

## **COVID-19 UPDATE – Friday 19 June 2020**

Good afternoon

Please find below the latest update on COVID-19 and other council matters:

If you haven't already done so, please sign up to receive our digital newsletters.

[To Sign up](#)

### **Monday is closing date for local Discretionary Grant scheme**

The closing date for applications for a local Discretionary Grant is 5pm on Monday 22 June. Applications should be made via the online application form. They will then be reviewed and assessed with grants being paid from 22 June onwards.

This new fund is aimed at small and micro businesses that can demonstrate they have suffered a significant fall in income due to COVID-19, have ongoing fixed property-related costs and occupy property or shared office space with a rateable value below 51,000.

A one-off grant worth 5,000 will be awarded to eligible businesses to help them cope with the challenges presented by COVID-19. Eligible businesses include:

- small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces such as mills, units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators which do not have their own business rates assessment
- regular market traders with fixed building costs such as rent, who do not have their own business rates assessment
- Bed and breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief who would otherwise have received Small Business Rates Relief

Full guidance for applications, FAQs and the online application form are available at:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/business-advice-support-covid19-grants>

### **Business Recovery Pack and Toolkit available for businesses across Wiltshire**

We have launched a COVID-19 Business Recovery Pack for businesses reopening their premises.

The pack contains a round-up of government guidance, helpful tips on how to implement the guidance and safety advice posters and social distancing floor spots for businesses to use to keep their staff, customers and visitors safe.

These resources have been created to support businesses across the county as they adapt their premises to provide a safe and welcoming experience for customers. They also complement additional signage being used across Wiltshire high streets to encourage people to follow social distancing guidelines.

Read more: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/articles/business-recovery-pack-and-toolkit-available-for-businesses-across-wiltshire>

The COVID-19 Business Recovery Pack and toolkit can be downloaded [online](#).

## **Council tax payments resume for those who deferred**

Residents who decided to defer council tax payments as a result of COVID-19 have been reminded that payments are starting again this month.

In March, we gave all residents the option to defer paying council tax in April and May to help ease any financial pressure they were under at the time. In total, more than 5,800 households took up this offer.

For those who pay via direct debit, this will automatically be taken from their bank account. Otherwise, people should pay in accordance with the various payment methods shown on their bill. If anyone is still struggling to pay at the present time, they should contact Wiltshire Council on 0300 456 0109 or email [counciltax@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@wiltshire.gov.uk) to discuss the options available to them.

Read more: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/articles/council-tax-resumes>

## **Registration service resuming face to face appointments**

Wiltshire Council's Registration Service has now recommenced face-to-face appointments for the registration of births at its Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge offices.

We are in the process of contacting all parents whose children were born in Wiltshire but have been unable to register their child due to the lockdown restrictions.

There is an inevitable backlog of Wiltshire births to be registered so we are asking people to bear with us. We will contact people to make appointments so there is no need for people to call. Appointments cannot currently be made online. In accordance with registration guidance at this time, all babies born outside of Wiltshire will need to register their child in the district where the birth occurred.

From Monday 22 June the council will be able to arrange notices of marriage or civil partnerships for couples whose appointments were cancelled during lockdown. People should email [ceremonies@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:ceremonies@wiltshire.gov.uk) and we will then contact them to make an appointment. Appointments cannot currently be made online. New notice of marriage/civil partnership appointments can be made from 1 July 2020.

No date has been announced by Government as to when any ceremonies can recommence.

Read more: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/articles/birth-registrations-recommence>

## **Time to renew garden waste collections**

Households that pay to receive garden waste collections have been sent an email or letter this week inviting them to renew their subscription by 14 August. New customers can also sign up to receive this service.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic garden waste collection renewals were delayed this year, but customers now need to renew their garden waste subscription if they wish to continue to receive the service. The cost of having garden waste collected will be 50 per bin for the year (no increase).

Current garden waste subscriptions were due to expire on 30 June 2020, but customers should continue to present their bin to be emptied on their usual collection day with their current 2019-2020 red sticker until they receive a new one. Garden waste bins displaying a red 2019/20 bin sticker will continue to be emptied until 31 August.

Read more: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/articles/time-to-renew-your-garden-waste-collections>

## **Stonehenge and Avebury remain closed for summer solstice**

Stonehenge and Avebury will remain closed for the summer solstice due to COVID-19 and in line with Government guidance.

It's important that people don't attempt to travel to Avebury or Stonehenge to mark the event, as the sites will be closed so that local communities are not put at risk.

Other amenities around the sites - including parking facilities, byways, toilets, shops and pubs - will also be closed, so please do not attempt to travel.

People will be able to enjoy watching the English Heritage livestream of the Solstice on the English Heritage social media channels so please do encourage your communities to enjoy the event from the comfort of their own homes/

Read more: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/articles/solstice-cancelled>

Regards,

**Cllr Philip Whitehead**