	During April: Vacant. 4 June: Work under way in preparation for to re-opening as Jurassic Cleaners (formerly in Milton's Yard). By mid-June: Renovation complete, office not yet open, but a notice in the window advertising for cleaners. Doors open by late June. By the end of July: No change.
244	Whirly Wash, launderette	During April: Closed. More evidence of normal working by late June. On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.
245	Golden House, Chinese take-away	During April: Closed. From 1 May: Take-away service operating. By the end of July: No change.
246	Golden House, Chinese restaurant	During April: Restaurant closed. By the end of July: No change.
	<i>Turn up Lyme Street, looking at the buildings on your right.</i>	
247	Red Lion, pub	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Open. By the end of July: No change.
248	Lucky House, Chinese take-away	During April: Closed. From 1 May: Take-away service operating (cash only). By the end of July: No change.
249	Maryknoll House (formerly JF Clarke & Son, funeral director, but for some time now residential)	Residential.
	<i>Cross Lyme Street and return down hill, looking at buildings on your right.</i>	
250	KC Joinery (access from rear, not direct from Lyme Street)	During April: Apparently closed (gates closed at rear). By the end of July: No change.
251	Vacant (formerly 1st Call Taxis, long-term empty)	By the end of July: Still vacant.
252	Chris' Tat Shack, tattoo studio	During April: Closed. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Open, but then suffered an arson attack on Sunday 9 August.
253	Champion Holmes, property management	During April: Office closed, with a notice in the window offering telephone support. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Open, unless accompanying clients.
254	Robot Pizza (formerly The Giant Club, restaurant)	During April: Pizza delivery service (advertised, but not obviously operating). By the end of July: The business had clearly closed for good.
255	Lemon Plaice, fish and chips take-away	During April: Offering phone orders for collection or delivery. By the end of July: No change.
	<i>Follow the pavement round into George Street and then Chard Street, continuing to look at the buildings on your right.</i>	
256	Vacant (formerly / briefly Celene's Cakes & Sugarcraft)	During April: Re-badged as Corner House Bakery & Café, but Closed. By mid-June: Open for take-aways on Thursdays, and with deliveries. More frequent opening by 25 June. On 4 July: Open, but only occasionally. By the end of July: No change.

257	Devon Appliances, electrical white goods	During April: Shop closed, but on-line sales being promoted. By mid-June: Shop also open. By the end of July: No change.
258	Melanie Brown, hair & beauty salon	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Open, subject to clear restrictions. By the end of July: No change.
259	Vision Express, opticians	During April: Closed, but with a notice in the window giving a phone number for emergencies. By mid-June: Open. By the end of July: No change.
260	The Old Tool Centre, including the office of Acorn Multi-Academy Trust (in the yard, off Chard Street)	During April: Courtyard gate locked. By mid-June: Gate open, but not every day. By the end of July: No change.
261	Scott Rowe, solicitors	During April: Limited access, with staff mainly working remotely. On 4 July: No change. By the end of July: Open to the public, by appointment.
262	Vacant (formerly Axe Vale Social Club, but closed for several years)	By the end of July: Still vacant.
263	United Reform church	During April: Chapel sold, and due to be converted for residential use. By the end of July: No change.
264	United Reform hall	During April: Being converted back for use as church. By the end of July: No change.
265	Axe Vale College, secondary school	During April: Closed. By mid-June: At least partly open. By the end of July: No change.
<i>Carry on up the street and cross to the other side. At the Hospital return down the hill towards the town centre.</i>		
266	Axminster Hospital, community hospital	During April: Limited access. By the end of July: No change.
267	Oak House, residential care home	During April: No public access for health reasons. By the end of July: Minimal change.
268	Reflections Hair & Beauty	During April: Closed. On 4 July: Open, subject to clear restrictions. By the end of July: No change.
269	Axminster Health & Wellbeing Centre	During April: Only open for food bank donations. By the end of July: No change.
270	Courtesy Care Ltd, aids for independent living	During April: Very limited opening hours. By mid-June: Open 10:00 to 12:00, Tuesday & Wednesday. On 4 July: Probably slightly less restricted hours. By the end of July: Open, subject to clear restrictions.
271	Yapp & White, paint shop	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Notice saying the business is to be re-located. By the end of July: Largely vacant.
272	Friends of ARC, charity shop	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. By the end of July: No change. Re-opened 6 August, Wednesday to Saturday.
273	Dreads Audio Workshop, sales and service	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Business closed and space vacant. By the end of July: No change.
274	Cirrus Vape Shop	During April: Closed. By mid-June: No change, but open by late June. By the end of July: No change.
275	Vacant (formerly / briefly Blondini, food shop)	During April: Vacant, with notice in the window stating that a micro-pub is planned. By the end of July: No change.

Circuit 3: Return to the junction between West Street and Church Street (see No.41, above) and continue along West Street, towards the railway station. Look at the buildings on your right.

301	Vacant, (formerly / briefly a second-hand furniture business)	During April: Vacant. By early May the fascia board shows the name 'Midas'. By mid-June: Open by appointment, selling antique and second hand furniture and furnishings. On 4 July: Open by appointment. By the end of July: Apparently closed due to a landlord-tenant dispute.
302	W G Potter, funeral director and monumental mason	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.

303	Vacant (Artemis House, formerly Ann Pengelly, stained glass)	During April: Vacant, but in process of being refurbished. By 4 June fascia board shows the name 'West Street Picture Framing'. By mid-June: No change, but open by appointment by late June. On 4 July: Open by appointment. By the end of July: Due to open Monday to Friday on 3 August.
304	Bolts Hair & Body, salon	During April: Closed. Starting a waiting list mid-May. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Open, subject to strict restrictions. By the end of July: No change.
305	Harris & Harris, estate agents	During April: Office closed, but staff working remotely. Office open by mid-May. By the end of July: No change.
306	Guildhall, including Town Council offices	During April: Office closed. Telephone and Email enquiries encouraged, with some personal appointments allowed. By the end of July: No change.
<i>Cross to the other side of West Street</i>		
307	Co-op supermarket (set well back, facing the West Street car park)	During April: Open. On 4 July: Open, masks required. By the end of July: No change.
308	Pets at Home (facing the roundabout, between West Street and King Edward Road)	During April: Open, limited access. By the end of July: No change.
309	Tesco petrol station and shop (facing the roundabout, between King Edward Road and Trafalgar Way)	During April: Open By the end of July: No change.
310	Axminster Tools retail shop (just off the roundabout, between Trafalgar Way and the former St John's Ambulance building)	During April: Closed to public, with on-line sales working. By mid-June: Due to re-open on 16 June (which happened). By the end of July: No change.
311	Vacant (former St John's Ambulance Building, empty for several years, facing the roundabout between Trafalgar Way and Shand Park)	By the end of July: No change.
312	Tesco supermarket, accessed via Shand Park	During April: Open, one-way system and queueing to enter. By mid-June: No change. On 4 July: Face masks required, but many of the other controls have either been or are about to be relaxed. By the end of July: No change.
<i>Follow the footpath past the Tesco petrol station (No.134 above) into the area in front of the railway station.</i>		
313	Railway station	During April: Station unmanned. Card sales only via the ticket machine. One service per 2 hrs in each direction, to Salisbury (normal stops) and Exeter Central (stopping at Honiton only). By mid-June: Services increasing. By 10 July Building manned, but trains are still every 2 hours.
314	Mole Avon Country Store, agricultural, animal health and home supplies	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.

Circuit 4: Return to the junction between West Street, Castle Street and Trinity Square (see No.25, above) and walk down Castle Street.

