



# MDC COVID-19 Briefing

**Issue 7**

21<sup>st</sup> June, 2020

## Latest News

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### **High street businesses will not face eviction for non-payment of rent**

The Government will extend measures to prevent high street businesses facing eviction from 30<sup>th</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September, meaning no business will be forced out of their premises if they miss a payment in the next three months. A new code of practice has been developed with leaders from the retail, hospitality and property sectors to provide clarity for businesses when discussing rental payments and to encourage best practice so that all parties are supported.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-provides-further-halt-to-business-evictions-and-more-support-for-high-street-firms>

### **Safe reopening of swimming pools**

Swim England has published guidance on the safe reopening of swimming pools. Included in the five detailed documents are recommendations for operators, casual swimmers, lane swimming, family-fun sessions, club activity, teachers and those attending swimming lessons.

<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/returning-pools-guidance-published/>

### **Coronavirus drug breakthrough**

A trial led by a team at Oxford University has found that treating patients on oxygen or a mechanical ventilator with steroid treatment Dexamethasone could reduce death by up to 35 per cent. Described by the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, as "the most important trial result for COVID-19 so far", the drug will be made widely available on the NHS and become the standard of care for all COVID-19 patients on oxygen in hospitals.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/world-first-coronavirus-treatment-approved-for-nhs-use-by-government>

## Green jobs growth

More than a million jobs could be created in the low carbon and renewable energy economy. Nearly 700,000 direct jobs could be created by 2030, rising to more than 1.18 million by 2050.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-over-million-new-green-jobs-could-be-created-2050>

## Music for Dementia

A new internet radio station created for people living with dementia and their carers. It is free to listeners and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The five available channels play music that evoke memories based on the years when a listener was born. <https://m4dradio.com/>

## Reliable Sources

There's been a lot of false information shared about coronavirus, which can make people feel very anxious. A useful website has been set up to help you tell whether news you see online is reliable or not, and whether you should share it.

[https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/?utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_source=GovDelivery](https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/?utm_medium=Email&utm_source=GovDelivery)

## Scams Awareness Fortnight 2020 15th-28th June

Citizens Advice launched its annual Scams Awareness campaign, which aims to create a network of confident, alert consumers who know what to do when they spot a scam. The campaign will be focusing on raising awareness of the scams that have emerged as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

It is more important than ever to be scam aware as criminals seek to exploit uncertainty and fear surrounding the virus outbreak. Citizens Advice has reported that almost one in every three people has been contacted by a scammer since the outbreak began and are urging people to remain vigilant.

They have developed some useful resources and information on recognising these scams and how to avoid them, which can be shared with friends and family.

To find out what to do if you have been a victim or how to report a scam, visit the Citizens Advice website. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/sa20/>

## Complete our 15-minute Residents' Survey

We want residents to help us shape our services, focus our efforts and priorities, post pandemic. Our survey takes 15-minutes to complete.

**Find the survey here:** [www.mendip.gov.uk/survey](http://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.

# Community and Resilience Cell Update

## Coronavirus response and helpline 0300 790 6275

The community response work continues, and the helpline is still active for those who need assistance. 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.

The work of the Community and Resilience Cell is nicely summarised in an infographic we've attached for your information. (**Document 1**)

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## Reopening: Help for our high streets

### What your Council is doing:

- Suspending fees in pay and display car parks until August 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Suspending Mendip Market rents throughout June and July.
- Supporting stallholders to ensure social distancing is observed.
- Providing guidance and to support to all businesses.
- £28 million paid out in Business Grants as of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.
- 2,234 eligible local businesses have benefited from the Business Grant.
- 62 businesses received Discretionary Grant payments this week.
- Total Discretionary Grant payments this week - £384k as of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.
- Issuing public information to reduce the spread of coronavirus.
- Installing signage, posters and barriers in retail areas to encourage safe shopping and build confidence back in the high street.
- Supporting a green recovery - making it easier for people to travel by bike and on foot through an ambitious network of walkways and cycle paths.

