



June 2020
LGBT+ Pride Month

MDC COVID-19 Briefing

Issue 5

8th June, 2020

Latest News

Ban on evictions extended by 2 months to further protect renters

Renters across England and Wales will receive greater protection after the government extended the suspension of new evictions until 23rd August.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ban-on-evictions-extended-by-2-months-to-further-protect-renters/>

Updated landlord and tenant guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities>

Coronavirus rough sleeper accommodation survey data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-covid-19-rough-sleeper-accommodation-survey-data-may-2020>

Mendip residents in financial hardship or at risk of homelessness should contact the Housing Options Team on 0300 303 8588 to speak to a housing adviser for one-to-one advice or, make a homeless application online: www.mendip.gov.uk/housing

Places of worship to re-open for individual prayer

From Monday 15th June places of worship will be permitted to open for individual prayer in line with social distancing guidelines.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-re-open-for-individual-prayer/>

Protective screens in taxis

Guidance about taxi and PHV drivers and operators concerning the use of temporary screens as a way of providing physical separation between drivers and passengers in order to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Here is an overview:

<https://local.gov.uk/approaches-use-screens-private-hire-vehicles-phvs-and-taxis-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Rewilding plan will boost biodiversity in Mendip

Great news for pollinators! Mendip has announced it is rewilding 17,000 square metres of land. And, working with our Town, Parish and City Council colleagues, we will be sowing wildflower species at various locations too. Grass cutting will be resumed in smaller areas for safety purposes across the district from 15th June – but always with wildlife in mind.

Vandalism worse than ever since lockdown, Wildlife Trusts says

Countryside vandalism has become worse than ever before as lockdown has eased, according to the Wildlife Trusts. Keep Britain Tidy has said it fears a rise in littering as people flock outdoors for picnics and barbecue.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/06/04/vandalism-worse-ever-since-lockdown-wildlife-trusts-says/>

Where to go and what to do outside

The Ordnance Survey has worked with Natural England to create a site that brings together current advice from government, councils and other outdoor organisations, so the public can decide where to go and what to do outside:

<https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/covid/>

Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do

Frequently asked questions on what you can and can't do during the coronavirus outbreak. The FAQs have been updated to reflect the change in government policy from 1st June.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/>

NEW! Briefings available online

Mendip District Council's web team have created a special spot for these briefings. You can find them here – <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/mdcbriefings> - with a shareable link that's perfect for placing on social media.

In focus: Transforming travel in Mendip

The Council is aiming to make it easier and safer for residents to travel by bike and on foot. It wants to reconnect people and places through a network of cycle and walking paths across the district.

The ambitious project delivers on the Council's priorities for a greener, fairer, more vibrant Mendip - and its aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. It also taps-in to the recent surge in walking and cycling rates since the Coronavirus crisis, and the reluctance of some to return to public transport until a vaccine is found.

Leader of Mendip District Council, Cllr Ros Wyke, was invited to appear on BBC Radio Somerset's popular breakfast show to explain the Council's plan in more detail.

Listen here: The Breakfast Show with Claire Carter. Scroll to 2nd June, and Cllr Wyke is on at 8.50am. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/schedules/p00fzl8m/2020/06/02>

Cllr Matt Martin and Cllr Edric Hobbs also discussed Mendip's exiting transport transformation plans on the radio, Glastonbury FM.

Follow this link: Go to Friday 5th June, The Community Show, 5-6pm. Shuffle in to 00:42. <https://www.gfm.org.uk/listen-again/>
(Please note: the GFM listen again service is only available for seven days).

Learn more about Mendip's plans to transform travel by reading our press release: www.mendip.gov.uk/activetravelplans

Active travel funding

A £225 million package allocated to Local Authorities will be released in two phases. The first tranche of £45 million will be released as soon as possible so that work can begin at pace on closing roads to through traffic, installing segregated cycle lanes and widening pavements.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-package-to-create-new-era-for-cycling-and-walking>

Reopening our High Streets

Reopening High Streets Safely Fund guidance

The Government have released a fund to help councils in England introduce a range of safety measures to kick-start local economies, get people back to work and customers back to the shops.

You'll find Mendip's workplace safety pages here:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/safeworkplaces>

Guidance to deliver activities supported through the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-high-streets-safely-fund-guidance/>

A short video on how retail can be COVID safe has also been produced.

COVID safe retail video: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13ze7Wy0IGNug8-pBeh0V19a19b7gbiYx/view>

Free webinars to help businesses to reopen workplaces safely

The government is hosting FREE webinars for businesses on how to make their workplace Coronavirus secure.

You can register to join for free:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy-18685150848>

Some webinars have already happened, but can be viewed as recordings on the Government's You Tube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/BusinessisGREAT/playlists>

'Route Map to Recovery' for Somerset

Evidence shows that the economic impact of Coronavirus in the 'Heart of the South West' area – Somerset, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay - is expected to be deeper and longer than in other parts of the UK.