401	The Old Chapel Antiques & Lifestyle Centre (on the Eastern side)	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open some days (cash only). On 4 July: Still sporadically open. By the end of July: No change.
402	Castle Garage (on the Western side)	During April: Open for vehicle servicing and MOT tests. By the end of July: No change.
403	Vacant grey building (several years ago a motorbike showroom)	By the end of July: Still vacant.
<i>Turn down Castle Hill, and then down Vale Lane.</i>		
404	Selec Security Systems (in a building with '1838' on the wall)	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Some evidence of activity. By the end of July: No change.
<i>Return to the junction with Castle Hill.</i>		

405	Wells Carpet Brokers, showroom and shop	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open. By the end of July: No change.
406	Jaffé & Fils, feather works (in the former brush factory, and adjacent workshop)	During April: Some activity evident. By the end of July: No change.
407	Climax Windows, office yard and buildings	During April: Closed. By mid-June: Open to the public by appointment only. By the end of July: No change.
	<i>Cross the level crossing and look at the yard to the left, before the river.</i>	
408	Auto Solutions, vehicle servicing and repairs	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.
409	Robin Wilson Ltd, Renault specialists	No information.
410	Castle Hill Tyres	No information.
411	Arc & Anvil, metalwork	No information.
412	<i>Continue along the Membury Road for 200 to 300 metres, looking on the Eastern side of the road.</i>	
413	R Norton Memorials, monumental mason, yard and office	During April: Closed to the public, but advice and service by telephone. By the end of July: No change.
414	Westcrete, aggregates, stone and concrete, yard, plant and office	During April: Closed. By early May offering 'call and collect' service while avoiding public access to the site. By the end of July: No change.

Circuit 5: Walk down Woodmead Road, starting from King Edward Road. Look at the buildings and plots on your left.

501	BT telephone exchange and depot (not normally accessible to the public)	During April: Working normally. By the end of July: No change.
502	DC Select Cars, second-hand car sales	During April: Closed. Opening up to a limited degree by 11 May, with card increasingly left on the open forecourt. Appears to be working mainly by appointment. By the end of July: No change.
503	FX Car Repairs	During April: Closed. Subsequently working occasionally. By the end of July: No change.
504	Safar, Indian restaurant and take-away	During April: Restaurant closed, but meal collection and delivery service being offered. By the end of July: Restaurant re-opening.
505	Ledger Scott Scaffolding, contractor's yard and office	During April: Working at part load. By early June: Fully back to work, and very busy. By the end of July: No change.
506	Pro Valet, car cleaning, yard	During April: Closed. By the end of July: No change.
507	Axminster Carpets Ltd, main factory	During April: Very limited activity. By the end of July: Slightly more activity evident.
508	Other businesses based within buildings owned by Axminster Carpets Property Ltd but with no public-facing access or facilities (taken from a list on their website dated September 2020, but believed to be representative of the Spring and Summer of 2020)	Axminster Commercial Vehicles, mainenance and repair; Keith Fernlay, bespoke furniture; Lee Harvey, joinery; Lloyd Fraser, bulk liquid transport; Lyme Bay Kitchens; Outside the Box, specialist construction for exhibitions, homes and offices; Precision Woodcraft; Rex Helston, furniture; Rider & Hope, interior design and furnishings; Sea Sabre, boatbuilders; Woodscott Joinery; Ulster Carpets, underlay manufacture.
509	Other businesses not on the list above, with publicly-accessible entrances	Bowes Brooks, accountants; Chiropractic Clinic: Both apparently closed in April; working again by the end of July.
	<i>Return towards King Edward Road, looking at the buildings and plots on your left.</i>	
520	Bastin's Axminster Garage, vehicle repair, servicing and MOT	During April: Closed. By the end of July: Working again.
521	Bradfords Kitchens (in main Bradfords building)	During April: Closed. By the end of July: No change.
522	Bradfords main business, yard and showroom	During April: Trade collections by appointment, plus deliveries. Showroom re-opened by the end of May, with access restrictions. By the end of July: Closer to normal working, but still some access restrictions.

Circuit 6: Millwey Industrial Estate, starting at the junction of Second Avenue and Millwey Avenue. Follow Millwey Avenue, looking at the buildings on your right. Where there are groups of buildings set back from the main road, look at them as well.

601	Axminster Garden Machinery	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change.
602	WESCO Electrical & Mechanical Services	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
603	Complete Meats	During April: Limited access, but working. 19 May: No change.
604	Vacant (formerly SH Mouldings & Engineering)	Company had been dissolved by voluntary strike-off in May 2019.
605	Bennett's Motor Services (off main Avenue)	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change.
606	3 Counties Tyres & Exhausts (off main Avenue)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
607	Country Motors Ltd (off main Avenue)	During April: Open. 19 May: No change.
608	MK Auto Spares (off main avenue)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
609	Hancock Marine Services (off main avenue)	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change.
610	Axminster Kitchens, fitted kitchen units and service	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: Showroom accessible by appointment.
611	Moor Instruments, scientific instruments	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change.
612	Complete Bake (part of Complete Meats), cooked foods	During April: Limited access, but working. 19 May: No change.
613	California Fitness, gym (off main avenue)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
614	Co-Tek (off main avenue)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
615	Axminster Ironworks, ornamental ironwork and steel fabrication (off main avenue)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
616	Total Plumbing Supplies (off main avenue)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: Open.
617	Axe Valley Motors (off main avenue)	During April: Open. 19 May: No change.
618	Arada, stove manufacturer	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
619	Arada Global Distribution Centre	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
620	ITT Gould's Pumps, manufacture of pumps and valves	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change. At the end of July: Closure of the factory announced, with the loss of 50 jobs by the end of 2020, and the transfer of production to Germany.
621	Air Control Industries	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change.
622	Cluster of smaller units at the top end of the Avenue, incl Coast Water Sports	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
<i>Return down the other side of Millwey Avenue looking at the buildings on your right.</i>		
630	Creative Solutions, graphics and printing	Appears closed. Some activity evident, 19 May.
631	Axminster Tools & Machinery, machinery manufacture and sales (national, including on-line)	During April: Significant activity evident. Some Covid-related disruption in late May (see main text). The company name was changed to Axminster Tools during lock-down.
632	Vacant (formerly Keytec Industries, long ago)	Vacant.
633	Xylem (Lowara, Goulds), pump manufacture and sales	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change.
634	Tick Tocks Day Nursery & Pre-School	During April: Closed. Later re-opened for children of key workers.
635	Vacant (under construction)	During April: Construction under way, but suspended. Subsequently re-started.

636	Nu-Type Ltd, specialist printing (including credit cards)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: Some activity evident.
637	Weycroft House (Office units 1-8, including St John's Ambulance)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
638	Axminster Dental Practice	During April: Building closed, with limited telephone support. 19 May: No change.
	<i>At junction with Second Avenue turn right and walk about 100 metres looking for a group of 9 small workshop units.</i>	
650	Tukxi Ltd, vehicle restoration / fitting	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: Working.
651	Cosmetic Bases, creams	Appears closed. 19 May: Some activity evident.
652	Unique Framecraft, picture framing	During April: Some activity evident. 19 May: No change.
653	Hunter's Fishing Baits	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
654	De-Lish, food preparation	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
655	EDDC Street Scene (works team)	During April: Working. 19 May: No change.
656	CSE Controls	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
657	Quick Smart	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.
658	Glass is Sharp, glaziers	During April: No obvious signs of activity. 19 May: No change.

Circuit 7: Other locations.

701	St George's Dental Laboratory, Musbury Road (opposite Hillhead Terrace)	During April: Closed. Open by mid-June.
702	Cuts & Co, hairdressers, Boxfield Road (near Musbury Road)	During April: Closed. By the end of July: Open some days, but with clear restrictions.
703	Axminster Carpets Factory Outlet, Abbey Gate (Musbury Road)	During April: Closed. Re-opened on 15 June, by appointment only, and with restrictions.
704	Flamingo Pool, Lyme Road (beside secondary school)	During April: Closed. By the end of July: No change, but preparing to mount an appeal for funds to enable the pool to re-open (which was successful).
705	J F Clarke, funeral directors, Lyme Road (opposite Catholic Church)	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.
706	Healthy Feet, podiatry clinic, Lyme Road (opposite Catholic Church)	During April: No obvious signs of activity. By the end of July: No change.
707	Lamb Inn, pub, Lyme Road	During April: Closed. By 4 July: Open.
708	Magnolia House, residential care home, Lyme Road	During April: No public access for health reasons. By the end of July: Minimal change.
709	Prospect Garage, Gulf fuel station, Lyme Road	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.
710	Central Convenience Store, First Avenue, Millwey Rise	During April: Open. By the end of July: No change.
711	Betterment Homes construction site, Duke Avenue	During April: Closed. Work re-started on final 15-25 dwellings by mid-May.
712	Bovis construction site, Cloakham Lawns (off Chard Road)	During April: Closed. Work re-started by mid-May.

