

Councillors' Connection

Thursday, April 9

Please continue to send your queries to media@rushcliffe.gov.uk and the team will work to respond via email as quickly as possible.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business closures and exempted activities



As you will already be aware, recent legislation and guidance requires the closure of certain businesses and venues to prevent the further spread of Coronavirus. In some cases, this has included restrictions on the operations of some of the businesses and venues that have remained open.

Environmental Health teams at Local Authorities across England have been given delegated authority to enforce new powers and work with

local businesses where necessary.

Our officers have contacted every business in Rushcliffe to offer advice and support to ensure they are aware of the requirements and have so far found that business owners are complying with government guidance.

Any essential businesses exempt from the list of closures can remain open but must operate subject to certain requirements and follow current guidance from Public Health England.

View the [list of businesses and venues that are required to close](#), and the exceptions to these requirements.

We are aware of concerns that construction activities are continuing during the current crisis. This activity is exempt from the closure requirements and therefore is able to continue.

However, everyone working on a construction site must adhere to [Public Health England \(PHE\) guidelines](#).

This includes maintaining a two-metre distance from others, where possible, regularly washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using hand sanitiser gel where soap and water is not available.

Any failure by an employer to follow PHE guidelines may constitute a breach of their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ('HSWA').

Should you have any further queries, please contact our Environmental Health Manager Geoff Carpenter by emailing GCarpenter@rushcliffe.gov.uk

Free parking permits for NHS and social care workers



We have joined the County Council and all other Nottinghamshire district and borough councils to launch a free parking permit for NHS and social care workers.

It allows eligible staff to park for an unlimited time on single yellow lines, in residents parking areas, limited waiting bays, or council-owned car parks.

The new permit scheme recognises that NHS and social care staff are doing vitally important work to support the most vulnerable in our society during this unprecedented emergency. Many are relying on cars to get them to and from work, to minimise the spread of infection, and are working long hours.

As well as NHS staff and social care workers, the new council permit scheme is being extended to anyone providing direct support helping unwell and vulnerable people in their communities, including emergency service workers, community volunteers, frontline transport workers, and local authority staff.

The new permits are 'virtual', which means there is no need to display anything in vehicles. Instead, vehicle registrations will be logged using a secure digital system, marking them as exempt.

Eligible staff can apply for a permit at <https://secure.mipermit.com/Nottinghamshire>

VE day 75th anniversary celebrations



The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations are working on revised plans to ensure the nation can still thank the Second World War generation on the 75th anniversary of VE Day

on May 8 in a manner consistent with the measures to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Given the circumstances, digital options are likely to provide the safest means to provide this fitting tribute. Colleagues from DCMS are leading the coordination of the Government's programme, and an announcement will be made in due course.

In the meantime, please do think about how communities can join in online to learn about VE Day and honour those who made so many sacrifices for our nation.

Updates will continue to be posted on the Gov.UK website at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-mass-gatherings>

FINANCE AND BUSINESS

For all the latest, visit the [business pages on our website](#).

Business owners asked to contact us on support grants



We are asking business owners yet to receive a COVID-19 Central Government grant but unsure if they are eligible for the support to get in touch with us.

Over 350 additional businesses have been contacted by letter this week, but the Council is aware many business owners are not currently present at their premises due to COVID-19 meaning they are required to call us on

0115 981 9911.

In some cases, owners have not registered a contact number with us, meaning they need to make themselves known by phone or respond to the letter arriving at the registered business address.

As of yesterday, over 1,200 businesses in the Borough had been informed about the funding resulting in nearly £10m of payments.

Eligible businesses yet to claim the grant are required to contact us to make their claim in line with safe financial protocols as soon as possible. The timing of payment received will be dependent upon a prompt return of information by businesses.

Our Leader, Cllr Simon Robinson said: "We know businesses everywhere are facing an unprecedented position and that's why we're very keen every single eligible business receives the grant it is entitled to.

“Business owners need to contact us on 0115 981 9911 as soon as possible if they have yet to claim but should meet the criteria of the scheme outlined in more detail on the website at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/businesscoronavirus”

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Nottinghamshire Coronavirus Community Support Hub



they need.

