

COVID19: News and Information for the local Construction Community

Issue 2:1st April 2020

Our intention is to provide a united front to help support local construction and built environment businesses and individuals, through the ongoing repercussions of the COVID-19 coronavirus for our sector.

Through this bulletin, we plan to provide a regular centralised, factual, relevant and robust source of official information. We can share intelligence to help us both now and to plan for the future. We want to create a forum for feedback with Plymouth City Council. We need to understand the implications for skills and employment. We must stay positive about our world post COVID-19 and we can help each other do so through staying in touch.



Welcome!

Hello, how are you doing? Thank you for your positive feedback to our first bulletin launched last week. We hope this regular communication will be a supportive way for us to stay connected during this challenging time – and provide something helpful and interesting to read during lockdown. We welcome your ideas for content and are happy to help support in any way we can. Please help us share this bulletin widely through your own networks.

We are starting Plymouth centric in our approach but as official information emerges from neighbouring areas then this bulletin's reach may potentially expand geographically.

Stay safe, stay in touch!

Emma Hewitt
Building Plymouth Skills Co-ordinator



Official Government Updates

27/03/20 - Further details of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme announced

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

29/03/20 - UK Announces New Insolvency Laws

Over the weekend, the Business Secretary announced that UK Insolvency Laws will be changed. The changes will give businesses "extra time to weather the storm" and give comfort to directors who, challenged with trading through a difficult cash flow period, will not face claims for wrongful trading.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

Summary of support available from UK government

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

FAQs on UK government support measures

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)

CBILS provides financial support to smaller businesses (SMEs) across the UK that are losing revenue, and seeing their cashflow disrupted, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The scheme is a part of a wider package of government support for UK businesses and employees.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)



Official Plymouth City Council updates

27/03/20 - Below is a link to the latest Economic Development business support newsletter with the COVID-19 updates

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

27/03/20 - Support for businesses affected by COVID-19

We're writing to local businesses eligible for support through the Government's new Small Business Grants Fund. We estimate that around 3,500 businesses across the city will qualify for grants of up to £25,000. We want to help them access this financial help as soon as possible to get them through the current uncertainties created by COVID-19.

In order to ensure that PCC can process grants as quickly as possible, letters have been issued to businesses with a Unique PIN to input into their grant application. Visiting your business premises to collect your letter is considered a legitimate reason to leave the house, and Police have been informed that these letters have been sent out to business addresses. A follow up email will be sent this week to all businesses that we have email addresses for, and have updated the **Business Grant FAQ page** with contact details so that you can get in touch with us to make alternative arrangements to receive your letter, if you aren't able to collect it or it hasn't arrived.

For more information about the business support available from Plymouth City Council, visit investplymouth.co.uk/covid-19.

Business rates bills and payments

Council Leader Tudor Evans has already announced that all business rates payments will be deferred until June 2020 meaning that we will not expect any payments to be made until then. Any Direct Debits which are in place do not need to be cancelled, please rest assured that we will not be taking any payments by Direct Debit until June 2020, as will be detailed in the updated bill you will receive from us. The business rates bill for 2020/21 which you recently received may not be correct and we will be reissuing all bills before payment is due in June 2020. We are working hard to ensure that all bills are rescheduled so that there are 10 monthly instalments starting from June 2020 until March 2021. There is a statutory duty to bill so bills are arriving.

For more information about business rates, visit plymouth.gov.uk/businesses/businessrates

David Draffan, Service Director of Economic Development

David Draffan, Service Director of Economic Development, Plymouth City Council has released his latest blog on Linked in which brings you up to speed with PCC action and response to the government announcements:

30/03/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)

27/03/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)

25/03/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)

24/03/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)

You can register directly for the PCC Economic Development newsletter here : [CLICK HERE for the Economic Development Newsletter](#)

Planning matters

The latest information on dealing with Plymouth's planning applications and building control can be found [HERE](#)

Planning Site Visits & Site Notices:

As a result of the Government's announcements of measures to minimise the spread of the COVID-19 Corona Virus, it has been necessary to review current site visits until such a time that the Government advises us that normal business arrangements can resume. This includes going on site to put up site notices. The only exception will be undertaking a planning enforcement investigation where a potential life safety issue has been confirmed. However no decision will be made on a planning application that requires neighbour notification until we are in a position to display a site notice and given a deadline for comments to be received.

