

SOUTH LAKELAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

News release

11 June 2020

STAY SAFE WHEN HIGH STREET REOPENS

Shoppers returning to South Lakeland's high streets from next week are being urged to stay safe so everyone can enjoy their visit.

The Government has announced that more businesses and high street shops can begin to reopen from next Monday, 15 June.

South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) is working with partners including Cumbria County Council, parish and town councils, Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) and the local business community to ensure visitors are reassured they can safely return to town centres in the district.

Anyone visiting town centres in South Lakeland from next Monday will notice that the high street will start to look and feel different, with signage advising people to observe social distancing and individual shops introducing arrangements for customers and staff in accordance with the Government's 'Covid secure' guidance.

Councillor Robin Ashcroft, SLDC's portfolio holder for Economy, Culture and Leisure, said: "We want to welcome people back to our town centres and to support the businesses that will be reopening, but we must ensure that this is done safely.

"Measures will be rolled out in all our town centres over the coming weeks, including the principal centres of Kendal and Ulverston.

"Although 15 June is the start of these changes, the Government guidance suggests that many measures could be in place for up to a year, so it is important we become familiar with the new arrangements.

"Visual changes will include signage in busy areas, reminding people of key information and the need to maintain social distancing at all times, while there will also be hand sanitising stations being installed for the public to use and signage directing to available public toilet facilities.

"On narrow streets a directional system for pedestrians could be used, with markings and visuals to assist the public.

“Guidance has been given to businesses to support them to operate safely, including ways to manage safe queuing outside stores, while the public messaging encourages people to use contactless payment wherever possible to minimise the risk of virus transmission.”

SLDC’s street cleansing teams will be carrying out enhanced cleaning in the principal centres, with public benches available for use but only with social distancing rules being followed.

In areas where pedestrian access has been widened, barriers may be in place with supporting signage while lamppost banners around the town centres will reinforce the key safety messaging and pick-up leaflets have been produced advising people about the guidance.

SLDC-operated car parks in all towns will be re-opened from 15 June and normal charges will apply.

NHS staff, care workers and NHS volunteer responders involved in Coronavirus response activities will be able to obtain a key worker parking pass from their employer under the Government guidance, which will allow them to continue to park for free on all SLDC-operated car parks.

Latest Government guidance on visiting retail premises states:

- Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms
- Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19
- You must only visit shops with people you live with
- Maintain two metre social distancing at all times wherever possible
- The public are advised to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn’t possible
- If possible, use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities when entering premises (to reduce the risk of transmission by touching products while browsing)
- Keep contact to a minimum and try to use contactless payments if available
- Some shops will need to consider limiting the number of customers, overall and in any particular congestion areas, for example pinch points like doorways between outside and inside spaces
- Customers are encouraged to shop alone where possible, unless they need specific assistance

The project supporting the safe reopening of high streets is receiving funding from the England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through the Department for Communities and Local Government. **(see Editor’s Note)**

Councillor Ashcroft continued: “Getting our high streets back open again will be a key priority in the weeks ahead, however it needs to be done in a careful and controlled way in order to keep everyone safe.

“I’d like to thank everyone involved in creating and implementing this plan in such a short space of time.

“We have discussed the arrangements with the BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) in Kendal and Ulverston and with local town and parish councils and we have worked with the LDNPA on specific signage for the national park.

“Everyone is committed to ensuring our town centres are safe places to visit and to work. I know the BIDs and LDNPA have got some excellent plans to support the reopening in individual town centres.

“Now we hope that everyone who visits our high streets does so in a responsible manner, by being considerate to other shoppers and shop staff by maintaining social distance and respecting the arrangements introduced by individual businesses.”

For further details about the measures being introduced, see the page on the SLDC website:

<https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/your-environment/coronavirus-covid-19-support-and-advice/high-street-reopening-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Businesses can find more information about ‘Covid-secure’ guidance at:

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

Ends

Editor’s Notes

European Regional Development Fund

The reopening high streets project is receiving funding from the England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Department for Communities and Local Government is the Managing Authority for ERDF. Established by the European Union ERDF funds help local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>

For more information about this release, please contact the SLDC Communications Team on 01539 793300.

IMPORTANT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION: Please note that South Lakeland District Council is prioritising its work and resources to meet the demands of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) response. We are also working hard to maintain our key services and to continue progress on critical projects. However, the current situation will mean that some non-essential work and responses to non-essential enquiries may take longer than usual. We appreciate your understanding during this difficult time.

South Lakeland District Council

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