

Coronavirus (COVID-19) response: Ipswich Borough Council

Summary of announcements up to, and including, 26th June 2020

The list below includes all previously announced decisions / information from Ipswich Borough Council that remains of relevance. The information below was contained within one of our 14 weekly updates up to and including 26th June 2020.

This summary supplements the weekly statement issued on 3rd July 2020.

Council Buildings / Events / Services and Bookings

1. **Council Buildings:** Ipswich Borough Council's public buildings will remain closed until such time as the Government restrictions are lifted and we have the ability to re-open them safely. These facilities include the Regent Theatre, Town Hall & Corn Exchange (with the exception from, Monday 15th June, of the Limelight Bar toilets), Shop Mobility, Swimming Pools & Sports Centres, the Tourist Information Centre, the visitor centres in Christchurch and Holywells parks and the Museum, Art Gallery and Christchurch Mansion.
2. **Cancelled Bookings:** Anyone who has booked one of our facilities to hold an event / meeting etc - for the period between 1st May and 30th June 2020 can, if they wish, get in touch and reschedule it (without any additional cost) to sometime later in the year. Please contact us using the General Enquiry option available on our website www.ipswich.gov.uk and we will respond as soon as we can.
3. **Future Bookings:** The Borough Council will not take any more bookings for any of our rentable spaces in our public buildings for the time being until they are allowed to open and we can ensure they meet all Covid-Secure guidance.
4. **Regent Customer Contact Progress:** The Council has contacted all customers of cancelled shows at the Ipswich Regent or Corn Exchange who had purchased tickets through our Box Office. The Council is processing requests for refunds for shows that have rescheduled and for which customers do not want to transfer their tickets or that have been cancelled without a rescheduled date. Customers of future shows are advised to check our website and social media feeds for updates and we will be in contact if they are any further changes.
5. **Council Owned Office Buildings:** That IP-City Centre and Grafton House (both owned and managed by the Borough Council) will remain open for appropriate Council staff and for tenants but meetings rooms in both buildings will not be bookable by outside organisations for the foreseeable future.

6. iCard Refund Progress: All customers have been notified of options available to them and all have now had the relevant refund, voucher or credit. All customers with iCard memberships have been written to and all direct debits have been amended to zero. Those customers with annual iCard memberships have been notified of the option to refund or to extend membership. For classes, parties, junior activities and casual sessions, all vouchers have now been sent and all customers contacted.
7. Parking enforcement: Our parking patrols are taking a common-sense view and focussing their time on tackling obstructive and dangerous parking to ensure emergency services, refuse collections and those carrying out essential travel can do so safely. Enforcement continues as usual in our Car Parks and in residents parking areas.
8. Parking for NHS and Social Care Key Workers: Critical key workers in the Health and Social care sectors are able to obtain free parking in car parks owned by Ipswich Borough Council and in on-street pay & display locations. Eligible critical key workers who apply are given access to an online MiPermit account which enables them to register their vehicle and park for free. More details can be found at: <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/keyworkerparking>.
9. Black and Blue Bin Waste: During the period when brown bin collections were suspended, on average the weight of waste collected from residents' black bins increased by about 2kg per household, which is a 10% increase on this time last year. On average the weight of the material within the blue recycling bins is much the same as usual.
10. Public Toilets: Last week (22nd May), the Council re-opened five of our public toilets. These are at Majors Corner, Christchurch Park (beside the Kiosk), Holywells Park (beside the play area), Lawn Cemetery and Millennium Cemetery. We have changed our opening times at Christchurch Park to 11am to 5pm as it became clear very quickly that the public still required the use of them and were still queuing at the point we had planned to close them, but weren't making much use of them mid-morning. The other toilets that are open can be used between 10am and 4pm.

11. Events: The Council has cancelled all its outdoor events planned to take place in its parks and in public spaces between now and the end of October. These include Ipswich Music Day, Maritime Ipswich, Global Rhythm, Indian Summer Mela, One Big Multicultural Festival, Family Fun Days, Outdoor Cinemas and Pantaloons Theatre. We will also be cancelling the Crafted Classique bike ride. Other events, organised by third parties, are not affected by this announcement. This decision has been taken because it is hard to envisage how any major, mass gathering, public events can be held safely and successfully as long as some form of social distancing remains in place. We had kept this year's programme under review but without clarity on what the rules might be over the summer and autumn we could not confirm bookings with suppliers. For up to date details about event cancellations and postponements, please visit: www.ipswichentertains.co.uk.

Democracy

12. Executive Authority: On 24th March 2020 the Leader of the Council (Councillor David Ellesmere) delegated authority to the Chief Executive to use the full range of powers held by the Executive of the Council until further notice.
13. Executive decisions taken: Following the cancellation of the Executive meeting that had been scheduled to take place on 24th March 2020, the Council Chief Executive has taken decisions on 9 of the items on that agenda. The details of the published papers are still available online – despite the meeting being cancelled – at <https://democracy.ipswich.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=135&MIId=2496&Ver=4>. Details of the decisions the Chief Executive has taken under his current 'emergency' authorisations are all recorded online at: <https://democracy.ipswich.gov.uk/mgListOfficerDecisions.aspx?bcr=1&BAM=0>. Any future decisions he might take will also be recorded and available via the same web-link.
14. Elections: Under the Covid-19 2020 Act, the Police and Crime Commissioner Election (Suffolk) and Ipswich Borough Local Elections, due to be held on 07 May 2020, have been postponed until 06 May 2021. The cancellation of polling station venues and associated equipment is complete. Similarly, where a by-election arises this will also be postponed until May 2021 and we await further guidance on the procedures that will apply.
15. Annual Council Meeting: The Annual Council Meeting scheduled for 20th May 2020 has been cancelled – as allowed for by recently agreed legislation. The current Mayor (Councillor Jan Parry) and Deputy Mayor (Councillor Jane Riley) will remain in post till the next Annual Meeting – scheduled for May 2021.

