



For Immediate Release

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**PR 9904**

### **Support local businesses as non-essential shops open next week**

Visitors to Basingstoke town centre and other shopping areas across the borough are being encouraged to follow safety measures while supporting local businesses that are able to reopen next week.

As part of the government's roadmap to unlock national COVID-19 restrictions, non-essential retail, personal care businesses and outdoor hospitality will be reopening from Monday 12 April.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has been working closely with Basingstoke Together, Festival Place, The Malls and local businesses to ensure a safe and pleasant experience for shoppers.

Visitors are being encouraged to plan ahead of their visit as individual businesses, and in particular outdoor hospitality such as bars, pubs and restaurants are likely to have new measures in place such as booking systems.

Other safety measures that will continue to be in place when visiting the town centre include walking on the left hand side of walkways, an increased cleaning schedule of public areas, hand sanitising stations and extensive signage reminding shoppers what they need to do to keep safe.

Providing a reassuring presence, town centre ambassadors, funded by the council, will be on hand to remind shoppers to wear face coverings and promote the social distancing measures in place.

Motorists will be able to enjoy one hour of free parking in three of the council's short stay car parks and electric vehicle owners wishing to charge their EV vehicle in the Feather's Yard charging hub can also park for free, with just the cost of charging to pay for.

Shoppers using council-owned car parks in the town centre are being urged to make card payments using the free RingGo app, with parking set to become even easier and cheaper following the removal of a 20p convenience charge.

Motorists will be able to extend their shopping trips without having to return to their vehicle and the app also allows visitors to find the closest car park before arriving in the town centre.

There are a number of other ways to get to the town centre, including walking, cycling and public transport, with bus passengers encouraged to follow the social distancing measures in place at Basingstoke bus station and on the buses.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Executive Director of Borough Development Ian Boll said: "We know the pandemic has been a difficult time for the local economy so I am pleased that a large number of businesses are able to reopen on Monday. I would also like to thank our borough's businesses who have helped to prevent the spread of COVID-19 locally by continuing to follow the government guidelines.

"To show your support for the local businesses that we all know and love, we would encourage residents and visitors to return to the town centre to enjoy everything it has to offer. But please continue to do this safely by following the social distancing measures that will be in place, minimising the amount of people from your household visiting the town centre and avoiding the busiest times of the day."

For more information about the town centre, please visit [www.basingstoke.gov.uk/shopping-eating-drinking](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/shopping-eating-drinking) and for more on what's happening across Basingstoke and Deane, visit the Love Basingstoke website at [www.lovebasingstoke.co.uk](http://www.lovebasingstoke.co.uk). You can also visit Festival Place's website at [www.festivalplace.co.uk](http://www.festivalplace.co.uk)

**ENDS**

Any questions via email to [customer.service@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:customer.service@basingstoke.gov.uk) or by phone on 01256 844844.

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