Lots of details are available on their [website](#), which welcomes emails or phone calls from volunteers, as well as those seeking support for free between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday: **0300 500 8080**.

Nottinghamshire County Council are coordinating the Community Support Hub and they are continuing to work closely with all seven District and Borough Councils to further their COVID-19 Community and Support Volunteering Hub.

They have now further developed their support with increased features for residents to make contact with the support functions

Please note, over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, opening hours are 9am to 1pm on Friday, Saturday and Monday. Advisors will not be available to take calls on Easter Sunday.

Parcels to clinically vulnerable continue



Phil Scotney from our Environmental Health team was among those delivering parcels to addresses in Thrumpton and Radcliffe on Trent today.

Our teams continue to assist the County Council with delivery of food parcels to those who are clinically vulnerable.

The parcels from the Red Cross via Central Government's coordination are to those who have received a letter from the NHS and requested support.

As highlighted in the article above, the [Nottinghamshire Coronavirus Community Support Hub](#) is an invaluable tool that enables residents across the county to request support and helps communities to pull together to support each other.

Please promote the link above to your wards as necessary to help us advise and support further residents.

Do you own accommodation or have a self-contained property?



We're inviting residents with accommodation or a self-contained property in Rushcliffe to consider playing a vital part in the fight against #COVID19 by offering a homeless person the crucial chance to safely self-isolate.

Anyone in a position to help who would like to find out more is encouraged to get in touch with our Customer Service Centre on 0115 981 9911.

What if people aren't observing social-distancing?



We have received reports of groups and individuals allegedly ignoring government guidance on social-distancing and self-isolation in recent weeks.

Those concerned about private social gatherings or individual's behaviour that flouts government guidance should [contact Nottinghamshire Police via their non-emergency channels](#).

As reported in last week's edition of this newsletter, our Environmental Health teams are on hand to support and enforce the closure of any [non-essential businesses](#) attempting to operate during this time.

The latest guidance on COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

A reminder that the government has strengthened police enforcement powers in England to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

If members of the public do not comply the police may:

- Instruct them to go home, leave an area or disperse
- ensure parents are taking necessary steps to stop their children breaking these rules
- issue a fixed penalty notice of £60, which will be lowered to £30 if paid within 14 days
- issue a fixed penalty notice of £120 for second time offenders, doubling on each further repeat offence

Individuals who do not pay a fixed penalty notice under the regulations could be taken to court, with magistrates able to impose unlimited fines.

Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund



A £1 million Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund has been created to help communities as they respond to exceptional challenges over the coming months.

Nottinghamshire County Council want to support local charities and community organisations that are delivering essential services to vulnerable Nottinghamshire residents impacted by COVID-19.

We're encouraging charities and voluntary groups in the Borough to apply for a grant of anywhere between £200 to £10,000 to deliver projects or services that meet the Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund criteria:

- Projects that directly help vulnerable people affected by the effects of COVID-19, such as by providing access to food, toiletries, necessities, as well as projects to help vulnerable people in isolation.
- Projects that are already set up and helping vulnerable people now.

Please visit the [Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Community Fund page](#) to find out more.

Corona symptoms? Please complete the NHS status checker



The Coronavirus Status Checker is now available to help the NHS coordinate its response and build up additional data on COVID-19.

Anyone with potential symptoms is now asked to complete the checker and answer a short series of questions which will tell the NHS about their experience, [here](#).

It is encouraged anyone who thinks they may be displaying signs, no matter how mild, to complete it.

Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp



A reminder that residents can access the government's [Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp](#).

The free service is an automated 'chatbot' that provides information on coronavirus prevention and symptoms, the latest number of cases in the UK, advice on

staying at home, travel advice and myth busting.

It aims to further reduce the burden on NHS services, including 111, combat the spread of the virus and ensure people stay at home and save lives.

Stay one step ahead of the scammers



There's growing evidence of a spike in email and phone scammers as criminals look to seize on people's vulnerabilities during the pandemic.

