



Dear Business Owner,

We are as you know in very difficult times with everyone one of us facing major challenges not only to our business but also to our personal lives.

On Tuesday (16<sup>th</sup> March) the BID had its third open presentation meeting which did ahead as the Government's announcement regarding social gatherings was made almost on at the start of our meeting. Despite that we had a very good attendance with several new faces in the audience. I would like to thank all of you for your attendance. Unfortunately Phil Prentice the Scotland Senior Officer for the Scottish Towns Partnership was unable to attend. However, Andrew Spence the CEO of bid4oban gave an excellent presentation highlighting the challenges, but more importantly the opportunities and success of the Oban BID and recognises the fantastic opportunities we have here on Bute.

As a result of the current health situation facing the country the Scottish Towns Partnership, in collaboration with local authorities, has taken the decision to suspend all impending BID votes for a period of 3-6 months. That decision will mean that our vote will now be delayed until January - March 2021. That decision does not mean that we will stop planning or assisting the businesses on the island.

Given the government projected time line for the Covid 19 to have peaked, and hopefully the ability to commence some relaxation of movement, we intend to generate and implement a plan in readiness to implement post crisis. The intended time frame for this is the last quarter of 2020 and will include plans for some Island events and prepare for a build up to Christmas.

There are multiple websites offering advice and guidelines. The advice from STP is to continue to look at the official Government website for ongoing accurate information.

The financial assistance being provided by the Scottish Government ( £2.2b) for business will be delivered locally by the local authorities. The application process will be ready next week commencing on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March (hopefully already out in the public domain as you read this).

Although the Isle of Bute BID is not formally in place, the steering group want to help as much as possible in return for the support that you have given to our BID project therefore the group has decided that our co-ordinator John Weir will continue to prepare for an eventual vote although not face to face canvassing.

Given John's business experience over the years (including several of his own) John will be available to assist any business on the island in the following way;

- the research of information to assist with business support
- assist in the completion of application forms when applying for support and or grants

Please do not hesitate to contact John we are all in this together and the steering group and John want to be of as much help as possible. **DON'T LOSE OUT, ASK FOR HELP.**

Thank you for your support.....it's our turn to give it back.

Sincerely,

John Glen  
Chairman Isle of Bute Steering Group

Information from the Scottish government so far.....

Please ensure that you obtain accurate information from the Government website a [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**REMEMBER FRAUDSTERS HAVE NOT GONE INTO ISOLATION!! Be careful who you share or give information to.**

Providing support during economic emergency.

Economy Secretary Fiona Hyslop has addressed the Scottish Parliament on the economic impact of COVID-19 in Scotland.

In her statement she warned that as a result of coronavirus, the Scottish economy is facing an immediate collapse in demand.

She outlined the actions being taken by the Scottish Government to support businesses including a package of measures worth £2.2 billion from 1 April:

- a full year's 100% non-domestic rates relief for retail, hospitality and tourism
- £10,000 grants for small businesses in receipt of the Small Business Bonus Scheme or Rural Relief
- £25,000 grants for hospitality, leisure and retail properties with a rateable value between £18,000 and £51,000
- 1.6% relief for all properties, effectively freezing the poundage rate next year
- First Minister to convene an emergency meeting of the Financial Services Advisory Board
- urging local authorities to relax planning rules to allow pubs and restaurants to operate temporarily as takeaways
- extending the go live date for the deposit return scheme to July 2022 halting the introduction of the Visitor Levy Bill

Ms Hyslop said:

“The overall economic impact is clearly likely to be significant, though the scale and duration of the impact are difficult to predict.

“Depressed economic activity this year will have implications for the public finances through lower tax receipts and higher welfare spending.

“This will have severe economic consequences and we are treating it as an economic emergency, triggered by the enormity of the health emergency.

“I welcome the further support announced by the Chancellor and the Scottish Government will pass all consequential measures to businesses to help them through this challenging period.

“We have already confirmed our intention to effectively freeze the poundage rate next year and today I can confirm that we will mirror those measures with a package of reliefs and grants worth £2.2 billion.

“That will ensure that small businesses receiving the Small Business Bonus Scheme or Rural Relief will be eligible for a £10,000 grant. We will provide 12 months relief for properties in hospitality, leisure and retail and provide a £25,000 grant for hospitality, leisure and retail properties with a rateable value between £18,000 and £51,000.

“We need to see substantial grant support and tax breaks to keep companies in business and people in jobs where possible, and a greater emphasis on supporting individuals and households.

“I will continue to work closely with the UK Government and the other devolved administrations as this situation will require a coordinated UK response.”