

Kennet & Avon Canal Trust - Message to Volunteers

17th March 2020



The Trust and Coronavirus

Dear Volunteer,

I met today (via video conference) with many of our trustees, directors and branch chairmen. We discussed how the Trust should respond to the advice given by the government yesterday afternoon on managing the Coronavirus epidemic. I'm writing on behalf of them all to let you know what was decided.

The parts of that advice most relevant to us are:

- Everyone should stop non-essential contact with others. This is particularly important for people over 70, those with underlying health conditions and pregnant women
- People should avoid places like pubs, clubs and theatres
- People should stop all unnecessary travel
- By the weekend, those with the most serious health conditions should be largely shielded from social contact for 12 weeks

(extracted government advice quoted by the BBC website)

Everyone agreed that our priority was to protect the well being of our volunteers and staff, and to do our best to encourage them to follow government advice. We want volunteers to know that we regard this as a much higher priority than any commitments to the Trust.

As a consequence, we will suspend Trust activities as soon as practicable. This includes all boat operations, not opening Crofton as planned, closing the museum and cancelling all Trust meetings (other than online). We don't know exactly how long this will need to last but we are assuming it will be at least until the end of April. We will review the situation again in late April.

This will be a great challenge to Trust finances. However, we were reassured by Treasurer Chris Bolt that we have the reserves to weather this storm.

There may be a few pieces of volunteer work that could sensibly continue during the closedown. We want to ensure nobody feels obliged to participate. To ensure that, we'll ask anyone volunteering for us to complete a short form confirming that they've considered the advice from government and us and are happy to continue. Branch Chairs and Boat Managers will have that form.

Our branches will be trying to keep in touch with you during the closedown so keep an eye on your emails and we will be back up and running just as soon as we can. In the meantime, please focus on your well-being and that of your loved ones as your first priority. There will be plenty of good times to be had along the Kennet & Avon when this is all over.

Yours ever

Rob Dean CMG
President