16. Virtual Committee Meetings: The Council has invested in technology to enable “virtual” public meetings, including Planning and Development Committee, Area Committees and Executive to take place this month (June). The first three meetings took place earlier this week (week commencing 1st June). Details of all meetings including agendas and the live streams are available on the Council’s website democracy.ipswich.gov.uk.

Community Impact and Volunteering

17. Council Tenants: The Council can confirm that following Government advice issued on 18th March 2020, the Council has suspended all rent related eviction action in relation to council tenants and will not initiate any new rent related actions until further notice.
18. Volunteering: A new Suffolk-focused community support service, ‘Home but Not Alone’, has been set up as part of a call for volunteers to help the most vulnerable people who need help during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service will mean willing volunteers, charities, town and parish councils, community and religious groups can all log their details and offers of support on an app, while people who need help can phone to request support. As the number of offers and requests grows, they will be matched so that the right help can be given where it’s most needed. The free app, called Tribe Volunteer, can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.
19. Commercial and CVS Rents: All Ipswich Borough Council’s voluntary and community sector tenants and all Ipswich Borough Council’s commercial tenants who are no longer able to operate due to the direct implications of the Borough Councils decision to close buildings they operate from e.g. the coffee shop in the now closed Town Hall and Corn Exchange complex - will be given a three-month rent holiday by the Council covering the period April 1st to June 30th. The Council’s Property Team has written to all who will benefit from the three-month rent-free period. This support is valued at around £80,000.
20. English as Second Language: The Council are providing information and resources for those residents in Ipswich with English as their second language. Details can be found here <https://www.gyros.org.uk/our-services>. Additional support is provided for refugees or asylum seekers through the Suffolk Refugee Support Team <https://suffolkrefugee.org.uk/>. The Government has also translated the Covid-19 guidance into 11 of the most popular languages in the UK and this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.

21. Changes of Circumstances of Existing Claimants: Existing Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction customers should report changes in their circumstances at the earliest opportunity. Losing hours of work or having your pay reduced could increase the level of help you are entitled to. The sooner you tell us about changes in your circumstances, the sooner we can calculate any increase due to you. The Council will look to award any increase in entitlement (due to loss of earnings/employment resulting from the Coronavirus outbreak) from the date that the change happened - providing we are told within 1 month of the change. However, if there are good reasons why you are not able to tell us within one month (such as being in hospital receiving treatment) we will be able to consider longer periods. Changes of circumstances can be reported on line – please go to www.ipswich.gov.uk/changeincircumstances.
22. Council Tax: Ipswich Borough Council is aware that in these challenging times many people might find keeping up with their Council Tax payments and their housing rent payments particularly challenging. We are looking at how we can assist residents further on these matters. In the meantime if you are in severe financial difficulty and cannot pay your next Council Tax instalment or your housing rent please go to www.ipswich.gov.uk/counciltax or www.ipswich.gov.uk/benefits.
23. Residents Parking: Ipswich residents who have Resident Parking Permits for zones 1 -4 can now use some Ipswich Borough car parks as demand exceeds capacity in the on-street bays within Residents Parking Zones. For further details see: <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/coronavirus-impact-residents-parking>.
24. Rough Sleeping: Since the Government announced on 27th March 2020 that all rough sleepers should be accommodated, there has been a significant increase in demand for accommodation. The Council, working with the Suffolk Accommodation Group has secured accommodation for appropriate households and individuals including rough sleepers. The Chief Executive has, on Wednesday (1st April), authorised the 'block booking' of hotel accommodation for the next 12 weeks. The Council will continue to carefully monitor capacity. You can help by reporting rough sleepers at Roughsleeping.enquiries@ipswich.gov.uk.
25. Homelessness / Begging: The Council and other partners are working particularly hard to ensure homeless households and rough sleepers have safe accommodation as they are a high Covid-19 risk group. Additional accommodation has been recently secured to ensure there is sufficient capacity. People who beg may not be homeless and you cannot be sure what your money will be used for. Instead, if you wish to show support, there is the established Ipswich Help our Homeless charity. Every penny raised goes to Ipswich agencies who help the homeless and rough sleepers. Visit <https://helpourhomeless.co.uk/> for more information.

