

16 July 2018

Dear resident,

We find ourselves in an extraordinary time and we thought it may be helpful to provide an update for you, as a local resident, following the major incidents in Amesbury and Salisbury.

We have all been shocked and saddened by the tragic death of Dawn Sturgess after she and her partner Charlie Rowley were exposed to Novichok. Our thoughts remain with Dawn's family and friends at this most difficult of times. Books of condolence for Ms Sturgess have been placed at Salisbury and Amesbury libraries for anyone wishing to pay their respects. Mr Rowley continues to make a recovery and our thoughts are also with him and his family.

The current advice from Public Health England is that the risk to the public remains low. You can find the latest advice on the Public Health England website (www.gov.uk/phe). They have also advised that people do not pick up any objects such as syringes, bottles, cosmetic containers or vessels. In fact they have said: "**if you didn't drop it, don't pick it up**". If you have any concerns or want some advice, please contact the dedicated phone line that has been set up by the police and public health, on Freephone 0800 092 0410 or 020 7158 0124 or call 101.

We understand that our communities in Amesbury and Salisbury may be feeling anxious as a result of the ongoing incident. We want to assure you that public safety remains the **number one priority** of all of the agencies involved in this incident. Wiltshire Police is coordinating the response working with 12 other partners including other emergency services, local authorities, Salisbury District Hospital, the military, the Environment Agency and other national agencies.

The news last week (Friday 13 July) that the investigation team had recovered and identified a small bottle, which they believe to have been the source of the contamination, was a significant development. However, searches are still expected to continue for several weeks, if not months, as officers gather further evidence to assist the investigation.

You will have seen cordons in both Amesbury and Salisbury following this second incident and the Counter Terrorism Policing Network, supported by Wiltshire Police, needs to be given the space, time and resources to establish the facts that led to this barbaric incident. All the sites that have been cleaned by specialist teams and released to the public are safe, and can be used normally.

People in Amesbury and Salisbury will continue to see an increased police presence in the local area. This will include officers in protective equipment as they carry out activity at a number of sites. This will look similar to some of the activity which took place in Salisbury earlier this year – this is a necessary precaution that needs to be in place to enable the investigation team to safely go about the meticulous searching they are conducting as part of the investigation.

A number of police forces from across the country, alongside private security guards, are supporting Wiltshire Police in managing the scenes, to enable local officers to continue to provide a high class policing service across the whole county. Our message is clear - policing services continue as normal and Wiltshire Police is there for you if you need them.

We would ask you to report anything suspicious immediately by calling the dedicated Counter Terrorism police hotline on 0800 789 321.

A public meeting was held in Amesbury on July 10 where the community was updated on the investigation and the public health advice. If you were not able to be there, but would like to view the meeting you can do so at www.facebook.com/WiltshireCouncil/.

Wiltshire Council, the police and other partners will host two further public meetings to provide the latest updates and information to the community. These will take place at 6.30pm on Tuesday 24 July 2018 at Salisbury City Hall, Malthouse Lane, Salisbury, SP2 7TU, and at 6.30pm on Wednesday 25 July 2018 at The Stonehenge School, Antrobus Road, Amesbury, SP4 7ND. Both these meetings will be live streamed on Wiltshire Council's Facebook page www.facebook.com/WiltshireCouncil/.

It is vital that we continue to assist local businesses and provide support throughout this extremely difficult period. Parking charges have been lifted from midday in Amesbury council-owned car parks (Central and Church Street) reflecting the situation in Salisbury's car parks. This is to assist the local businesses and encourage people to continue to shop in the town and city.

We recognise that the impact of the recent incident is likely to affect footfall if you own a business in Amesbury and Salisbury. Officers from the council's economy team are visiting businesses to assist with their concerns and to assess the impact of the situation. If you are a business owner and you need advice and support, you can call Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub on 01225 402096. Lines are open 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday or visit <https://growthhub.swlep.co.uk/> You can also call the Enterprise Network Centre in Salisbury (Salt Lane) on 01722 567345.

Since the first incident occurred in March, Salisbury has shown just how resilient and determined it is in the face of an unprecedented challenge, and already Amesbury is responding with calmness and patience and we would like to thank both communities for their ongoing support and stoicism.

We will do all we can to help both these communities get back to normal and move forward. Regular updates and community meetings will take place to make sure you know what's happening and have the opportunity to ask questions of those involved in the investigation and those who are providing support to both local communities and businesses.

If you have any concerns or questions in relation to the Amesbury and Salisbury incidents please visit the Wiltshire Police website for all the latest policing advice and information at www.wiltshire.police.uk or follow the police on Facebook and Twitter (@wiltshirepolice). You can also visit the dedicated Salisbury and Amesbury pages at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/salisbury-amesbury for the latest information and updates as well as business support and advice.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, Leader of Wiltshire Council

Angus Macpherson, Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon

John Glen, MP for Salisbury and South Wiltshire