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership has launched a 'Route Map to Recovery' outlining measures to help stimulate our local economy in three phases: Restart - supporting businesses to re-open; Revitalise - providing local training and growth support; Grow - create better, cleaner.

You'll find details here: <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/news/15395/>

Mendip – rebuilding better

The Council is giving its high streets an extra helping hand as we reopen and rebuild our district. Further announcements will be made within the next few days.

Car parks – watch this space

On 23rd March, Mendip District Council suspended all parking charges in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. The action was taken to support the needs of local communities and our businesses. There will be further news about this item in a few days.

Mendip Markets begin opening this week

Some Mendip Markets will return from 10th June. It's another sign of Mendip on the move as its villages, towns and city reopen for business, post-COVID-19.

Wells and Frome Markets kick-off first. Wells Market will open on Wednesday 10th June and on Saturday 13th. Frome will open again from Saturday 13th June and will run on Saturdays until further notice.

As the national restrictions ease, the markets at Glastonbury, Street and Shepton Mallet will follow suit, and open too.

To stay up to date with market news, please follow @mendip_markets on Twitter and @mendip.markets on Instagram.

Visit our website www.mendip.gov.uk.uk/markets.

Mendip – rebuilding better

Residents' Survey

The Council is doing its bit to boost business and revive the economy. But we want residents to have their say too, and help us to shape services, post pandemic.

We are keen to hear from residents about where they feel it should focus its efforts and priorities. The Council has compiled a 15-minute survey, which it encourages communities to complete to help shape its services, as it looks to the future.

Cllr Ros Wyke, Leader of Mendip District Council, said: "The impacts of the pandemic have been extremely challenging for communities and local businesses. We hear of how people's lives, habits and priorities have changed.

"After all the upheaval we must reset and rebuild. But we want to take our residents with us and so welcome and encourage their feedback in this survey.

"Their opinions matter, and their voices will be heard."

The online survey is here: www.mendip.gov.uk/survey

Alternatively, call customer services 0300 303 8588 and the Council can arrange for the survey to be completed over the phone, or will issue a paper copy by post.

** Members and Parishes, please can you ensure you share news of this survey with your Mendip-based residents, family and friends **

Coronavirus Crisis: help and advice for residents you may wish to share:

- A wide range of regularly updated information, advice and guidance for businesses, community groups and residents can be found at www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus
- **Coronavirus Helpline: 0300 790 6275.** People can ring this number for help with personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions, support for the homeless, emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious, financial assistance, transport to medical appointments and waste collection and disposal.

More help for businesses

Broadband upgrade opportunity for Mendip

CDS (Connecting Devon and Somerset) in cooperation with Mendip District Council are looking for rural communities of 50 to 100 properties in the district with poor internet connectivity to upgrade their broadband using the Government voucher scheme. There will be support from CDS to enable this. For more information contact Cllr Peter Goater.

Email: cllr.Goater@mendip.gov.uk or see <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

Mendip businesses receive £27 million from Council as region reopens

The District Council has issued £27 million to more than 2,200 eligible local businesses in a bid to get Mendip moving again after lockdown.

Business Grants are not loans – firms will not be asked to pay this funding back. And forms are easy to navigate. Register here today: www.mendip.gov.uk/businessrates

Mendip's small businesses urged to take up grant before offer ends

The Local Authority Discretionary Grant funding finishes at 5pm on Tuesday 9th June, prompting the Council to call on firms to act fast.

Register here on our website: www.mendip.gov.uk/businessrates

For enquiries email: MendipGrants@mendip.gov.uk

Businesses should start to receive payments during week commencing 15th June.

Dairy response fund

A new dairy response fund will open for applications on 18 June. Qualifying farmers can apply for support to cover up to 70% of their losses due to coronavirus disruption across April and May, up to a total amount of £10,000 each. The funding will be paid out from 6 July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dairy-response-fund-set-to-open-for-applications>

Village hall and community centre grants

If you run a village or community hall you can register for the COVID-19 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant. Check out the eligibility criteria from Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) here: acre.org.uk/cms/resources/guidance-on-eligibility-for-government-support-for-halls-2.4.20.pdf.

Register to get your grant here: www.mendip.gov.uk/businessrates

Service Updates - Planning Enforcement

An Overview of the Service and its Functions

The Planning Enforcement Team have pulled together a brief document for members and parishes to help them understand the planning enforcement function during lockdown, and also during normal business.

You will find this document attached to the briefing email (**Document 1**).

Health Matters

Regional R rates explained

The reproductive (R) value tells us how many people a person with the virus is expected to infect and gives an indication of whether the epidemic is getting bigger or smaller.

An R value of below 1 suggests cases are decreasing, whilst an R value above 1 suggests the number of infections are increasing.

