

Hi, its Kim here with my weekly council update. We are halfway through this latest lockdown and it remains as important as ever to continue social distancing, covering our faces and washing our hands to inhibit the spread of the virus. It is also important to stay at home as much as we can to minimise the contact we have with others. The rate of COVID-19 cases remains low in our town and I know that we are working together to keep it that way.

The council has been working to distribute Local Restriction Support Grants to businesses who have had to close due to government restrictions and I am pleased that we have managed to pay out over £500,000 already in just over a week. To check if you are eligible and to apply just visit our website.

We know it has been a tough time for many local businesses and with the festive season approaching, a time many of them can usually rely on for increased business, let's continue to try to shop local where we can. We have been working with the Health and Safety Executive to check how businesses are doing with their COVID compliance and to offer support. It was such good news that of those checked 93% of them passed and the others were helped to make the adjustments needed to achieve it.

Remember many of our local businesses are now offering click and collect services and deliveries too which is a perfect way to stay safe while also shopping local. If you go to the Amazing Hastings and Love Hastings websites, you can find more details of some of our lovely local businesses.

It is World Children's Day today which marks the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: our children are our future and we need to continue to work together to promote their rights. Every child has the right to survival, protection and education but sadly this is still not the case for all the world's children.

It has been hard for us as adults to deal with the reality and restrictions of the pandemic and the world has become a very confusing place for our children as well.

Our town has a Youth Council and we are proud of the work they do in ensuring that the voice of our young people is heard by decision makers. They identify their priorities for the year which are of concern to young people and work with others to address the issues.

So, on World Children's Day it's over to Francis and Harri, the joint chairs of our Youth Council.

Hello, my name is Francis and I'm Harri and we are the co-chairs of the Hastings Youth Council. Before we start, I just want to say Happy World Children's Day to all the young people out there.

So firstly, we'll tell you a little bit about who the HYC are. We are a group of young people in Hastings who meet regularly on Thursday's to discuss popular issues in our town and we always make sure that we represent the youth voice in any decisions that we bring forward to the council.

Personally, what I like in Hastings is how quite a lot of young people have a voice, so we go out to all local schools and communities and we speak about the issues we have, and they usually support us. I also like how there is usually a community feel and I feel like we are a nice little community in Hastings and also what I think we could change is to raise awareness for knife crime because recently they have increased. So I think we should try to decrease that as much as we can, and also to definitely reduce youth homelessness because that is a massive issue in Hastings along with youth poverty, we have some of the highest levels and I really want all young people to have a good quality of life in this town.

So, thank you for watching, this was the Hastings Youth Council.

Goodbye

Thanks Francis and Harri for helping to promote World Children's Day. Let's continue to cherish our children and support them in their journey through life.

Before I go, a reminder that support is still available through the community hub for those who need help during lockdown. If you need urgent support, call 01424 451019, or if it's less urgent, you can fill out the form on our website.

Let's continue to come together as a community and support each other to keep the virus at bay and protect those who are most vulnerable. Until next week, please stay safe.