

Update for borough and parish councillors

Stay at home, save lives, protect our NHS

We are continuing to promote the vital Stay at Home messaging to prevent a second spike. We are urging the public to follow the social distancing guidance that is in place and follow the lockdown guidelines. We are reminding people to shop as infrequently as possible – popping out to shop every day for essentials is not ok; travel as little as possible, and stay at home.

Encouraging people to stay at home remains an absolute priority and please do share these messages wherever possible.

As a reminder, the lockdown guidelines are:

- Shop for essentials, as infrequently as possible
- Receive medical treatment or provide care
- Travel to and from work if it's impossible to work from home
- Exercise outdoors once per day, alone or with household members.

DEFRA have added to this message to remind people to only go to local parks, and to shop locally, to avoid any unnecessary travel

Remember when out of your house, stay 2m away from other people and wash your hands as soon as you get home

Everyone must comply with these measures.

Latest updates

Here are this week's latest updates:

Bin Collections

Bin collections are running as normal. We look forward to Defra's updated guidance on reopening recycling centres and remain mindful of the current Government restrictions on essential travel. In the meantime, we appreciate all the efforts householders are taking to do the right thing with their waste. Composting can be a way in which people can dispose of food waste, and more information can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3aWRs5o> We are also clear that fly tipping will not be tolerated.

Business Grants

We have now paid out over £32.215m in grants to 2,752 businesses.

This covers the two grant funding schemes, **the Small Business Grant Fund** and **the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund**, both of which are administered by the borough council.

We have been encouraging people to check in with local small businesses as part of the 'BIG small business check-in', the purpose of which is to ask members of the public to remind small businesses of the grants available.

We are continuing to accept and process forms and make payments. The form to verify details for the Small Business Grant or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant is available here: <https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/businessrateshelp> **Businesses need to submit verification forms as soon as possible.**

Anyone with any questions can contact us on 01553 616200.

Clap for Carers

We continue to support the team at QEH and all key workers, and encourage people to take part in the clap for carers. This week, James Wild MP, Councillors Brian Long and Stuart Dark, and Chief Executive Lorraine Gore joined our public open space and bin crews in a round of applause for key workers. You can view the film here: <https://bit.ly/2z138Ms>

Council Tax

We awarded the Council Tax Support Hardship Grants to council tax support recipients on Thursday 30th April. The grant announced by government in March 2020 is a discount of up to £150, credited to the council tax accounts of working age customers receiving council tax support.

In total we awarded £331,917 to 2,139 accounts. The grant will also be awarded to all new working age claims during 2020/2021.

Exercise

A free helpline to offer members of the public exercise support has been launched. People can call the number – 0344 800 8020 option 5 – and get a free call back from Active Norfolk who can offer bespoke guidance to help individuals to exercise safely at home.



Call our helpline for free exercise support

Being as active as you can at home is important to keep you healthy and resilient to coronavirus.

If you don't have access to the internet and would like support over the phone to exercise at home, call 0344 800 8020 and select Option 5 to get a free call back from Active Norfolk.

A qualified physical activity instructor will give you tailored one-to-one guidance to exercise safely at home.

Active at Home active norfolk Norfolk County Council

Call 0344 800 8020 and select Option 5

Calls will be charged at your usual landline tariff. There is no charge for the call back.

Funerals

Local Government Minister Simon Clarke has written to all councils in England to ensure that family members can attend the funerals of their loved ones and that the wishes of the deceased are respected during this pandemic.

Government funding

The Local Government Secretary has announced that councils across England will receive another £1.6 billion in additional funding as they continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. The money will be paid through a grant that is not ring-fenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how this funding is spent.

Any money from the Government to assist with our response to the Covid-19 crisis is obviously welcome and we are pleased that the district councils received more in the allocation this time round to reflect the work they are doing to help vulnerable and socially isolated individuals within the borough. At this stage we don't know what period this funding is to cover or whether there will be any further funding announcements.

Housing Benefit

We're suspending all recovery action for Housing Benefit overpayments until 30 June 2020. This means that we won't take any money from people's current Housing Benefit payments, deductions from other benefits will stop, and we won't take Direct Debits for any payment arrangements. We'll also ask employers to stop making deductions from earnings for recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit. For more information, please see our [Housing Benefit overpayment page](#).

The government has increased the Local Housing Allowance rates as part of its response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The changes to Housing Benefit claims have already been made, and those affected will have received a letter or email.

We have also updated eligible claims with the new Earnings Disregard from April 2020. Letters and emails have been sent to customers.

People can check benefits claims by visiting [MyRevenues](#). Anyone needing more information about Housing Benefit because of a low income due to self-isolation please call 01553 616200.

International Workers' Memorial Day

At 11am, on Tuesday 28th April, the Borough Council joined in the minute's silence to remember the health, care, transport and other key workers who have died from coronavirus.

We also released a message from Councillor Brian Long and Chief Executive Lorraine Gore expressing our heartfelt and



deepest condolences to Chrissie Emerson's family. Chrissie Emerson was the healthcare worker from the QEH who tragically died as a result of coronavirus.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies are currently under huge pressure to make sure everybody gets their prescriptions and to ensure that everybody visiting the pharmacy is safe. People are being asked to not visit a pharmacy if they have any of the symptoms of coronavirus. [Healthwatch Norfolk have put together some tips](#) on how people can help ease the pressure on pharmacies and their staff.