Appendix 2: Mortality Data from the First Wave

The following tables provide the mortality figures referred to in Chapter 4 (in the section headed 'Health and deaths: the numbers'). They cover all registered deaths, not just those attributed to Covid-19. Equivalent data on deaths attributed to Covid-19 can be found in Appendix 3.

The source for all of the data in this Appendix is the ONS. Most figures come from their weekly data releases, up to the end of Week 36 (4 September 2020). The 2018 mortality figures come from a separate ONS data set.

Weeks 12 to 14: The rising curve

Weeks 12 to 14 Where deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	37	35	2	54	0	128
Rest of Devon	214	202	35	306	8	765
Devon as a whole	251	237	37	360	8	893
South West	984	1,006	142	1,504	59	3,695
England	10,103	10,145	1,616	24,160	817	46,841
Low pop'n density areas	3,893	3,682	550	11,382	358	19,865
Med pop'n density areas	1,502	1,384	277	3,477	124	6,764
High pop'n density areas	4,708	5,079	789	9,301	335	20,212

Weeks 12 to 14 % of deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	28.9%	27.3%	1.6%	42.2%	0.0%
Rest of Devon	28.0%	26.4%	4.6%	40.0%	1.0%
Devon as a whole	28.1%	26.5%	4.1%	40.3%	0.9%
South West	26.6%	27.2%	3.8%	40.7%	1.6%
England	21.6%	21.7%	3.4%	51.6%	1.7%
Low pop'n density areas	19.6%	18.5%	2.8%	57.3%	1.8%
Med pop'n density areas	22.2%	20.5%	4.1%	51.4%	1.8%
High pop'n density areas	23.3%	25.1%	3.9%	46.0%	1.7%

Weeks 12 to 14 Weekly deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre-Covid)	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	98.3%	93.0%	41.7%	115.3%
Rest of Devon	95.2%	89.8%	122.1%	109.3%
Devon as a whole	95.6%	90.3%	110.6%	110.1%
South West	90.6%	92.6%	102.6%	111.2%
England	90.7%	92.8%	63.8%	113.0%
Low pop'n density areas	82.4%	79.4%	51.2%	125.5%
Med pop'n density areas	93.3%	87.7%	75.7%	112.6%
High pop'n density areas	97.9%	107.7%	72.2%	100.8%

Weeks 12 to 14 Excess deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly deaths	Weekly deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 death rate
East Devon	42.7	0.296	118.6%	18.6%
Rest of Devon	255.0	0.243	114.2%	14.2%
Devon as a whole	297.7	0.249	114.8%	14.8%
South West	1,231.7	0.248	124.2%	24.2%
England	15,613.7	0.279	160.5%	60.5%
Low pop'n density areas	6,621.7	0.296	202.3%	102.3%
Med pop'n density areas	2,254.7	0.268	148.5%	48.5%
High pop'n density areas	6,737.3	0.267	136.5%	36.5%

Weeks 15 to 17: The peak

Weeks 15 to 17 Where deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	44	56	4	46	5	155
Rest of Devon	231	404	23	339	14	1,011
Devon as a whole	275	460	27	385	19	1,166
South West	1,232	2,142	107	1,792	95	5,368
England	12,915	26,100	1,854	37,144	1,215	79,228
Low pop'n density areas	4,903	9,325	730	16,725	518	32,201
Med pop'n density areas	1,998	4,276	297	6,193	194	12,958
High pop'n density areas	6,014	12,499	827	14,226	503	34,069

Weeks 15 to 17 % of deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	28.4%	36.1%	2.6%	29.7%	3.2%
Rest of Devon	22.8%	40.0%	2.3%	33.5%	1.4%
Devon as a whole	23.6%	39.5%	2.3%	33.0%	1.6%
South West	23.0%	39.9%	2.0%	33.4%	1.8%
England	16.3%	32.9%	2.3%	46.9%	1.5%
Low pop'n density areas	15.2%	29.0%	2.3%	51.9%	1.6%
Med pop'n density areas	15.4%	33.0%	2.3%	47.8%	1.5%
High pop'n density areas	17.7%	36.7%	2.4%	41.8%	1.5%

Weeks 15 to 17 Weekly deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre-Covid)	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	96.6%	122.9%	68.9%	81.1%
Rest of Devon	77.7%	135.9%	60.7%	91.6%
Devon as a whole	80.2%	134.2%	61.8%	90.2%
South West	78.1%	135.7%	53.2%	91.2%
England	68.5%	141.2%	43.3%	102.7%
Low pop'n density areas	64.0%	124.1%	41.9%	113.8%
Med pop'n density areas	64.8%	141.4%	42.4%	104.7%
High pop'n density areas	74.2%	157.2%	44.9%	91.4%

Weeks 15 to 17 Excess deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly deaths	Weekly deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 death rate
East Devon	51.7	0.358	143.6%	43.6%
Rest of Devon	337.0	0.321	150.9%	50.9%
Devon as a whole	388.7	0.325	149.9%	49.9%
South West	1,789.3	0.360	180.5%	80.5%
England	26,409.3	0.472	271.5%	171.5%
Low pop'n density areas	10,733.7	0.481	327.9%	227.9%
Med pop'n density areas	4,319.3	0.513	284.6%	184.6%
High pop'n density areas	11,356.3	0.450	230.0%	130.0%

Weeks 18 to 20: The declining curve

Weeks 18 to 20 Where deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	28	47	4	30	0	109
Rest of Devon	205	278	25	230	12	750
Devon as a whole	233	325	29	260	12	859
South West	999	1,644	113	1,209	79	4,044
England	9,877	17,554	1,589	19,435	900	49,355
Low pop'n density areas	3,297	5,109	525	7,059	324	16,314
Med pop'n density areas	1,533	2,962	263	3,350	144	8,252
High pop'n density areas	5,047	9,483	801	9,026	432	24,789

Weeks 18 to 20 % of deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	25.7%	43.1%	3.7%	27.5%	0.0%
Rest of Devon	27.3%	37.1%	3.3%	30.7%	1.6%
Devon as a whole	27.1%	37.8%	3.4%	30.3%	1.4%
South West	24.7%	40.7%	2.8%	29.9%	2.0%
England	20.0%	35.6%	3.2%	39.4%	1.8%
Low pop'n density areas	20.2%	31.3%	3.2%	43.3%	2.0%
Med pop'n density areas	18.6%	35.9%	3.2%	40.6%	1.7%
High pop'n density areas	20.4%	38.3%	3.2%	36.4%	1.7%

Weeks 18 to 20 Weekly deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre-Covid)	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	87.4%	146.7%	98.0%	75.2%
Rest of Devon	93.0%	126.1%	89.0%	83.8%
Devon as a whole	92.3%	128.7%	90.1%	82.7%
South West	84.0%	138.3%	74.6%	81.7%
England	84.1%	152.4%	59.5%	86.2%
Low pop'n density areas	85.0%	134.2%	59.5%	94.8%
Med pop'n density areas	78.1%	153.8%	58.9%	88.9%
High pop'n density areas	85.6%	163.9%	59.7%	79.7%

