

Welcome



Welcome to the third edition of Epping Forest District Council's business e-newsletter. The key focus for this edition is to promote packages of support from the council which support local businesses as trading restrictions relax.

This e-newsletter is brought to you by the Council's Economic Development Team and we hope you find this information useful.

Talk to us

We need your views!

If you have any comments on this e-newsletter or any suggestions about future content, please let us know by emailing us on:

businessmatters@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Share

Please share this e-newsletter with colleagues and friends who might find it of interest. If this edition of our e-newsletter has been forwarded to you, and you would like to receive your own regular copy, simply subscribe by following the link here:

<http://eepurl.com/gib9nD>

Coming soon! Loyal Free



It is now more important than ever to promote your business and encourage locals and visitors to return to the high street. Epping Forest District Council has partnered with the award winning place promotion app LoyalFree to offer you FREE advertising to hundreds of local app users. By adding an exclusive offer to the LoyalFree app, you will benefit from:

- Advertising of your offers to locals and visitors with the option to run a digital loyalty scheme.
- An additional platform to promote your events on.
- Click throughs to your website, social media, reviews and more through

your business profile.

Find out more here www.loyalfree.co.uk/demo/ and see what other local businesses are offering by downloading the app directly from the App or Play Store, simply search 'LoyalFree'. Or view the video for businesses here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmaUnU2W2xw>

To get involved or find out more, email info@loyalfree.co.uk. They create the profile for you, making it zero admin for you!

Financial Support for your business



Essex Business Adaptation Fund (EBAF)

Farima Perry Florists in Loughton (pictured above) have been supported by the **Essex Business Adaptation Fund** to enhance their online delivery service. Your business may also be eligible for support worth up to £1,500 so don't delay, apply today! To find out more about how Farima Perry benefited from this grant to make their business more Covid secure please visit: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/helping-to-make-your-business-covid-secure/>

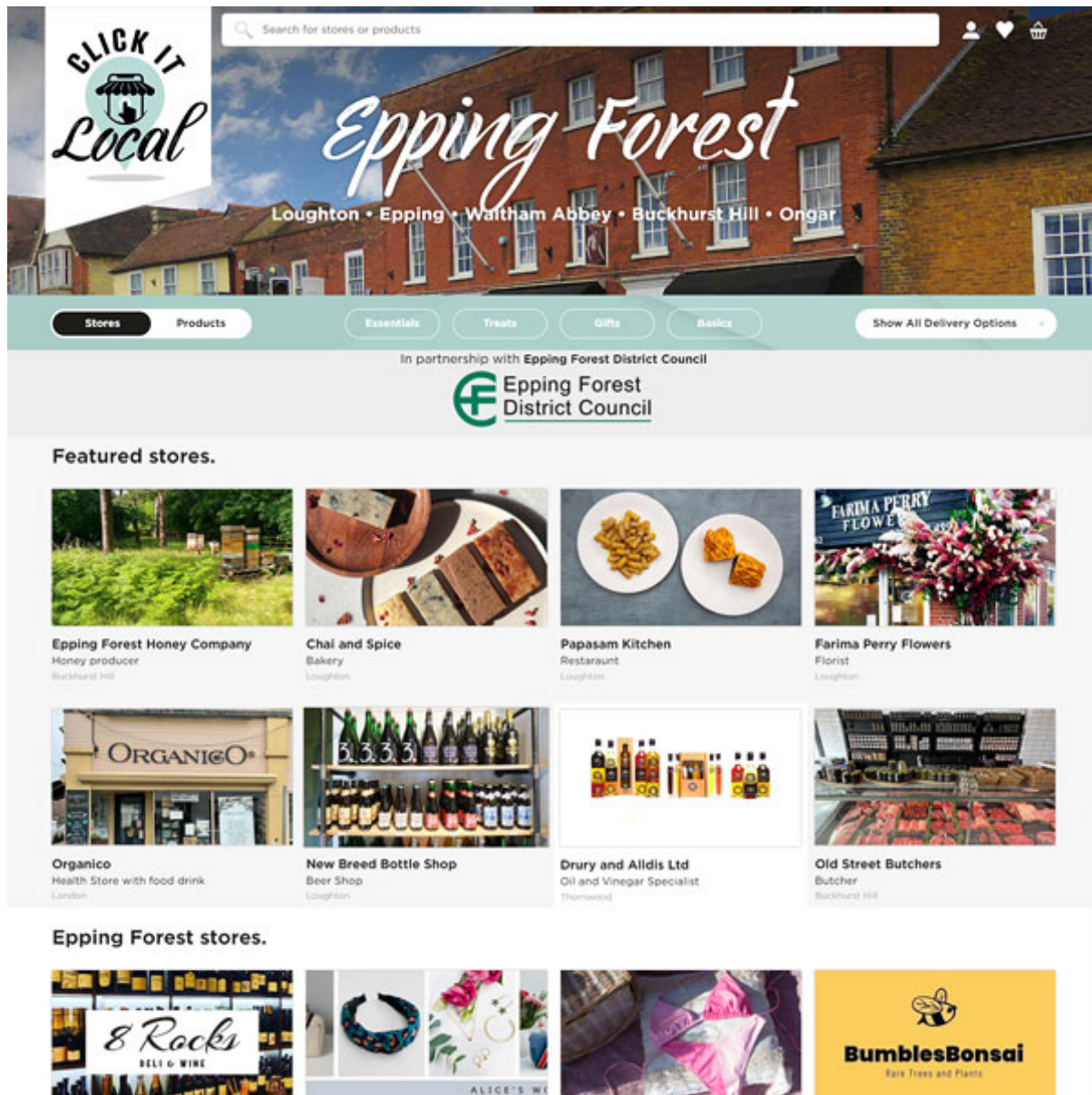
The Essex Business Adaptation Fund is available to help businesses to

