

21st May 2020

MESSAGE REMAINS THE SAME: PLEASE DO NOT VISIT PEMBROKESHIRE THIS BANK HOLIDAY

With another Bank Holiday weekend on the horizon, visitors and second home owners are again being urged not to travel to Pembrokeshire during the current lockdown.

“We are extremely grateful to the vast majority of people from outside our county who are obeying the lockdown restrictions” said Pembrokeshire County Council’s Leader, David Simpson.

“We need that compliance and co-operation to continue over this coming weekend when Monday the 25th is a Bank Holiday.”

“This is especially important at this time given the change of rules in England.”

Councillor Simpson emphasised: “The message stays the same. We will welcome our visitors back when it is safe to return.”

He stressed that journeys to holiday lets and second homes are not classed as ‘essential travel’ and therefore constitute a breach of the lockdown regulations.

The penalty for breaching the stay-at-home rules has recently been increased by the Welsh Government. Details on the fine increase can be found at: <https://gov.wales/fines-increased-repeat-coronavirus-lockdown-breaches-wales>

In the lead up to the recent Easter break, the Council’s Public Protection Division received a significant number of reports of people arriving at various properties in the County to take up occupation – allegedly in contravention of the restrictions.

As a result of this intelligence, a joint letter endorsed by all members of the Dyfed-Powys Local Resilience Forum- and signed by the Council’s Chief Executive and the Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys Police - was sent to over 6,000 owners of second homes/holiday properties in the County.

The letter outlined the key requirements relating to the use of the properties.

Councillor Simson revealed that the letter had been effective as the number of complaints over the recent May Bank Holiday was significantly reduced.

The Authority also carried out a programme of visits to establish whether the properties reported to the team were ‘let as part of a business’. These visits were supported by Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

Sixty-eight properties spread out across the county were visited with the following results:

- thirty-six per cent of premises were found to be unoccupied
- fifty-four per cent were either the primary residence of the occupant or they were second homes in which the owners had taken up residence prior to the lockdown - a situation which the regulations doesn't prohibit
- five per cent had not sought a permit from the local authority to accommodate key workers and other displaced individuals. Approval was subsequently sought and the premises were added to the list of over 60 permitted accommodation providers
- five per cent required follow up by the Public Protection Division as there was potential occupation of a holiday accommodation as part of a business.

Pembrokeshire County Council and Dyfed Powys Police continue to work in partnership to protect our communities.

Council officers will continue to follow up any reliable intelligence of 'persons renting out holiday accommodation as a business' and will also support police cordons that will be in place over the Bank Holiday and are designed to stop those travelling into Pembrokeshire without 'reasonable excuse'.

For further guidance on the position as it applies in Wales see <https://gov.wales/guidance-note-holiday-accommodation-owners-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-wales>

We appreciate the extreme challenges faced by many of our businesses and would encourage those facing difficulty to visit our website: <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/business-advice-and-support> for advice on financial support that you may be entitled to.