Building Control - Site inspections suspended:

As a result of COVID-19 PCC are keeping all operations under constant view and amending them as required in line with the best available information. With immediate effect Plymouth Building Control will not be conducting on site inspections until such a time that the Government advises us that normal business arrangements can resume. The only exceptions will be: attendance at a dangerous structure incident where a potential life safety issue has been confirmed, and a statutory or completion on site inspection at a Covid-19 construction project.

Demonstrating compliance through virtual inspections

PCC want to continue to support the construction sector where building work is taking place at home or a workplace. We have therefore implemented processes for our surveyors to conduct virtual inspections where we will still require contact at certain stages of the build to assess compliance. We are fully IT enabled to accept video calling, photographs or other types of communications.

We ask that a request for a site inspection is the normal manner by calling **01752 304343** or e-mail BuildingControl@plymouth.gov.uk and a surveyor will contact you.

Please note, the function of the Building Control service is to act as a third-party assessor to consider compliance of building work to the requirements of **The Building Regulations 2010**, however it is the duty of the persons carrying out the work to adhere with all necessary legislation.

As part of Plymouth City Council's resilience work we are collating feedback from businesses within the city to share economic impacts of Covid-19 which we will feed into central Government to lobby for sector support for businesses in difficulty. If you have feedback to share on construction sector impact please can you email **Emma Hewitt**. Any information that is provided and shared with Plymouth City Council will only be used specifically for understanding the business impacts of COVID-19 and will not be used beyond this critical period.

Building Plymouth COVID19 Bulletins are located on our website at:

www.buildingplymouth.co.uk/covid19-updates

Construction Sector Updates

31/03/20 Letter from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Alok Sharma, has written to the UK's construction sector "for many people working in construction their job requires them to travel to their place of work, and they can continue to do so"

[CLICK HERE FOR THE LETTER IN FULL](#)

31/03/20 - Remediation and COVID-19

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has just issued the following announcement, which reconfirms the messages from the Construction Leadership Council about construction work continuing and emphasises the critical nature of ACM remediation work.

[CLICK HERE for the announcement](#)

Constructing Excellence South West and LeadersMeets

Constructing Excellence South West and LeadersMeets have come together to provide members and guests a series of 'conversations that matter' around key themes to help members and leaders in the Construction navigate through the challenges presented by the Coronavirus pandemic. Each Tuesday and Friday until the 7th April there will be a 60-90 minute maximum 'conversations that matter' hosted by LeadersMeets signing up at 12.00hrs

[CLICK HERE to sign up](#)

COVID-19 webinars

ACE has announced a new online webinar series, hosted by ACE chief executive Hannah Vickers,

Navigating COVID-19 covers the major issues currently facing our industry including finance, people, communications and procurement. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask virtual questions to the panel of experts on specific announcements, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or Coronavirus Business

Interruption Loan Scheme. Sign-up now to upcoming webinars through the links below:

Procurement (02/04/20, 12.00pm)

People in a Pandemic (07/04/20, 12.00pm)

Communicating in a Crisis (09/04/20, 1.30pm)

30/03/20 Construction Leadership Council re: temporary suspension of sites.

[CLICK HERE FOR LATEST INFORMATION](#)

Latest information from CITB

CITB's COVID-19 updates page is being refreshed daily and includes information on a range of subjects, including Grants, Funding and Apprenticeships.

CITB urges all employers not to dismiss any apprentices without first contacting the apprenticeship team:

apprenticeships.covid19@citb.co.uk

Update on online Site Safety training and a checklist for Apprentice Safety on Site can be found:

[CLICK HERE for Apprentice Safety on site](#)

Local contact: **Darren Murrish**



Legal & HR Matters

Useful guides and contacts:

Womble Bond Dickinson FAQs - Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

Foot ANST's publication - 'How to approach furloughed workers'

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

Apex HR have created a coronavirus Help Pack for employers

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

VAT

HMRC are allowing businesses to defer their VAT payments where they are unable to pay VAT due between 30 March and end of June 2020 until 31 March 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. You will not need to apply for deferral as the eligibility is automatic but if you pay by direct debit, you will need to cancel this to ensure payment is not taken from your account. VAT returns need to be submitted in the usual way. The return requirement has not been deferred.



