

MDC COVID-19 Briefing

Lockdown lift-off

Issue 8

Welcome

3rd July, 2020

You'll have heard that large parts of our economy are set to reopen on 'Super Saturday', 4th July. It particularly impacts the hospitality, accommodation, leisure and personal care sectors.

There will be fewer restrictions on the public too.

The Government has been issuing new guidelines in preparation for these significant changes. This briefing will feature the key points, signpost links and highlight ways to keep both businesses and residents safe.

Please remember that despite these new freedoms, the risks are still present. Just this week we've seen the first city to have a local lockdown imposed (Leicester), due to the number of confirmed cases on the rise. Some 36 areas across England are experiencing a fresh surge according to Public Health England (PHE).

As we ease out of lockdown, the message to our communities is please be considerate to others, and help us all stay safe.

The PHE data is here: <https://cf-particle-html.eip.telegraph.co.uk/54e10118-7f35-4632-b7f4-a861ad69d1de.html>

The latest number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in the UK can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Marketing and Media Team

Mendip District Council

Mendip News

Mendip District Council (MDC) lifts restrictions on its play areas this weekend

All 45 **MDC-owned** play spaces, kick-about areas and skate parks will be accessible again from 4th July. In readiness for the reopening, MDC have been undertaking equipment replacement and maintenance at a number of locations, alongside safety checks across all sites. Outdoor play areas were shut in March due to the coronavirus pandemic to help prevent the spread of the disease.

Read the full story here: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9346/Lift-off-for-little-ones-as-Mendip-s-play-areas-reopen-this-weekend>

Mendip District Council-run play areas are listed here:
www.mendip.gov.uk/playareas

Please note: The list is not exhaustive. Many towns and villages across our beautiful district have play areas that are not managed by MDC – they are managed by their city, town or parish councils. The District Council is only lifting restrictions on the play areas owned by MDC. We've attached a poster to this email (**Document 1**) which will be applied to all MDC-owned play areas.

For the latest Government guidance for owners and operators of playgrounds and outdoor gyms, visit: [Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms](#)

Help further improve Somerset's streets during the pandemic

A new interactive online mapping tool called 'Commonplace' has been launched so people can have their say on temporary walking and cycling measures in Somerset. Temporary measures, including pedestrianised high streets, have been introduced to encourage social distancing during the pandemic and positively support the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists. The mapping tool enables members of the community to flag up areas of concern in a specific area where changes could help to make a positive difference.

Read the full story here: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9345/Help-further-improve-Somerset-s-streets-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

National News

Revellers urged to drink responsibly as pubs reopen

People planning on heading to pubs and restaurants as they reopen this weekend have been urged by health services and the police that "it has never been more important to drink responsibly". [Sky News Online](#)

Park staff in England tell of litter chaos as 'Super Saturday' looms

Councils have said hundreds of tonnes of additional rubbish is being discarded by the public on beaches and in parks - where the partial lifting of lockdown has led to millions more people using them - each day. Park staff are concerned at the pressure they are likely to face on "Super Saturday", with alcohol widely available to take away under new laws drawn up by ministers. [Guardian](#)

England's roads set for busiest weekend of the year as lockdown eased

Roads in England could be at their busiest of the year this weekend with more than 10.5 million people using their cars to travel as lockdown restrictions are eased on Saturday, a survey by RAC Breakdown reveals. [Guardian](#)

Lockdown easing and warm weather a 'perfect storm' for tourist destinations

The Government's easing of lockdown and hot weather could create a "perfect storm" and overwhelm England's busiest seaside resorts. Following scenes at beaches across the country last week, some council leaders are urging the Government to do more to discourage tourists from travelling to overcrowded destinations. [Huffington Post](#)

City centres 'face disaster' unless office staff return

City centres are facing financial ruin after office workers and civil servants were told to continue working from home until as late as the summer next year despite the easing of the lockdown. [BBC](#)

10 per cent of England's swimming pools will close

As many as 10 per cent of England's 5,000 swimming pools will be lost due to the coronavirus pandemic, Swim England analysis reveals. The national governing body for swimming in England found that hundreds of councils have contracted out the running of pools and leisure centres, and those companies are asking for millions in additional funding to reopen. [Sunday Times](#)

