

LIGHTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 9TH JUNE 2020

1.

New Discretionary Business Grant Fund launches 8th June 2020

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's new Discretionary Business Grant Fund launches, Monday 8 June.

Businesses that were not eligible for Government funding through previous COVID-19 related financial support schemes are being invited to apply for business support funding through the [discretionary business grant fund](#), from today until the closing date on **26 June**.

The scheme is designed to help small businesses which did not meet the criteria for the first round of funding which targeted Small Businesses in the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector.

The scheme will provide support to businesses that fall into a number of main priority areas:

- - Bed & Breakfasts which pay Council Tax
 - Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces
 - Regular market traders with fixed building costs
 - Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief

The District Council is also accepting applications from other businesses significantly affected by COVID-19 who:

- - are suppliers reliant on the retail hospitality and leisure industry who were not included within the original scheme

- have a Rateable Value greater than £15k but are outside of the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors
- have a Rateable Value marginally greater than £51k but could be considered as a small business
- are a Small Business who are not eligible for Small Business Rate Relief as they occupy a second property with a combined value below £15k
- are a business unique to the tourism sector within the Stratford District.

Businesses must apply for the additional funding online at: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/dbrgrant> during the three-week window.

Notes to editors

- Stratford-on-Avon District Council has been allocated an additional £1.6million to support businesses across the district as part of the Government's Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

2.

Local Council Tax Support Hardship Fund

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has received funding of £660,000 from the Government, as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak, to help those residents who receive Local Council Tax Support.

This funding is targeted at benefit recipients classed as '*working-age*' who qualify for Local Council Tax Support.

If residents are in receipt of Local Council Tax Support, during the 2020-21 financial year, they can receive a one-off discount of up to £150, which the District Council will apply directly onto their Council Tax Account.

This means that the total amount of Council Tax those benefit recipients have been asked to pay this year will automatically be reduced by up to £150.

There is no need for those currently on benefits to contact the District Council to make a claim – adjustments to accounts will be made automatically.

“Coronavirus is placing immense pressure on us all. Stratford District Council is determined to do everything we can to support families and businesses financially if they are struggling to make ends meet.

“This is another measure we are implementing to help reach those households on the lowest incomes in these difficult times and help those that need it. Residents on Local Council Tax support will be getting a new bill showing them that we have reduced the amount they have to pay this year by up to £150.

“The measures we have put in place are there to help families who are on low incomes and cannot afford to pay bills at the moment. If any resident is concerned about finances then please call one of our team and we will do everything we can to help.”

The District Council has applied this Local Council Tax Support Hardship Fund Discount and will be sending out new bills showing the reduction and a revised balance of Council Tax to pay.

If you have any queries regarding this please contact the Benefit Team by email at: benefits.sdc@stratford-dc.gov.uk

To date: The District Council has paid a total of £526,636.42 to 3,546 cases.

The District Council has no legal power to suspend the collection of Council Tax. Unless or until Central Government make a decision to do so we must collect Council Tax. We do completely understand the pressure many households now find themselves under but there are options available to help individual households.

Additional support may be available for families, already in receipt of council tax support and experiencing financial difficulties, depending on their individual circumstances.

Also most residents pay their Council Tax over 10 months but they are all entitled to extend their Council Tax instalments from 10 to 12 months, reducing the monthly payments by paying over a longer period for no extra charge or by taking their two-month Council Tax ‘holiday’ now instead of in February and March next year.

3.

Reopening of Stratford Town

To assist in the reopening of Stratford Town and the recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council have worked together to produce a temporary scheme which will provide additional space for pedestrians to safely circulate, for customers to queue outside shops and for businesses to expand to meet customer needs.

The proposed scheme includes the introduction of a one-way system with traffic restricted to westbound movements on Bridge Street, Wood Street, Greenhill Street and on Alcester Road between Arden Street and Brunel Way, southbound movements on Rother Street, High Street and Chapel Street and eastbound movements on Sheep Street.

The space created by a combination of lane closures and the suspension of some on-street parking will create areas for customers waiting for shops to queue whilst allowing pedestrians to circulate safely. It is also proposed to introduce a 20mph speed limit in the town centre and to make changes to pedestrian crossings.

Traffic management equipment such as cones and barriers will be used to safely segregate people from motor traffic. The councils have plans to work with local art groups to consider options for improving the appearance of barriers to ensure the distinctive look and feel of the town can be retained.

As hospitality businesses open, the space created may allow them to increase their outside tables to accommodate the social distancing requirements.

The changes will be advertised in a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order in the near future with the aim of introducing the scheme to coincide with the reopening of non-essential shops from 15 June.

“The plans will help businesses operate, give the public confidence that they can safely return to use and enjoy the town centre and all it has to offer and give Stratford a much-needed boost.”

4.

Stratford District Council’s Chinese friends donate more personal protective equipment to NHS staff at Warwick Hospital

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has been able to arrange further donations from China of personal protective equipment (PPE) to The South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT), thanks to the Council’s on going cultural relationship with Fuzhou in Jiangxi province.

SWFT has now received two deliveries of PPE of masks and gloves from Fuzhou.

Fuzhou, with whom the District Council has developed a strong ‘sister’ city relationship over the past five years, contacted the Chairman of the District Council, Cllr Christopher Kettle, to offer the Council help through the provision of PPE, which we were delighted to accept, and who worked with Fuzhou to arrange its importation and delivery to SWFT.

Along with previous donations, SWFT have now received a total of 35,000 masks, 200 disposable protective suits and 5,000 protective gloves from China through the District Council.

