

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

October 15, 2020

Fenland District Council maintains open door to support businesses

Fenland District Council is continuing to work with local businesses to help them keep their premises, staff and customers safe amid the ongoing coronavirus challenges.

The authority's Environmental Health team has been on hand throughout the pandemic to help businesses follow COVID-19 guidance, helping protect local people and giving the public much-needed peace of mind when out and about.

Businesses can now be fined up to £10,000 for failing to abide to the Government's coronavirus regulations, while fines for individuals breaking the 'rule of six' or failing to wear a face mask have been doubled to £200 for the first offence.

The Council's additional support for businesses is being funded by the Government's Reopening High Streets Safely Fund, which is providing £50 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to councils across England to support the continued safe reopening of high streets.

Cllr Samantha Hoy, the Council's Portfolio Holder responsible for Environmental Health, said: "After an incredibly difficult few months for our local businesses, I am proud to see how well they have adapted to the changes coronavirus has brought.

"Our Environmental Health team continues to help businesses make themselves COVID secure, playing a vital role in helping to keep infection rates down in Fenland and ensuring these vital local businesses are able to continue to operate."

- Any businesses which need advice and support can contact the team on 01354 654321 or via email at: envhealth@fenland.co.uk

One of the many businesses that has worked hard to welcome customers back safely is Tranquility beauty salon in Park Street, Chatteris. Owner Tasha Parsley said the help she received from one of the Environmental Health officers to become COVID secure was invaluable.

"Before reopening (after lockdown) I invited Russell, an Environmental Health officer at Fenland District Council into my business," she said. "As a business owner it was important to me that I ensured I was doing everything I could to allow my business to reopen safely and securely, for myself and my client's peace of mind.

"Russell was very approachable and knowledgeable with all matters relating to environmental health and the government guidelines on COVID. This gave me full confidence that I was able to offer a range of services in a safe environment with minimal risk to clients and myself. Without the support of Russell, I would have doubted whether I'd interpreted the guidelines correctly. It was also great to share with my clients that Environmental Health had given Tranquility a green light to open."

Some of the measures Tasha introduced into her salon were not new to her industry, such as disinfecting and sterilising tools, frequent hand washing and cleaning down surfaces between clients, but she stepped them up further in line with the guidance.

Other measures include pre-treatment COVID assessments to ensure clients haven't got any symptoms or been in contact with anyone who has tested positive, a 'one-in, one-out' client policy, full PPE for therapists (mask, visor, apron and gloves), and a touch-free hand washing station.

There are also floor stickers in the salon to aid social distancing, screens at reception, contactless payments and an online booking facility, plus eco-friendly bamboo and biodegradable disposable towels/bedding. Clients can also use the NHS COVID-19 app to scan the salon's NHS Test and Trace QR code.

Tasha said her clients have been more than happy to abide by the guidelines and been grateful of the extra measures put in place to enable them to return safely.

"I'm so humble and grateful that clients have felt confident enough to return for their treatments," she said. "Many of my clients have said they don't feel confident enough to go to a big shopping centre but have felt comfortable nipping to their local beauty or hair salon, bakers, tearoom or restaurant."

"Hopefully support from our communities will help keep our high streets busy and encourage new businesses to open," she added. "We need to support our small and independent businesses more than ever. It's not good enough to be disappointed when another shop disappears from our town centres, they need supporting long before that."

ENDS

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