'Act responsibly' as lockdown eased

Boris Johnson is urging the public to "act responsibly" when several businesses - including restaurants, pubs, hairdressers and cinemas - can reopen on Saturday. The British Beer & Pub Association urged people to support landlords as they open their doors for the first time in months. But the PM says we should do so sensibly and safely as "we are not out of the woods." [Guardian](#)

Briefings available online and in pdf and word formats

A version of these briefings, suitable for publication, is available as a pdf, a Word document, and a web link. A shareable version can always be found here: [**https://www.mendip.gov.uk/mdcbriefings**](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/mdcbriefings)

What you can and can't do

The Government has set out its plan to return life to as near normal as possible, for as many people as possible, quickly and fairly, in order to safeguard livelihoods, but in a way that continues to protect our communities and the NHS.

The latest changes to the lockdown restrictions are due to come in to effect this weekend. To help understand these new changes, the Government has published FAQs on [what you can and cannot do](#) after 4th July.

The Government has published guidance on [social distancing](#) and [staying safe outside your home](#).

Please be considerate to others. When out, keep two meters apart. Walk or cycle where you can, and take your rubbish away or place in a bin when you leave so others have a clean space to enjoy.

If driving, park considerately - remember all Council-owned car parks in Mendip are free to use.

Read about free parking: [**https://www.mendip.gov.uk/freeparkingextended**](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/freeparkingextended)

What businesses are reopening?

From 4th July, many businesses and venues will be permitted to reopen and will be expected to follow COVID-19 Secure guidelines. These include:

- hotels, hostels, bed and breakfast accommodation, holiday apartments or homes, cottages or bungalows, campsites, caravan parks or boarding houses
- places of worship
- libraries, community centres and social clubs
- restaurants, cafes, workplace canteens, bars, pubs that are self-contained and can be accessed from the outside
- hair salons and barbers, including mobile businesses
- cinemas, theatres and concert halls
- funfairs, theme parks, model villages, adventure parks and activities
- outdoor gyms and playgrounds, and outdoor skating rinks
- museums and galleries
- bingo halls, amusement arcades and other entertainment centres
- indoor attractions at aquariums, zoos, safari parks, farms, wildlife centres and any place where animals are exhibited to the public as an attraction
- indoor and outdoor areas of visitor attractions including, gardens, heritage sites, film studios and landmarks

What will need to remain closed by law?

The following businesses will need to remain closed, as it's been assessed they cannot yet be made sufficiently COVID-19 secure:

- nightclubs and casinos
- bowling alleys, indoor skating rinks, indoor play areas including soft-play
- spas, nail bars, beauty salons and tanning salons, massage, tattoo and piercing parlours
- indoor fitness and dance studios, and indoor gyms and sports venues/facilities
- swimming pools and water parks
- exhibition or conference centres - where they are to be used for exhibitions or conferences, other than for those who work for that venue

Guidance on re-opening businesses and venues from 4th July:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/opening-certain-businesses-and-venues-in-england-from-4-july-2020>

Your new-look high streets

If you are heading out for the first time since lockdown, please be aware that your high streets will feel a little different. There may be pedestrianisation schemes, new traffic flow systems in place - and look out for those pop-up cycle lanes and cyclists too.

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|--------|---------------------------|---|
| Mendip | Frome | Frome Town Council providing access only to the Market Place 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 | Pedestrianisation of Market Place and partial closure of High Street between Queens Street and Broad Street junction. |
| Mendip | Glastonbury | Temporarily pedestrianise (with delivery and bus access only) High Street, Magdalene Street and Benedict Street |
| Mendip | Shepton Mallet | No changes to highways requested – to be reviewed |
| 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). |

Travelling safely

You can help control coronavirus and travel safely by:

- working from home where possible
- shopping locally and less often
- considering all other forms of transport, such as cycling and walking, before using public transport
- avoiding the busiest times and routes
- keeping your distance when your travel, where possible
- washing or sanitising your hands regularly

You should not travel at all if you:

- are experiencing any **coronavirus symptoms**
- are **self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a household or support bubble with somebody with symptoms**
- are **clinically extremely vulnerable** and cannot shield during your journey
- have been advised by the **NHS test and trace service** that you should self-isolate

If you have any symptoms of coronavirus you should self-isolate at home and **arrange to have a test to see if you have coronavirus**. If anyone in your household or **support bubble** has symptoms of coronavirus you should self-isolate.

