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## News and Features from Harborough District Council - May 2020

# Harborough District News



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**Councillor Phil King  
Leader of Harborough  
District Council**

### Continued efforts to support community at time of crisis

As the impact of the coronavirus continues to be widely felt, we have now supported a huge number of residents with either essential food supplies, access to medicines, or support with loneliness.

The community groups that have been developed across our district are essential in helping us to fulfil the needs of our residents, and the sense of community has been phenomenal. This is something we will continue to build on as we go forward.

We have redeployed nearly half of our staff to help support vulnerable residents, food banks, business grants, homelessness, environmental crime patrols, medicine drops, and to keep the market food hall open.

The positive feedback we are getting from those we are helping is heart-warming.

Alongside this, we commend the work that colleagues from Leicestershire County Council have undertaken in our district. Supporting not just many hundreds of medically shielded residents, but care homes, and adult social care recipients to name just a few areas of activity.

### Do you need support at this time?

If you, or someone you know, is vulnerable or self-isolating, and does not have a local support network, you can contact Harborough District Council's Community Hub if you:

- need immediate help with supplies of essential food
- are feeling lonely or would like a friendly phone call or text message
- would like to connect with a local community group
- need transport to medical appointments
- would like advice about staying active and exercising

To refer yourself or someone you are concerned about please visit: [www.harborough.gov.uk/hd-community-hub](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/hd-community-hub)

If you cannot use the online forms please email: [communityhub@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:communityhub@harborough.gov.uk) including contact details and

We would also like to acknowledge the crucial role of volunteers in helping sustain many hundreds of people across the district during this pandemic crisis.

support required or call  
01858 821 232 from 9am-5pm.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude for all that they have done and are continuing to do.

Thank you.

## Helping get essential food and supplies to residents in time of need

More than 500 residents and families have requested support through Harborough District Council's Community Hub which offers help to those who are vulnerable or self-isolating.

Redeployed Council staff are working with food banks (*pictured*) in Market Harborough and Lutterworth, and other organisations, to help deliver the essential food people need.

As part of our work with Leicestershire County Council we are contacting around 600 residents from the medically shielded group to check they are OK and to identify if they need any further support.

If they need food support, we will provide an emergency food parcel and then support them to re-register on the Government site to ensure they get ongoing food parcels directly from the Government.

If they need support around isolation, we will refer them to Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL), who are undertaking befriending on our behalf for Harborough District residents.

Look out for signage on the side of some of our refuse vehicles reinforcing the 'stay at home' messages and promoting our community hub contact details so that we can continue to support our most vulnerable residents.



## Providing nearly £20m of financial support to businesses across district

The coronavirus crisis has had a devastating effect on businesses across the country.

In response to this; the Council has been providing urgent financial assistance to local businesses across the district.

We've had a team of officers contacting businesses to ensure they get the support they need as quickly as possible.

So far more than £17.3m worth of grants have been paid out to nearly 1,338 businesses – over 90 per cent of the total funding available – and more businesses will receive support over the coming days.

Approximately 1,400 businesses in the Harborough





district could be eligible for grant aid.

The Council is endeavouring to contact the remaining businesses.

The Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has been publishing a league table of the performance of all local authorities in distributing grants with Harborough District Council listed as the eighth best nationally out of 314 councils.

One business contacted us to say: "Our huge gratitude and thanks to everyone involved in putting together the Business Grant & Business Rate Relief packages so quickly & efficiently for businesses like ours."

