

**April 2020**

**Inside: the latest information and  
advice about COVID-19**



**Thank you  
for staying  
at home**

# Message from Cllr Elizabeth Campbell, Leader of the Council

**These are extraordinary times we find ourselves in as we face the biggest national crisis of a generation.**

I know these are anxious and uncertain days for many of our residents and businesses and we are doing all that we can to support you through this pandemic.

I'm really pleased that our residents are listening to government advice and are staying home and staying safe. This is especially important for our more vulnerable residents.

To the many local voluntary and community groups who are playing their part in the community, to our NHS staff who are working tirelessly to attend to the sick, to the volunteers who have given their time for free and to local people who are helping neighbours with shopping and medical supplies, I want to say thank you. By working together we will ensure our borough comes through these extremely worrying times.

We too are playing our part and have announced we will be adding a further £500k to our Hardship Fund for those who need emergency financial support due to Covid-19, we won't be taking tenancy enforcement action for three months if you are struggling to pay your rent and we are providing up to £150 extra relief for households that already receive a Council Tax reduction.

We are also making £100k each month available for the next four months for Council tenants struggling to pay their rent and service charges including heating costs.

Our Covid-19 hub has been set up to support our clinically vulnerable residents to ensure they have access to food and essential medical supplies and you can read more about that on page four.

We have also issued more than 2000 virtual permits to key workers including our NHS staff and are keeping streets clear of obstructions for emergency vehicles and key workers.

We also know that being at home for long periods of time can be challenging, so we have uploaded a number of different activities to our website to keep the mind and body active. Please do keep an eye on our social media feeds for more on our Together K&C campaign.

We have put together a strong package of support for our business community and you can read more about that on page three.

I want to assure you that the Council, alongside the NHS, government and of course our exceptional community groups and volunteers, is working tirelessly to ensure services adapt to changing regulations, and that residents are informed and supported.



## Hardship fund to help those affected by Coronavirus

**If you have been affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and feel you need financial support, you may be entitled to support through the Council's Hardship Fund. The Council has announced that it will boost this fund by £500k, on top of funding from central Government.**

This is an existing fund which the Council has had in place for a number of years, but the criteria is being expanded to ensure that we can help more people who have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and need our support to make ends meet.

You can find the latest information on how to apply for this fund on the Coronavirus page of the Council website under 'Support for hardship or difficulties.' Visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus)

You can also apply over the telephone on **020 7745 6464** between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. We are seeing an increase in calls and we are dealing with them as quickly as possible.

### Supporting businesses during the Coronavirus pandemic

If you own a business in the borough or are self-employed, we know that this will be a tough time for trading and you personally. We've gathered all of the key information that you need to know and sources of support that are available to you on our website, from business rates, to finance, benefits, and the latest government announcements that impact you.

We are here to support you and the local economy.

Visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus) and click 'Advice for businesses and the self-employed.'

# Supporting businesses during the Coronavirus pandemic

**We know it is a really tough time for business owners and self-employed people, who are so valuable to our community and local economy in Kensington and Chelsea.**

It is a priority for the Council to do what we can to help you retain your livelihoods during the Coronavirus pandemic and we want to make sure that you know about the support that is out there for you.

Read Lead Member for Skills and Enterprise, Cllr Catherine Faulks' full open letter to businesses at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom-rbkc](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom-rbkc).

## The Council is:

- Delivering around £41 million in government grants to our businesses
- Delivering the 2020/21 business rates holiday promised by Government to around 2,700 businesses in retail, leisure and hospitality
- Suspended rents for businesses in Council owned commercial property and storage units for three months
- Suspended invoicing for those using Council commercial waste service
- Given permanent market traders a rent holiday for 12 weeks
- Given temporary traders a guarantee that they won't need to maintain their attendance record during lockdown
- Continuing to run our Council-funded business support including:
  - ▣ Portobello Business Centre: offering business advice in virtual one-to-one sessions. Visit [pbc.co.uk](http://pbc.co.uk) or call **020 7460 5050** to find out more.
  - ▣ RBKC Supply Chain: supporting small local businesses and suppliers to get tender ready and to access opportunities with local buyers. Visit [rbkcsupplychain.co.uk](http://rbkcsupplychain.co.uk) or call **07891165207** for more information.
- All pubs, restaurants and cafes across the UK can operate as food takeaways without the necessary planning permission for 12 months, just contact the Council to let us know at [planning@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@rbkc.gov.uk).

