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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**REF 200318closures**

**Council leisure centres & community centres to close and upcoming public events postponed as result of Coronavirus**

The decision follows Government advice which asks the public to take appropriate measures to avoid gatherings, unnecessary travel and public places.

Due to recent changes in guidance around gatherings and social distancing, Gedling Borough Council has today made the decision to close all of its leisure centres, community centres and the Bonington Theatre to the public, as well as immediately postponing planned public events.

The closures of leisure facilities & community centres will come into effect at the close of business on Friday 20 March, this decision will be kept under constant review. As soon as the Council deem it appropriate and safe to do so, they will be reopened. Refunds for existing bookings, leisure membership suspensions and cancelations in relation to the period of closure will begin in the near future and customers will be contacted either by phone or email with further details.

A number of events were planned by the Council for the near future including the popular Arnold Carnival at Arnot Hill Park, Pride of Gedling Awards which recognise local community heroes, and a series of free children's play days – with deep regret these have now all been postponed until further notice.

Staff who would usually be based at leisure sites and working on council events will be redeployed to other service areas across the Council to help ensure that essential day to day services are maintained with as little disruption as possible.

Despite the closure of these facilities, all council managed parks and open spaces, including Gedling Country Park, will remain open for use, with residents encouraged to enjoy our beautiful open spaces, whilst observing social distancing measures advised by Public Health England and the Government.

Even with the difficult and regrettable decision to make temporary closures of leisure facilities and postponements of key events, the Council is putting in place additional measures to help and support residents wherever possible.

Yesterday, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, wrote to all twelve major supermarkets offering for the Council to purchase stock of essential non-perishable food and items that would be distributed to vulnerable and elderly residents as and when necessary.

Funds which were planned to be spent on upcoming events will instead be used to establish a Gedling Borough Hardship Fund to help support the most vulnerable and those residents and families worst affected by Coronavirus – more information on this will be provided by the council in the coming days.

The council will also be donating £2,000 to each of the established foodbanks around the borough to help manage the increase in demand they will now be facing.

A dedicated Coronavirus phone line has also been set up by the council (0115 901 3667). This phone line will be used to signpost residents who are unable to access online information to necessary advice and support in line with the guidance from Government and Public Health England.

For the latest updates residents can sign up to the Council's email newsletters at [www.gedling.gov.uk/keepmeposted](http://www.gedling.gov.uk/keepmeposted) or visit the Councils dedicated coronavirus page [www.gedling.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gedling.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Leader of Gedling Borough Council, Councillor John Clarke said;

“The decision to temporarily close our leisure centres, community centres and Bonington Theatre was not taken lightly, but the health and wellbeing of our residents and staff comes first and as a responsible council it is the right thing to do in these difficult circumstances. We want to make sure our facilities are available to residents wherever possible, so we will be keeping this decision under constant review as the situation with Coronavirus evolves.

Our key priority now is to ensure that vital council services continue to run and that we are helping those in our community who are most in need of our support. We've already written to all major supermarkets to offer the council's services in stocking up on supplies for our most vulnerable residents and this week we're making some major donations to all foodbanks in the borough to help manage increases in demand that they will likely be seeing.

I appreciate these closures are likely to cause disruption to some residents but I want to reassure everyone that we are doing everything we can to prioritise the support we can offer. Dealing with this virus outbreak is going to be a marathon,

not a sprint, so it is vital we put in place appropriate and proportionate measures now to ensure we can work together to face this challenge.”

**- ENDS -**

**NOTE TO EDITORS**

**A full list of parks and open spaces within the borough that will remain open are available at [www.gedling.gov.uk/resident/parksandgreenspaces/findapark](http://www.gedling.gov.uk/resident/parksandgreenspaces/findapark)**

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