Retail

There have been some queries from the public about which retail outlets are deemed essential at this time. Although more retailers are re-opening for business, lockdown guidance still applies. People should only go shopping out of the house for basic necessities such as food or medicine, or if they need items to make essential repairs to their home – but NOT home decorating. People are encouraged to use online shopping where possible and make only essential journeys. Visit asklily.org.uk for a list of local suppliers who may have delivery services available or can provide assistance.

Any retail outlet permitted to remain open must adopt social distancing measures as advised by the Government. These businesses can also operate via a click and collect method to assist their customers in feeling safer when purchasing goods.

- **DIY stores:** As homeware and hardware shops are permitted to be open, DIY shops can remain open and/or operate click and collect and delivery services. These businesses must adopt social distancing requirements. It is important though that people do not make non-essential travel at this time.
- **Garden Centres:** As the types of businesses that can remain open include food, pet food and hardware retailers, it may be that some garden centres are permitted to remain open where these goods are sold alongside more traditional garden centre products. They must adopt social distancing measures and all customers must have a reasonable excuse to travel to the garden centre. Garden centres that are solely plant nurseries are not permitted to open as their retail business type is not listed as being allowed to remain open. They can however operate a delivery service.
- **At all times, people should not make travel that is non-essential.**

Testing

Testing has been expanded to cover key workers and those over the age of 65 with coronavirus symptoms. This is in addition to testing for care workers which was announced last week:

Information about accessing testing for key workers in Norfolk can be found here: <http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/our-se.../covid-19-testing-key-workers/>

Further details about how to get tested can also be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

Virtual VE Day



Whilst all national VE Day celebrations are delayed until VJ day in August, together with Stories of Lynn, we have announced plans for people to celebrate VE Day safely at home on May 8th.

On Friday 1st May, in the Lynn News, Your Local Paper, and online, we unveiled an 8-day countdown of activities which people can do at home in the run-up to VE Day. These include making table decorations from recycled materials, making paper hats, bunting and flags, baking a 1940s recipe, and plane spotting with an ARP Warden's chart.

Other online activities include:

- True's Yard have produced a gallery of archive images from the time, and people can tune into Zoom for a talk about Norfolk airfields.
- There will be a video of food historian Kathy Hipperson, cooking the winning 1940's recipe so people can cook along, or pick another recipe to produce for their party.
- King's Lynn Festival have provided a film clip of Dame Myra Hess who gave many free lunchtime concerts in London's National Gallery during the war to keep up morale. One of the most popular pieces she performed was her own transcription of Bach's Jesu Joy of man's desiring.

In the run up to the day, we have also announced that people can invite the Mayor to attend their celebration via Facetime or WhatsApp. To book the Mayor for a party, people can simply go to west-norfolk.gov.uk, search 'Invite the Mayor', then complete the online form.

On the day, people are encouraged to have a party in their house or garden - Lily will be able to direct people to where they can get deliveries or takeaways of party food or afternoon teas. Throughout the day, the Mayor will be making virtual visits to people's homes and there will be a prize for the best decorated house or garden. The Mayor will invite the winning family for a special tea in the town hall when it is safe to do so. We hope people across west Norfolk will join the country in raising a teacup or glass at 3pm to toast the heroes – both then and now during this current crisis. And, at 7.30pm the Festival Too Chairman Mark Stanford will be hosting a 2-hour disco so that people can keep the party going, leading up to the national singing of "We'll Meet Again", following on from an address by HM The Queen at 9pm.

We have received huge support and interest from community groups and individuals, and the local media KLFM, Lynn News and Your Local Paper and BBC Radio Norfolk have really got behind the project too.

Links to videos, galleries, talks, the disco and activities are all available by visiting storiesoflynn.co.uk/VEDay75 and the Stories of Lynn social media channels @storiesoflynn on Twitter and Facebook, hashtag #VEDay75WN. Some links will be added on the day.

Also visit asklily.org.uk to find out local supplies who providing picnics or afternoon tea for delivery or takeaway.

Borough Council service impacts

All of our service impacts can be found here: www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus

Please remember our council offices are no longer accepting visits from the public. People can contact us through Live Chat on our website, or by calling us on 01553 616200. Anyone needing to provide documents can post and drop these into the letterbox which is emptied daily.

If you require specific information about any of the issues raised in this update, please contact communications@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Useful contacts and information

Business Support

- The government advice for businesses is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>
- The Growth Hub from the New Anglia LEP offers free, expert advice for any business in Norfolk and Suffolk and the advisers are able to signpost employers and employees to details of the new Government support schemes. They're a valuable additional resource. Please call them on 0300 333 6536 or email growthhub@newanglia.co.uk
- You can follow @newanglialep and @angliahub for tweets with links to the latest Government guidance and updates.

Health advice

The best places for health advice are:

- NHS - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Public Health England - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Lily

- There is a lot of information and advice available on the Lily website. <http://asklily.org.uk/kb5/westnorfolk/cd/home.page>

Norfolk County Council

- A single dedicated web page is being developed and details of this will be shared once it is ready. In the meantime the Norfolk County Council website is a useful and trusted resource: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus>

Volunteering

- We know that there are many people keen to help out at this time which is very much welcomed. If you are able to volunteer some of your time to assist others in your community, we really need your help. If you are a business and can help with services, vehicles, or other resources, we would love to hear from you, as together we really can make a difference. Individuals who want to volunteer should visit www.voluntarynorfolk.org.uk and businesses should email covidbusinessresponse@voluntarynorfolk.org.uk