adapt to meet the challenges of trading in a COVID environment. Up to £1500 is available to each applicant. Over 130 businesses have already benefited from this grant in Epping Forest with the council paying out over £180,000. Applications have been received for a wide range of adaptations including new protective screens, support with website development, equipment to help trade outside, training etc. The current scheme is scheduled to end on the 1st of July. Further information and application forms are available at: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/business/business-support-grants/essex-business-adaptation-fund-ebaf/> or if you would like to speak to a member of staff for more details please call: **01992 564 264**.

The **Restart Grant** scheme is also available to support businesses for re-opening safely as COVID19 restrictions are lifted. **Eligible businesses in the non-essential retail sector** may be entitled to a one-off cash grant of up to £6,000. **Eligible businesses in the hospitality, leisure and personal care sectors** are eligible for up to £18,000 of support. These grants can make a major difference to our local businesses. Closing date for applications is 30th of June. Please visit this site for more details on eligibility and application forms: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/business/business-support-grants/restart-grant/>

Throughout the pandemic council officers at Epping Forest have been working hard to process grants to local businesses. Almost £50 million in support grants to local businesses have already been made but there are still opportunities to access further financial support and grants. There is information on a wide range of other existing grants on the council's website available here. Please visit this webpage for further information: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/coronavirus/support-for-businesses/>

Click it Local update



Click It Local is a shopping site that allows local independent businesses to sell product online that is then collected and delivered to customers homes the same day. Since launch in our district, more areas across Essex have joined the scheme giving local retailers who have signed up an expanding market in which their products are sold and delivered. The Click It Local business team are visiting our area on a regular basis and keen to make appointments with interested businesses to come and explain the benefits and how easy it is to sign up and take advantage of the special trial offer funded by the council.

Business enquiries / arrange an appointment: Michael Ukaegbu

michael@clickitlocal.co.uk

Website: <https://www.clickitlocal.co.uk/epping-forest>

Reopening high streets



Monday 17th of May saw another successful reopening of businesses on our high streets including the welcome return of much of the hospitality sector. The reopening was supported by the district council with free car parking on all council car parks and our team of high street ambassadors, providing information, advice and guidance to businesses and welcoming visitors and shoppers. Council officers and partners are looking forward to the next potential relaxation date on the 21st of June and will be working on providing support to businesses in and around this key date. We will provide more information on this when available.

Epping Forest Outdoor Hospitality Safety Letter

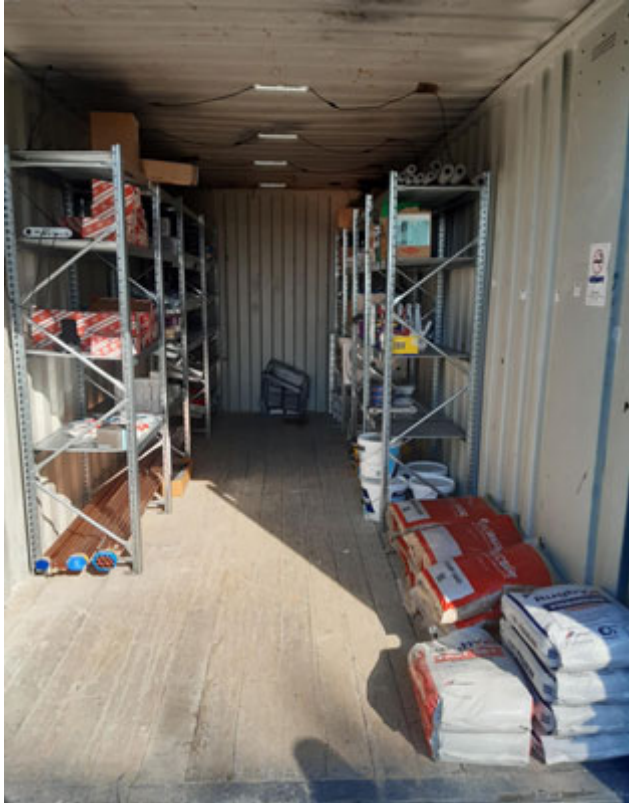
At Epping Forest District Council our team of experienced environmental health officers are here to support businesses and provide free advice on all aspects of H&S, food safety, air quality and compliance with the Coronavirus restrictions as they relate to businesses. The team have compiled a short advice letter for businesses using outside areas and temporary structures to ensure that they are installed correctly and maintained in a safe condition, this includes any additional exterior electrical installations. If you have any queries please contact the team at environmentalhealth@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Town Centre Project Manager - One month in