26. Hardship Fund: (JC) The Government has introduced a new Hardship Fund in response to Covid-19. This is being allocated in accordance with Government advice to support those households already in receipt of means-tested working age Local Council Tax Support. This means bills for these households will be reduced by up to £150 – which will ensure that the most financially vulnerable households have nothing to pay. These awards will be applied automatically if you are already in receipt of this support - there is no requirement to apply. Letters to the nearly 7,000 households affected should all have been sent by the end of today (3rd April). Ipswich Borough Council welcome new claims from people whose financial circumstances have been affected by Covid-19. To find out if you may be entitled to some help with your Council Tax, please go to www.ipswich.gov.uk/benefits to make a claim. It is never too late to register for help with Council Tax.
27. Preparation for Likely Higher Local Death Rates: A Suffolk ‘Excess Death Cell’ has been set up. This is to consider and plan for County-wide body storage capacity to be increased and whether the paperwork associated with deaths and funerals can be simplified. The Borough Council is participating in and contributing to this workstream. The Council has trained additional staff to ensure that capacity for both cremation and burial are increased. Spare parts have been ordered for our cremators.
28. Direct Line Community Fund: Direct Line Group has committed £100,000 from its Community Fund to provide essential supplies for homeless people in Ipswich during the Coronavirus emergency. This will enable the Borough Council to buy dozens of ‘starter packs’ for families and individuals moving into the Council’s temporary accommodation. The packs include bedding, crockery, saucepans, nappies, toiletries, electrical goods, children’s drawing books, food and shopping vouchers – items that can help people at their most vulnerable. People who have been sleeping rough will be offered a change of clothes or vouchers. This commitment has been secured in the last few days and launched on 17th April 2020 by Direct Line Group’s CEO Penny James and Councillor Neil MacDonald, the Council’s Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health.
29. Direct Line Funding Progress: By 15 May 2020, 19 households at West Villa have been provided with items such as bedding, kitchen & cookery items, toys, electronics, crafts (supplied by Pennikity pots) and baby items. Pennikity pots in Ipswich are very kindly setting up individual packages per household with various items to decorate as a family. They provide all the equipment needed including paints and brushes etc. Once the lockdown is lifted, vouchers will be purchased and these can be used in store by the family at any time. £5,900 of the Direct Line Group money has been spent so far. The process is about to begin again for households at East Villa.

30. Discretionary Housing Payments: Every year the Government make funds available to Local Authorities to help customers who, despite receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs, still have a shortfall in the amount they need to pay their rent. The Council generally use this discretionary funding to help customers who are affected by the Local Housing Allowance rent restrictions or the Bedroom Tax but have specific reasons why they could not look for alternative, cheaper accommodation. Applications from customers who have been affected as a consequence of the Coronavirus emergency are welcome. Short-term assistance can help prevent rent arrears accruing while customers wait to return to their normal employment or hours of work. To make an application for Discretionary Housing Payments please go to www.ipswich.gov.uk/dhp.
31. HEARS: Ipswich Borough Council's Home Emergency Alarm Response Service (HEARS) - which provides a much needed service to many customers - continues to provide 24/7 cover. Since the start of the pandemic (23rd March) HEARS have received 3,412 calls and made 379 safe visits to customers' homes. HEARS has successfully contacted all of its 1283 customers to check on their welfare with 8% being provided with the Home, But Not Alone number - as it was identified that they may have been in need of more support.
32. Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers: The Council has written to all licensed drivers today (29th May 2020), letting them know how they can renew their annual licences via direct debit – spread over 12 months rather than in one go at the start of their licence year. Drivers are also being reminded of national schemes of support - and - how to suspend their licences if they do not wish to trade at this time.
33. Hotel Block Booking: The Council had block booked a hotel to support the services it provided to rough sleepers and homeless people during the coronavirus pandemic. Our block booking finished this week. Over the last 12 weeks we housed 50 people at various times at the hotel. The 24 people who were staying there at the end of this period all had personal plans and have successfully moved on to supported accommodation, with family, private or social rented housing or Bed & Breakfasts. We continue to work with people who are homeless or rough sleeping and an announcement on the 24th June by the Government relating to '*funding support for those in emergency accommodation and EEA Rough Sleepers*' may provide the Council with further flexibilities to effectively support these people.

34. Food Bank: Ipswich Borough Council has delivered 580 food parcels to 343 properties since the Coronavirus 'lockdown' started. We did this from a foodbank we ran from Gainsborough Sports Centre. These were to people who are not in the shielded group but who are unable to access food any other way and contacted us on the Home But Not Alone phone number. This Gainsborough service stopped on Friday 19th June 2020, however, the Council will continue to work in close partnership with FIND - and other food banks in the area - by continuing to assist with deliveries for the next four weeks. In addition to the 580 deliveries above the Council has also helped with 497 deliveries for Ipswich food banks, since the 30th March 2020.

Support for Business

35. Business Rates: The Council has also decided not to start any formal enforcement action related to any non-payment of business rates - that are related to the financial impact of Coronavirus - until (at least) June 30th 2020.
36. Ipswich Central Levy: The Borough Council has worked with Ipswich Central and their industry body to lobby Government to extend the business rates discount for retail, leisure, and hospitality businesses so that it covers the Ipswich Central levy as well. But for the moment, pending any government announcement, the levy money is still owed. However, in order to allow Government the time required to reach a definitive decision on this matter, businesses in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors will not have their levy payments enforced until, at least, 30th June 2020. Therefore, whilst the due date for payment remains unchanged (30th April 2020) as set out in the Regulations it is not the intention of Ipswich Borough Council or Ipswich Central to send reminders or take action against any business in those sectors prior to 30th June 2020. For the avoidance of doubt, however, should Government not take up our recommendations, the levy for this sector should be paid by 30th June 2020 and, for other levy payers, the due date remains as existing (30th April 2020).
37. Business Rate Relief: The Council has sent out just over 1,200 letters to businesses that qualify for full business rates relief (i.e. a £0 bill) for 2020/21 – in the 'retail, hospitality leisure' sectors. If you haven't yet received a letter from the Borough Council and believe your business qualifies then please apply online at <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/businessratesgrant>. Please first check the government guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses> that sets out who should qualify for the business rate relief.
38. Paying Suppliers: The Council has updated its procedures so that we are paying all invoices from suppliers within 7 days - to support businesses during this difficult time.

