

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update from Braintree District Council

Dear Parish Clerks and Councillors,

Welcome to our latest newsletter. We hope you are all keeping safe and well in these challenging times. We want to say thank you for continuing to support the Council during these times, helping our vulnerable communities where you can and keeping them informed with the latest and accurate information.

This newsletter will update you on our latest Coronavirus (COVID-19) service updates, a new campaign we have launched to shine a light on our local heroes, details about VE day and more.

We are continuing to keep our coronavirus web page updated with the latest information on our services so please do share this link with your communities: www.braintree.gov.uk/coronavirus.

If you have any questions about this newsletter, please do get in touch with us at marketing@braintree.gov.uk.

New campaign to celebrate our local heroes

This week we launched a new campaign which aims to shine a light, celebrate and say thank you to heroes who are doing incredible and heartfelt things in the battle against COVID-19.

Whether they are volunteers, a local business, a key worker, or individuals going the extra mile to show little pockets of kindness during this tough time, we want to say thank you and celebrate each and every one of these people in our district.

We will be publishing stories about the efforts and achievements of these people/groups on our social media channels and using the hashtag #BraintreeDistrictTogether.

Our first story was published yesterday which focused on a Braintree resident who runs her own local arts and crafts business, and has made 307 scrubs bags so far for NHS nurses using her own fabric stash!

We know there are hundreds of heroes out there in our district so please do share your stories with us by sending an email to marketing@braintree.gov.uk or getting in touch with us on social media as we would love to celebrate your work.

You can also share our post on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to encourage people to tell us about their stories.

23
April
2020
at
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VE Day online materials

Friday 8th May 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (commonly known as VE Day). This year, the Government has moved the May bank holiday to VE Day to allow the nation to remember the sacrifice so many made in the fight against fascism.

We had been hoping for communities to run a whole host of activities, but given the restrictions due to COVID-19, sadly these have had to be cancelled.

However, the government have developed a wide range of digital resources for use on social media channels in the run up to VE Day.

Before 8th May:

- The full toolkit is available here: [Get involved](#) in marking #VEDay75. This link contains online resources including tips for hosting a tea party at home, colouring, bunting and creative challenge for children.
- Share your stories: we'd love to see people contributing their family's connection to WW2 by posting photos and stories on social media using #VEDay75.

Does your parish council have any plans for VE Day celebrations? Please do let us know by emailing marketing@braintree.gov.uk.

Or if you know of any local stories that we can highlight, please email them over to us so we can support on social media.

What is the latest on the support for businesses?

At the end of last month, we sent out over 2,500 grant application forms to eligible small businesses and businesses with the retail, hospitality and retail sectors. We've now received and administered 70% of these applications (so far) paying out £21.1 million to the businesses needing support in our district.

The grants are part of the emergency funding from central government to support high street businesses and other small businesses.

Our aim over the next week is to make direct contact for a second time with those businesses that we've identified as eligible, but who have not yet returned their application forms so that they can also be offered the support that they are entitled to.

We will continue to communicate with our businesses via our business contacts, [business e-newsletter](#) (2374 businesses have signed up so far) and [Braintree District Businesses Facebook](#) page.

We have been using the channels above to share [central government business support](#) information, grant information and other training opportunities such as free marketing courses, free selling on Amazon courses and cybersecurity workshops.

If a business in your parish needs advice, help and support, they can email our Economic Development team on ecodev@braintree.gov.uk

Update on Community Shield

The Community Hub has received over 120 referrals from the Essex Welfare Service for people requesting support for shopping, collection of medication, befriending and mental health support. They continue to signpost these to Town & Parish Council's and community groups or deal with them via the Community Transport Team.

The Community Transport Team are also delivering food bank parcels to those that are unable to collect from the food bank themselves. Unwanted food parcels are also being collected from individuals and donated to the food bank.

The hub have also contacted approx. 500 people that the government has identified as being high risk and requiring additional support.

Online education resources roll-out

Oak National Academy is a new online learning resource to support schools, families and young people during the current school closures, which provides 180 video lessons each week for every year group – from Reception through to Year 10 – across a range of subjects including maths, art and languages.

The BBC has also launched its own education package, **BBC Bitesize Daily**. This will deliver a tailored day of learning across TV and online, with curriculum-relevant offers for Years 1 to 10.

These resources are alongside **new Government guidance** for parents on how to best support their child's education and development.

Read more on Essex County Council's **website**.

Livewell - reducing stress and anxiety at home

It's important to stay at home at the moment, but over long periods of time, this can put a strain on relationships and might lead to arguments. However, there are lots of things people can do to help reduce stress and anxiety at home:

- **PAUSE** - is a disagreement escalating to a point where you are no longer in control and you are just reacting? If so, take a breath and re-assess the situation.
- **THINK** - try to reflect on why an argument started. Ask yourself how you were feeling before the conversation started and whether you were already feeling anxious or tense.
- **RESOLVE IT** – take a step back. Is this argument about something important, or can you come back to it when you are both calmer? Everyone argues, but if you feel like you and your partner need extra support, visit the livewell website <https://www.livewellcampaign.co.uk/livewell-articles/healthy-relationships/>