

Checking in on Businesses in Chiswick

Dear Team,

I'm not sure this merits attention but here we go...

Ours is a group of 10 councillors in opposition in Hounslow. There are two parties here currently, Conservative and Labour.

When the Chancellor announced the business rates holiday in the Budget, we emailed the good news and other information to all of the traders we knew - over 200 in fact; a list that continues to grow. This helped to build on the work we had done since setting up the Chiswick Shops Task Force in 2018 to support retailers, café/pub/restaurant owners and other local independent high street businesses.

We had no idea that there would be so many more announcements or new initiatives and have already sent out over 10 long emails. Each one brings a small flurry of thanks - different people every time - so we know it was worth the time. Nine of us represent Chiswick, which is noted for its independent shops, with retailers in all three wards. Everyone everywhere is concerned about the future of their high streets; indeed, it is a huge issue for us.

We also researched and then published, through a local website, a list of cafes, restaurants and shops that continued to trade either online or for take-away and delivery; keeping it up to date and reissuing it when there were changes. It has proved so useful that it has been much-copied by others, including retailers, suppliers and a rival local community website, realising the value of them promoting it amongst their customers or readers!

Being in touch with traders has also meant that when the Council's applications process for the retail, hospitality and leisure business cash grants went awry, worried traders contacted us and we were able to intervene to speed up the process.

They continue to contact us for help, more recently when aggressive landlords pushed for rents to be paid in full despite the Government's request for them not to do so.

Joanna

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Leader of Hounslow Conservative Group