Staying Healthy and Positive

Peter's Top Tips

Home working and occupying / educating the small people in your life...

If you find yourself in the situation of being at home with young children, then I hope you find some of the following thoughts useful. I have based this on my own experience of sharing our little cottage with three little people over the last couple of weeks. Ran is 10, smart and sensitive; has an amazing ability to get lost in a book whilst chaos reigns around him, Fleur is 8, sensitive and requires structure to her day and Six year old Mabel is wild, emotional and acts first, thinks second but is totally adorable! They have found the transition to being home schooled a mixed challenge. On the one hand they have enjoyed extra freedom to play in the garden, build things and progressively get dressed later and later in the day. On the other hand, they have missed their friends and clubs and often find it a challenge to occupy themselves.

To help them, we get the obvious piles of paper, colouring sheets, paints, glue etc, but have also found lots of useful resources online, some of which I have noted below which hopefully are of use if you are in a similar position, click away!

Loads of cheap and simple activities for various ages; you don't have to be a Scout!

Daily virtual tours at Chester Zoo; mine loved watching the red panda feeding!

For those computer savvy little people -- create stories, games and animations

Smart videos for curious minds of all ages

Get them started in 3D design using TinkerCad

I never got around to earning a Blue Peter badge as a kid!

Some lovely ideas for interacting with younger children

For when you need a crafting idea

Geography based quizzes

Brush up on your Mayflower knowledge

We have even dressed up in the evening and gone to the ballet at the virtual Royal Opera House!

Some of these are not just fun for little people and can be quite good fun for all ages. I hope that this helps, please feel free to share. We would love to know if you have any other useful links, if so, please drop **Emma Hewitt** a line.

Keep safe and well!

Peter Everitt
Chair of Constructing Excellence Plymouth Club

Something to Look Forward To

Devon and Plymouth Chamber Awards -- Rescheduled to 1 October

Devon and Plymouth Chamber Business Show -- Rescheduled to 14 October

The Building Forum Autumn Dinner -- 20 November

Keeping Active

Join the movement

Sport England have created a web hub of indoor exercise materials to help you keep fit during social distancing. The **Stay in, work out** website is full of fun and creative ideas on how to stay active at home, including exclusive offers and workouts. There's also advice to help you make the most out of the fresh air during your daily walk, run or cycle.

How to work remotely

Cosmic, a Devon based social enterprise has created a toolkit for remote working. If your business is having to work remotely for the first time the guide provides an overview of guidance for best practice and steps to set up strong systems and processes to enable you

