

COVID-19 UPDATE – Saturday 4 April 2020

Good afternoon

Please see the latest update regarding COVID-19.

Business Support

We have received £106,328,000 grant from central govt to support local businesses during the coronavirus outbreak.

We are administering the £10,000 grant for businesses in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) or rural rates relief. We are also administering the £10,000 grant for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with a rateable value of under £15,000 and for those businesses with a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000 a grant of £25,000.

So far this week we:

- have sent out over 8,000 letters to businesses eligible for these grants
- have received over 3,100 applications which are currently being assessed
- have issued over £2.6 million to local businesses; this is ahead of schedule as we were initially planning to release funds from Monday 6 April onwards
- have 40 members of staff who have now been trained to assess applications
- are working over the weekend to continue assessing applications

Since the launch of the dedicated contact centre (Covid-19BusinessSupport@wiltshire.gov.uk) we have received approximately 650 enquiries from businesses asking about the grant process, eligibility or wider support available. Twelve members of staff have been assigned to respond to these emails.

We are supporting 18 tenants of The Enterprise Network by waiving two months' rent for their office in TEN Centres covering April and May 2020.

We also held last week our first virtual meeting with over 25 business

partners including BEIS and other government departments, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP), Business Improvement Districts, Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, and Business West. We have sent them nine emails providing up-to-date information on the government schemes, Wiltshire Council's additional support such as deferment of business rates payments and progress on the administration of the grant schemes.

In addition, we launched our first Business newsletter last week to 592 subscribers giving updates, information and advice on the support available. Our second edition was issued on 3 April 2020 to 813 subscribers.

Finally, Sam Fox, Director of Economic Development and Planning, attends daily meetings with government and SWLEP to feed issues up to government – this process is influencing decisions at a national level.

Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub

The Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub was launched last weekend to provide support for our county's most vulnerable residents who may be struggling during this difficult time.

Our teams are making daily calls to people identified by central government to see if these individuals require support with things such as food or collecting prescriptions. So far we have also received 489 calls to our designated hotline from other members of the community requiring assistance.

People can get in touch with the hub via email at wellbeinghub@wiltshire.gov.uk or by calling 0300 003 4576. It's available from 8am-8pm Monday-Friday and 10am-4pm Saturday and Sunday.

Please kindly share with people in your community who may this require our support.

The Scottish and Southern Electricity Resilience Community Fund

The Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) Resilience Community Fund, which offers grants to support community resilience, is now

open for applications from parish and town councils. However due to COVID-19, the criteria has been changed for this year's applications. Grants will be given to schemes that have a direct impact and benefit to the priority vulnerable groups who are self-isolating.

The fund will only be open to parish and town councils, and will offer grants of up to £3,000 to help communities support people in this group.

Parishes that have flood and/or emergency plans could find this grant particularly useful to help their community, but please get your applications in quickly! To find out more about what communities can do to support vulnerable people, please see [our volunteer pack](#); or [find out more about the SSE fund and how to apply](#).

Salisbury's park and ride sites to temporarily close

Following the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the council has confirmed that its Salisbury park and ride sites will close from 5 April.

The decision to temporarily close the sites (located at Beehive, Wilton, Britford, London Road, Petersfinger) is due to significantly reduced usage recently in response to the government's message to only undertake essential travel.

This decision coincides with the Salisbury Reds bus company reducing the frequency of their bus services in the city from the same date. Housing estates close to the park and ride sites will continue to be served by buses once per hour and Salisbury Reds are working to focus resources on providing bus services elsewhere in the city, so that NHS staff and others can travel to-and-from work via sustainable transport.

With regards to parking, people can use on and off-street parking bays without time restriction or charge. This includes any council car parks, on-street paid for parking bays and permit bays in controlled parking zones.

We look forward to getting the sites back up and running as soon as possible after travel restrictions are lifted.

May I wish you a happy and safe weekend.

Regards

Cllr Philip Whitehead