Weeks 18 to 20 Excess deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly deaths	Weekly deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 death rate
East Devon	36.3	0.252	101.0%	1.0%
Rest of Devon	250.0	0.238	111.9%	11.9%
Devon as a whole	286.3	0.240	110.4%	10.4%
South West	1,348.0	0.271	136.0%	36.0%
England	16,451.7	0.294	169.1%	69.1%
Low pop'n density areas	5,438.0	0.243	166.1%	66.1%
Med pop'n density areas	2,750.7	0.327	181.2%	81.2%
High pop'n density areas	8,263.0	0.328	167.4%	67.4%

Weeks 21 to 36: Under control

Weeks 21 to 36 Where deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	152	130	19	160	10	471
Rest of Devon	888	872	141	975	52	2,928
Devon as a whole	1,040	1,002	160	1,135	62	3,399
South West	4,373	3,795	648	4,609	279	13,704
England	41,261	32,834	7,478	55,348	2,853	139,774
Low pop'n density areas	13,563	9,245	2,473	19,044	1,074	45,399
Med pop'n density areas	6,477	4,648	1,250	9,121	452	21,948
High pop'n density areas	21,221	18,941	3,755	27,183	1,327	72,427

Weeks 21 to 36 % of deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	32.3%	27.6%	4.0%	34.0%	2.1%
Rest of Devon	30.3%	29.8%	4.8%	33.3%	1.8%
Devon as a whole	30.6%	29.5%	4.7%	33.4%	1.8%
South West	31.9%	27.7%	4.7%	33.6%	2.0%
England	29.5%	23.5%	5.4%	39.6%	2.0%
Low pop'n density areas	29.9%	20.4%	5.4%	41.9%	2.4%
Med pop'n density areas	29.5%	21.2%	5.7%	41.6%	2.1%
High pop'n density areas	29.3%	26.2%	5.2%	37.5%	1.8%

Weeks 21 to 36 Weekly deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre-Covid)	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	109.8%	93.9%	107.7%	92.8%
Rest of Devon	103.2%	101.3%	128.5%	91.0%
Devon as a whole	104.1%	100.3%	125.6%	91.2%
South West	108.6%	94.2%	126.2%	91.9%
England	124.1%	100.7%	98.9%	86.7%
Low pop'n density areas	125.6%	87.3%	100.7%	91.9%
Med pop'n density areas	124.1%	90.7%	105.3%	91.0%
High pop'n density areas	123.2%	112.1%	95.8%	82.2%

Weeks 21 to 36 Excess deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly deaths	Weekly deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 death rate
East Devon	29.4	0.204	81.8%	-18.2%
Rest of Devon	183.0	0.174	81.9%	-18.1%
Devon as a whole	212.4	0.178	81.9%	-18.1%
South West	856.5	0.172	86.4%	-13.6%
England	8,735.9	0.156	89.8%	-10.2%
Low pop'n density areas	2,837.4	0.127	86.7%	-13.3%
Med pop'n density areas	1,371.8	0.163	90.4%	-9.6%
High pop'n density areas	4,526.7	0.180	91.7%	-8.3%

Weeks 12 to 36: Phase 1 as a whole

Weeks 12 to 36 Where deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	261	268	29	290	15	863
Rest of Devon	1,538	1,756	224	1,850	86	5,454
Devon as a whole	1,799	2,024	253	2,140	101	6,317
South West	7,588	8,587	1,010	9,114	512	26,811
England	74,156	86,633	12,537	136,087	5,785	315,198
Low pop'n density areas	25,656	27,361	4,278	54,210	2,274	113,779
Med pop'n density areas	11,510	13,270	2,087	22,141	914	49,922
High pop'n density areas	36,990	46,002	6,172	59,736	2,597	151,497

Weeks 12 to 36 % of deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	30.2%	31.1%	3.4%	33.6%	1.7%
Rest of Devon	28.2%	32.2%	4.1%	33.9%	1.6%
Devon as a whole	28.5%	32.0%	4.0%	33.9%	1.6%
South West	28.3%	32.0%	3.8%	34.0%	1.9%
England	23.5%	27.5%	4.0%	43.2%	1.8%
Low pop'n density areas	22.5%	24.0%	3.8%	47.6%	2.0%
Med pop'n density areas	23.1%	26.6%	4.2%	44.4%	1.8%
High pop'n density areas	24.4%	30.4%	4.1%	39.4%	1.7%

Weeks 12 to 36 Weekly deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre-Covid)	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	102.9%	105.6%	89.7%	91.8%
Rest of Devon	95.9%	109.5%	109.6%	92.7%
Devon as a whole	96.9%	109.0%	106.9%	92.6%
South West	96.3%	109.0%	100.6%	92.9%
England	98.9%	117.8%	73.5%	94.6%
Low pop'n density areas	94.8%	103.0%	69.5%	104.3%
Med pop'n density areas	96.9%	113.9%	77.3%	97.1%
High pop'n density areas	102.6%	130.1%	75.3%	86.4%

<i>Weeks 12 to 36 Excess deaths compared to 2018 weekly average</i>	<i>Total weekly deaths</i>	<i>Weekly deaths per 1,000 residents</i>	<i>Previous column as % of 2018 death rate</i>	<i>Excess deaths as % of 2018 death rate</i>
East Devon	34.5	0.239	95.9%	-4.1%
Rest of Devon	218.2	0.208	97.7%	-2.3%
Devon as a whole	252.7	0.212	97.4%	-2.6%
South West	1,072.4	0.216	108.2%	8.2%
England	12,607.9	0.225	129.6%	29.6%
Low pop'n density areas	4,551.2	0.204	139.0%	39.0%
Med pop'n density areas	1,996.9	0.237	131.6%	31.6%
High pop'n density areas	6,059.9	0.240	122.7%	22.7%

Appendix 3: Covid-Related Mortality Data from the First Wave

The following tables provide the mortality figures for deaths linked explicitly to Covid-19, as referred to in Chapter 4 (in the section headed 'Health and deaths: the numbers'). Equivalent data on all deaths irrespective of their cause can be found in Appendix 2.

The source for all of the data in this Appendix is the ONS. Most figures come from their weekly data releases, up to the end of Week 36 (4 September 2020). The 2018 mortality figures come from a separate ONS data set.

Weeks 12 to 14: The rising curve

Weeks 12 to 14 Where Covid deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	0	1	0	3	0	4
Rest of Devon	4	1	0	34	0	39
Devon as a whole	4	2	0	37	0	43
South West	19	29	3	201	0	252
England	476	564	54	6,005	62	7,161
Low pop'n density areas	301	319	30	3,460	48	4,158
Med pop'n density areas	62	55	8	806	6	937
High pop'n density areas	113	190	16	1,739	8	2,066

Weeks 12 to 14 % of Covid deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%
Rest of Devon	10.3%	2.6%	0.0%	87.2%	0.0%
Devon as a whole	9.3%	4.7%	0.0%	86.0%	0.0%
South West	7.5%	11.5%	1.2%	79.8%	0.0%
England	6.6%	7.9%	0.8%	83.9%	0.9%
Low pop'n density areas	7.2%	7.7%	0.7%	83.2%	1.2%
Med pop'n density areas	6.6%	5.9%	0.9%	86.0%	0.6%
High pop'n density areas	5.5%	9.2%	0.8%	84.2%	0.4%

Weeks 12 to 14 Weekly Covid deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre- Covid) overall death rate	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	0.0%	85.0%	0.0%	204.9%
Rest of Devon	34.9%	8.7%	0.0%	238.2%
Devon as a whole	31.6%	15.8%	0.0%	235.1%
South West	25.6%	39.1%	31.8%	217.9%
England	27.9%	33.8%	13.9%	183.7%
Low pop'n density areas	30.4%	32.9%	13.3%	182.2%
Med pop'n density areas	27.8%	25.2%	15.8%	188.4%
High pop'n density areas	23.0%	39.4%	14.3%	184.3%