As we emerge from lockdown, shops are reopening, hospitality is resuming and our town centres are slowly coming back to life. Large numbers of people are still working from home and as a result continue to support their local high street and shops. At Epping Forest District Council, we are doing our utmost to assist our businesses and retailers through a range of initiatives. These include the basic and cosmetic sprucing up of our town centres to increase their attractiveness through to schemes such as Click It Local which enables consumers to support their local shops by shopping on-line and having their purchases delivered to their home. We are now working with town app provider LoyalFree, which will add to the tools available to businesses and town centres, whilst at the same time, encouraging and increasing footfall and trade.

In my new role as Town Centre Manager, I have been out and about within our town centres, talking to retailers and also linking up with the various Town & Parish Councils and Town Centre Partnerships. My aim is to pull together a successful Town Team in each area and use this to drive trade, and as a result the future success of the high street. If you have a contribution or idea you would like to make or would like to have a chat about the needs and requirements of your high street or business, then please do not hesitate to contact me. Paul Messenger Tel: 07973 418001 Email: pmessenger@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Material storage pods to be used to increase efficiency and reduce carbon footprint



In partnership with Buildbase, part of the Grafton builder merchants' group, Qualis Management has installed three material storage pods across the Epping Forest District to improve the efficiency of its service to customers and reduce its carbon footprint.

Working with Buildbase, the pods are being used to hold stock that isn't normally carried on the Qualis Management vans but may be needed to carry out repair work in the homes of customers renting from Epping Forest District Council. The use of the pods means that our team can stay within the area, reducing travel time and speed of service as they don't need to travel to and from the branch to collect materials, therefore increasing efficiency and reducing unnecessary carbon emissions. All pods are also fitted with CCTV.

Ben Johnson, Managing Director of Qualis Management said, "This innovation has been set up to improve the efficiency of our service and the time it takes to complete jobs for our customers. The pods will work in similar way to a warehouse, but on a much smaller scale.

“When the operative arrives, they can select the items they need and scan them onto their van stock. This allows products to be fully audited and stock to be replenished by Buildbase Hub in Harlow when required. In addition we are trialling solar panels on one of the pods to generate the electricity needed to run the pod, with a view of introducing this to the other pods in the future.”

Visit Epping Forest





As lockdown eases and people start to think about holidays, caution and restrictions have led to the rise of the 'staycation' and a new interest in our district as a destination for days out and a place to stay and explore. The district's tourism and visitor website, www.visitteppingforest.org, has seen a recent increase in traffic to pages devoted to accommodation, things to do and travel information. The site is also being visited from people across the country from as far away as Glasgow. This is encouraging news, not only for our beleaguered hospitality industry and attractions, but for our high streets where increased footfall will aid recovery. The desire to get back out and enjoy the place in which we live is an indication of the very real opportunity we have to resume previous growth and surpass the £242 million that the tourism economy was worth to our district before the pandemic.

To help promote our town centres as destinations, a new section has been created on the website to highlight the individual character and warm welcome of our towns and villages.

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Update



Experts in Business

Tackling late payments

Late payments are an age-old menace for small businesses. FSB research showed that 50,000 SME's go bust every year as a result of late payments with more than £23.4 billion currently owed. This problem has been worsened by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK's transition from the EU, with clients delaying payment as they rein in their finances. A staggering 62 per cent of small businesses surveyed by FSB said that they have experienced either an increase in late payments and/or had payments completely frozen as a direct result of the pandemic.

The matter has been highlighted by FSB who called on the Government to mandate that any large companies receiving significant financial aid should commit to a small business supplier charter, including the provision that all payments are made within 30 days (currently the limit is 30 days for public sector and 60 days for the commercial sector).

