



Latest update from Uttlesford District Council – 17 April

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/coronavirus

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This briefing is to keep you updated on the evolving situation around coronavirus (Covid-19). It includes some of the actions being taken in the district as well as other useful information.

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Latest service changes

- **Garden waste service:** Our garden waste collection service will be starting again from next week (20 April) – all information, the online application form and the payments process have been re-instated and promoted. There has been a significant take up of the service from the public.

Notes:

- we are not able to do one-off garden waste collections and people are asked to not leave out additional garden waste as the crews will not be able to take this
- the garden waste weekend skip service is still suspended at this time
- the recycling centres remain closed
- Advice on composting is available on the Love Essex website:
www.loveessex.org/news-and-ideas/try-composting-at-home/

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/gardenwaste#collectiondays

- **Scams during the coronavirus outbreak:** We have compiled a resource page bringing together warning and topical advice from the Action Fraud, Citizens Advice and Ofcom on scams that have become prevalent during the current situation.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6649/Scams-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak

- **Coronavirus case virtual dashboard:** Our mapping provider, Esri, has put together a virtual dashboard tracking coronavirus in real time. This will allow you to see the latest statistics on coronavirus cases from around the globe. We have published some information and signposting to this resource.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/mymaps

- **Pests and animal nuisance:** DialAPest, the council's pest control service provider is operating a restricted service within the government's social distancing guidelines. We have published an update on pest services offered on behalf of the council.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5693/Pests-and-animal-nuisance

- **Businesses allowed to trade:** We have promoted with enhanced signposting the enforcement powers the council has with regard to businesses trading when they should not do under the current guidelines. We've also promoted reporting to the Competition and Marketing Authority of businesses profiteering from the current situation.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/business/article/6611/Guidance-Further-businesses-and-premises-to-close

- **Coronavirus sports and arts organisations grant funds:** We've added extra grant information for local organisations.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6645/Coronavirus-COVID-19-sports-and-arts-organisations-grant-funds

- **Council meetings during the coronavirus outbreak:** Information has been published regarding security of Zoom video conferencing platform. This service is being trialled for use at council and committee meetings.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6632/Council-meetings-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak

Community hub

The Uttlesford Community Response team has taken over 700 calls. More than 200 volunteers are registered with the hub and the team is continuing to link volunteers to those who need support.

To date, the hub has been able to help over 250 people with their shopping, almost 300 people with collecting their prescriptions, and over 300 people by offering a befriending service.

Alongside this, the team is supporting some very vulnerable people with their food boxes and any other help they may need as part of the nationwide 'Operation Shield'. It continues to link in with partners such as the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and doctor surgeries to ensure no-one is missed.

As a reminder, the hub team consists of UDC's Communities Team, the Council for Voluntary Services and Volunteer Uttlesford, and the helpline contact details are:

- Call: 03333 408 218 (8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday)
- Email: communityresponse@uttlesford.gov.uk

Support for businesses

As of 16 April, we had handed out £11.5m in cash grants to almost 950 local businesses in seven days. The grants are part of the emergency funding from central government. Uttlesford is one of about 50 councils to have issued more than 50% of the value of grant given – but there is more to do, and officers are processing the requests as fast as possible to ensure businesses are getting the help they need. We know more businesses will be entitled to this grant funding and so we are continuing to promote the schemes. Further advice is available at: www.uttlesford.gov.uk/covid19-business-grants-fund.

Sky lanterns

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has warned that a campaign encouraging the public to light sky lanterns in a show of solidarity for NHS workers is ‘misguided’. At a time when all emergency services are under increased pressures, the NFCC believes the suggestion that people should set off highly flammable lanterns should be discouraged. The full NFCC position is available on its website [here](#).

We support the advice – sky lanterns may look pretty but they are a fire risk to buildings, cause damage to farming machinery and are harmful to livestock and wildlife. They are also a litter nuisance. In 2018 we took the decision to prohibit the release of sky lanterns from council premises and land, and we would ask Uttlesford residents to support us in protecting our district from the damage sky lanterns can cause.

Bonfires

At the moment, while we're staying at home more than usual, concerns have been raised about the health impacts of smoke from bonfires. We're asking people to please consider the health of local residents with respiratory problems and not light fires if this can be at all avoided. Further advice is available the UDC website [here](#).

Public Rights of Way

Essex Highways has a useful poster which highlights what people should do when using public rights of way during the coronavirus pandemic. It reminds people to respect others, including property owners and farmers. It also includes the latest government advice about social distancing, and asks people to follow the Countryside Code.

We have been sharing this poster on our communications channels. The poster is available [here](#). Please use at your discretion.