

Latest COVID-19 update from Councillor David Lloyd:

Good morning,

I hope that this finds you well and that you have been able to take in some of the sunshine. Below are a series of updates that I hope you will find useful, in particular those detailing further play/activity initiatives.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that this week and next we are writing to all residents aged 70 and over to explain the assistance on offer should they need it. Call it 'belt and braces' if you wish but, given that this age group are required to isolate and have been for longer, we are wanting to make sure that they are secure at present and that they can contact us should the need arise going forward (as it is unlikely, we assume, that any relaxation of the lockdown will apply to this age group for the time being). Very genuinely, I don't expect a sudden flurry of responses because you have been working so well in your communities and reassurance/resilience appears to be excellent. Nevertheless, should anything arise from replies that you need to know, HART will filter it through to you. I hope that you will agree that this is a worthwhile exercise to double-check and to reassure with those in our communities that might need help most. Some might ask what of other vulnerable people? I would agree. However, we hold very limited data on people and it is only by using the electoral register that we can extract this information. Hopefully any people with financial vulnerability or housing tenure will have already been known of, and being assisted through national or local schemes that we can deploy, or they are getting in touch with us.

Regrettably, unless the NHS has identified people from the data they hold (and written to those persons) neither we nor the County Council are in a position to know of any medical, life-limiting conditions or disabilities which people might have. As ever, if you do come across someone in your community in need of assistance - urgent or otherwise - please put them in contact with us or be their advocate to us.

Therefore once again our huge thanks to you and all those in your community that are continuing to support residents at this time. Huge thanks!

With regards

David

Humanitarian Assistance Response Team

The Hart is continuing to work with Community Groups across Newark and Sherwood to ensure that residents are provided with the support and assistance they need. A huge number have stepped forward to offer their time and support across the County. Nottinghamshire County Council advised last week that 736 groups or individuals were registered on the central Hub. Where there are gaps in community support, or in more complex cases, the Hart group steps in and organises the support required.

Weekend preparation

The Hart are encouraging residents to plan in advance and contact the County Hub prior to weekends to avoid residents running out of vital food and medicine during this time. Please see messaging being shared on social media and the website below:

If you are an isolated resident without support from friends or family, you can find a list of community groups offering help at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/.../nottinghamshire-coronavirus-co... If you can't get the support you need from your local community or volunteer group, then please email enquiries@nottscg.gov.uk or call 0300 500 8080. Please ensure that you have enough food and medication to last the weekend and if not, please make the relevant contact today or Friday.

During the Easter break, Aldi donated a number of Easter Eggs to the Hart team. The Hart team are responsible for coordinating the management of food from a number of partners and putting it into urgent food parcels for residents. These Easter Eggs however took a different path, and were taken to staff and patients at Newark Hospital who were very grateful.



Last week, the team were offered some trays of fresh vegetables from Morrisons which were distributed to community groups in Ollerton, Edwinstowe, Clipstone, Rainworth, Blidworth, Collingham and Southwell. Some of the food was put into food parcels and some was turned into hot food for people who need it. This is a great example of the community support throughout Newark and Sherwood – it is the community groups that are becoming the vital support network residents need and

the Hart team can plug the gaps where no community support is available or there are more complex needs.

Hart Officers are also representing the Council on a number of different groups or cells. These include the Humanitarian Assistance Group, the Coronavirus Community Hub Group, the Food Supply Group, the Complex Needs Group, the Housing Group and the Discharge Cell. These groups are vital at ensuring the Hart is responsive to meet needs of all sections of the community.

New logo

The Humanitarian Assistance Response Team now has a logo, which has been designed internally.



Press release - 21 April

Covid-19 help offered to over-70s in Newark and Sherwood

More than 10,000 people in Newark and Sherwood in the over-70s age group are being contacted to ensure they have the vital help and support needed during the on-going Coronavirus pandemic.

The letters, sent out by Newark and Sherwood District Council, set out the help that is available for residents who feel in need of urgent non-medical support.

