

19th June 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

RESTRICTED OPENING OF PUBS & RESTAURANTS

We are looking for your help and assistance in the re-opening of the pubs and restaurants across the County.

Most Council staff are working remotely and therefore it causes problems trying to do a mailshot. Like most we are looking at alternative ways that we can communicate with premises. We are hopefully that by contacting you, you can pass this information on, to either your local Chamber of Commerce/Trade, or even directly yourselves, to the operators in your area, using your local knowledge.

It is not just pubs which need our support but also the smaller retailers who may be operating a café or similar.

This is the information we would like to share with them:

As you will be aware, the Government may allow bars, pubs, cafes & restaurants to re-open in the near future, potentially on Saturday 4th July. However, there is still some debate as to when this will actually be, what social distancing measurement will be adopted and in what form.

Whatever the case, it is almost certain that there will be a requirement to maintain some form of social distancing (currently set at 2 metres separation), although there is speculation that this may be reduced before the 4th July. It is clear that whatever measures are put in place, the internal standing or seating capacity of your premises is likely to be considerably reduced and this in turn will raise challenges for your business. One of the ways forward could be to utilise outside areas, such as pavements and other open spaces. Herefordshire Council are therefore looking to work with you to consider the feasibility of increasing the amount of available space in the market towns that may be used for pavement cafes and bars and would encourage you to consider this an option for you.

Both the Council as the licensing authority and the police are keen to support reasonable proposals, but want to ensure that this is done in a safe way, which will protect both your customers and your staff, as well as the public and local residents. This is likely to take the form of a variation for those businesses with a Premises License for alcohol, although we may suggest temporary event notices are applied for in the short term.

Regardless of alcohol being served or not, there will also be a requirement to acquire a pavement café licence from the Council if you intend to apply for 6 or more items of furniture to be placed on the highway or public realm, i.e. tables and/or chairs.

We are also considering how planning rules can be initially relaxed to facilitate outdoor seating for the hospitality sector and will be able to advise on this in due course, as we wish to support and encourage businesses to utilise the open space in our historic city centre.

Herefordshire Council's officers and the police are keen to engage with premises to discuss plans for reopening and would be available to visit your premises and offer free technical advice as to how this could be best achieved. Therefore, if you wish to expand seating into public spaces we would like you to draw up your proposals as a scaled plan drawing of where tables and seating could be located. We suggest this plan is based on two scenarios; firstly if social distancing remains at a distance of 2 metres and secondly if the government relaxes it to a distance of 1 metre.

Once you have done that please email licensing@herefordshire.gov.uk with the name of your premises, your name and phone number and if possible your plans and proposal. One of the officers will then contact you and make an appointment to come and visit you as soon as possible and free of charge.

In the meantime, we are aware that our highway colleagues on the reallocation of road space are independently consulting the market towns, which may help support any proposals for outdoor pavement seating.

I hope this letter is of assistance and will help you to make your business viable in the face of these Covid-19 restrictions.

Yours faithfully,

**FRED SPRIGGS
PRINCIPAL LICENSING OFFICER
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & TRADING STANDARDS**

**PC 2368 CHRIS LEE
MATES/Licensing Officer
HARM HUB HEREFORD POLICE STATION**