Weeks 12 to 14 Excess Covid deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly Covid deaths	Weekly Covid deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 overall death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 overall death rate
East Devon	1.3	0.009	3.7%	-96.3%
Rest of Devon	13.0	0.012	5.8%	-94.2%
Devon as a whole	14.3	0.012	5.5%	-94.5%
South West	84.0	0.017	8.5%	-91.5%
England	2,387.0	0.043	24.5%	-75.5%
Low pop'n density areas	1,386.0	0.062	42.3%	-57.7%
Med pop'n density areas	312.3	0.037	20.6%	-79.4%
High pop'n density areas	688.7	0.027	13.9%	-86.1%

Weeks 15 to 17: The peak

Weeks 15 to 17 Where Covid deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	1	10	0	7	0	18
Rest of Devon	11	67	0	86	0	164
Devon as a whole	12	77	0	93	0	182
South West	63	463	5	522	10	1,063
England	1,059	6,234	283	14,510	192	22,278
Low pop'n density areas	579	2,391	148	6,940	101	10,159
Med pop'n density areas	144	1,047	46	2,480	32	3,749
High pop'n density areas	336	2,796	89	5,090	59	8,370

Weeks 15 to 17 % of Covid deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	5.6%	55.6%	0.0%	38.9%	0.0%
Rest of Devon	6.7%	40.9%	0.0%	52.4%	0.0%
Devon as a whole	6.6%	42.3%	0.0%	51.1%	0.0%
South West	5.9%	43.6%	0.5%	49.1%	0.9%
England	4.8%	28.0%	1.3%	65.1%	0.9%
Low pop'n density areas	5.7%	23.5%	1.5%	68.3%	1.0%
Med pop'n density areas	3.8%	27.9%	1.2%	66.2%	0.9%
High pop'n density areas	4.0%	33.4%	1.1%	60.8%	0.7%

Weeks 15 to 17 Weekly Covid deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre- Covid) overall death rate	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	18.9%	189.0%	0.0%	106.3%
Rest of Devon	22.8%	139.0%	0.0%	143.3%
Devon as a whole	22.4%	143.9%	0.0%	139.6%
South West	20.2%	148.2%	12.6%	134.2%
England	20.0%	119.9%	23.5%	142.6%
Low pop'n density areas	24.0%	100.9%	26.9%	149.6%
Med pop'n density areas	16.1%	119.7%	22.7%	144.9%
High pop'n density areas	16.9%	143.1%	19.7%	133.2%

Weeks 15 to 17 Excess Covid deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly Covid deaths	Weekly Covid deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 overall death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 overall death rate
East Devon	6.0	0.042	16.7%	-83.3%
Rest of Devon	54.7	0.052	24.5%	-75.5%
Devon as a whole	60.7	0.051	23.4%	-76.6%
South West	354.3	0.071	35.7%	-64.3%
England	7,426.0	0.133	76.3%	-23.7%
Low pop'n density areas	3,386.3	0.152	103.5%	3.5%
Med pop'n density areas	1,249.7	0.148	82.3%	-17.7%
High pop'n density areas	2,790.0	0.111	56.5%	-43.5%

Weeks 18 to 20: The declining curve

Weeks 18 to 20 Where Covid deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	1	15	0	3	0	19
Rest of Devon	5	44	1	31	0	81
Devon as a whole	6	59	1	34	0	100
South West	23	386	2	241	2	654
England	400	4,871	197	5,847	97	11,412
Low pop'n density areas	180	1,488	68	2,170	37	3,943
Med pop'n density areas	58	873	34	1,074	14	2,053
High pop'n density areas	162	2,510	95	2,603	46	5,416

Weeks 18 to 20 % of Covid deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	5.3%	78.9%	0.0%	15.8%	0.0%
Rest of Devon	6.2%	54.3%	1.2%	38.3%	0.0%
Devon as a whole	6.0%	59.0%	1.0%	34.0%	0.0%
South West	3.5%	59.0%	0.3%	36.9%	0.3%
England	3.5%	42.7%	1.7%	51.2%	0.8%
Low pop'n density areas	4.6%	37.7%	1.7%	55.0%	0.9%
Med pop'n density areas	2.8%	42.5%	1.7%	52.3%	0.7%
High pop'n density areas	3.0%	46.3%	1.8%	48.1%	0.8%

Weeks 18 to 20 Weekly Covid deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre- Covid) overall death rate	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	17.9%	268.6%	0.0%	43.1%
Rest of Devon	21.0%	184.8%	33.0%	104.6%
Devon as a whole	20.4%	200.7%	26.7%	92.9%
South West	12.0%	200.8%	8.2%	100.7%
England	14.7%	182.9%	31.9%	112.2%
Low pop'n density areas	19.2%	161.7%	31.9%	120.5%
Med pop'n density areas	11.9%	182.2%	30.6%	114.6%
High pop'n density areas	12.6%	198.6%	32.4%	105.3%

Weeks 18 to 20 Excess Covid deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly Covid deaths	Weekly Covid deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 overall death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 overall death rate
East Devon	6.3	0.044	17.6%	-82.4%
Rest of Devon	27.0	0.026	12.1%	-87.9%
Devon as a whole	33.3	0.028	12.9%	-87.1%
South West	218.0	0.044	22.0%	-78.0%
England	3,804.0	0.068	39.1%	-60.9%
Low pop'n density areas	1,314.3	0.059	40.2%	-59.8%
Med pop'n density areas	684.3	0.081	45.1%	-54.9%
High pop'n density areas	1,805.3	0.072	36.6%	-63.4%

Weeks 21 to 36: Under control

Weeks 21 to 36 Where Covid deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	0	3	0	6	0	9
Rest of Devon	4	15	0	14	0	33
Devon as a whole	4	18	0	20	0	42
South West	16	182	2	170	1	371
England	411	3,131	202	5,082	49	8,875
Low pop'n density areas	163	870	61	1,570	19	2,683
Med pop'n density areas	67	466	40	981	8	1,562
High pop'n density areas	181	1,795	101	2,531	22	4,630

Weeks 21 to 36 % of Covid deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%
Rest of Devon	12.1%	45.5%	0.0%	42.4%	0.0%
Devon as a whole	9.5%	42.9%	0.0%	47.6%	0.0%
South West	4.3%	49.1%	0.5%	45.8%	0.3%
England	4.6%	35.3%	2.3%	57.3%	0.6%
Low pop'n density areas	6.1%	32.4%	2.3%	58.5%	0.7%
Med pop'n density areas	4.3%	29.8%	2.6%	62.8%	0.5%
High pop'n density areas	3.9%	38.8%	2.2%	54.7%	0.5%

Weeks 21 to 36 Weekly Covid deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre- Covid) overall death rate	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	0.0%	113.4%	0.0%	182.2%
Rest of Devon	41.2%	154.6%	0.0%	115.9%
Devon as a whole	32.4%	145.8%	0.0%	130.1%
South West	14.7%	166.9%	14.4%	125.2%
England	19.5%	151.2%	42.1%	125.4%
Low pop'n density areas	25.5%	139.0%	42.0%	128.2%
Med pop'n density areas	18.0%	127.8%	47.3%	137.5%
High pop'n density areas	16.4%	166.1%	40.3%	119.7%

Weeks 21 to 36 Excess Covid deaths compared to 2018 weekly average	Total weekly Covid deaths	Weekly Covid deaths per 1,000 residents	Previous column as % of 2018 overall death rate	Excess deaths as % of 2018 overall death rate
East Devon	0.6	0.004	1.6%	-98.4%
Rest of Devon	2.1	0.002	0.9%	-99.1%
Devon as a whole	2.6	0.002	1.0%	-99.0%
South West	23.2	0.005	2.3%	-97.7%
England	554.7	0.010	5.7%	-94.3%
Low pop'n density areas	167.7	0.008	5.1%	-94.9%
Med pop'n density areas	97.6	0.012	6.4%	-93.6%
High pop'n density areas	289.4	0.011	5.9%	-94.1%