## Other support through the Government:

- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme delivered through the British Business Bank
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Deferral of VAT payments and self-assessment tax

## Other support at the Council:

**Business rates and related grants:** if you haven't received a letter or can't access your business address contact [covid19businessrates@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:covid19businessrates@rbkc.gov.uk)

## Council-owned commercial property

queries: [propertyinformation@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:propertyinformation@rbkc.gov.uk)

## Council commercial waste service

queries: [commercial.waste@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:commercial.waste@rbkc.gov.uk)

**Market trader queries:** [street.trading@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:street.trading@rbkc.gov.uk)

If you want to find out any more information about the support available or how to access it, visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus) and click on the 'Advice for businesses and the self-employed' tab.

## Stay at home to stop Coronavirus spreading

**Everyone must stay at home to help stop the spread of Coronavirus.**

**This includes people of all ages** – even if you do not have any symptoms or other health conditions.

You can only leave your home:



**to shop for basic essentials** – only when you really need to



**to do one form of exercise a day** – such as a run, walk or cycle, alone or with other people you live with



**for any medical need** – for example, to visit a pharmacy or deliver essential supplies to a vulnerable person



**to travel to and from work** – but only where this is absolutely necessary

If you have to go outside to do essential tasks or exercise, stay at least **two metres** (three steps) away from other people. This is roughly the length of a door.

# Remember fire safety while isolating

**With an increase in people working from home and staying indoors it is important that we consider fire safety when we are adjusting our daily routines.**

The Council will be continuing with planned fire safety improvement works and we are able to fit a smoke alarm for tenants who don't have one, or if theirs is faulty.

Follow these tips on staying safe at home:

- Test your smoke alarms regularly using the 'test' button. If it doesn't work, report immediately to [firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk) or call **0800 137 1111**. If you do not have a smoke alarm, we can help to get you one.
- If you smoke, ensure that your cigarettes are fully and safely extinguished in a suitable ash tray and disposed of carefully.
- Don't overload your plug sockets.
- Use the correct chargers for electrical items, such as laptops or mobile phones.
- Take extra care in the kitchen and never leave cooking unattended.
- Avoid using candles.

You can find more information on the Council website, visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk) and search **fire safety and smoke alarms**.



# Covid-19 Hub begins operating

**The Council has set up a COVID-19 Hub to support vulnerable residents who have been affected by the pandemic.**

The hub is part of the Government's Local Support Scheme to support the 1.5 million people identified by the NHS nationally as being at highest risk of severe illness and for whom self-isolation is most critical.

The main focus of the hub over the past week has been to support those identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable who have to be shielded at home for 12 weeks and may not have support networks in place.

The hub has been reaching out to this group and ensuring

that any urgent needs are met, including delivering food packages to those who don't have someone who can get shopping or medical supplies for them. The Council now has a full list of those in this group and is contacting them individually to ensure they receive the support they need.

Alongside this, we are also working with our partners, including the Government, the NHS and the voluntary and community sector, to support other potentially vulnerable residents, including those who are not on the NHS list but who do not have families or friends to support them. Council services are reaching out to potentially vulnerable service users to check they have the support they need.

If you or someone you know is vulnerable and needs urgent support, you can contact the Covid-19 Hub by email at [C19Hub@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:C19Hub@rbkc.gov.uk) or call our dedicated line on **020 7361 4326**. You can also find more information about the support available from the Council and its partners at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus)



# Quiet nights in Kensington and Chelsea

It's crucial that we all stay home throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, and these photographs taken by a noise enforcement officer show that local people are doing just that.

Usually bustling spots for evening dining, shopping and entertainment are quiet and still, as local people thoughtfully self-isolate to help slow the spread of Coronavirus.

Thank you to everyone who is observing Government advice for the greater good of our community.

Photo credit: [www.instagram.com/s\\_nappe\\_r/](https://www.instagram.com/s_nappe_r/)



## An update from government on Coronavirus and Grenfell

**The information here and on pages six and seven has been provided from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.**

Current events have meant people across the country having to make unprecedented changes to our lifestyles and routines. During this uncertain time, the Government is working to fight Coronavirus, protect the NHS and the public.

- We are continuing essential work to keep the Grenfell Tower site safe and secure, but we are making some changes to reduce those working on-site from coming into contact with each other.
- We are available, by phone and email, to discuss any questions you might have about the Grenfell Tower site, the environmental checks work or the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission. We are temporarily pausing our face-to-face contact with the community and we will resume that as soon as it is safe for everybody to do so.

