

# FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

June 1, 2020

### Council opens new business discretionary grant fund for applications

Small businesses which missed out on Government premises-based funding to help them cope with the impact of coronavirus are being invited to apply for new discretionary grants.

Fenland District Council has been allocated £985,000 from the Government to provide extra support to small and micro businesses through a Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund.

The grant is aimed at businesses which were not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

Businesses which were not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund may be entitled to a discretionary grant, including those who have received funding through the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention (furlough) Scheme or the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, subject to eligibility criteria.

An online application window for the discretionary grants opens at 10am on **Monday, June 1, and will run until 9am on Monday, June 22.**

To support local businesses as quickly as possible, a grant payment of £2,500 will be paid to all applicants that meet the basic eligibility criteria and fall within any of the following priority types of businesses:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, such as units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators which do not have their own business rates assessment
- Long-term market traders (at any of Fenland's four statutory markets) with fixed costs, such as rent, who do not have their own business rates assessment
- Bed and Breakfast businesses which pay council tax instead of business rates
- Small charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief
- Local economic priority businesses with significant operations in or substantially supplying the following sectors:
  - Agri-tech, such as food production, food processing, food packaging, food security, horticulture and food technology
  - Specialist manufacturing, electronics and advanced and precision engineering

After the application window closes and all initial grants have been paid, any remaining funding will be quickly distributed to applicants from shared offices, bed and breakfasts and local economic priority businesses up to the value of £7,500 (maximum total grant of £10,000).

The online application form, plus full guidance on how the Council will distribute the discretionary grant fund, is available at: [www.fenland.gov.uk/discretionarybusinessgrants](http://www.fenland.gov.uk/discretionarybusinessgrants)

To be eligible, businesses must have been trading on or before March 11, 2020, and be either continuing to trade now or intending to re-open; have a rateable value or annual rental commitments of below £51,000 and have ongoing fixed property costs.

It is not available to businesses which are eligible for or have received funds from any other Government COVID-19 grant, other than from the furlough scheme or the self-employment income support scheme.

Cllr Chris Boden, Leader of Fenland District Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, said: “We have already distributed more than £17million in Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants to over 1,700 businesses, but there are others out there which fell outside the scope of these original schemes and are still desperate for help.

“These discretionary grants will be a welcome extension to the support package we have already provided to local businesses, especially for the small and micro enterprises and the agri-tech and specialist engineering businesses which characterise so much of Fenland’s unique economy.”

Meanwhile, the Council is still accepting applications from eligible businesses for the Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. To apply for these, visit: [www.fenland.gov.uk/coronavirusbusinessgrants](http://www.fenland.gov.uk/coronavirusbusinessgrants)

Any businesses requiring help or advice regarding any of the grant schemes can contact the Council on 01354 654321.

Alternatively, you can email: [covid19.businessgrants@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:covid19.businessgrants@fenland.gov.uk) (Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants) or [discretionarybusinessgrants@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:discretionarybusinessgrants@fenland.gov.uk) (Discretionary Grant Fund).

**ENDS**

**For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226**