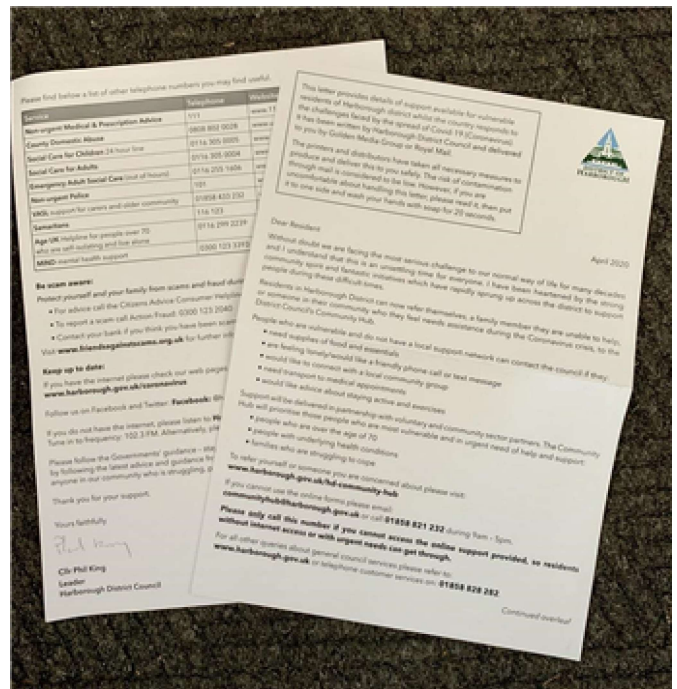
Letters from Harborough District Council have been distributed to households across the district sharing information about support services available during the Coronavirus crisis – including telephone helpline numbers for people who have no internet access.

Every household in the district received this important information.

We also provided large print and Braille versions of the letter for visually impaired residents who have requested these formats from us in the past.

A lot of information was pulled together in a very short timeframe to help residents during this difficult period.

One resident contacted us to say: "Thank you for your letter with all the helpful details. So helpful for us older people."



We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from the public regarding our combined work to help people in the community at this challenging time. Residents and children have been surprising their bin collectors with heartfelt messages of praise, good wishes and colourful drawings to thank them for being



"true heroes" in the face of COVID-19.

A series of kind gestures from the Harborough community was furthered by local charity, HAB-Antibullying (HAB), a charity working with adults and children affected by bullying. The charity usually operates an annual raffle of Easter eggs – an event that did not go ahead this year due to COVID-19.

Instead, the charity kindly donated the eggs to FCC Environment employees to thank them for their continued service throughout the COVID-19 crisis. In return, FCC Environment donated an amazing £237.63 from raffling off the eggs at their depot.

We have also been sharing feedback from the community on social media.

Some examples can be found below:

- One resident said: "Thank you very much for delivering the Green Bin this morning. I really appreciate all the work you and the Environment staff are doing. I will be clapping for all of you as well on Thursday evening"
- A resident said of the Housing Team: ""I'd like to say a big thank you for guiding me in the right direction to what I needed. I really cannot thank you enough for letting me see a light at the end of the tunnel. I'll be forever grateful."
- One resident said: "I just want to say a huge thank you to Harborough District Council & all the volunteers involved for supplying our food box this morning. It brought us to tears."
- A resident said: "Just wanted to thank you and your team for all your help. It was amazing; the [food] parcel I received cheered me up."
- Another resident said: "Please pass on a very big thank you to the refuse bin heroes who have once again promptly & energetically emptied the bins in Houghton on the Hill today. Stars every one!"

To ensure public safety; where our open spaces have contained play equipment, or dedicated self-contained play areas, we have closed these sites; this also includes multi-use games areas or tennis courts.

These have been closed to reduce children using play equipment where the virus could spread through hand contact or where it would be difficult to social distance as per the Government guidelines. All other open space, specifically around the children's play areas, remains open.

Cemeteries, burial grounds and memorial gardens also remain open with signage in place to observe social distancing.

Council-owned cemeteries have remained open for funerals and for visitors, including the gardens of remembrance. In conjunction with local funeral directors, mourners at funerals have been limited to 10 to ensure adequate social distancing can be maintained. We have had to temporarily close the





cemetery chapel at Market Harborough as it would not be possible to maintain social distancing within the building.

Harborough Market Food Hall has remained open during the coronavirus pandemic, with restricted admittance, social distancing measures and clear two metre floor markings in place for the safety of staff, traders and shoppers.

Public feedback and support for the food hall traders has been overwhelming with market staff going that extra mile in an effort to keep the traders safely trading, the local food chain moving and to support the local community with essential foods and household goods.

The market food hall is open Tuesday to Saturday 8am to 3pm.





HM Government



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