### What work is taking place at the site?

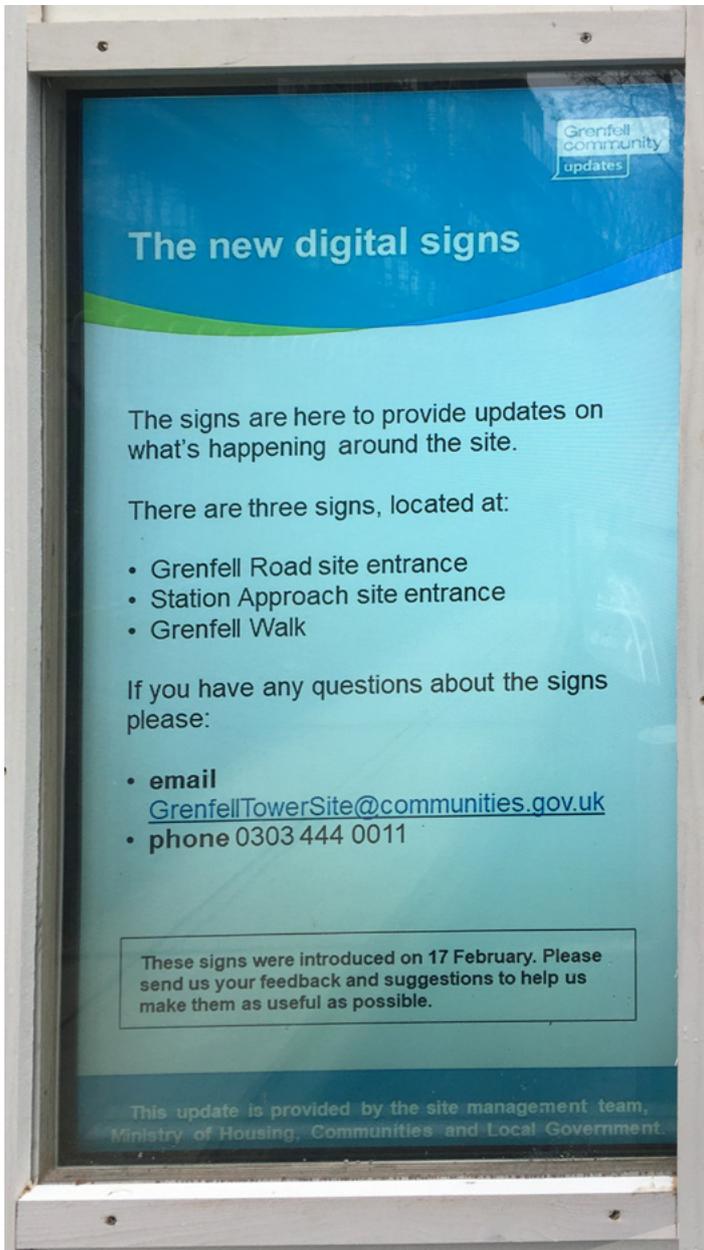
The Grenfell Tower site management team oversees the security, health and safety works. From February, this included replacing the wrapping on the Tower, which was originally due to be completed in April.

In response to Government advice on the Covid-19 pandemic, the re-wrapping of the Tower has been paused to avoid non-essential staff going on-site or using public transport. The re-wrapping progressed well in March, and the remaining 'older' wrapping on the lower floors is in good condition. We do not believe pausing re-wrapping is a cause for concern, but the team is happy to take any questions you might have.

Garage access from Grenfell Road, Testerton Road and Hurstway Road will be restricted for vehicles until further notice. Garages outside of the site cordon on Testerton Road and Hurstway Road can still be accessed by foot. If this restriction affects you, the site team can provide more information.

All other safety and security arrangements for the site remain unchanged.

# An update from Government on Coronavirus and Grenfell: continued



## What is happening with the environmental checks?

The environmental checks are a two-stage programme to investigate possible land contamination around the Grenfell Tower site and any potential risk to public health. Stage 1 found that the levels of chemicals in the soil were consistent with those generally found in London.

To help reduce uncertainty about the health risks, Stage 2 will involve more detailed testing and AECOM, an independent environmental specialist company, is being appointed to undertake this work.

Air quality monitoring has also been in place since June 2017 and has not identified any cause for concern.

We are now reviewing our plans for Stage 2 to see when and how this work can continue safely and how residents can be involved, in response to the latest Government advice on Covid-19. We will keep you updated on our plans and you can also contact us using the details below.

## How to get more information

The team responsible for the Grenfell Tower site and environmental checks has been holding sessions at The Curve Community Centre every Wednesday from 10am to 2pm. We have paused those sessions to reduce face-to-face contact, but we continue to be available to you over the phone and by email.

Digital signs were installed around the Grenfell Tower site on Monday 17 February and will continue to be updated with relevant information. Please send us your feedback to help us make the signs as useful as possible.

**The latest guidance and advice from the Council on Coronavirus,** including information on service disruptions and support services, is available on the Council website.

Visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus)



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

# An update on the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission

**The Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission is made up of bereaved family members, survivors and residents. It will work with the community to develop ideas for a future memorial.**

The community representatives have selected two independent co-chairs, Thelma Stober and Michael Lockwood, and they were announced in February.