Maybe you've received one claiming to be from organisations you would trust such as:

- the Government asking for your bank details so money related to free school meals can be transferred;
- HMRC stating you have a tax refund;
- banks asking you to confirm your details;
- emails from criminals disguising themselves as an organisation;
- callers offering coronavirus testing kits and protective equipment; or
- calls telling you your internet is going to be cut off in 24 hours because you've been hacked.
- A direct debit payment has failed

The common factor with emails is that you can only find out more if you click on a link or open an attachment.

An automated call will invariably ask you to press buttons on your phone and skilled criminals on live calls can deftly convince you of their legitimacy. And that's when the damage starts. Either by inadvertently giving criminals access to your computer or phone or, at the extreme end of the scale, emptying your bank account.

The good news is there are some simple steps to take to ensure you stay safe and don't fall victim to these invisible criminals.

Before you take any action, pause and take a moment to consider:

- Is the email addressed to you personally or is it addressed to "Dear customer" or "Valued customer"?
- Is the spelling, punctuation and grammar correct?
- Does the email ask you to urgently verify details within a specific time limit?
- Does the sender's email address look legitimate?
- Does the email look like previous emails you have legitimately had from the same organisation?
- Does the email ask for your bank account details, online banking passwords or your PIN number and CVC code for your debit card?
- Does the caller's offer sound too good to be true? Then it probably is.
- Do you actually have an existing relationship with the caller?

Agencies across the UK, and beyond, are working together providing advice on how to stay safe online.

The [National Cyber Security Centre](#) has an abundance of guidance including [how to spot and deal with suspicious emails](#); [top tips for staying safe online](#) and [securing your devices](#).

SERVICE SPECIFIC ISSUES

Advice on unpaid care



The Department of Health and Social Care has outlined further detailed guidance for anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who cannot cope without their support during the coronavirus outbreak.

The guidance builds on the previous guidance for households on staying at home with possible coronavirus and the guidance on social distancing.

Carers are advised to create an emergency plan with the person they care for, to use in circumstances where help from other people to deliver care may be needed.

Having to organise alternative care can be difficult and concerning. Where possible, carers should contact friends and family who may be able to give immediate help in providing care.

They should follow the guidelines set out in the stay at home guidance and the guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults.

If carers cannot organise alternative care, they are advised to contact their local authority or health care provider and they can find out more [here](#).

Extra support for schools



The government has announced a package of support to help schools deal with the challenges posed by coronavirus.

Extra funding is to be made available for schools to cover the unique challenges and financial costs of the coronavirus outbreak. The specific costs schools can claim for are:

- Additional cleaning required due to confirmed or suspected coronavirus cases;
- Increased premises related costs needed to keep schools open during holidays; and
- Support for free school meals for eligible children who are not attending school, where those costs are not covered by the national voucher scheme.

The additional funding for schools will be available on top of core funding allocations that will be paid as normal to schools for the 2020-21 financial year.

Further guidance with more details of the claims process is set to be published in June.

Funeral advice now updated



Central Government advice has now been updated on funerals.

During this unprecedented period, many lives will sadly be lost. To ensure organisations managing funerals are able to cope with the increased number of deaths, it is important that people do not delay funerals.

It is understood how difficult this will be for the families and friends of lost loved ones, however the current guidance will be in place for the foreseeable future for public safety reasons.

Those organising a funeral should adhere to the following:

- restrict the number of mourners who attend so that a safe distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) can be maintained between individuals
- only the following should attend:
 - members of the person's household
 - close family members
 - if the deceased has neither household or family members in attendance, then it is possible for a modest number of friends to attend
- at no point should mourners mix closer than 2 metres apart from each other
- mourners should follow the advice on social distancing when travelling to and from the funeral gathering
- mourners should avoid any direct face-to-face or physical contact, for example, hugging each other unless they are part of the same household, that is, they have already been living in the same house as each other
- mourners in attendance, should follow the general advice on hand hygiene and preventing the spread of infection
- mourners who are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus, or are part of a household with possible coronavirus infection, should not attend any gatherings
- mourners who are symptomatic should not attend in any circumstance

Further information is available [here](#).