

COVID-19 UPDATE – Thursday 2 April 2020

Good afternoon

Please see the latest update regarding COVID-19.

Business Support

The council has sent out over 8,000 letters to business who are eligible for either the:

Small business grant schemes (£10,000)

For businesses that pay little or no businesses rates, the [Small Business Grant Scheme](#) will provide a one-off grant of £10,000 to businesses in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) and rural rates relief.

Or,

The Retail and Hospitality Grant Scheme (£25,000)

The [Retail and Hospitality Grant Scheme](#) provides businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with a cash grant of up to £25,000 per property.

- For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of under £15,000, they will receive a grant of £10,000
- For businesses in these sectors with a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000, they will receive a grant of £25,000.

The letters ask people to complete an online form, accessed via a dedicated grants webpage <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/business-advice-support-covid19>, so we can ensure the grants are issued appropriately and help minimise fraud. Around £1.5m has been issued today (2 April 2020) as we started to release vital funds to support businesses struggling during the coronavirus outbreak.

We're aware that many businesses are not open. If they think they are eligible they can complete the webform without the need to pick up their letter <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/business-advice-support-covid19>. They will not be disadvantaged by not having the letter.

We have also set up a dedicated contact centre for COVID-19 business support and businesses who have queries on the grant process or require further information and advice can contact us on Covid-19BusinessSupport@wiltshire.gov.uk. Please kindly share this

information with businesses in your community who need support.

Food banks

At this difficult time, food banks are in need of more volunteers and donations. If you are able to help in any way please get in touch with your local food bank. Food banks are there to support vulnerable people in a crisis, which is usually subject to a referral from a trusted source such as a social worker.

[List of food banks currently operating in Wiltshire](#). Please note these details are subject to change during the COVID-19 situation.

You can also donate to your local foodbank through the foodbank donation points at your local supermarket.

[Markets in Wiltshire](#)

Recent government guidance advised that all [indoor and outdoor markets](#) will be cancelled until further notice. The only exception to this is food stalls, which are making their own decisions on whether to trade, so please check with your local market to see if it is going ahead. [Read the government guidance](#).

We're keen to support our local community's food stalls to trade but would encourage any markets that remain open to ensure that customers following the Government advice on social distancing ([click here](#)) at all times.

Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub

The Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub is available to anyone who is struggling during this difficult time, such as people who are shielding or self-isolating and don't have a support network around them or know where to get help. Our team can help provide support but also signpost them to where additional help is available in their local area, via the hundreds of community groups set-up across the county providing invaluable 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.

Getting Wiltshire Talking

Although Wiltshire Council's Get Wiltshire Walking programme has been suspended, the council's walking co-ordinators have made more than 100 calls to the group members to ensure they feel

supported and connected during this difficult time.

The Get Wiltshire Walking programme generally engages older people, many of whom live on their own and may be feeling isolated. Our co-ordinators have been encouraging the members to stay in contact with each other via phone/text/email, buddy up where they can, and look out for one another during the ongoing situation. Some groups are arranging virtual coffee mornings via skype or video calling on WhatsApp at the time they would normally have coffee after the walk – yet another great example of people staying connected and enjoying some form of social activity by virtual means.

The team will stay in contact as much as possible with the group over the coming weeks.

Helping our communities to be aware of misinformation

We're supporting national efforts to encourage members of the public to check the information they receive and share about COVID-19.

The Government is running a '[Don't Feed The Beast](#)' public information campaign via its [Share Check List](#) website to empower communities not to believe or spread information from purported 'experts' issuing dangerous misinformation, or become victims of criminal fraudsters running phishing scams.

The public can really help stop the spread of potentially dangerous or false stories circulating by following official government guidance. The 'SHARE' checklist below includes basic but essential advice such as to checking the source of a story and analysing the facts before sharing.

- Source - make sure information comes from a trusted source
- Headline - always read beyond the headline
- Analyse - check the facts
- Retouched - does the image or video look as though it has been doctored?
- Error - look out for bad grammar and spelling

Please kindly share this information with your communities to help them protect themselves as well as others.

Regards

Cllr Philip Whitehead