They are addressed to all those residents aged over-70 and will be sent out in two batches with the first batch being received this week and the second batch being delivered next week.

Anyone who has concerns about a vulnerable friend or neighbour can get in touch with the District Council via the Nottinghamshire Community Support and Volunteering Hub by emailing enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk in the first instance or by calling 0300 500 8080 if they do not have access to the internet.

Trained staff and a support network of volunteers are on hand to assist. The Hub coordinates national voluntary services working in Newark and Sherwood, local volunteers and community groups, forming a link between residents needing help and those able to provide it.

Where community volunteers are unable to assist or in more complex cases, residents will be directed to the District Council's Humanitarian Assistance Response Team (Hart) for the support they need.

The help and support available from volunteers includes:

- Safe and well checks, befriending
- Dog walking
- Social contact/ virtual befriending
- Food and medicine collections
- Standard health and social care
- Covid-19 support.

District Council leader David Lloyd said: "We want to ensure that nobody is left in need of support in our communities as a result of the current Covid-19 lockdown and the restrictions that it has brought. We would simply say 'Please get in touch and we will be there to help you'."

Earlier this month, the District Council, through its Humanitarian Assistance Response Team (Hart), joined forces with a number of partners, including Morrison's, the British Red Cross, Ikea, Newark Town Council and local shops and market traders to ensure food and other essentials is distributed to 'isolated' residents.

It has ensured food parcels are being distributed to those who are most in need – families and individuals who have identified themselves as needing help with food deliveries and including older people, families with disabilities and families on low income. The Town Council is working with local market traders to 'top up the food parcels' immediately prior to delivery with fresh fruit, vegetables and bread.

Business support

Press release - 21 April

Newark and Sherwood tops rankings for Coronavirus business payments

Newark and Sherwood District Council has been named in the top 10 per cent for paying out business support grants to those affected by the Coronavirus crisis in a nationwide league table of local authorities.

Council staff have been working around the clock to ensure local businesses receive financial support as quickly as possible. The figures rank Newark and Sherwood as the highest performing local authority in Nottinghamshire, having already paid just under £19.84 million in 1,624 transactions.

Three-quarters of intended recipients have now been paid after the authority made the decision to initially use its own resources to pay out the grants, to minimise the damage to the local economy, before its allocation of funds was transferred from central government.

The speed with which the Council has acted in paying out the grants has been praised locally, prompting relief among businesses which have had to pause operations as part of the nationwide effort to slow the spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19).

Malcolm Smith, partner with Southwell-based Land and Estate Agents Smith and Partners, said: "Thank-you and your department for the efficient manner in which you have processed our application for the Government Covid-19 Business Support Grant and for the advice given in connection with Small Business Rates Relief.

"It is all too easy to assume that when dealing with a local authority, the process would be indifferent and overly bureaucratic, but your handling of the above matters has been - refreshingly - the complete opposite.

"I appreciate that arranging for a relatively large local authority to have personnel working from home would have been an enormous task, but I think the District Council, and in particular the Revenues section, should give itself immense credit for operating so efficiently in such difficult circumstances. Well done!"

Council Leader David Lloyd said: "Colleagues in our finance and revenues and benefits teams deserve huge credit for pulling out all the stops to ensure payments have been made in such a swift and efficient manner. They have diligently worked around the clock to ensure grants have been paid out quickly and we hope that the vast majority of businesses will have been in receipt of their funds by the end of the week."

On one single day, since the pandemic unfolded, almost £6million was paid out with firms receiving £10,000 or £25,000 depending on their circumstances.

Press release - 17 April

Hotel served with prohibition notice

Pubs and hotels were today warned to keep on the right side of the law after a prohibition notice was served on business publicly flouting Covid-19 lockdown rules.

The Deincourt Hotel, Newark, received the legal caution after regulations, limiting the sale of food and drink operations because of the Coronavirus outbreak, were broken.

