

The Nip

The Newsletter of The Fife Licensed Trade Association



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Time to batten down the hatches

At the moment situations are changing almost hourly but hopefully will eventually settle down so that we have time to draw breath, take stock, and make sure that we have done what is needed to get us through the next few months,

both personally and professionally. More details have emerged on the mechanics of the CBILS funding and the cash grants which we will look at today. We will also consider a handful other issues.

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Daddy, what did you do during the Great Covid-19 Panic Buy?



The most dangerous job going lad, Rear Gunner on an Andrex Truck.



The Scottish “What Ever It Takes” package update

It will be appreciated that in a fast evolving situation the fine detail of the mechanics of mitigating it take a little while to crystallise. The details of the Scottish Governments support package are now available and this is the latest information.

1. Support via the Local Authority

- All non-domestic properties in Scotland will get a 1.6% rates relief, negating the poundage increase for 2020-2021. This relief will be available from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

How do I get it?

You do not need to apply. This will be automatically applied to your rates bill by your local authority.

- All retail, hospitality and leisure businesses will get 100% business rate relief. To qualify a property has to be occupied. You get these reliefs even if you already get another relief for your property. This relief will be available from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

How do I get it?

The arrangements are presently being finalised by the Scottish Government and the 32 local authorities but in all likelihood you will need to apply to your local authority. Updates on the application process will be

- Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with a rateable value of between £18,000 and £51,000 will be able to apply for a one-off grant of £25,000. You can only get one grant even if you own multiple properties. You will be able to apply for this grant at any time from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

How do I get it?

Again the details are being finalised but you will probably have to apply to the local authority for this.

- Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses that qualify for the Small Business Bonus Scheme relief - i.e. with a rateable value of less than £18,000 or Rural Relief will be eligible for a one-off grant of £10,000. You can only get one grant, even if you have multiple properties. You will be able to apply for this grant at any time from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

How do I get it?

As with the grant for larger businesses you will be able to apply to the local authority once the arrangements have been finalised.

- Further assistance. Businesses that are struggling to pay current business rates bills should contact the local authority who will have a range of payment options which can be structured to suit your circumstances.

2. Support from the Utilities

- EDF Energy have announced that they have additional support and flexibility on offer to gas and electricity business customers who are having difficulty with bills including alternative payment arrangements and repayments spread over a longer period. They say each case will be looked at on an individual basis. Refer to www.edfenergy.com for more information.

- British Gas have said something similar and can additionally offer to push back bill dates or remove debt charges for late payments. www.britishgas.co.uk

- E.On has announced that it won't cut off any supply during the crisis period due to non-payment of bills. They recommend that any customer facing Covid-19-related difficulties should get in touch as soon as possible so that a solution can be arrived at.

- NPower at the time of writing are in discussions with the Government and regulators to finalise their customer support.

- BT has announced that it is working on a series of measures designed to help business customers experiencing cashflow difficulties. We will look at those when they are finalised. BT has also said that there is more than enough capacity in the UK broadband network to cope with likely demand. This is because the network is built to accommodate evening peak network capacity when video streaming and game downloading are at their maximum. In comparison daytime needs such as video conferencing and email traffic use only a fraction of the data. BT have also announced that they are removing domestic data limits which will be beneficial to those working from home.

Otherwise BT is looking to put in place upgrades to network capacity; additional VPN connectivity to support greater remote working; extra conferencing and collaboration tools such as file sharing; and call routing and forwarding solutions to divert calls to home phones and mobiles.

- Scottish Power, SSE, Ovo Energy and Scottish Water have all to announce what support they are offering.

The Scottish “What Ever It Takes” package update

In the Friday Press conference the Prime Minister confirmed that all hospitality outlets are to be closed for on-sales, whether for food or drink although such outlets will be able to offer takeaways.

As Convener of the Fife Licensing Forum I have contacted the Licensing Board to request that they confirm to all licensed premises that they can offer off-sales even if not specifically provided for in Premises Licence Operating Plans.

At the same time the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a massive programme to protect jobs and incomes. Businesses will be able to apply to HMRC for grants of up to 80% of wages up to a maximum of £2,500 per person per month for 3 months backdated to 1st March. The arrangements are currently being put in place with the aim to start paying out by the end of April.

Arrangements are being put in place for the self employed to be paid Statutory Sick Pay.

Next quarter's VAT is deferred with no payments due until 30 June at the earliest.

Under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme the Government will absorb the interest costs for 12 months instead of 6 months. More information on the British Business Bank website
: www.british-business-bank.co.uk

We have been in touch with **PRS/PPL** to find out what they will be doing regarding subscriptions that have been paid for where businesses have been forced to close and therefore are not using copyrighted material. They are formulating a response which we have not had as yet.

The same applies to **MPLC** licences - no information on the website and no response to phone call and email.

HMRC have established a dedicated helpline for anyone facing difficulties paying tax. The telephone number is 0800 015 9559

There is an excellent website set up by the Scottish Government - www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot providing further information which will be worth checking for time to time as updates are added.

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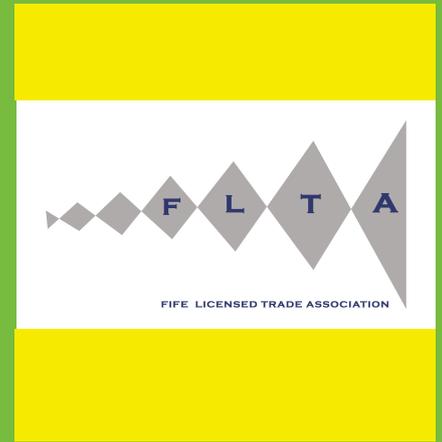
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Thorntons LLP are our legal advisors of choice and are available to consult on a range of matters besides licensing, including employment, immigration, wills and powers of attorney. They offer special scale rates for FLTA members. A separate leaflet has been produced by Thorntons covering the full range of benefits they are offering to members.

Condies provide a helpline for tax and accounting matters. Condies are based in Dunfermline and Edinburgh and provide a wide range of proactive business advice in addition to traditional accountancy services. They are long standing friends of Fife LTA.

Lindores Abbey Distillery is the latest addition to Scotland's distilling estate and is built on the site of the historic Lindores Abbey, which also happens to be the location for the first written record of whisky production.