

Buckden Parish Council May 12 2020

District Councillors Report

I hope that all continues well with you and this is a quick update on how Huntingdon District Council is responding to Covid19 with new or recent measures. HDC is now one of only six Councils that is still maintaining full waste disposal and in addition HDC is now extending grass cutting to areas where the County Council no longer provides a full summer service. This is for the safety and amenity of residents, so if you have a grass problem, it may be CCC's responsibility, but HDC will try and help in due course.

A new HDC Covid-19 fund has been set up, the Community Chest Grant Scheme. This uses the existing £30k community chest funding and HDC have added further funds to bring it up to £50k. Groups can apply for up to £1000 to help with Covid-19 projects and support. Details can be found here: <https://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/council-democracy/grants/#chest>

HDC and County Council Funding

Government has increased funding by £1.6 Billion but the majority of this is being routed to County Councils and not District Councils. HDC is a well-managed and financially prudent District Council, and is currently managing the Covid-19 situation, but will not be able to continue in the medium term unless there is a change in Government policy.

HDC Local Support for Covid19

HDC have also set up a help website and access to support online for Residents at the site above. If you do not have online access, or are unable then please call 01480 388388
www.wearehuntingdonshire.org

Local News

Local news updates from HDC are available by signing up for direct emails at
www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/emailsignup

HDC Financial Support and Grants for Residents and Business

The recent letter from Cllr Ryan Fuller, Conservative Executive Leader, sent to 70,000 Households, gives an excellent summary of actions taken so far. Support is being given to the vulnerable, including food parcel and prescription delivery. For business, a two-month council tax deferment scheme for those who need it, has been introduced, car park charges and market pitch fees are suspended. HDC is in the process of delivering more than £30 million of Government Grants to eligible businesses.

But there is a problem. Sadly, many hundreds of eligible businesses, appear not to have applied.

There is also a second problem. Businesses eligible for Grants are facing delays because many applications are not filled in correctly. Mostly this appears to be that Bank details are not being completed properly and this delays payments. So please be careful in filling in these forms. HDC understands how pressured business is but cannot respond if this vital information is not given.

Bounce Back Loans, a New Loan for Small Business from May 4th

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/small-businesses-boosted-by-bounce-back-loans>

- businesses will be able to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000 and access the cash within days
- loans will be interest free for the first 12 months, and businesses can apply online through a short and simple form

Small businesses will benefit from a new fast-track finance scheme providing loans with a 100% government-backed guarantee for lenders. [Bounce Back Loans scheme](#), which will provide loans of up to £50,000, will help bolster the existing package of support available to the smallest businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The loans will be easy to apply for through a short, standardised online application. Firms will be able to access these loans through a network of accredited lenders. The government will work with lenders to ensure these loans are advanced as quickly as possible and at an agreed low and standardised level of interest.

Summary of existing HDC schemes for your reference

Buckden businesses should apply via the HDC website [Coronavirus: Business Grant Funding page](#) and also check the HDC two-month [Council Tax deferral scheme](#)

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- The Small Business Grants Fund is a £10,000 grant per business which on 11 March this year was eligible for relief under the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme or the Rural Rate Relief Scheme.
- The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund is for those that were eligible on 11 March for a discount under the Expanded Retail Discount scheme and have a rateable value of less than £51,000. Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000 while eligible businesses with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000. Grants are provided in respect of each property operated from and therefore businesses with multiple outlets could receive more than one grant and may receive grants from separate local authorities.
- These grants are worth £10,000 or £25,000 and are non-repayable grants (not loans) to help businesses through this crisis

I hope that this report and summary is helpful and wish you all the best in the current situation. As always please check data and websites, as the above information has been drawn from a variety of local websites and government feeds and whilst believed correct, may have been subject to revision, amendment, or cancellation since writing this.

Hamish Masson

District Councillor Buckden Ward