39. Suffolk Chamber of Commerce: Suffolk Chamber is working hard to ensure that its members – and indeed the wider business community – are kept up to date with all the latest information about COVID-19. In particular, Suffolk Chamber has: (i) set up a COVID-19 hub at www.suffolkchamber.co.uk providing up-to-date links to authoritative information of relevance to business; (ii) sent out daily COVID-19 briefings with the latest ‘must-know’ facts for businesses; (iii) conducted a weekly COVID-19 survey of its members to ascertain their actions and views – in order to lobby Government to boost its support packages; (iv) handled hundreds of direct queries from businesses by phone, email and social media and lobbied for improvements to various Government COVID-19 schemes.
40. Business Rate Holiday: The Government have previously announced a 12 month business rate holiday for the ‘retail, hospitality and leisure’ sector. The Council wrote to all qualifying businesses last month. Revised bills (i.e. bills of £0) have now been sent to all 758 qualifying business. The Council has now extended this to include – following revised Government guidance – childcare nurseries on Ofsted’s Early Years Register. Revised bills have been issued to 23 such ratepayers. This additional relief amounts to around £153,000 in support.
41. Payments in 7 Days: As part of its response to Coronavirus, the Council amended its procedures to aim to pay all invoices from suppliers within 7 days. In May 2020, 95% of invoices were paid within 7 days. This compares with a norm of about 45% paid that used to be paid in 7 days (i.e. prior to the adoption of the new 7 day target).
42. Response to Prime Ministers Re-Opening Announcement on 23rd June 2020: The announcement on Tuesday (23rd) means that the Council will be able to re-open some more of the services / activities it provides. For instance, plans associated with play areas and outdoor gyms are set out at point 2 above. The new rules mean that we could also open a few other buildings (e.g. Ipswich Museum) from 4th July but we will not be rushing to do so since we want to make sure we have all relevant Covid-Secure measures in place first and that buildings can be operated safely for customers and staff as well as effectively in terms of their core purpose. Many of our other facilities (e.g. indoor gyms and swimming pools) remain on the list of facilities that legally will have to remain shut until an unknown date beyond 4th July 2020. We will provide an update on our plans within each of our weekly statements.

Staffing matters

43. Home-working: The Council has limited the number of its employees at our Grafton House Headquarters to less than 50 people per day (all practising social distancing). This is approximately 10% of the numbers who normally work out of the Council’s space in Grafton House each day. Significantly increased levels of home-working are taking place.

44. Key Workers at the Council: The Borough Council has identified all its Key Workers across its services (just less than 50% of our employees) and sent letters to all those identified on 20th March 2020.
45. Employee Rules: With the exception of maintaining our Cemeteries and Crematorium service and enabling 'on-site' meetings to take place - with appropriate social distancing measures followed - all Ipswich Borough Council staff are still banned from attending (in person) any external meetings or events until at least 22nd May 2020. Employees will continue to provide essential services to residents (such as essential emergency repairs for tenants and our HEARS service) and will therefore meet residents but they may ask residents whether they or their household are displaying any coronavirus symptoms first and will follow best practice wherever possible on social isolating.
46. Furloughing: The Council has decided (May 2020) to furlough over 200 employees under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The furloughing will take place across a range of Council services that are unable to operate fully at this time such as sports centres and theatres. We have already redeployed over 120 employees into key services that are leading our response to Coronavirus - but we need to take this additional action to improve our financial position in the face of unprecedented costs in tackling the virus – and unprecedented losses of income across many of our services. None of the employees affected will lose out financially as we will continue to pay the 20% of their salary which falls outside the Government's furlough scheme. The decision to furlough staff means that each will be furloughed for a minimum period of three weeks. This should save the Council about £100,000 over a three week period.

Funding

47. Cultural Organisations / Individuals: Arts Council England, with funding from the National Lottery, are providing £70 million for cultural organisations and individuals in the arts sector affected by the pandemic . Organisations can apply for a maximum of £35,000; individuals can get grants of up to £2,500. Applications open on 9th April 2020. For further information please go to: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19>. National Portfolio Organisations (of which we have 6 in Ipswich) are able to access a separate Arts Council pot of £90 million. If you would like support from the Council in preparing a submission to these funds please contact the Council via events@ipswich.gov.uk.
48. Sports Clubs and Organisations: Sport England has opened a £20 million Community Emergency Fund as part of a UK-wide £195 million support package. Suffolk clubs and community organisations can find out more and apply for emergency grants of between £300 and £10,000. For further information please go to: <https://www.sportengland.org/news/coronavirus-information-sector>. If you would like support in preparing a submission to these funds please contact our partners at Active Suffolk via <https://www.activesuffolk.org/sectorworkers>.