Weeks 12 to 36: Phase 1 as a whole

Weeks 12 to 36 Where Covid deaths occurred	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital	Other	Total
East Devon	2	29	0	19	0	50
Rest of Devon	24	127	1	165	0	317
Devon as a whole	26	156	1	184	0	367
South West	121	1,060	12	1,134	13	2,340
England	2,346	14,800	736	31,444	400	49,726
Low pop'n density areas	1,223	5,068	307	14,140	205	20,943
Med pop'n density areas	331	2,441	128	5,341	60	8,301
High pop'n density areas	792	7,291	301	11,963	135	20,482

Weeks 12 to 36 % of Covid deaths by place	At home	In a care homes	In a hospice	In hospital	Other
East Devon	4.0%	58.0%	0.0%	38.0%	0.0%
Rest of Devon	7.6%	40.1%	0.3%	52.1%	0.0%
Devon as a whole	7.1%	42.5%	0.3%	50.1%	0.0%
South West	5.2%	45.3%	0.5%	48.5%	0.6%
England	4.7%	29.8%	1.5%	63.2%	0.8%
Low pop'n density areas	5.8%	24.2%	1.5%	67.5%	1.0%
Med pop'n density areas	4.0%	29.4%	1.5%	64.3%	0.7%
High pop'n density areas	3.9%	35.6%	1.5%	58.4%	0.7%

Weeks 12 to 36 Weekly Covid deaths as % of Weeks 1 to 9 (pre- Covid) overall death rate	At home	In a care home	In a hospice	In hospital
East Devon	13.6%	197.3%	0.0%	103.8%
Rest of Devon	25.8%	136.3%	8.4%	142.2%
Devon as a whole	24.1%	144.6%	7.3%	137.0%
South West	17.6%	154.1%	13.7%	132.4%
England	19.8%	127.5%	27.4%	138.5%
Low pop'n density areas	24.5%	103.7%	27.1%	147.9%
Med pop'n density areas	16.8%	126.0%	28.5%	140.9%
High pop'n density areas	16.3%	152.5%	27.2%	127.9%

<i>Weeks 12 to 36 Excess Covid deaths compared to 2018 weekly average</i>	<i>Total weekly Covid deaths</i>	<i>Weekly Covid deaths per 1,000 residents</i>	<i>Previous column as % of 2018 overall death rate</i>	<i>Excess deaths as % of 2018 overall death rate</i>
East Devon	2.0	0.014	5.6%	-94.4%
Rest of Devon	12.7	0.012	5.7%	-94.3%
Devon as a whole	14.7	0.012	5.7%	-94.3%
South West	93.6	0.019	9.4%	-90.6%
England	1,989.0	0.036	20.4%	-79.6%
Low pop'n density areas	837.7	0.038	25.6%	-74.4%
Med pop'n density areas	332.0	0.039	21.9%	-78.1%
High pop'n density areas	819.3	0.032	16.6%	-83.4%

Appendix 4: Businesses' Experiences, in Their Own Words

This Appendix contains a series of records and recollections reflecting the experiences of local businesses (including charities) during and around lock-down.

The first four were written by the businesses themselves, specifically for Axminster Heritage, during the summer and early autumn of 2020. They come from:

- Axminster Tools;
- Acorn Gift Shop;
- Project Food; and
- Axminster Printing.

We then have information from the local press on:

- Flamingo Pool.

Axminster Tools, Millwey Industrial Estate and Trafalgar Way retail outlet: A Lock-down Diary

At the start of 2020 Managing Director Alan Styles made a presentation to all staff at Axminster Tools about the future of the company; plans for the future, improvements to the way of working and how everyone had a role to play. Alan, nor anyone could have foreseen the uncertain times we were about to face or how dramatically we would need to change our way of working in order to secure a healthy future for the company and its employees.

January 2020

News broke of the first case of Covid-19 in the UK. Initially we responded in the same way as everyone else; staff were asked to be vigilant with their contact with people, particularly those who worked in customer facing roles. We asked that staff washed hands regularly and to isolate if they developed symptoms after coming into contact with anyone who had recently visited mainland China.

February 2020

We remained cautious and stopped all visitors to head office from outside of the organisation. We stayed in continual contact with our Far East suppliers to ensure minimal disruption to our supply chain and safety at all times. In line with government guidance we asked staff to isolate if they developed symptoms, regardless of whether they had been in contact with someone who had visited an affected area. Other than that it was very much still 'business as usual'.

Mid March 2020

Following the government announcement that people should avoid all non essential travel and face to face communication, we started the huge operation to move as many staff over to home working as we could. Within a week we had over 50 staff working from home which allowed us to distance any remaining staff in the office who were unable to work offsite.

For many areas of the business home working simply wasn't possible. The Health & Safety team worked hard to put social distancing and other safety measures in place to ensure the safety of staff in our warehouse, contact centre, servicing and manufacturing departments. We introduced staggered break times and asked people to eat at their desk or in their cars where possible. We provided a free lunch and cake for anyone still working at head office to say thank you and help boost morale.

End of March 2020

We made the difficult decision to close our retail outlets and skill centres in line with government guidance. Whilst hardware stores were legally allowed to remain open and we could choose to define ourselves as that, The Board felt that we would be irresponsible in doing so. We closed everything overnight, forcing a huge amount of work to update both staff and customers.

We also lost sales through other significant areas of the business including Business Services, Education and Wholesale. Fortunately, with so many people at home starting new hobbies, working on their craft and tackling DIY projects, on-line sales remained strong. In fact we started to break records in the warehouse for the number of parcels dispatched in a day. This record breaking pattern would continue well into the next month and beyond.

Beginning of April 2020

With on-line sales ensuring we stayed in a good position financially, we started to look for ways to support our customers and the community.

We introduced marketing campaigns to help keep customers entertained while stuck at home and ran lots of competitions as an incentive for them to get involved. We utilised Skill Centre tutors who were unable to continue with their normal face to face courses and started an on-line Skill Centre at Home series. Within the series we launched a live session which started as 'Turning Tuesdays' once a week at 4pm, live on Facebook. However the videos quickly gathered momentum and we subsequently added more Facebook Lives on a Wednesday and Thursday. To date, some of these videos have received well over half a million views!

Alongside Skill Centre at Home we launched a Beat the Boredom segment, aimed at a much younger audience and our future Axminster Tools customers. We gave lots of project ideas for parents and guardians to work on at home with their children. We ran a monthly competition for the best project and had entries from children as young as three years old. Even now we have continued with the Beat the Boredom and Skill Centre at Home campaigns which show no sign of losing popularity.

We made contact with Axminster Community Emergency Response to discuss ways in which we could support the local community. Our Transport team made several food collections using our lorries, on behalf of ACER. Our Product Development team took time out to design and 3D print some visors for Axminster Medical Practice who did not have enough PPE to keep them safe.

Mid April 2020

We were still in a good position with regards to stocks and supply with the exception of items of PPE like goggles and masks. We were in constant contact with our suppliers and concentrated our efforts in sourcing PPE to ship directly from the supplier to the NHS.

Mid to end of April 2020

Despite the uncertainty we successfully implemented our planned domain name change from axminster.co.uk to axminstertools.com. Our axminster.co.uk domain had served us well for over 20 years, however we felt it was the right time to change. Our new domain name axminstertools.com better encompasses our brand and the name our customers like to refer to us by; 'Axminster Tools'. We also hope that a more generic .com domain will better serve our international customers as we look to grow our export business.

We set up an eBay auction for some wood turned pieces made by Skill Centre Tutor Colwin Way during one of our Skill Centre at Home Live sessions. These reached a combined total of £615 which we donated to the NHS.

Beginning of May 2020

The Health & Safety team started to make preparations for when the time was right to start bringing staff back into the office. They made changes to office and retail layouts as well as continually assessing the work spaces for the staff in our warehouse, contact centre, servicing and innovation and manufacturing departments who remained onsite throughout.

