

Lighthorne Parish Council Meeting

4th May 2021

District Councillors Report

New Restart Grants to be paid to help businesses recover

Businesses in Stratford District reopening after the latest lockdown will soon be receiving new Restart grants to help them recover as COVID restrictions ease.

The grants, announced by the government to help businesses financially as they reopen, will be paid by Stratford-on-Avon District Council, who will receive around £11million of Government funding.

Anyone who has received a business grant from the council during the pandemic need not apply for these grants as payments will be paid automatically.

Those who have not had any grants in the last 12 months and pay business rates can still claim Restart grants through the council website.

The Restart grants will be available to non-essential retail businesses who were trading and due to pay rates to Stratford District Council on April 1 2021. Firms will be receiving a one-off payment from £6,000 to £18,000 depending on the rateable value and type of business.

All non-essential retailers are eligible, those businesses in the hospitality, leisure, accommodation, gym & sport, and personal care sectors will be able to claim different sums.

For businesses which are ineligible for Restart grants because they do not pay business rates, the council will be issuing one-off discretionary grants of around £1,200 each in April. Businesses that have received grants in the last 12 months need not apply again.

The Restart grants will allow the district's many non-essential retailers to have a bit of a safety net to keep them going and should hopefully encourage as many as possible to reopen.

For those which fall outside of those criteria, SDC will be awarding another discretionary grant. We are expecting further funding from the Government in June 2021 which will be used to support wider businesses initiatives.

We will be providing more information on how this scheme will operate in the coming months. The Council will be working with the Growth Hub to ensure funding reaches the most appropriate businesses.

The new grants come after a busy year for Stratford District Council's revenues team, in which it issued £52million in grants to over 4000 businesses all over the district.

For further details on each of the grants, payment thresholds and how to apply, visit <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/coronavirus/local-restrictions-support-grant-national-lockdown.cfm>

SECOND RAFT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE THROUGH WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S £1.5MILLION BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANT SCHEME

Warwickshire County Council is inviting local small businesses in the retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure sectors and their supply chains to apply for a range of grants in the second round of its Adapt and Diversify grant scheme.

The scheme was launched to support those businesses most affected by the Covid-19 crisis and it complements the Government grants available through the District and Borough Councils by providing additional support for investment in external expertise, new equipment or the refurbishment of property.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have been negatively affected by Covid-19 and have clear plans to adapt and diversify their business. Earlier

in the year, the county made an initial £1m available for distribution among businesses drawing on funding made available through the Local Restrictions Tier status.

A further £850,000 is now available for small businesses to apply for in Round 2. Grants of between £2,500 up to £5,000 are available towards the costs of specialist advice – for example: accountants, legal advice, digital specialists – and between £2,500 and £20,000 for accessing speciality expertise and /or the purchase of new equipment, or the refurbishment of property that will help the business to diversify their offer and safeguard their immediate future and the jobs of their workforce.

Further information on how to make applications is available at the dedicated [web page](#) which details other funding streams available to local businesses to support them through the adverse effects of the pandemic and to prepare them to bounce back.

A webinar has also been organised for Wednesday 28th April, at 10am, in which Warwickshire County Council officers will explain the application process. The link to join this webinar will be on the [Adapt and Diversify](#) webpage, where it will also be made available for viewing after the event.

The [Adapt and Diversify grant](#) application window opens at 9.30am on Monday 17 May at on a first come, first served basis with businesses urged to use the interim period to prepare their applications.

For information about the wide range of other support for your business, contact Coventry and Warwickshire LEP Growth Hub on 0300 060 3747.

Warwickshire County Council has played a major role in supporting local businesses through loans and grants since the start of the pandemic. It is currently delivering three major grant schemes through its Capital Investment Fund to complement Government support.

Small Capital Grants: up to £35,000 towards the costs of capital investments.

Retail and Hospitality Grants: a £250,000 fund for grants of up to £7,500 towards small capital investments to safeguard jobs, sustain a business and support future growth.

Survive, Sustain and Grow: grants of up to £10,000 towards the costs of capital investments to help business recovery plans.

The County Council also provided loans of £2.5m to Coventry and Warwickshire Reinvestment Trust to support the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

Reopening outdoor hospitality safely across Stratford District

Under the Government's roadmap out of the third Lockdown, venues such as pubs, cafes and restaurants reopened on Monday 12 April 2021, with customers being served seated at tables in outdoor spaces in their household group or bubble.

Hospitality businesses are looking for ways to increase seating for their customers and many are setting up marquees, gazebos and other structures in order to provide outdoor seating space with adequate social distancing.

Hospitality businesses in Stratford District are being encouraged to work with Stratford-on-Avon District Council to make sure their temporary outdoor seating areas don't fall foul of COVID-19-secure rules – and help protect customers and staff.

The District Council's Environmental Health and Licensing teams are continuing to advise cafes, pubs and restaurants on how they can safely promote the use of their outdoor space for drinking and dining in line with Step 2 of the Government's roadmap out of the third Lockdown.

Temporary changes mean that businesses such as pubs can set up a marquee for up to 56 days without the need for planning permission until 31 December 2021. To be classed as ‘*outdoors*’ any structure must be substantially open, having at least 50% of the area open to the air. Any temporary structures erected need to be suitable and safe for use.

Hospitality businesses can achieve this extra outdoor space through the District Council’s temporary pavement licence and/or the permanent pavement permit regimes to use space on the highway, or making use of privately-owned land such as pub carparks – [Pavement Licence | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

Make sure you’re ready to have your say on 6th May

Across Stratford-on-Avon District, there are elections for Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner and four local planning referendums taking place.

Polling stations will be safe places to vote on 6 May. People voting in person are encouraged to keep themselves and others safe by:

- wearing a face covering
- bringing their own pen or pencil
- cleaning their hands when entering and leaving the polling station

- keeping a safe distance

Voters should not attend the polling station if they have symptoms of Covid-19, or if they have been asked to self-isolate. Anyone who develops symptoms, or is asked to self-isolate shortly before polling day, has up to 5pm on polling day to apply for an emergency proxy vote. This allows them to nominate someone they trust to vote on their behalf.

David Buckland, Electoral Registration Officer for the District Council, said: “Your poll card will tell you where to find your polling station. Make sure you check the information on your polling card, as your polling station might have changed since the last elections. You do not need your poll card to vote, however, we encourage you to bring it with you to make the process quicker and more efficient.

“Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on Thursday 6 May. Voters who have opted to vote by post must return their postal ballot pack by 10pm; they can hand it in at their polling station if they don’t have time to return it by post.”

Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance at the Electoral Commission, said: “If you are voting in person, make sure you remember to bring your face covering and a pen or pencil with you. At the polling station, help keep yourself and others safe by following the safety measures, including sanitising your hands and keeping a safe distance from others.

“If you are self-isolating or become unwell as a result of Covid-19, you don’t need to lose your vote. You will be able to apply for an emergency proxy vote so that someone you trust can vote on your behalf.”

For further information on elections in your area, voters can visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voter – this page will continue to be updated ahead of the polls.