Addressing the issue

Currently small businesses have three main options for chasing late payments: negotiation with the debtor, civil court action and statutory demand and steps to wind up the debtor. All are effective to a certain degree. Ultimately, the most effective means of securing payment is through direct discussion with the debtor.

FSB has worked with the British Services Association (BSA) on a [new supply chain guide for businesses](#). The document highlights some of the challenges faced by smaller firms, identifying routes to collaborative working across areas such as prompt payment, alignment of objectives and relationship building.

FSB Debt Recovery can help navigate the debt recovery process and give you the tools to take control of your debt. For more information visit www.fsb.org.uk/benefits.

Zero Emission Vehicles for Businesses/Fleets

The district council has made a climate emergency declaration and there is an imperative to see less pollution from vehicles travelling through the Forest (Special Area of Conservation). In addition, national and London administrations are planning and deploying measures that will affect many of our local businesses if they use vehicles as part of their business activities. A confirmed measure from October 2021 is the extended ULEZ zone into the area bounded by the A406 and will mean £12.50 daily entry charge for [non-exempt vehicles](#). There is a possible future extended LEZ zone charge to the Greater London boundary involving a separate and additional charge to non-London residents, but this is probably some time off if indeed it happens.

We want to help businesses consider the benefits of converting fleets to low and ideally zero emission fleets, but also the barriers to adoption. We believe there are compelling business reasons for fleets (taxis, delivery, service vans etc) to consider converting to fully electric fleets, starting with running and maintenance/repair/servicing costs being much lower than diesel/petrol and avoidance of ULEZ type road use charging. One major barrier we are looking to start solving as soon as possible is the relative lack of public and workplace charging points in the District. Epping Forest has the second highest number of electric vehicles (EV) on the roads in Essex, but we are well behind the national average on public charging points per 100k population. This means that most current EV users are able to charge at home or at the workplace, but others who do not have such facilities are being held back on adoption. We hope to have good news soon on installation of both 'rapid' public chargers (80% charge in 30-45 minutes) and 'fast' chargers (full charge overnight) and want to

hear from businesses on what else we need to do, potentially with partners such as Essex County Council, to help that transition.

We will publicise business and industry-specific surveys and engagement on EV adoption in the next edition, but to voice any concerns or comments now, please email Transport@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Updates from the Digital Innovation Zone



Cyber Security

[Cyber security: advice for small businesses](#): Guidance for small businesses on how to put simple cyber security measures in place.

Cyber security needn't be a daunting challenge for small business owners. Following the quick and easy steps in this guidance, produced by the National Cyber Security Centre, will help protect your money and data online, and could save time and even your business's reputation.

38% of small businesses suffered a cyber breach or attack in the past 12 months, with the average cost for those that lost data or assets standing at £8,170 ([source](#)). Taking action today can significantly reduce the chances of your business becoming a victim of cyber-crime.

[Small Business Guide - cyber security](#)

The DIZ is keen to engage with local businesses to ensure that it's programmes are meeting real local need. For more information on how to engage with the DIZ and its work programme, contact mwarr@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
DIZ Twitter link: <https://twitter.com/DizMatters>
More information on the DIZ and its work is available at: <https://diz.org.uk/>

Keep up to date with business support:

UK Government- Business Support

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

Please visit this page for all the latest government announcements around business support, and guidance for adapting to COVID in the workplace.

Essex County Council- Testing for Small businesses

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/getting-tested-for-covid-19/workplace-testing>

All Essex businesses with under 50 employees can set up their own lateral flow testing for employees in the workplace who can't work from home. Businesses will be required to set up a designated testing area on their premises, which Essex County Council can support with.

Best Growth Hub

<https://southeastbusiness.org.uk/essex-southend-thurrock/>

Best Growth Hub provides a local team of Business Support Navigators that can help you identify and access relevant programmes, initiatives, or funding schemes currently on offer across Essex. The Business Support Navigators also provide 12 weeks of free advice for businesses seeking to scale up.

Let's Do Business Start Up

<https://www.letsdobusinessgroup.co.uk/>

The Let's Do Business (South East) Group Limited is a Social Enterprise helping businesses to start-up and grow throughout the South East of England. It offers services such as finance and support for businesses starting out, training courses, as well as exhibitions providing an opportunity for small businesses to showcase products.

Essex Police Business Crime Team launch their 'Open for Business, Closed for Crime' campaign

<https://www.essex.police.uk/news/essex/news/news/2021/april/essex-return-to-retail/>

Through 'Open for Business, Closed for Crime', Essex Police are working with businesses and their staff, from management to the shop floor, encouraging businesses to report incidents to them.

Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce

<https://www.eppingforestchamber.co.uk/>

The Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce is a representative body run for local businesses and by local businesses.