49. Sources of External Funding for Groups (Persimmon): Persimmon is actively operating two charity schemes, specifically for groups supporting the under-18s and people aged over 70. Persimmon's Charitable Foundation is committed to relaunching its Building Futures scheme for 2020. Persimmon will donate more than £1 million to support children in sport, health and education. They are calling on local groups which support children to apply online: www.persimmonhomes.com/building-futures. Persimmon's Community Champions initiative gives away £64,000 every month in single donations up to the value of £1,000. From April 2020, all funding will go directly to groups supporting the over 70s, and therefore groups can apply online: www.persimmonhomes.com/community-champions.
50. Sources of External Funding for Groups (Historic England): The Council will highlight any major sources of funding it has become aware of that may be of interest to local people, businesses or groups. Historic England have launched an emergency fund to help tackle the impact of Coronavirus on the heritage sector. The aim of the fund, which will be up to £2m, is to extend the safety net as far as possible for the sector by helping small heritage organisations both to survive the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic, and to prepare for recovery. This will complement measures put in place by the Government, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund's £50million emergency fund. Applicants are invited to apply for grants of up to £25,000 to address financial difficulties arising from Coronavirus. More information on how to apply: <https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/fund/> The deadline for new applications is midnight on 3 May 2020.
51. Sources of External Funding for Groups (New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership): The Council will highlight any major sources of funding it has become aware of that may be of interest to local people, businesses or groups. New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) has launched a new grant programme worth £3.5m to support businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic and support their recovery following this outbreak. It will provide capital and revenue grants of up to £50,000 towards costs involved in initial resilience and future recovery of businesses, with a maximum 50% intervention rate. This grant is for businesses who are interested in R&D, diversification, Coronavirus related production, purchase of new plant/machinery, IT upgrades and expansion into new markets. Businesses interesting in applying for support should first contact the New Anglia Growth Hub on 0300 333 6536 or email growthhub@newanglia.co.uk. More information is available on the LEP's website - <https://newanglia.co.uk/grant/business-resilience-and-recovery-scheme/>.
52. Sources of External Funding for Groups (Youth Endowment Fund): A new Youth Endowment fund of £6.5m has been set up to support vulnerable children at risk of youth violence. Organisations working with young people aged 10-14 at risk of youth violence will be able to apply for funding from £25,000. Half of the total funding is reserved for charities and social enterprises. More information can be found on youthendowmentfund.org.uk.

53. Sources of External Funding for Groups (National Lottery): On 20th May the Government announced further details of funding available to small and medium sized charities (£200m) that will be administered by the National Lottery Community Fund. The bidding process is due to open today (22nd May). In addition £150 million is being made available from dormant bank and building society accounts to help charities, social enterprises and vulnerable individuals during the coronavirus outbreak. For further information on both funding streams see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unlocks-150-million-from-dormant-accounts-for-coronavirus-response>.
54. Sources of External Funding for Groups (National Lottery Community Fund): On 20th May the Government announced further details of funding available to small and medium sized charities (£200m) that will be administered by the National Lottery Community Fund. The bidding process is now open. Funding is being prioritised to: (i) organisations supporting people and communities who experience disproportionate challenge and difficulty as a result of the COVID-19 crisis; (ii) organisations providing services and support for vulnerable people, for which there will be increased demand as a result of the COVID-19 crisis; and, (iii) organisations which connect communities and support communities to work together to respond to COVID-19. Applicants can seek funding from £300 to more than £10,000. For more information see: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/covid-19/learn-about-applying-for-emergency-funding-in-england>.
55. Sources of External Funding for Groups (Sport England): 17 sports clubs in Ipswich have received a total of £36,209 from the Sport England Covid-19 Community Emergency Fund, which is designed to support local sports clubs at risk during this period. This works out as an average of £2,129 per club. A total of 19 clubs have applied with 2 not successful. The success rate for Ipswich based clubs has been very high compared to the rest of the county. Full details can be found at <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/our-funds/community-emergency-fund>.
56. Sources of External Funding for Groups (Historic England): On 9th June 2020 Historic England has launched a second emergency fund to support the heritage sector recover from the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. Grants of up to £25,000 will be offered to fix urgent problems at locally-cherished historic buildings and sites which are normally visited by the public, so that they can re-open as quickly as possible, subject to COVID-19 restrictions, and thrive once again. The deadline for expressions of interest is midnight on 28 June 2020. For more information on eligibility and how to apply: <https://historicengland.org.uk/covid-19-fund/>.

57. Sources of External Funding for Groups (Anglian Water): Anglian Water has created The Anglian Water Positive Difference Fund. The first part of the fund is open to constituted community organisations throughout Suffolk, who are supporting vulnerable, isolated and older people at this time. To be eligible for funding, projects must support those who are considered high risk (including those with pre-existing medical conditions and older people over 60) or those in vulnerable circumstances and help to: Support their ongoing needs, ensuring their health and mental well-being is maintained; reduce isolation and vulnerability during any isolation period that may arise as a result of the threat of coronavirus; or, help to make sure people remain safely connected with the outside world during this time. For more information and to make an application go to: www.suffolkcf.org.uk/grants/anglian-water-positive-difference-fund/.
58. Sources of External Funding (Red Cross): The Red Cross have created a Hardship Fund with their partner Aviva and the Aviva Foundation. The fund can provide short term financial help for people who can't afford essentials such as: food and toiletries, somewhere safe to sleep, access to a telephone and the internet and fuel to keep the lights on, cook or stay warm. Further information can be found at: <https://hardshipfund.redcross.org.uk/>.
59. Finance Return to Government (2nd): The second financial return was submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the deadline on Friday 15th May. This report outlined the financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis and broadly stated that the Council incurred approximately £450,000 in April and lost predicted income of around £800,000 – i.e. since many services are either closed or demand for some services, like car parking, is dramatically reduced. Furthermore, many local residents and businesses are now struggling to meet council tax and business rate payments due to the crisis. At the moment the Council has received just over £1.4m of Government funding to cover its additional expenditure and losses – and amount that roughly covers additional expenditure and lost income to the end of April. The Council is working with partners to lobby Government for further financial support – pointing out that the financial impact will go on well beyond the end of April.
60. Finance Return to Government (3rd): The third financial return was submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the deadline on Friday 19th June. This report outlined the financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis and broadly stated that the Council is forecast to spend approximately £3.9m more this year on services and expects to lose income of around £5.8m across the financial year. In addition, many local residents and businesses are now struggling to meet council tax and business rate payments due to the crisis. At the moment the Council has received just over £1.4m of Government funding to cover its additional expenditure and losses – and amount that roughly covers additional expenditure and lost income to the end of April. The Council is working with partners to lobby Government for further financial support – pointing out that the financial impact is going to stretch well beyond the first quarter of the financial year (i.e. April to June 2020).

