

Member briefing 16 June 2020

Information Classification: PUBLIC

Dear colleagues

Please find below the latest update on our actions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils in Cornwall to gets electronic library cards

In what is thought to be a first for UK library services, every Primary School child in Cornwall is being issued with an electronic library card.

The card will give access to a junior version of 'Borrowbox' - Cornwall Libraries' e-book and e-audiobook platform. It will also allow access to the annual [Summer Reading Challenge](#), presented by The Reading Agency.

The challenge is delivered in partnership with public libraries and funded by Arts Council England. It encourages children aged 4 to 11 to enjoy the benefits of reading for pleasure over the summer holidays, providing lots of fun, as well as curing what can be a summer reading 'dip'.

And Cornwall Library and Information Service, although all their libraries are currently closed due to the health pandemic, is giving free access to Junior Borrowbox and its thousands of children's books. Children can read or listen to famous titles from *The Gruffalo* and *Elmer*, to *Harry Potter* and books by David Walliams.

The Summer Reading Challenge runs from now until mid-September.

The card can be used both in school, or at home (on a digital device). Children not in school will be sent instructions by their teachers.

Cornwall to create a virtual dolls house for refugee week

A community art project is being launched across Cornwall to celebrate diversity as part of National Refugee Week.

The giant dolls' house project asks participants to make a dolls' house in a shoebox, with the aim of helping Cornwall Council share stories of welcome and hope and exploring some of the challenges facing refugee families who have settled in Cornwall.

The boxes will be displayed in a virtual gallery on the Together for Families and Cornwall Council Instagram feeds.

The Giant Dolls' house is a community arts project that raises awareness for homelessness and refugees by showing that everyone needs a space of their own to be part of a community. The project has travelled to the US, Dubai, India and has been part of the London Festival of Architecture for the last five years.

Adults and children from all walks of life and all ages are able to take part and it's hoped schools across Cornwall will also embrace this project.

To join us take a picture of your box, write a few lines about it and tag us @TFFCornwall on Instagram. Or you can email your picture to TFFCommunications@Cornwall.gov.uk

Lifeguard cover on beaches

The RNLI has announced a further nine beaches in Cornwall to have lifeguard cover from Saturday 20 June, which will bring the total to 24.

From Saturday **Tregonhawke, Sharrow, Portreath, Chapel Porth, Holywell Bay, Treyarnon, Harlyn, Trebarwith and Crooklets** will join those with lifeguard posts already at **Sennen, Porthmeor, Hayle Towans, Poldhu, Praa Sands, Watergate Bay, Gwithian, Fistral, Mawgan Porth, Polzeath, Constantine, Perranporth, Widemouth, Porthtowan and Summerleaze.**

The RNLI says it is now confident it can provide a more comprehensive lifeguard service this summer safely, despite the continuing challenges created by the pandemic. The first few weeks having lifeguards back on beaches has helped them to properly test the new ways of operating and reassured everyone that plans can be accelerated and expanded.

Despite this huge boost to lifeguard cover, all the agencies concerned continue to strongly advise caution on beaches if going into, or onto, the water, and to remember that social distancing is still essential to combat the health pandemic.

High Streets reopening

We have been working with towns across Cornwall ahead of this week's reopening of non-essential retailers, such as clothes shops.

Our '[Social distancing within the highway](#)' toolkit provides guidance for towns on the measures we can support to help aid social distancing. This includes considering requests for temporary traffic restrictions and pedestrianised zones, as well as removing street furniture to help make space on pavements.

Examples include:

- Falmouth – Falmouth Town Council and the Falmouth BID partnership are leading the way having produced a Positive Engagement Plan which sets out immediate actions, such as the production of business toolkits, branded signage and waymarking, establishing temporary traffic flow arrangements, road closures and enhanced pedestrian ways that will be in operation between 11am and 4pm; as well as looking to longer term aims including a digital upskilling business programme and how people travel to and experience the town.
- St Austell – Street signs have been put up in the town centre reminding people to observe social distancing
- Launceston – Proposals to modify the street furniture layout to aid pedestrian flows and enable social distancing. Launceston Town Council, Cornwall Councillors and the Chamber of Commerce are also seeking to implement some temporary road closures.

The work is supported by a £152,000 grant awarded to the Council from the Government's emergency active travel fund and £509,000 of support to towns for temporary public realm measures from the European Regional Development Fund's Reopening High Street Fund.

Retailers can get more information on reopening from Cornwall Council's [Back in Business Recovery Guide](#) which covers topics such as working safely and limiting the risk of Coronavirus, cleaning and disinfection, food safety and health and safety.

I am pleased to report that I have heard very positive responses to the reopening of these shops, and I hope it is another step towards restarting the economy while keeping our residents safe.

Face masks on public transport

It became compulsory to wear face coverings on public transport this week, as, with more people being to use buses and trains once more, social distancing becomes harder to maintain.

It is important that people realise this does not mean wearing a clinical mask, and that any covering, including a scarf, would be suitable.

People are reminded to follow the hygiene rules when removing their masks, and are advised to wash their mask after each use.

A video demonstrating how to make your own mask [can be found here](#).

Deadline extended for discretionary fund applications

Businesses across Cornwall so far ineligible for Government support now have until Wednesday 22 June to register an expression of interest for discretionary funding.

Last month the Government allowed Cornwall to use £13.5m for the discretionary business support fund - a figure which the Council has said is not enough to meet the needs of small and micro businesses which are struggling in the wake of the coronavirus shutdown.

The Council has asked businesses which do not fall into the groups prioritised by the Government for this new pot of money to complete an expression of interest. This will help build a clear picture of the level of need across Cornwall and further support efforts to lobby Government for more funding. The Council has extended the deadline as it considers more than 2,100 applications to the Government's discretionary business support fund. It expects to complete this process by the end of the week and businesses which have been unsuccessful will have the option to submit an expression of interest.

For more information on submitting an expression of interest visit www.cornwall.gov.uk/smallbusinessgrant

Important links

All coronavirus related enquiries or issues to our dedicated email address covid19@cornwall.gov.uk. This email address is monitored seven days-a-week.

Anyone who needs help can request a volunteer by ringing 01872 266988 or emailing requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk.

Find out more about the support available for businesses here: [Business Rate Support](#) [Council Tax Support](#) and [Growth Hub](#)

Please take care of yourselves,

Best wishes
Julian

Julian German

Hembrenkyas an Konsel
Konseler Kernow rag Pastel-vro An Ros
Leader of the Council