

Councillor Kim Forward Weekly Video Update Transcript 14.05.2020

Hi, it's Kim here again the leader of your council, with my weekly video update on council news and services.

Well, there have been some changes to government guidance, with lockdown easing slightly and their plan for us to return to normal. The council has been working hard looking at the guidance and deciding how our services might need to adapt.

Keeping our residents safe is our top priority. The COVID-19 infection rate in Hastings is one of the lowest in the country, thanks in part to the way Hastings residents have followed the previous guidance and looked out for each other. I know that many people are very concerned about the new messaging and I believe that if we can we should continue to stay home and stay safe.

We want to keep the infection rate as low as possible, and our message to those wishing to travel to Hastings is very clear: Hastings is closed. We do not want a sudden increase of people in our parks or on our beaches making social distancing impossible and putting people at risk.

Of course we look forward to that time when we can welcome visitors again. A time when our B&Bs, restaurants and attractions are open again and our town is really buzzing but for now, we are telling visitors to stay away.

I think I told you last time about the extra money available to local authorities to support businesses not previously eligible for funding and we have had a bit more detail about this new scheme, including a rough guide as to who should be prioritised. Now we are working with other local councils on our criteria and we will let you know when it's ready. Please check our website for more information and updates.

Please remember that the community hub service is still here to support those that need it and around a thousand people have benefitted from help so far. If you need urgent support call 01424 451019 or if it's not so urgent, you can fill out our online form. The form, opening times, and more information about the organisations we're working with, can be found on our website. I am glad and grateful that as a community we are working so hard to support those in need.

In other news, we have made the decision not to go ahead with solar panels in the Hastings country park. We have begun to review all our major planned projects and this decision was made after receiving guidance from Natural England as we said it would be. The council is still dedicated to its climate change strategy and will focus on other ways to help Hastings minimise its environmental impact.

I know that thousands of you are now getting our weekly e-newsletter which I hope you are finding useful. Please sign up at MyHastings if you would like to receive it and don't forget MyHastings is the place to report any issues.

Our museum has lots of interesting online events including an amazing collaborative digital arts project coming next week. Check out their website and Facebook page.

It's been a long time since we could be close to our loved ones and I am really missing my children and lovely grandchildren but we must keep this up for everyone's sake. Let's continue to reach out and support each other and please stay safe and we will catch up again next week.

Thanks for listening and I am trying to make these messages a bit shorter so that you make it to the end!