Re-starting Services

61. Regent Shows: We will - on a gradual basis - be announcing 17 new shows going on sale through the Regent Box Office over the coming month. These shows are for various dates between Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021, that we are contractually obliged to put on sale now in order for ticket sales to build over time.
62. Ipswich Market (1): The market re-opened on 1st May with a small number of food stall following recent advice on outdoor markets issued by Government (including maintaining appropriate social distancing standards). The market will open on Fridays and Saturdays over the coming weeks. To further minimise length of personal contact, market traders have been asked to take advance orders online or by telephone and communicate this as the preferred option to their customers. The Council will also promote this via its social media channels.
63. Empty Council Houses: The Council has restarted work on 50 of a back-log of 94 unoccupied council houses (voids). A significant number of employees who will work on these homes have now be trained in new risk assessments observing relevant social distancing rules and national guidance. 19 of these voids were are able to matched to 19 priority households in temporary accommodation and work has started on 17 of these voids. These works include inspecting and surveying to identify the scope of refurbishment required to meet our Ipswich Voids Standard, clearance and where required and asbestos surveys. Once refurbished, these will be direct lets to households in temporary accommodation. The Government issued further advice on 27 April confirming that Local Authorities should continue with essential home moves, which include those moving from temporary accommodation. The Council is restricting the number of employees that work in any individual property to 2 persons to comply with Government advice. A further 33 properties are also in progress. In addition to this, a further three 2 bedroom bungalows - currently unoccupied - are receiving major conversions to fully wheelchair accessible homes.
64. Construction / Development work: With a few exceptions, including on-going works at Eastern Gateway and – now finished works - to the Chantry Park Pond, most major development projects that the Council has an involvement in suspended works as a consequence of Coronavirus. In the next week or two work is expected to re-start at a number of sites including at 1 Cornhill (the Old Post Office). The Council will be starting work next week on a 10-week programme to replace the equipment in the (currently closed) Christchurch Park play area. Work should also restart shortly on the site being developed by the Council's wholly owned company, Handford Homes, on new homes (including council houses) at the former Tooks site on Bury Road. In all cases, the latest government and Construction Leadership Council guidance on safe working during Coronavirus is being applied.
65. Skate Parks: We have started (22nd May) to allow use of the Skate Parks and have installed clear, easy to understand signage designed by Skateboard England and Skateboard GB that reminds users of the need for social distancing and about good hygiene practices.

66. Public Toilets: The Council has re-opened (22nd May) five of our public toilets. These are considered to be those which are used more frequently, where there are hand washing basins, where we believe at this point in time there is a demand and where can supply resource to regularly sanitise them. Initially the opening hours will be limited to 10am to 4pm. These are:

- (i) Majors Corner: We have opened the disabled toilets for use by all of the general public, with a cleaner on site during the hours it is open and managing a strict one-in, one-out policy and sanitising the cubicle after each use;
- (ii) Christchurch Park: We have opened the disabled toilet within the toilet block that is beside the Kiosk located between Reg Driver Centre & Westerfield Rd entrance, there is a cleaner on site during the hours it is open, managing a strict one-in, one-out policy and sanitising the cubicle after each use.
- (iii) Holywells Park: We have opened the disabled toilet within the toilet block that is beside the play area, there is a cleaner on site during the hours it is open, managing a strict one-in, one-out policy and sanitising the cubicle after each use.
- (iv) Lawn Cemetery: We have opened the toilet block at the Lawn Cemetery.
- (v) Millennium Cemetery.

As the cemetery toilets are much less frequently used – these will receive regular - scheduled visits - to be sanitised over the course of each day – rather than having a continuous cleaning presence. The need for cleaners to be on site at the first three locations will be kept under review and if this initial trial proceeds well, we will over the coming weeks, where we are able to safely do so, we will start to open other public toilets where there are hand washing basins. We urge people to follow social distancing guidelines if there is a queue.

67. Brown Bins: The collection of garden waste in brown bins re-started last week (12th May) for those residents who usually put their brown bin out with their blue bin. Those residents who normally put their brown bin out at the same time as their black bin have been getting their brown bins collected this week. We have increased our resource with additional trucks and crews in order to cope with the additional numbers of brown bins presented for collection and much heavier weights than usual of material collected. Last week (week commencing 11th May) we collected 614 tonnes of garden waste in the brown bins, which as a comparison is a 126% increase in the 272 tonnes collected in the same week last year.

