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## SHOP & DINE WELL IN WEALDEN

Wealden District Council is launching a new campaign to encourage residents to support their local town and village high streets as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. The 'Shop & Dine Well in Wealden' campaign seeks to reassure people that their high streets are safe places in which to visit, shop and enjoy leisure time while adhering to government rules and guidance.

As part of the work, a district-wide consultation has already taken place in 16 Wealden locations involving Town and Parish Councils, local Chambers of Commerce and community groups. A marketing campaign is now being rolled out to support these local communities. It includes a public information campaign to ensure people are aware of safety measures being taken by high street businesses, and a digital campaign to promote independent retailers and eateries when open to the public.

The campaign also seeks to raise awareness of schemes such as the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative which is supported by the Council and has been widely adopted by businesses across the District. Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard discreetly indicates to people around the wearer that they need additional support, help or simply a little more time.

The Shop & Dine Well in Wealden campaign runs until the end of March 2021 and is being funded from Wealden District Council's allocation of Re-opening High Streets Safely (RHSS) monies awarded by the UK Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The funding has also enabled Wealden District Council to recruit two new information officers who will provide on-the-ground health and safety advice to local retailers and hospitality businesses as the pandemic continues.

Councillor Roy Galley of Wealden District Council said: “We recognise that our high streets and neighbourhood shopping areas are under threat. This campaign will seek to raise the confidence levels of residents, so they are encouraged to visit, shop and dine locally whilst continuing to follow Government safety advice. From Crowborough to Pevensey and everywhere in-between, Wealden’s towns and villages are distinctive hubs for community life, so we must act now to help them adapt in these challenging times.”

Prowse & Co. Ltd is delivering the project on behalf of Wealden District Council. Managing Director Joanne Rogers, a member of the National High Streets Task Force register and marketing expert, says the pandemic has created a perfect storm for high streets, already impacted by ecommerce and changing consumer habits.

She said: “During the consultation, we heard stories of Wealden communities joining forces to support one another, providing for those who are feeling isolated or are particularly vulnerable to the health crisis. We have listened to the challenges of independent retailers as they have struggled to survive two periods of closure and recover with limited resources.

“The COVID pandemic threatens the distinctive nature of Wealden District’s town centres, not least because of the high proportion of vulnerable independent businesses. Yet these play a broader role than shopping or dining and supporting jobs. They bring social cohesion to our communities and are reflective of local heritage and identity - the very things that make Wealden such a wonderful place to live, work and visit.”

For more information about the campaign, please visit the Wealden website:

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/press-and-media/coronavirus-covid-19-latest/reopening-our-high-streets-safely/>

Follow the ‘Shop & Dine Well in Wealden’ campaign online via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Wealden high street businesses, Chambers of Commerce and community groups are encouraged to access the campaign marketing materials for their own usage by joining the [Wealden RHSS Facebook Stakeholder Group](#)