



**VARBERGS
KOMMUN**

The Chairman of the Board Ann-Charlotte Stenkil and Director Carl Bartler from Varbergs Council have together written an open letter to the local community which was published on the website varberg.se and other channels on 26 March 2020.

Open letter to Varbergs local residents

Together we can reduce the spread of infection and increase safety.

The world at this moment is no longer recognizable as the daily world we are used to. The effects of the new coronavirus, covid-19, is affecting the whole world and because there is no current vaccine and no one has had a chance to develop immunity to the virus, the infection is spreading very quickly.

What we do know is that most people infected by the virus show mild symptoms consisting of a cough and fever. We also know that older age groups and those with underlying health conditions stand a greater risk of experiencing more serious complications. Updates on the spread of infection and those affected are continuous, and the worry and uncertainty that exists in our society at large, is also being felt in our local community.

In order to curb the effects, major decisions are being made both at a national and local level that have huge consequences for our community. Concerts and sporting events are prohibited. Companies are implementing relevant restrictions. Travel and meetings are being cancelled. Operations are being put on hold in various places and countries are closing their borders. In Varbergs county we have cancelled large events and in order to protect our more vulnerable residents, we are not currently allowing visitors to our local elderly care homes.



Your roll is important

The most important thing you can do for your community is to help reduce the spread of infection. You can do this by being conscientious with your hand hygiene, respecting the restrictions on visitations to care homes and by staying home from work if you are sick. If your children are sick, they should not attend school or nursery and stay at home, even with mild symptoms.

For those of you who are healthy and symptom free, there are many different ways that you can contribute in order to increase safety in your local environment. We all experience anxiety in varying degrees, but perhaps you know someone who is even more anxious than you are and struggling with the current situation? If so, then a small contribution can make a great difference.

- If you have an elderly person close to you who perhaps does not have access to the same quick and updated information as you do, you can perhaps take a few minutes to explain what is happening to them, both in the world and in our local county. Maybe you can even help them by buying an extra bag of food when you are at the supermarket?
- If you have a neighbor or acquaintance who does not speak Swedish, perhaps you can help to translate the information provided from the government and the local council.
- If you see any information on social media that you believe to be incorrect, find out the actual facts and help direct people to the correct information provided by the government and local council.
- At a time when visits and physical meetings are limited, maintain contact and lend a helping hand via telephone and other outlets.
- We know that a lot of these suggestions are already being implemented in our county, but we appeal to you to show continued consideration and an even greater support in the effort to increase safety and reduce the spread of infection.



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Our roll is clear

As the leaders of Varbergs council, we promise to take our responsibility and manage the situation as best we can. We have our staff to support us, who right now are working extra hard, not only within schools and care homes, but within all of our departments and organisations. Our employees are accustomed to keeping their heads cold and their hearts warm, the feet moving and their hands clean and right now, they are doing a tremendous job.

We have a challenging time ahead of us and it is good that we have plans and routines in place that help us to act coordinated and with a long-term perspective, enabling us to make quick decisions when needed. We are also doing everything we can to reach out to our local residents with correct and relevant information as quickly as possible.

The most important thing we can do is to think about each other and show concern for others. If you are able to give a little extra when needed, then together we have everything we need to take us through anything that awaits us.

Ann-Charlotte Stenkil

Chairman of the Board, Varbergs council

Carl Bartler

Director, Varbergs council