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

Public transport: The Government has published updated **safer transport guidance for operators**. This now reflects that, from 4th July, transport operators' risk assessments are expected, where possible, to enable social distancing of two metres or one metre with risk mitigations (where two metres is not viable).

You'll find a handy passenger guidance poster here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/890273/covid-19-passenger-guidance-infographic.pdf

Opening businesses safely

Mendip have a collection of guidance and FAQs on working safely during coronavirus on its website. These web pages are constantly updated.

In particular, the guidance for restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services has been expanded ahead of the planned re-opening.

We also have information on food preparation, how to keep workers and clients safe in close contact services, such as hairdressing. Plus there's news for hotels and accommodation providers – such as campsites, caravan parks and short term lets – and for indoor and outdoor visitor attractions.

You'll find all you need here on our restyled Mendip webpages:

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

Also check out:

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

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

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/hotels-and-other-guest-accommodation>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/construction-working-hours-draft-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses>

We can recommend **Better Business for All (BBFA)** who have produced a toolkit to support businesses. This can be found on the Heart of the Southwest Growth Hub website.

This a really useful reference and one that's regularly updated:

<https://www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2020/05/BBFA-Covid-19-Toolkit.pdf>

Below, we've focused on **three** different venues you may find of interest; safe use of council buildings, opening village halls, and support for pubs, restaurants and cafes.

Safe use of council buildings

There is guidance for those managing council buildings. The guidance applies to all users of council buildings including visitors attending meetings or council buildings, and councillors working from council buildings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings>

Opening village halls

Guidance for those managing community centres, village halls and other community facilities on safely re-opening multi-purpose buildings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

And see attached to this email (**Document 2**) a guide prepared by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE).

Support for pubs, restaurants and cafes

The Government has introduced plans to allow more pubs, restaurants and cafes to serve customers outside. It's working on legislation to relax some alcohol and pavement licensing laws too, but these will not be on place until later this month. Meanwhile Mendip Officers have been working with business owners to support them opening safely from 6am on Saturday, 4th July.

Draft guidance on pavement licensing proposals:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pavement-licences-draft-guidance>

Changes to Planning

Under the Town and Country Planning Regulations, councils will not be required to get planning permission to use land for the purpose of holding a market. The right is time-limited and will cease to have effect from **23rd March 2021**.

The regulations will also give people greater freedom over how they use their land by doubling the length of time that temporary structures can be placed on land without needing an application for planning permission.

This will allow land to be used for a broad range of purposes such as for car boot sales and summer fayres, as well as allowing pubs and restaurants to be able to use car parks and terraces as dining and drinking areas, using their existing seating licenses. The right is time-limited and will cease to have effect from 1 January 2021.

Councils are asked to continue to ensure their communities are consulted on licensing applications, that waste is disposed of responsibly, and that access to pavements and pedestrianised areas is not compromised.

The Business and Planning Bill:

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/201921/businessandplanning/documents.html>

The Town and Country Planning Regulations:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/632/introduction/made>

Build, build, build: the Prime Minister's speech on how the UK plans to build itself out of a recession.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/build-build-build-prime-minister-announces-new-deal-for-britain>

Lockdown lift-off: Here are some of the many things MDC is doing to help communities and local businesses

- Opening all our 45 MDC-owned play areas from July 4th.
- Suspending fees in pay and display car parks until August 6th.
- Suspending Mendip Market rents throughout June and July.
- Supporting stallholders to ensure social distancing is observed.
- Providing guidance and to support to all businesses.
- Issuing more than £28.5 million in grants to help businesses.
- 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.

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

We are also on Twitter **twitter.com/MendipCouncil**

And LinkedIn **www.linkedin.com/company/mendip-district-council**

Finally, here's our official website: **www.mendip.gov.uk**