68. Allotments: There are over 2,100 plots on the 16 allotments sites we have in Ipswich. Our allotments cover in total an area of 60 hectares and all residents are within easy travelling distance of one of them. We are now actively encouraging residents to sign up for an allotment which is easily done by emailing allotments@ipswich.gov.uk, following which the relevant Field Secretary for the allotment site will be in touch to agree a mutually convenient time to meet in accordance with social distancing guidance i.e. only 2 people from different households present to undertake a safe, hygienic handover of the plot maintaining a 2 metre distance at all times. Our allotments are great value for money with a standard plot costing only 87.5p per week.
69. Online Sports Programme (1): Since the closure of our sport and leisure facilities we have continued to provide a fitness programme with online classes, here: <https://www.ipswichfit.co.uk/fitness-classes>. Our Fitness Team have live-streamed two classes a day and provided daily fitness videos. We have also provided a 10-day challenge of fitness activities. As a result we have seen over 45,000 people view and participate in these sessions, average over 150 people per class, which is higher than we could ever accommodate physically in one of our leisure centres. Our subscribers on YouTube and followers on Facebook have significantly increased and reflect huge growth and a continued engagement from existing and potential new customers. We are currently exploring online platform options as a way of providing online fitness videos and classes. This technology will also allow customers to track their fitness activities, set goals and will allow our instructors to set programmes and other sessions for customers.
70. Housing: The Gateway to Home Choice housing allocation system restarts on 4th June 2020. The website can be accessed here: <https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/>. This means that from 4th June, available affordable homes (Council Homes and homes owned by Registered Social Landlords) will be advertised again and people will be able to bid on them as before. As normal, viewings and allocations will happen a week later, as usual. Previous users of the system will be contacted where we have an email address to advise them of the restart. Where needed, our housing team will assist any new applicants.
71. Crown Car Park: We intend to re-open Crown Car Park on the same day that 'non-essential' retailers can re-open in the Town Centre (i.e. Monday 15th June). The opening hours will initially be 10:30 to 16:30 Monday to Sunday. Use of the car park will be free of charge up to and including 3rd July, although any individual stay should not be longer than 5 hours.

72. Ipswich Market (2): In accordance with the Government guidance we are allowing more market traders to start trading again and we expect there to be a larger number of stall-holders at the Ipswich Market on Tuesday 9th June with more attending on the Friday and Saturday of that week as well. From our discussions with the traders we expect the number of traders to gradually increase week on week during June. The market will be in its usual position of Princes St, Giles Circus, Butter Market and Queen St, with stalls being spread out further than usual to allow social distancing guidelines to be adhered to for shoppers and passers-by and it will only be trading on a Tuesday, Friday and Saturday until further notice.
73. Ipswich Fit Programme (2): Since the closure of our sport and leisure facilities we have continued to provide a fitness programme with online classes. Our Fitness Team have live-streamed two classes a day and provided daily fitness videos. We have also provided a 10-day challenge of fitness activities. As a result we have seen over 60,000 people view and participate in these sessions, an average of over 150 people per class, which is higher than we could ever accommodate physically in one of our leisure centres. Our subscribers on YouTube and followers on Facebook have significantly increased and reflect huge growth and a continued engagement from existing and potential new customers. We are currently exploring online platform options as a way of providing online fitness videos and classes. This technology will also allow customers to track their fitness activities, set goals and will allow our instructors to set programmes and other sessions for customers. More information on the classes can be accessed at: <https://www.ipswichfit.co.uk/fitness-classes/>.
74. Town Centre Plans: It has now (early June 2020) been announced that 'non-essential' retail stores can re-open from 15th June 2020. The Borough Council continues to work with a number of partners – Ipswich Central, Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk County Council (as well as the wider Ipswich Vision group) to plan how the town centre could work safely with more business open and more people in the centre – whilst still enabling compliance with Government rules / guidance – such as social distancing. This week some of the new 'Ipswich: Together We Can' signage has started going up around the town centre. Ipswich Central have produced, with support from partners, a Together We Can: Reopening our Town Centre Safely Employer's Guide (<https://ipswichcentral.com/togetherwecan>). As announced last week, the Borough Council will re-open Crown Car Park on Monday 15th June. The opening hours will initially be 10:30 to 16:30 Monday to Sunday. Use of the car park will be free of charge up to and including 3rd July, although any individual stay should not be longer than 5 hours. Next week, we hope to be in a position to start to set out plans for support the re-opening of cafes, public house and restaurants (etc) from whenever the Government allow (e.g. 4th July at the earliest).

Additional Items

75. VE Day: It was important that we commemorated the 75th anniversary of VE Day today (8th May) but it is vital that we did so safely and responsibly. While we could not come together to celebrate and honour the heroes who made victory possible in 1945 we could still get involved through all the many ‘events’ highlighted on the special VE Day website www.veday75.org. You could, of course, have a quiet moment of reflection by joining the national two-minute silence at 11am.
76. Arts / Cultural Performances (Red Rose Chain): A decent summary of arts and cultural activities going on in the town during these challenging times can be found at: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/events-activities/online-and-streamed-events/arts-activities/. Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what performances (etc) they are making publicly available. This week (8th May), the spotlight is on Red Rose Chain Theatre Company who are live streaming (free) a play reading of *The Secret Heart of Ann Boleyn: Fallen in Love* at 19:30 on Tuesday 19th May. They also release a new video every Friday afternoon. For more information visit: www.redrosechain.com.
77. Arts / Cultural Performances (Dance East) : Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what performances (etc) they are making publicly available. This week (15th May), the spotlight is on Dance East which is now celebrating 10 years on the Ipswich Waterfront. They have several 15 minute dance classes online every week, for both adults and children (from under 4s to teens) – tots, creative, contemporary, yoga and creative. ‘Home Is Where The Dance Is’ and Dance East’s YouTube channel can be found at: <https://www.danceeast.co.uk/get-dancing/home-dance/>.
78. Arts / Cultural Performances (Gecko): Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what performances (etc) they are making publicly available. This week (22nd May): Gecko Theatre <https://www.geckotheatre.com/>, Ipswich’s very own award-winning and internationally-acclaimed physical theatre company. Next Wednesday 27th May at 7pm there will be an online viewing of *The Wedding*, which the Guardian called “a terrific ensemble at work in a show that bursts with the joy of union.” The show can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iZ5rRRuZTo> - and available through Sunday 31/5. Ipswich Borough Council has been working with Gecko Theatre to deliver a new home for them – the ‘Creation Space’ on the Ipswich Waterfront.

