



**Newark and Sherwood District Council**  
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**MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

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## **Newark and Sherwood District Council calls on residents to support local retailers**

Newark and Sherwood District Council is calling on residents to do their Christmas shopping locally this year, to help support the district's retailers and high streets.

Many retailers have struggled to stay afloat, having been forced to close for long periods of time due to COVID-19 restrictions this year.

Tier 3 restrictions have come into force today (Wednesday 2 December) in Newark and Sherwood and retailers are now allowed to re-open their doors ahead of the festive season and the district council is encouraging its residents to spend locally now more than ever.

Newark and Sherwood District Council has set up a Retail Assurance Scheme with local independent businesses to help reassure shoppers that each business is operating safely. The scheme has officially launched today (2 December).

As part of the scheme, any local retailer offering a COVID-secure shopping system can choose to display the district council's Retail Assurance Certificate in their shop window.

These certificates will be distributed to retailers meeting the COVID-secure criteria in Newark, Southwell, Edwinstowe and Ollerton by district council officers and parish clerks. Officers will also be available to offer advice and support to any business.

The criteria for the Retail Assurance Scheme includes:

- providing hand sanitiser
- requiring face coverings to be worn, unless a person is exempt
- having thorough cleaning in place
- limiting the number of shoppers
- having social distancing guidelines in place
- quarantining handled stock
- making sure a gov.uk risk assessment has been completed

Retailers can also visit [newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/fsb](https://newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/fsb) to download a copy of the certificate to display in their shop window if they meet all the criteria and they wish to do so.

In addition to this, the district council has secured £108k of funding from the European Regional Development Fund to help provide local retailers and businesses across the whole of the district with material and information to ensure customers feel safe whilst visiting their premises.

Newark and Sherwood District Council has also played a key part in distributing financial support grants from central government and has so far paid out more than £30 million to 3,288 businesses to date this year.

Recognising that shopping behaviours have changed, for those businesses that have had to adapt to running an online service throughout the pandemic, Newark and Sherwood District Council also launched a High Street Diversification Fund in October. £25,000 was available to support local, independent high-street based retail/hospitality businesses with individual grants of £250 towards investing in e-commerce.

Councillor David Lloyd, Leader of Newark and Sherwood District Council, said: "This year has been extremely tough for everyone but especially so for our local retailers. While they have been able to stay afloat thanks to business support grants, many still write to me concerned about the reduced trade they may experience in the future.

"I understand that many residents may feel apprehensive about heading out into the community again, which is why we have introduced the Retail Assurance Scheme to provide some clarity that our retailers are doing everything they can to make sure their shops are COVID-secure for its customers.

"We are lucky in that Newark and Sherwood has many brilliant, independent shops selling a range of unique items, many of which would make perfect Christmas gifts. In addition, our local butchers, bakers and market stalls offer everything resident's need for their Christmas dinner. By choosing to visit any of these local businesses for your festive shopping, it will make a huge difference to them and the long-term economic recovery of our high streets.

"For those who are concerned, or remain indoors due to being identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, it is important to know that many of our local and independent shops offer a home delivery, click or collect or online provision so I also encourage residents to take advantage of these methods. Whether shopping in person or online, please remember and support our local businesses wherever possible."

Newark and Sherwood District Council will also be providing unlimited free parking on each Sunday in the run up to Christmas, including the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December. These dates will also coincide with Newark Town Council's COVID-secure Christmas markets. The district council is also encouraging businesses to extend their current opening hours during the free parking period.

Denise Starkey, Owner of Grace Gentle on Middlegate, Newark said: "I'm really looking forward to welcoming customers back into the shop after so long. We, like all shops, have taken a number of measures to ensure that our businesses are COVID-secure and the safety of our staff and customers will always remain our number one priority.

"It has been a very difficult year so far and it is only through the fast and swift payments of the business support grants, distributed by Newark and Sherwood District Council, that I am able to open my doors again to my wonderful customers.

“I hope that people will feel confident to visit their local high streets once again. I am able to offer a delivery service, and click and collect but not everyone can. I employ 5 members of staff and it is vital that I continue to pay their wages and the only way to do that is for customers to shop local and support their high streets.”

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