Visit our pages here: [www.mendip.gov.uk/reopenhighstreet](http://www.mendip.gov.uk/reopenhighstreet)

Read about it in our press releases:

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

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

Guidance to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Guidance on which businesses and venues must remain closed is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>

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## Reopening: Changes to travel

Your high streets are open – but things won't look or feel quite the same as we ease out of lockdown. Here are some of the key travel measures being delivered:

Mendip	Frome	Providing access only to the Market Place from 22 June to enable Market Place improvement works with car parks remaining open.
Mendip	Street	Temporarily pedestrianise (with delivery vehicle access only) High Street from Leigh Road to Vestry Road (where market normally takes place).
Mendip	Wells	Reduced scheme now agreed for closure of Market Place and a small section of the lower High Street. Market Place car park is closed as part of pedestrianisation/social distancing arrangements.
Mendip	Glastonbury	Temporarily pedestrianise (with delivery and bus access only) High Street, Magdalene Street and Benedict Street.
Mendip	Shepton Mallet	Shepton Mallet Town Council have requested no temporary interventions to the existing highways and traffic flows in the town. This will be kept under review.
Mendip	Wells to Glastonbury lane	Temporary closure (with residential / farm access only) of Long Drove following existing cycle route to facilitate safer cycling between the towns and support social distancing on public transport (Glastonbury – Wells bus service).

## Reopening: Mendip Markets return!

After a successful reopening of Wells Wednesday and Frome and Wells Saturday markets last week, we are now going full steam ahead to resume all the other weekly markets in the District.

- Frome Wednesday Market will start on June 24<sup>th</sup> and run from 9am to 2pm in the Cattle Market Car Park and Boyles Cross.
- Shepton Friday Market will start June 26<sup>th</sup>, 9am to 2pm in the Market Place.
- Glastonbury Tuesday market will start on 30<sup>th</sup> June in its temporary new home in St Dunstan's Road Car Park, Magdalene Street.

We are in discussion with Street Parish Council regarding Street Thursday market, but are planning to bring this market back as soon as possible.

## Recovery: Grants and funding

### Business Grants update

Some £28 million has now been paid out in Business Grants, to 2,234 eligible local businesses as of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.

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](http://www.mendip.gov.uk/businessrates)

### Local Authority Discretionary Grants payments going ahead

Some 62 businesses have received Local Authority Discretionary Grant payments this week. A total of £384k was paid out as of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.

The applications for this grant are being reviewed and processed in batches on a weekly basis and businesses will receive information when a payment is made.

Please avoid calling or emailing to follow up, as this delays the processing of payments.

More businesses will receive payments into their accounts next week.

If your query is urgent: [Mendipgrants@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:Mendipgrants@mendip.gov.uk)

### Sport England Inequalities Fund – do you qualify?

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP), has received funding from Sport England to help keep people most affected during this pandemic physically active, or ready to get or resume activity.

The Inequalities Funding aims to support targeted groups. They are; people from Lower Socio Economic Groups; Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Communities; Disabled People; People with Long Term Health Conditions.

Project will be valued between £200 and £2,000. Larger projects will be considered where the impact justifies it. Expressions of Interest will be reviewed within a two week period.

Full details can be found on their website here:

<https://www.sasp.co.uk/news/2020/06/sport-england-inequalities-fund>

Expression of Interest Form can be completed here:

<https://www.sasp.co.uk/forms/view/inequalities-fund>

## **Broadband for rural properties**

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](mailto:cllr.Goater@mendip.gov.uk) or see <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

## **Dairy response fund - now open**

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.

Information for farmers, landowners and rural businesses can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-farmers-landowners-and-rural-businesses/>

## **Route Map to Recovery**

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership's 'Route Map to Recovery' outlines measures to help stimulate our local economy.

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

## **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

The Government has released new guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which includes: information on changes to the scheme and key dates that you need to be aware of; how to claim, and the information you'll need to do so; how to work out how much you can claim, including an online calculator to help you; plus information on amending your claim.

You'll find help here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/worker-support>

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# Health Matters

## Tick time

June is peak month for tick bites. Please share this important health information with your families, friends, communities and networks.

Ticks are small, spider-like creatures that feed on the blood of animals, including people. During this feeding process, they can transmit pathogens that can result in infections such as Lymes Disease.

Hot and humid weather is perfect for ticks. With lots of us making the most of the warm weather and spending longer outside please be aware that tick activity peaks in June.

If you're going out for a walk to any woodlands, grasslands or moorlands in the Mendips, make sure you carry out a tick check afterwards. Look and feel for attached ticks on you, your family and your pets.

You can prevent being bitten by:

- Walking on clearly defined paths
- Using insect repellent that repels ticks
- Wearing light colour clothing so ticks are easier to spot

Most tick bites are harmless, but some do carry Lymes Disease so it's important to remove them safely and be aware of symptoms:

- Mild flu-like symptoms including fever
  - Headache
  - Fatigue
  - Bulls-eye rash
- Hot and humid weather is perfect for ticks.

### Useful links:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tick-surveillance-scheme>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tick-bite-risks-and-prevention-of-lyme-disease>

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2014/03/24/tips-and-tricks-to-stay-safe-from-ticks/>

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# News from Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

## All 16 sites will be moving to 'shop-style' social distancing approach next week

Since reopening, extra staff have been making sure that social distancing is being followed and controlling access to skips. This staffing has been gradually phased out and over the course of the next week, barriers will be removed.

