

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

June 8, 2020

Discretionary business grants: Call to apply as first grants are paid out

Fenland District Council has paid out the first grants from its new Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund to help support small businesses during the coronavirus crisis.

Successful businesses will receive the funding in their bank accounts later this week.

The Council has been allocated £985,000 from the Government for the fund, which aims to provide extra support to small and micro businesses which missed out on the earlier premises-based funding.

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 form, including the criteria businesses need to meet, plus guidance on how the Council is distributing the discretionary grant fund, is available at: www.fenland.gov.uk/discretionarybusinessgrants. **The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday, June 22.**

To support local businesses as quickly as possible, a grant payment of £2,500 is 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 on June 22 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).

Cllr Chris Boden, Leader of Fenland District Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, said: “These discretionary grants have provided 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.

“I would urge businesses to check if they're eligible as soon as possible and apply before the application window closes on June 22. Remember, these are grants and do not need to be paid back. They are there to help you meet any ongoing business costs and challenges you are facing due to the coronavirus pandemic.”

Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

The Council is still accepting claims for the ongoing Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. To date, more than £17.7million in these premises-based grants has been paid to 1580 businesses. For more information and to make a claim, visit: 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 (Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants) or discretionarybusinessgrants@fenland.gov.uk (Discretionary Grant Fund).

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