79. Arts / Cultural Performances (Russell Maliphant Dance Company): A decent summary of arts and cultural activities going on in the town during these challenging times can be found at: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/events-activities/online-and-streamed-events/arts-activities/. Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what performances (etc) they are making publicly available. One of the latest additions to Ipswich is the Russell Maliphant Dance Company <https://russellmaliphantdancecompany.com/> which has been in residence at the Jerwood DanceHouse along with DanceEast, for two years now. Each week they have been posting a new performance on their digital archive. This week is *Push*, a duet produced with Sadler's Wells. Also still available is a performance of *Silent Lines* – produced and filmed in Ipswich with five exceptional dancers. All can be seen on their YouTube channel at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMcSIDtt1khomAROINkoV_Q
80. Arts / Cultural Performances (New Wolsey Theatre): A decent summary of arts and cultural activities going on in the town during these challenging times can be found at: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/events-activities/online-and-streamed-events/arts-activities/. Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what performances (etc) they are making publicly available. New Wolsey Theatre has curated a fantastic collection called Bounce, their 'brand new fortnightly curation of the best arts and culture on the web right now' – see: <https://www.newwolseybounce.co.uk/>. Meanwhile, you can also book for their Christmas Panto! This year it's Jack and the Beanstalk, from 26th November <https://www.wolseytheatre.co.uk/shows/jack-the-beanstalk/#prices>.
81. Arts / Cultural Performances (Ipswich Museum): A decent summary of arts and cultural activities going on in the town during these challenging times can be found at: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/events-activities/online-and-streamed-events/arts-activities/. Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what they are making publicly available online. We are proud that our museums service is nationally recognised by the Arts Council – this includes Ipswich Museum, Ipswich Art Gallery and Christchurch Mansion. The team have created over 50 activities that you can do online through their 'Museum from Home' project, see: <https://cimuseums.org.uk/museumfromhome/> You can also share some of your own experiences of the Covid pandemic, for example photos from your phone, creating a scrapbook, recording a diary, creating artworks or music... Have a look at: <https://cimuseums.org.uk/yourstories/>.

82. Arts / Cultural Performances (Eastern Angles): A decent summary of arts and cultural activities going on in the town during these challenging times can be found at: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/events-activities/online-and-streamed-events/arts-activities/. Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what they are making publicly available online. Eastern Angles, www.easternangles.co.uk, have been delivering online masterclasses covering writing and directing, and have commissioned playwrights for Paines Plough's [Come To Where I Am: Peterborough](#); a series of four plays created in lockdown, performed by the writers. In addition, EA has been supporting associate company 'tusk' to produce an online version of [Baba Yaga for primary schools](#), complete with a resource pack, and are also promoting [Standby Theatre's](#) activity pack for ages 14+. The Eastern Angles team are looking at ways to safely produce their annual alternative to panto with a socially distanced audience.
83. Arts / Cultural Performances (The Smokehouse): A decent summary of arts and cultural activities going on in the town during these challenging times can be found at: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/events-activities/online-and-streamed-events/arts-activities/. Each week we will draw attention to one organisation and what they are making publicly available online. The Smokehouse www.thesmokehouse.org is a live music venue just off Norwich Road, which last year organised the hugely successful Sound City festival in the town centre. They will be hosting a whole day of live streaming, pre-recorded concerts and industry interviews on Thursday 9th July (accessed via the above web-address). The Smokehouse has been closed since Monday 16th March however they have helped keep the region's musical talent busy by launching [LOCK EAST](#) where regional artists can submit and share their work – about fifty can be seen there now.
84. 'Suffolk Remembers' with St Elizabeth Hospice: The Council has been working with St Elizabeth Hospice to assist them with their annual 'Suffolk Remembers' fundraiser which usually consists of large numbers of candles being lit as part of a well-attended outdoor event. They are holding a virtual event this year encouraging people to donate and participate virtually, with the Council providing them the use of the Corn Exchange Grand Hall within which they will set up the Suffolk Remembers lettering and lighting the candles to be filmed in preparation for the online streaming on 21st June. There will be no public attendance at the Corn Exchange, with filming taking place on Monday and Friday of next week in accordance with all the social distancing guidelines and the risk assessments we have drawn up.

[END OF LIST]

Future Communications and Contacting the Council

The Borough Council intends to issue a full updated summary position every Friday while communicating more regularly about individual issues and services.

If you wish to contact the Council about anything please contact us via www.ipswich.gov.uk or 01473 432000 rather than visit Grafton House or the Customer Services Centre).

The Leader of the Council, Councillor David Ellesmere, should be available to comment if there are any media enquiries – he can be contacted via the Council's Press Office.

Issued by the IBC press office – press.office@ipswich.gov.uk