The public will be expected to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe, with the help of floor markings and extra signs – a set-up similar to that seen in supermarkets and other shops.

Other access and safety restrictions will remain in place:

- Gloves to be worn when outside the vehicle
- Maximum of two people per household
- Trailers and 3.5 tonne vans only allowed between 4pm and 6pm on weekdays
- Lifting assistance not available.

There will be a further update when all sites can take the last few materials currently not being accepted, including glass and cardboard which can be recycled at the kerbside. There have been long queues at times, especially in the morning. We expect this to continue and would ask people only to come if they really need to.

We are aware of some ongoing issues with collections, especially with garden waste services. Although affecting a relatively small number of people, we understand how frustrating these issues are and apologise for the inconvenience.

For more information visit <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/dealing-with-ongoing-collection-issues/>

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](#).

## Campaigns: LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Mendip District Council will once again fly the flag at its buildings in Shepton Mallet in honour of Pride Month. We will be changing our logo on our Facebook and Twitter accounts too, from 22<sup>nd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> June. Keep an eye on social media for stories, videos and signposting to support organisations.

Pride month takes place in June each year to celebrate LGBTQ+ communities around the world. Usually our streets would be filled with colourful marches and parades, however with coronavirus and social distancing still in place, people need to celebrate a little differently. While many social events are postponed or even cancelled, we are encouraging residents to continue to celebrate from the safety of their homes. Online events called 'Pride Inside', have been organised. These will be a virtual celebration of the LGBTQ+ communities.

Visit our LGBTQ+ webpages here: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/equality>

Also go to: <https://www.prideinside.co.uk>

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## Events

### Armed Forces Day

On Saturday 27th June will be the twelfth annual Armed Forces Day and the first to be marked virtually.

You can show your support for the UK's armed forces by encouraging people to join a virtual event listed on the Armed Forces Day website or social media channels, and by encouraging people to watch, listen or read about the UK armed forces and the work they do.

To find out all about the campaign, visit: <https://www.armedforcesday.org.uk/>

### Free webinars for Community Buildings

The Community Buildings Team at CCS (Community Council for Somerset) are running free weekly webinars for community buildings throughout Somerset.

They are suitable for all forms and sizes of community buildings including village halls, community centres and church halls.

For the full list of webinars, and to sign up visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/community-buildings-advisory-team-ccs-30284407230>

## Council changes at Mendip

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Cllr Edric Hobbs, who was previously an Independent Councillor, joined the Liberal Democrats as of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

This alters the political make-up of the Council to:

- Liberal Democrats 23 Members
- Conservatives 10 Members
- Green Party 10 Members
- Independents 2 Members
- Others 2 Members

If you have any questions please email Mendip District Council:

[democraticservices@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@mendip.gov.uk)

## When will council meetings be held in public again?

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The Local Government Association (LGA) continues to receive queries from councillors, officers and communities about the future of public meetings.

The legal advice they have received on the interpretation of the current Regulations states that councillors are not allowed to gather for meetings (more than six people outdoors or more than two people indoors). The LGA's legal counsel has advised that neither the "reasonably necessary for work" nor the "fulfilling a legal obligation/participating in legal proceedings" exceptions apply in the case of council meetings.

The LGA acknowledges people have questioned why national government has been allowed to return to Westminster, but local councillors are unable to perform similar democratic functions (while adhering to social distancing). Parliament revoked their own resolution passed in April which allowed them to work remotely and passed another resolution to allow them to return.

The LGA view is that the regulations should be amended, or guidance should be issued to allow councillors to hold hybrid meetings in the same way as Parliament is able to. The LGA has raised the issue as a priority with Government – watch this space.

## Useful links and numbers

### Make your own face covering

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

### Coronavirus FAQs on what the public can and can't do

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

### Safer travel guidance for passengers

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers/>

### At home shouldn't mean at risk

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247. In an emergency call 999.  
<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

### Mental health weekly radio slot

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

Mendip District Council: [www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Government information on coronavirus: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

NHS information: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

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](http://www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-outbreak-councillor-guidance)

## 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](http://www.facebook.com/mendipcouncil)

We are also on Twitter [twitter.com/MendipCouncil](https://twitter.com/MendipCouncil)

And LinkedIn [www.linkedin.com/company/mendip-district-council](http://www.linkedin.com/company/mendip-district-council)

Finally, here's our official website: [www.mendip.gov.uk](http://www.mendip.gov.uk)

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