The Commission ran a series of community events in February and its work will continue during this challenging period. Please see the Commission's website for more information, [www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk](http://www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk)

To get in touch with the Memorial Commission's secretariat, email [GTMCsecretariat@communities.gov.uk](mailto:GTMCsecretariat@communities.gov.uk) or phone **0303 444 4831**

For more information, visit [www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk](http://www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk)

To receive updates on the Commission's work, sign up to the mailing list on the 'contact' page.

The team will keep you informed of any developments and will respond to any queries as soon as possible.

Take care of yourselves, your families and neighbours.

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**

## How to get in touch or sign up for updates

**For the site management team:**

Email [GrenfellTowerSite@communities.gov.uk](mailto:GrenfellTowerSite@communities.gov.uk)  
Phone **0303 444 0011**

**For the environmental checks team:**

Email [environmental-checks@communities.gov.uk](mailto:environmental-checks@communities.gov.uk)  
Phone **0303 444 9086**

**For the latest Government information on Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

For the latest information and advice from the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL):

[www.cnwl.nhs.uk/coronavirus-update](http://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/coronavirus-update)

If you're anxious or need to talk to someone call the **Grenfell Health and Wellbeing Service** on **020 8637 6279** or email [grenfell.wellbeingservice@nhs.net](mailto:grenfell.wellbeingservice@nhs.net)

If you have a CNWL appointment and would prefer to do this by phone, call **020 8637 6279**

You can also visit [www.nextdoor.co.uk](http://www.nextdoor.co.uk) and search for 'Grenfell Community Updates – HM Government'. We'll let you know when the drop-in

## Parks are now only open for walking, running and dog walking. All other facilities have been closed.

The following are therefore unavailable:

-  public toilets
-  sports facilities (tennis courts and games areas and outdoor gyms)
-  drinking fountains
-  water play areas
-  cafés and kiosks

Please think about protecting others and also avoiding adding more pressure to the NHS. Don't abuse the parks or they will have to close.

Find the latest information on our website

[www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus) Or follow us on **twitter @RBKC**



# Artwork from home

**Voluntary Arts has nearly 30 years' experience of remote working, working at home and supporting a distributed network of staff, freelancers and volunteers.**

On 17 March, they launched Creative Network, a daily online get-together open to anyone involved in arts, culture and creativity who would welcome the opportunity to talk to others about dealing with the impact of Coronavirus on creatives, the challenges of working from home and what we can do together to make the most of difficult circumstances.

Daily gatherings take place via Zoom from 9.30am to 10.30am each weekday, and you can join in with the conversation anytime via social media using **#CreativeNetwork**.

Ideas and suggested resources have been captured and shared on the Creative Network website, covering everything from creative projects to do from home, digital working solutions and resources for freelancers, book recommendations, online exhibitions and podcasts.

▶ To join gatherings simply click 'Join' on the Voluntary Arts webpage below (Chrome browser works best) or download the Zoom app on your smartphone, then click the 'Join' link.

## You can now follow Kensington and Chelsea Council on Instagram

**Ready for a host of dazzling photos of our borough?**

We're already on **Twitter, Facebook and Nextdoor** and now we're ready to take Instagram by storm! We've officially launched our Instagram account to highlight our beautiful borough and the cultural offerings that await. Focused on what our residents enjoy the most, we look forward to celebrating the things you love in Kensington and Chelsea. Make sure you follow us by searching the handle **@kensingtonandchelseacouncil** on **Instagram**. And if you find yourself in a photo worthy spot, share content with us by using the hashtag **#OurRBKC** and tagging us in your photos.

**Let the delightful Instagram feed of Kensington and Chelsea begin!**

 [@voluntaryarts](https://twitter.com/voluntaryarts)  
 [info@voluntaryarts.org](mailto:info@voluntaryarts.org)  
 [www.voluntaryarts.org/creativenetwork](http://www.voluntaryarts.org/creativenetwork)

## About your North Ken News

### Staying in touch

There are ways to keep up to date with borough-wide news as well as updates and announcements from Kensington and Chelsea Council.

 [@RBKC](https://twitter.com/ourrbkc)  
 [www.facebook.com/royalborough](https://www.facebook.com/royalborough)  
 [www.nextdoor.co.uk](http://www.nextdoor.co.uk)

### For updates on Grenfell

 [@GrenfellUpdates](https://twitter.com/GrenfellUpdates)  
 [www.rbkc.gov.uk/grenfell](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/grenfell)

If you would like to opt out of receiving North Ken News or would prefer to read it online, please let us know at [northkennews@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:northkennews@rbkc.gov.uk)

### Subscribe to K&C Life, our monthly newsletter

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter for the latest information that's relevant to your life in Kensington and Chelsea. Discover what's on, learn about our latest initiatives and receive updates about our services.

To find out more about our newsletter or to join the mailing list, visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk) and search **K&C Life**.