

May 2020 update from District Councillor Darren Tysoe

Contact: 01480 388310 email: darren.tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

I thought I would take this opportunity to share with you what the District Council is doing to support residents during the Coronavirus situation. Further information on all of these initiatives can be accessed via HDC's dedicated Coronavirus website, www.wearehuntingdonshire.org or the normal call centre: 01480 388388.

Council Tax Delayed Payment Scheme

Huntingdonshire District Council is continuing to offer residents the opportunity to push back the start of their Council Tax payments to offer financial assistance to those who are being affected by the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic.

Refuge Collection, Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance

HDC are still maintaining a 100 per cent service on all waste streams, street cleaning and grounds maintenance. HDC is one of just five per cent of all local authorities in the country that are still providing 100 per cent service provision of this nature. This compares nationally to only 20 per cent operating street cleaning normally, 19 per cent offering a bulky waste collection service normally and 41 per cent operating a garden recycling service normally. My thanks to everybody at the District Council for the determination to keep their services running that they are all demonstrating.

Huntingdonshire Community Hub

The Huntingdonshire community hub is making phone calls to vulnerable residents to offer support, delivering food parcels and prescriptions. The County Council is responsible for providing help and support to those residents who have been deemed 'clinically extremely vulnerable' and placed on the shielded list. The 3,000 residents that HDC has contacted so far are people we have identified through other means as being vulnerable and possibly in need of help that they won't get from CCC or the Government because they're not on the shielded list. The work that is going on from the hub really is making such a difference to people throughout the district. We've had people with no family, no other support and no idea of where to turn who are now safe and taken care of because of HDC's intervention.

Distributing Government Grants to Businesses

HDC is delivering more than £30 million of government grants to local businesses. Most of the businesses that are eligible to receive a grant are those that qualify for Small Business Rates Relief and pay no business rates due to the size of their premises. HDC did not therefore hold the necessary bank account details for 81% of all the businesses that we need to pay and have had to source this information. However, we were one of the first councils to launch the application process and to contact businesses and we've been processing and paying grants on an almost daily basis since 3 April. There are also several hundred businesses that have still not even applied. These grants are worth £10,000 or £25,000 and are non-repayable grants (not loans) to help businesses through this crisis. To

make sure that we can get this support out as quickly as possible I would urge all eligible businesses to apply via <https://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/council-democracy/coronavirus-service-update/coronavirus-business-grant-funding/>

Call Centre 01480 388388

Our call centre is also operating a normal service, albeit with staff working remotely, and we have trained extra staff to help deal with enquiries more effectively.

Other Initiatives

Other initiatives include a suspension of all car parking charges, and all market pitch fees (food markets continue to trade as they are helping with the supply of food).

I wish everyone well during this unusual time and look forward to the recovery period which will improve in time. Meanwhile, a strong and vibrant sense of community spirit is supporting our most vulnerable residents throughout the villages. I am available to offer advice or support on 01480 388388 and can be contacted by email on darren.tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Best wishes

Darren Tysoe