Mid May 2020

We teamed up with Axminster based company Fortis Clothing to provide reusable masks for the personal use of all employees. We purchased 300 masks in total.

We continued our work with Arc Axminster who provide easily accessible, flexible, counselling and psychotherapy in the heart of the community. They are our chosen charity and all Axminster Tools employees are entitled to free counselling through Arc, funded by the company. We encouraged any staff who had concerns about returning to work or even back out into the community, to use their services. We had an increased number of staff sign up for counselling with Arc through March - July 2020.

Mid to end of May 2020

We made the decision that our retail outlets should remain closed. We felt announcements made by the government were not conclusive enough and whilst we do offer hardware products, it doesn't constitute the majority of our offering. We also felt that due to our customer profile which includes many in the vulnerable bracket, we wouldn't feel comfortable encouraging people into store. Nor would they feel comfortable doing so at a level that made store openings viable.

We experienced our first potential infection scare. In order to keep us all safe and to ensure the company remained operational in the long term, we made the decision to temporarily close the warehouse. The warehouse underwent a deep clean and all potential affected employees were sent for testing. While we waited for test results to come back we increased delivery terms to 5-7 days, pulled all major marketing offers and the Customer Support team worked hard to contact customers who were affected. Fortunately all test results came back negative and we were fully operational within a few days of a possible infection. We were in close contact with HSE at all times and they approved the actions we took. However, it gave us an opportunity to evaluate our processes and outline how we could improve if we were faced with another potential infection in the future.

End of May 2020

We produced a 'life after lock-down' document for staff to keep employees informed of all our plans - past, present and future.

Beginning of June 2020

We began to see some operational challenges with regards to supply. The closures of factories abroad started to have a knock on effect. More businesses were returning to work which led to increased demand and longer lead times. The Supply Chain team stayed in constant contact with suppliers as they worked to overcome issues. We focused our marketing activity towards well stocked products and the Customer Support team kept customers informed of any delivery delays.

Mid June 2020

We reopened three of our stores - Axminster, Sittingbourne and Warrington and they outperformed our expectations. We were able to evaluate safety measures and monitor the way customers shopped to create a footprint for opening the remaining stores. We noticed the way customers were shopping had changed, only coming into store to purchase and not for general enquiries and advice. Hopefully over time customers will grow in confidence and the retail team can begin to rebuild the community feeling we work so hard to achieve throughout our business and so prominently within our stores.

Mid to end of June 2020

We launched our brand new website which had been in the planning for many months. The new axminstertools.com site represents a significant milestone in the evolution of our e-commerce business and serves as the basis for many exciting developments in the future. Launching this remotely was never something that we'd envisioned, particularly with our sales so dependent on the website, and yet the launch went well and our website performance continued.

Staff started to return to the office. The Health & Safety team worked with Managers and Directors to ensure this was done in the safest way possible. Most office departments worked, and continue to work, on a rota to minimise the number of people in the office at any one time. We installed new larger desks and erected solid partitions to meet social distancing guidelines.

Beginning of July 2020

We opened four more of our stores - Basingstoke, High Wycombe, Newcastle and Nuneaton. Only Cardiff remained closed while we waited for guidance from the Welsh government, who at the time still had a 5-mile travel restriction in place.

Mid July 2020

The Welsh government lifted travel restrictions and our Cardiff store was the final retail outlet to open to the public.

We started to see an increase in sales through our wholesale, education and business sectors as we and those around us began returning to a 'new normal'.

"Living through a global pandemic has taught us a great deal, both as individuals and as a company. The pace of change in government policies and direction meant we had to make some quick and difficult decisions, always with the safety of our staff and customers as the first priority. Like everyone else I'm concerned for the millions whose lives will have been changed and the longer term costs to the economy. This is on top of many challenges such as the environment and wellbeing that we already had. However, history has taught us that over time there is constant improvement which is rarely highlighted or celebrated.

"I will never forget the energy, focus, and determination I saw from my colleagues. It was as if everything we had planned or thought about came together at once with a clear sense of purpose, understood shared objectives, appreciation for work and each other, and inspiring collaboration.

"Never have I been more proud of the Axminster Tools family as I have over the past few months. Staff had to be adaptable and worked as hard as ever as we took steps to protect each other and the organisation from Covid-19. It was humbling to witness the dedication, commitment and support from those we work with both within the company and the wider community.

"We deal with challenges all the time and although the pandemic has created a number of big challenges, I am confident that the things which made Axminster Tools prosper over the years, together with the teams and focus we now have will continue to be the key strengths in our successful future." - Alan Styles, Managing Director.

13 July 2020

Acorn Gift Shop, Victoria Place

Annette Heath-Coleman

Acorn gift shop opened in Axminster in January 1998, so we (the Coleman family) have been trading in Axminster for 22 years. We have ridden out recessions, snow and heatwaves. All of the aforementioned can affect trade but they have never closed us for more than a day at a time - sheet ice outside the door was the only reason we've shut before now (2020).

On Friday March 20th however there was talk of lock-down, some people were already shielding, schools were shutting to all but keyworkers' children. The shop was open but we were already telling our customers they could telephone and we could deliver etc. if they can't get out. The plan was to stay open until we were told otherwise. On Monday March 24th however things felt different and the threat of catching the virus felt very real and immediate. I put a marker on the floor in an attempt to get customers to keep their distance from the staff when paying, and when my parents happened to come into the shop for a chat I kept my distance from them, which was very counter-intuitive.

Some customers didn't understand the request to social distance and it felt rude to be stepping away from them or asking them to keep back. I became very stressed, so we took the decision to shut the shop and set about making posters for the window and getting the phone line forwarded to my mobile. It was a relief not to have to deal with customers face to face for a while. I was expecting the shop to be shut for maybe 4 or 5 weeks and I roughly calculated that I could keep paying myself and my staff for a few weeks. The bank account would be severely diminished when we got back but the shop would survive if I was careful. Later that day Boris announced that we had to shut all non-essential shops anyway, so I had just been a few hours ahead of the announcement.

My prediction of 4-5 weeks (which was obviously just optimism because it was unthinkable to be shut for any longer) turned into 12. All staff were furloughed, including myself as I am a director paid via payroll, so we weren't allowed to work for the shop at all. I therefore took down the posters saying that customers could ring to have items delivered etc. The shop was dark and gathered dust for a while! Jodi and Hannah, who usually work in the shop, were keen to make the shop windows look good, but I was reluctant to let them display things we sell because of the furlough rules. Instead they did a fab window thanking the NHS and keyworkers and highlighting the achievements of Tom Moore.

At one point there was hope that we'd be allowed to open on 1 June, the same day my daughter's pre-school was allowed to re-open. The gift industry seemed to be expecting this to be the

reopening date, so it wasn't just my bad interpretation of what the PM said. I started to prepare mentally for a return to work and was looking forward to it. So it was really upsetting to hear we had to wait another 2 weeks, until 15 June. With this announcement came government guidance, so it was more definite. Suddenly I had work to do – write a risk assessment, replace real towels with dispensers and paper towels in the kitchen and bathroom, communicate with all staff (mainly returning, but not all due to health issues), order the tape for the floor (I could have easily spent £100s on lovely floor stickers), find posters for the walls advising people to keep 2m apart and pay by card etc. There were rumours we'd be compelled to wear masks but the government guidance at the moment is that people must keep their distance from each other rather than rely on masks in shops. Proper PPE is to be reserved for the NHS and others who cannot maintain social distance. My father-in-law made a bespoke sneeze screen out of items he had in his workshop, it's the finest I've seen.

We sanitise our hands A LOT and encourage all our customers to do so as they enter. Only one person has point blank refused in 3 weeks. Others have grumbled and done it anyway, most are more than happy to oblige and some are clearly in the habit already, seeking it out as they enter. What would we do without hand sanitiser?!