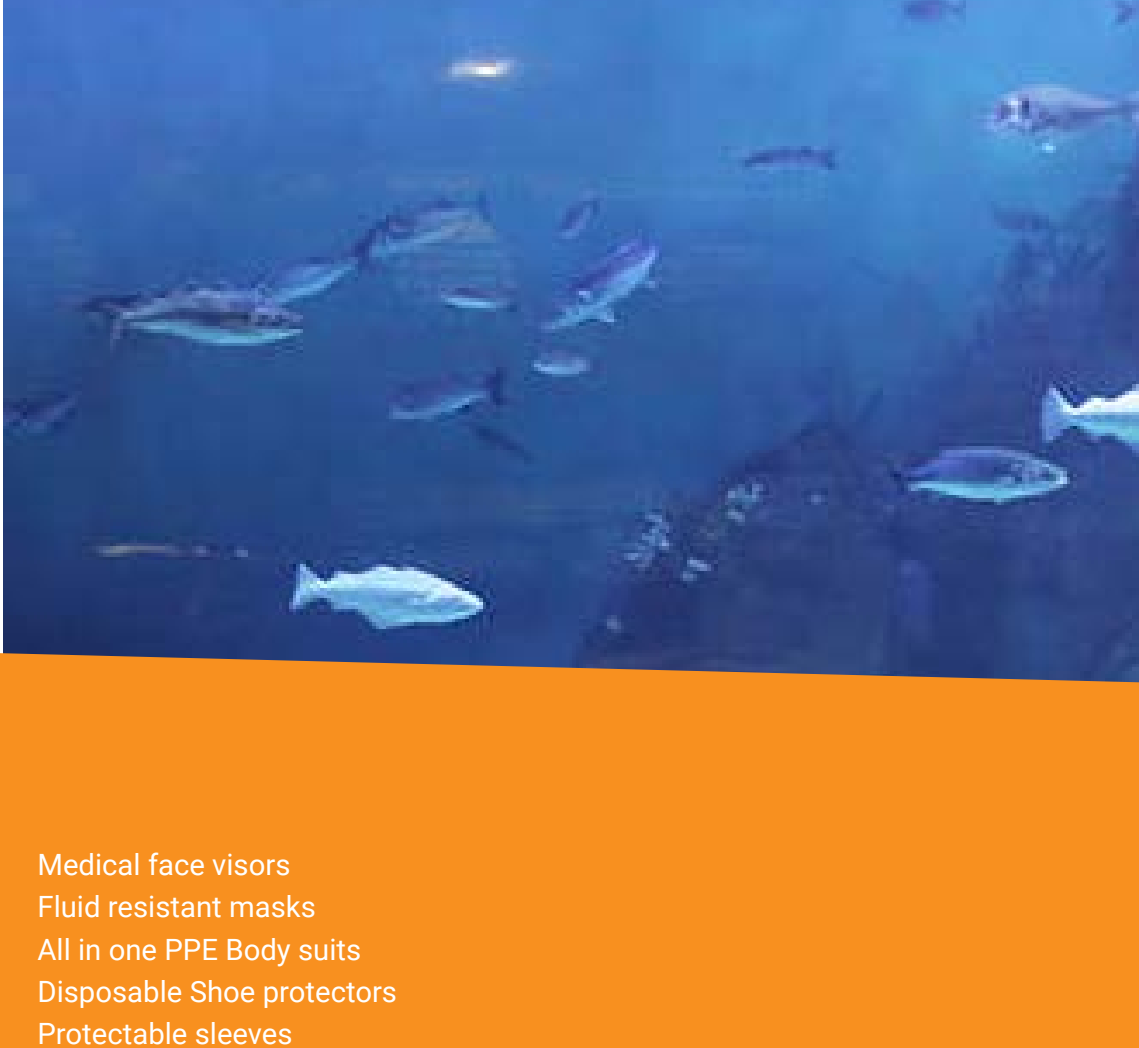
and your colleagues to succeed.

[CLICK HERE to view the toolkit](#)

Aquarium Relax

Have some time to yourself and enjoy the National Marine Aquarium's stunning Eddystone Reef exhibit.

[CLICK HERE to watch](#)



ACTION REQUIRED!

26/03/20 - PPE needed call from Emergency Response Team Plymouth

As you will recognise the supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the care sector is fundamental for the good care of people with suspected symptoms of Covid-19. Whilst we are working rapidly with the government to ensure a longer-term supply of all aspects of personal protective equipment, including gloves, aprons, face masks and hand sanitiser, in order to support our services, our frontline staff and those that we are working to protect, we urgently need action to address the PPE stock levels in Plymouth.

As a city we are pulling together in our time of need and we hope that you can provide further support with donating any essential Protection equipment to support the COVID-19 emergency.

The types of things we need are:

- Disposable nitro or latex free gloves
- Disposable aprons

If you are able to help with this request then please email with your contact details and number and Plymouth City Council will get in touch.

PeopleDirectorateResponseTeam@plymouth.gov.uk

Contact Us

For any queries, feedback and support:

[CLICK HERE to contact Building Plymouth](#)

Other key contacts include:

Emma Hewitt, Building Plymouth

Kate Mills, The Building Forum Devon & Cornwall

Glayne Price, South West Women in Construction

Peter Everitt, Constructing Excellence Plymouth Club

Mike Borkowski, Constructing Excellence Exeter Club

David Bayliss, First Thursday Club Plymouth

About Us

Building Plymouth is a council-led partnership with the local construction and built environment industry that drives skills and employment with the aim of increasing the number of local skilled people joining the industry. During this unprecedented and challenging time, we are very keen to support the local construction community and would be pleased to hear from employers and individuals about how we can best help.