The latest information suggests the R value for the South West is estimated to be around 1.

The R value only tells us whether an epidemic is getting bigger or smaller and should never be looked at in isolation. In Somerset we still have low numbers of cases, although there is some suggestion this is increasing.

There will be times when numbers in Somerset will rise and fall; the easing of lockdown and other factors will contribute to this. This is a stark reminder that the coronavirus pandemic has not gone away.

Here are some links to information, advice and guidance

To discover more about the R rating, there is a useful public health blog here:
<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/15/coronavirus-covid-19-real-time-tracking-of-the-virus/>

For more information on what you can and cannot do during these times:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

Guidance on Shielding can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

The most important symptoms of Coronavirus are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people it will be a mild illness. However, if you have any of the symptoms above you must stay at home and arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

NHS Test and Trace

The NHS Test and Trace service was launched nationally on Thursday 28th May. The service will help to identify people with coronavirus and their contacts, helping us to reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.

Testing is now available for anyone who develops the symptoms of coronavirus through the NHS website or by dialling 119. Anyone who receives a positive test result will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to find out about their recent interactions and who they have been in close contact with. Then, if necessary, the people they have been in close contact with will be notified and given guidance on self-isolation and staying at home to help stop the spread of the virus.

NHS Test and Trace: How it works:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

New Guidance, 1st June: Guidance for contacts of people with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

Health news round-up

W.H.O advises wearing face masks in public places

The World Health Organisation has changed its advice on face masks, saying they should be worn in public to help stop the spread of coronavirus. The organisation said its new guidance had been prompted by studies over recent weeks.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52945210>

Face coverings to be worn on public transport

From 15th June face coverings will be required when using public transport in England:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-coverings-to-become-mandatory-on-public-transport>

Face masks and coverings to be worn by all NHS hospital staff and visitors

Staff in hospitals in England will be expected to wear surgical masks from 15th June. All visitors and outpatients will be expected to wear face coverings at all times.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-masks-and-coverings-to-be-worn-by-all-nhs-hospital-staff-and-visitors/>

Make your own mask

Find out more about wearing a face covering and how to make your own on the government's website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

Public Health England's Active at Home advice

Public Health England has developed a booklet to support older people and those who are shielded to be active and healthy at home by helping them find ways to build activity into their day. You can [download and print off the booklet.](#)

Mental health weekly

[Mindline.](#) The charity has teamed up with BBC Somerset and Spark to broadcast a weekly slot with Charlie Taylor on Wednesday evenings 7-8pm. They are available on 01823 276 892.

Campaigns and events

LGBT+ helpline

June is LGBT+ Pride Month. It's an opportunity to celebrate LGBTQ+ people across the world, campaign for equal opportunity and highlight the issues facing this community. COVID-19 is having a significant impact on many LGBTQ+ people with family tensions during lockdown, new levels of isolation and domestic abuse being some of the issues that have been highlighted. Colleagues at the **Switchboard LGBT+ helpline** (0300 330 0630) have asked us to raise awareness that their helpline is still open and they're continuing to support those in need during this time. <https://switchboard.lgbt/>

Bike Week 6th-14th June

Mendip Members and Officers will be taking part in this year's event. Take a look at our social media channels and join in too! www.facebook.com/mendipcouncil and twitter.com/MendipCouncil

Bike Week is delivered by Cycling UK: www.cyclinguk.org/bikeweek

WEBINAR #QuitforCovid in the South West

Thursday 11th June 10am-11am

There's an invitation to attend a webinar exploring the Quit for Covid Campaign. To register please [sign up here](#).

Somerset Diverse Communities multicultural digital event

Somerset Together: Saturday 13th June – 6pm

Somerset Together is an online event that celebrates the county's vibrant cultural diversity through music, food, story-telling, dance, film and information sharing.

For more information: ccslovesomerset.org/network_news/multicultural-event-keeps-somerset-communities-connected/

Useful numbers and links

Mendip District Council: www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus

Government information on coronavirus: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

NHS information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

The latest travel advice can be found here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus

Q&A from Public Health England on coronavirus:

publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/

The LGA have issued some general guidance specific to elected councillors that you may find useful: www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-outbreak-councillor-guidance

LGBT services helpline and counselling service.

<https://www.intercomtrust.org.uk/item/214-we-are-here-for-you>

Somerset Waste Partnership

Website: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWaste/>

Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWaste/>

You can also sign up to SWP's e-newsletter [here](#).

Keep connected

These briefings are produced by Mendip's Marketing and Media Team. We're doing everything we can to make sure we're directing you to the most up-to-date information and advice regarding COVID-19.

Mendip District Council's corporate Facebook page www.facebook.com/mendipcouncil

We are also on Twitter twitter.com/MendipCouncil

And LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/mendip-district-council

Finally, here's our official website: www.mendip.gov.uk