Cllr Christopher Kettle, Chairman of Stratford-on-Avon District Council said: “We are very grateful to our friends in the Municipal Government of Fuzhou for this very generous and supportive offer during our ongoing health crisis. It is further evidence of the benefit of the relationships Stratford has been building with Fuzhou over the past five years.”

Glen Burley, South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive said: “I want to say a huge thank you to Fuzhou and Meishan for their generous donation of personal protective equipment in such a crucial time for the NHS.

“With their support, we are able to continue providing essential care to our patients in hospital and in the community, while keeping them and our staff safe during these unprecedented times. We are extremely grateful and would like to also thank Stratford District Council for their support.”

Notes to editors

Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the Fuzhou Municipality have been building a cultural partnership to boost trade and investment links and strengthen the local economy for the past five years.

Last year Fuzhou gifted to the District Council the Peony Pavilion which is located in the Firs Garden in Stratford-upon-Avon.

5.

Orbit

Letter from Orbit to David Buckland Chief Executive SDC

Dear David,

As we work together through the ongoing Coronavirus situation, I want to continue to keep in touch and share information about how we are operating and delivering effectively.

Our teams have worked hard over the last nine weeks and I am pleased to say that we have now started to increase our services even further following the Government and medical advice. Our sales offices have re-opened for pre-booked appointments and we are in the process of re-mobilising our direct build development sites.

Repairs, maintenance and safety work

Throughout this period, we have continued to inspect and maintain our communal areas and estates, keeping buildings and bin stores clean and removing waste. We've continued to meet fire safety requirements and keep communal areas clear from any hazards. This will continue.

We've now communicated with customers to let them know that we are pleased to be able to restart a full repairs service to manage any outstanding requests for existing repairs and to start our planned maintenance work. The only exception

to this will be if anyone is self-isolating or shielding, then we'll only complete work that is an emergency. In these cases, specific arrangements will be made.

Customers wanting to move home

We're now able to re-let our homes again, helping customers to move to their new Orbit accommodation. This includes mutual exchanges. Our teams are now preparing empty homes for re-letting, undertaking viewings and making sign ups, all in a way that safely ensures social distancing.

Supporting our customers

We've continued to make well-being calls to customers who are shielding due to underlying health conditions to check if they are experiencing any difficulties with their general well-being, access to food or shopping, finance and rent payments.

Our Better Days team have been helping customers access a range of support packages to help them with any worries or anxieties they've experienced during the recent social isolation, physical illness or disability and relationship or family issues. They are here to help. If a customer is worried about money or paying their rent, they can call us on 0800 678 1221.

The team work with a range of trusted independent partners including Payplan, Citizens Advice and the Money Advice Service who provide information and advice on managing debt and household budget as well as accessing financial products.

Over the next few weeks, we hope to restore more services while still focusing on protecting our customers' safety and well-being. In the meantime we will continue to keep our website updated with all the latest information on our current position including our [FAQ page](#).

Kind regards,

Paul Richards
Group Director of Customer Services

6.

Advice for retail businesses as they prepare to reopen

From 15 June 2020, more shops will be able to open as the Government eases the lockdown following the coronavirus outbreak.

From mid-June retailers ranging from shops selling clothes, shoes, toys, furniture, books, and electronics, plus tailors, auction houses, photography studios, and indoor markets will open again, if the Government's five tests are met and they follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines.

Social distancing will still be necessary to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and retailers will have to familiarise themselves with all the new social distancing and hygiene standards.

To help businesses adapt and guide them through the legislation, the District Council has put together some useful information and links on its website – <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-recovery.cfm>

Stratford District Council want to encourage people to Visit Safe | Stay Safe – that's our message and we will do all we can to help businesses achieve this.”

There may be some who are taking this opportunity to start a new business or to change an existing business. In this case the District Council can help with any planning, licensing, hygiene or safety requirements which are needed just complete the [online form](#).

Useful Information:

- **Health & Safety Executive (HSE):**

Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak – a short guide and links to industry specific advice: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf>

Talking with your workers about working safely during the coronavirus: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf>

- **The Food Standards Agency (FSA)**

A checklist to support food businesses to reopen safely during COVID-19 after a period of inaction: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-checklist-for-food-businesses-during-covid-19>

- **Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH):**

Resources relating to COVID-19 including downloadable signage links, safe shopping guides, food delivery, legionella: <https://www.cieh.org/policy/coronavirus-covid-19/resources/>

7.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's recycling rate hits 64%

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's household recycling rate has hit 64%.

This figure from April will now be reported to DEFRA as part of the District Council's quarterly submission.

Tonnage is also up – in April 2020, 1,328 tonnes of dry recycling was collected (compared to 1,156 tonnes in April 2019) and 2,513 tonnes of garden/food waste was collected (compared to 1,894 tonnes in April 2019).

This equates to a 15% increase in dry recycling collected and a 33% increase in garden/food waste collected (year-on-year).

Cllr Ian Shenton, Operations Portfolio says: “We already have a very good track record for recycling, but thanks must go to our residents for their continued support and commitment by increasing their levels of recycling.

“I am really proud of what our residents have achieved and would ask them to keep up their good work. These results maintain our position as the best performing local authority for recycling across Warwickshire and one of the top performers in the UK.

“This has been an extremely testing time for our collection crews but they have been boosted by the appreciation and thanks they are receiving from residents. During this COVID-19 health emergency, we have maintained all our collection services across the district, which is testament to our dedicated collection crews.”

There's plenty that can be recycled with the District Council's recycling service, if you would like a reminder of what can be recycled please visit: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/waste-recycling/our-recycling-collection.cfm>