Opening on Monday 15th June was really lovely. Customers were really pleased to see us open and we have had some good chats, as always. Trade has been fine, with some customers really intentionally spending with us as a way of ensuring Acorn's survival. Having had the government grant, which East Devon District Council administered swiftly at the start of April, we are not on a knife-edge financially as feared. That said, I am aware that there could be further closure to come so we need to be cautious. Only time will tell whether the tourist season will bring Covid-19 with it (I am writing at the start of July) and a new recession will certainly bring challenges. But at the moment at least it feels like people are appreciating their local businesses and being supportive, which is great.

Early July

Project Food (formerly HALFF), South Street

Kerry Morgan

Project Food in Axminster (a small charity previously known as HALFF) has been looking after disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our local community for nearly 15 years, helping them to eat good food and enjoy good physical and mental health. Our work includes teaching people how to cook and eat healthily, as well as selling our healthy 'Real Meals' and fresh fruit and vegetables and local produce from our shop on South Street in Axminster.

When the Covid-19 crisis hit, and lock-down started, we had to adapt quickly to ensure that we continued to reach the people who had come to rely on us.

We were particularly worried about the people who had been told to shield themselves. We knew that some would have no family members living nearby to do their weekly shop for them, and others would not be able to shop on-line. One man got in touch from Australia, deeply concerned about his elderly mother who lives alone in a very rural spot. She didn't know where she was going to get any food from and had started to ration herself. We also suspected that many others would slip through the net for government food packages.

So we quickly rallied an army of volunteers and started a food delivery service to Axminster, Seaton, Colyton, Lyme Regis, Charmouth and the surrounding villages, sending out more than 50 deliveries a week. We allowed people to call us and talk to us to order rather than having to order on a website or an app. We also started to work alongside River Cottage and The Monmouth Pantry, providing regular cooked meals to struggling families, and provided free emergency supplies to those in the most need.

Our service has proved to be invaluable, particularly to those who live alone in remote villages. The weekly call to place their order with us can be one of the few conversations they have.

As lock-down begins to ease, we are still adapting our support. Many of our beneficiaries have underlying health conditions and are still too anxious to venture out. Several have told us that they will continue to isolate until they feel completely reassured that it is safe – which may not be the

case for some time to come – and our delivery service will continue to support them for as long as they need it.

In the new era of social distancing, we are exploring how we can move beyond the basic supply of healthy food and get back to helping people improve their food skills and knowledge. This has become even more urgent as susceptibility to complications arising from Covid-19 seems to be associated with obesity and other diet related health conditions. We can't offer face-to-face cooking sessions and demonstrations any more, but we can move our classes on line – and in the last 2 weeks we have been running several of our groups via Zoom, not only demos, but also one-to-one hands on cook along sessions. This means that people can continue to learn how to cook healthy nutritious meals, as well as see friendly faces and have a catch-up – all of which are really important for their wellbeing. One of our participants commented "I thoroughly look forward to these sessions. They break up the very long weeks and allow me to see my friends from the group. It would otherwise be such a long time before we could see each other again".

As a charity, the lock-down has given us a new insight into ways of connecting with the people who we used to find difficult to reach – particularly those who could not leave the house because of caring responsibilities or a disability. Ironically our on-line lock-down session for carers, held during Carers Week in June, attracted at least as many participants as would have attended in person – and, in a post-Covid world, on-line sessions for carers will continue to be an invaluable tool.

As a team, we are learning to work remotely and to use technology to diversify the services we offer. It has been a fast learning curve for us all, and we are all doing things that we didn't know were possible. We will keep reaching out to new groups of people, and keep adapting our work to help them to improve their health through better food. Although we may never be able to go back to the way we did things before, we are very excited about where 'life after lock-down' will take Project Food.

Written for Axminster Heritage Centre, based on an article which appeared in Marshwood Magazine in July 2020.

(Postscript: On 30 September it was reported in the Midweek Herald that Project Food had been awarded a grant of £17,893 from the National Lottery Community Fund to support the continued operation of its Covid-related support to local communities. Specifically the grant was to enable the delivery of free on-line food sessions, including the supply of free tablet devices; and the delivery of fruit and veg boxes across East Devon. Charity founder Tiggy Parry said "Project Food ... will be continuing to provide free fruit and veg boxes to people unable to feed their families a nutritious diet, as well as free ready meals for those most isolated and in need of support. Every week we take fruit and veg boxes and home-made meals to a local women's refuge for women and children escaping domestic violence.")

Axminster Printing, West Street

Jane Rockett

Axminster Printing was founded in 1969 by Tony Rockett and Jim Sweetland, with their respective wives Audrey and Daphne, a partnership which ran for 18 years. In 1987 the partnership ended and Tony and Audrey's daughter, Jane, joined the business, soon followed by her brother, Keith. Jane and Keith continue to run it today.

Keith runs the print factory with a real mixture of traditional Heidelberg Litho and Letterpress printing presses alongside up to date digital presses and a large format printer. This enables him to offer a complete range of printed items for both business or personal stationery from business cards, headings, menus, invoices, duplicate or triplicate books/pads, posters and flyers, price lists, brochures, newsletters, calendars and so much more. An increasingly popular service is taking your photograph or original painting and turning it into greetings cards, postcards or canvasses.

Our shop is a real mixture of traditional office supplies, many printer inks, an art and craft section and in more recent years an expanding children's area, lots of creative products. In March we had just started to stock greetings cards by Dandelion Stationery, a lovely range which has proven to be very popular, 'a sentiment for every feeling' as a customer remarked.

In January we decided to knock down a store room, which had previously been a dark room and then Tony's office. After much decluttering and moving around of stock, the deed was done and

what a difference it made to the shop. Moving back the counter has made the shop more spacious and customers now have a view into the factory and are noticing that we print on site. It exposed a large window which has made the shop very light and airy. We have had lots of positive comments re the new look. It also came just in time for the most recent challenge for businesses to deal with Covid-19.

As per government instructions, on 23rd March we sent all staff home on furlough (thank goodness for that scheme) and closed the shop to the public. I remember the overwhelming feeling of anxiety at this time. Keith and I soon decided that we would continue to try and keep the business going behind closed doors. Keith set himself up in the factory, printing whatever was needed (it was lucky that he can do anything that is required to produce all the print).

I continued in the office processing orders which were delivered by me to local businesses and people who were staying at home. Local delivery is something that we have always done, but this time it was a strange feeling to knock on doors, leave goods on floor and stand well back, with much hand sanitising. The roads were eerily quiet but at least it was usually sunny so I didn't have the rain to contend with as well. We were pleased to be able to supply our regular customers such as funeral directors, local pharmacy, local councils, care homes, health food shops and other food producers, all of whom had to continue though out these challenging times.

We have seen a variety of businesses come and go in Axminster over the year. It is always sad when one goes but there is usually something else in the pipeline. We have enjoyed getting to know these people and supplying all the print and stationery they need and would welcome any new ones to come and see what we can offer.

We are proud to be involved in the running of Totally Locally Axminster and think it's a vital way of encouraging us all to think a little bit about our shopping habits and supporting local businesses. Also, we are lucky to have the Heritage Centre which has quickly become a source of so much local information.

Late September 2020

Flamingo Pool, Lyme Road

From the Midweek Herald

"Axminster's Flamingo Pool has launched a 'support us or lose us' campaign after recording losses of some £50,000 during lock-down.

"A statement on the pool's website said despite measures to save whatever costs it could, the enforced closure, because of coronavirus, had hit them extremely hard financially. It said: 'new measures including reduced space and therefore customer capacity will impact us further financially, leading to a decision that at this current time, despite the government announcing that indoor swimming pools can re-open on July 25, for financial viability reasons we will be remaining closed.'

"This has been an extremely difficult decision to make. However, we remain committed to re-opening the Flamingo Pool as soon as it is reasonably practicable. ... Whilst we are continuously trying our very best to remain positive and working tirelessly applying for all grants available, the message for the public of Axminster is 'support us or lose us.'"

5 August 2020

The appeal was successful, and the Flamingo Pool re-opened later in the summer.