The hotel, on London Road, was open as usual on Tuesday, April 14, with customers being served food and drink in its bar, restaurant and beer garden.

The notice is a legal instruction whereby the hotel must shut down these facilities and any other areas which would be used communally and where the food and drink would normally be consumed on the premises by the public.

Non-compliance with the notice could result in a fixed penalty notice of £60. If there are further contraventions the penalties are doubled up each time, up to and including £960.

Under the regulations, brought in on March 26, 2020, hotels are able to remain open to provide accommodation for key workers and residents who have nowhere else to stay but meals can only be provided on a room service basis only.

Pubs, bars, restaurants and hotels in the district are being warned that they must comply with the regulations as they serve to halt the spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19) and if they do not, they face enforcement action. Some such catering facilities have been able to vary their terms of trade to offer a take-away service on a temporary basis. For further details go to <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/foodsafety/>.

Council officers have also been investigating reports of other licensed premises opening but this has not been proven. Council licensing staff are working throughout the week, weekends and evenings to ensure that there is strict compliance.

In general, businesses across the district have been abiding by the rules as part of the current lockdown and the Council expresses its gratitude to them for their cooperation.

Council leader David Lloyd said: "It is absolutely essential that hotels and pubs - all businesses and residents in fact – act within the law at this time of national emergency. We recognise that these regulations are a challenge for us all in that they are very restrictive but they are wholly necessary in the fight against this disease.

"The social distancing guidelines appear to be having the necessary impact and it is vital that these are maintained so that we can help conquer the spread of this pandemic and all of our lives can return to normal as soon as this can be safely achieved."

The Council has also received some complaints regarding social distancing in workplaces and at retailers and officers have been able to give further guidance and advice.

Further information is available from at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

Activities for families

Press release – 21 April

Newark and Sherwood Community Hub distributing craft boxes to isolated families

Boxes full of craft equipment are being handed out to help families in Newark and Sherwood get creative during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Newark and Sherwood Community Hub, also known as Newark Play Forum – which is part-funded by Newark and Sherwood District Council - has been assembling the kits to help isolated families and those on low incomes, entertain their children.

Boxes have also been distributed to several local schools which are looking after the children of key workers as well as to families who are self-isolating in temporary accommodation for the homeless. A whole host of exciting activities for children feature inside including toy figures, masks and flag-making. There are also crayons, glue, scissors, die cuts, word searches, dot-to-dot books and drawing paper with each box containing enough to entertain two children, aged five to 10 years, for hours.

Councillor David Lloyd, Leader at Newark and Sherwood District Council, said: "The huge effort from community groups and volunteers during this outbreak has been remarkable. The Hub is working incredibly hard and thinking creatively to ensure that children are given a way to express themselves emotionally through play and craft at this unprecedented time.

"We, as adults, may understand what is happening around us but it must be very strange and often overwhelming for children right now. I would like to thank the Hub and all other community groups and volunteers for their overwhelming support, time and dedication during this pandemic."

Jill Musson, Manager at Newark and Sherwood Community Hub, said: "At this difficult time, children's routines are disrupted. They can't see their friends or socialise and are restricted in where they can

go. Play is very important for their mental health and wellbeing as well as their imagination. These craft boxes can also help parents who may be struggling to access resources and we felt this was a good way to 'do our bit' for our community."

Newark and Sherwood Community Hub has another 24 boxes for the Home-Start organisation which will be going out this week and a second craft box delivery on will take place on Monday, May 4. This second batch of boxes will include activities to help celebrate 75 years since VE Day.

A number of social media posts have been shared locally about how residents can safely celebrate VE day with ideas including celebrating in your front garden or in your street while maintaining social distancing. This second round of craft boxes is aimed at inspiring children into thinking of ways they can celebrate with their families at home. Parents are also being encouraged to use the VE Day celebrations as an opportunity to develop home learning about subjects such as history, English, art and drama.

