

# Supporting Evesham Businesses through the COVID-19 lockdown

## EVESHAM BUSINESS SUPPORT FEEDBACK

### In May, local businesses owners were asked to share their thoughts on predicted challenges they may face when re-opening after lockdown.

From the responses, several confidential, in-depth support calls took place. These included signposting the financial support available, discussing protective equipment needed to re-open safely and ideas for diversifying business offerings.

### Positive Promotion

The VECTA 'Evesham Loyalty Card Scheme', which operated during the Abbey Bridge replacement, was recollected by some respondents, praising its part in helping to promote the town and encourage visitors, during that challenging time. They wondered perhaps a similar scheme should be considered in the coming months to help Evesham's independent traders bounce back?

The 'Love Local Business' Campaign, launched by the Evesham Journal (11th June 2020) is calling on local people to support local businesses to recover. The paper intends to promote some of the Vale businesses during the next few weeks, as they reopen.

The Cotswold & Vale Magazine have confirmed that they would be very happy to work with VECTA, Wychavon District Council and local businesses/organisations to support the town during these unprecedented times.

We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas on how we could achieve this?

### Environmental Impact

Some business owners also expressed concerns about the ongoing environmental impact of the amount of disposable PPE required over a period of several months, or longer.

### Car Parking

It was suggested that the free parking concession, already offered by Wychavon District Council, should be extended to continue to support town centre businesses as they reopen and work hard to recover.

### Financial Support

Some business owners were not aware of the full range of financial assistance available from the Government. Including; the Job Retention Scheme, Deferral of Tax Payments, Business Rates Relief, Business Support Grants, Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Bounce Back Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Future Fund and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

The new Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund supports small businesses that are not eligible for other grant schemes.

One small independent Evesham business actually found that they should already have been receiving the Small Business Rates Relief, and have been paying full rates for many years.

They have since received a refund of several thousand pounds and are now exempt from paying business rates altogether. As a result of qualifying for small business rates relief, they became eligible for a £10,000 government grant, via Wychavon District Council.

VECTA were also able to highlight their eligibility for a low interest Bounce Back Loan of up to £50,000 to support their recovery and protect the future.

Seeing the value of local support, they have now joined VECTA.

### Additional Costs

Most of the businesses that we have spoken to have already ordered PPE and have made plans for new signage, distancing markers, screens/shields, etc. Some local, small independent business owners expect these additional costs to be in the region of £1,000.00.

During the lockdown, it seems that businesses shared concerns about the availability of PPE supplies, although this appears to be gradually improving at the time of writing.

For the latest official help, advice and guidance – please subscribe to receiving newsletters from Wychavon District Council: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWYCHAVON/subscriber/new>

### Who are VECTA?

For over 30 years VECTA has been supporting the Vale of Evesham businesses, by lobbying the Council for improvements to the town, getting involved in decisions that effect the area and putting effort and funds into helping the town's many events and festivals.

Members are all unpaid volunteers who want to develop Evesham into a vibrant place to live, thrive and survive – meeting for an hour every month topics are discussed and actions planned. We want to listen to your opinions, they are all important. If you are interested in finding out more, email: [SupportingEvesham@VECTA.info](mailto:SupportingEvesham@VECTA.info)