National Civil War Centre / Palace Theatre activities

The National Civil War Centre's Learning Team have been busy working from home uploading fantastic content to the Learning From Home page on www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com. There's a treasure trove of appealing activities to entertain all ages from games and crafts to recipes and podcasts. The Centre has also brought some of its collection online in a Star Objects series which includes the magnificent Newark Torc; families can read up about this incredible Iron Age artefact, enjoy a story about its discovery, read by the daughter of the Centre's Team Leader for Learning Sarah Clarke, and follow that by baking their very own pretzel torcs.

There are also brilliant Stay Home and Make History craft tutorial videos hosted by another member of the Centre's Learning Team, Denise Greany. So far, she has been teaching viewers how to create a bust of King Charles I and a Pikeman's Pot Helmet, all using materials commonly found in the home. Craft lovers can also get involved with the very exciting recently launched Knit A Battlefield project.

The Palace Theatre is continuing to provide entertainment despite their closure as well, with weekly crosswords, mini quizzes on their Facebook page, a Spotify playlist with upbeat hits from musicals to stay cheerful during isolation and recommendations for the best theatrical content available to watch at home, all on their website www.palacenewark.com. They've also launched the #7dwarfschallenge inspired by this year's panto title and much-loved Disney film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. They're asking members of the public to send in photos representing one of the personalities of the seven dwarfs. The competition is taking place on the Palace Theatre's Facebook page and there's a great prize up for grabs of a delicious lunch in Café Nineteen20 when it reopens.

Newark Castle lit up in blue

Newark Castle's curtain wall is being lit up in blue every Thursday in a poignant gesture of support and gratitude to all the doctors, nurses, carers, GPs, pharmacists, volunteers and other key workers, who are working tirelessly to help those affected by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Easter Bank Holiday video

Before the Bank Holiday we joined Nottinghamshire Police and other agencies across the county in urging the public to comply with social distancing measures. You can view the video here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=323066102006136>.



Sky Lanterns

The National Fire Chiefs Council is warning a campaign encouraging the public to light sky lanterns in a show of solidarity for NHS workers is 'misguided'. A fire caused by a sky lantern could see firefighters spending valuable time dealing with a complex and large-scale incident; time which could be spent supporting vulnerable people in the community, as part of the fire service response to COVID-19.

NSDC is sharing this caution to residents on social media, with a reminder that sky lanterns and helium balloon releases are banned in our parks as they pose a risk to property, livestock and agriculture.

Domestic Violence

The National Domestic Abuse helpline has seen an increase in calls and online requests for help in the past week. Nationally there has been a well-publicised 25% increase in the number of calls to the domestic abuse helpline. The national helpline aims to support women living in abusive relationships and where appropriate help them to flee their current situation.

Locally, Juno Women's Aid provide a free 24 hour helpline for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire women, offering the same support as the national helpline. They also provide advice for professionals and members of the public who are concerned for women experiencing domestic abuse.

We need to be particularly mindful of any friends or family we know are experiencing domestic abuse or we fear may be experiencing domestic abuse during the lockdown. Be aware of the effects of domestic abuse on children, any safeguarding concerns can be referred in the usual way, via the Council safeguarding process and referrals to Nottinghamshire County Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

[Domestic Abuse support is still available](#)

Women

Nottinghamshire Women's Aid: 01909 533610 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Nottinghamshire Juno Helpline: 0808 800 0340 (24 hours)

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (24 hours)

Men

Equation's service for men: 0115 960 5556

Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327

Children

Childline: 0800 1111 or chat online [here](#).

Mental Health (Every Mind Matters)

Last week Public Health England launched a campaign to encourage adults to take steps to look after their mental health during Covid-19, using Every Mind Matters (EMM) and its self-care resources. The EMM platform has been updated to incorporate the new Covid-19 mental health guidance and provide content to help people look after their mental and physical health while staying at home. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have also endorsed this new campaign and a [video](#) has been released. NSDC is helping to promote this campaign to its residents via social media.