

ONE LINLITHGOW

We're delighted to be supplying member businesses with protective equipment, screens, sanitiser, distancing stickers, gloves, masks and other related items to help them observe both distancing and hygiene in a strict way.

Some have actually thrived throughout lockdown, and a small number in Linlithgow have reopened under "Phase 1" of lockdown easing, most notably Linlithgow Golf Club and Kingsfield Leisure.

Most will be reopening under "Phase 2", which we hope will happen some time in June, with a few (e.g. hairdressers) having to exercise more patience until "Phase 3".

It's crucial to supply the correct equipment to businesses in time for reopening, so that we can keep the virus under control and allow further easing to take place, instead of losing control and going back towards stricter lockdown measures.

One Linlithgow has secured £15,000 external funding to subsidise its augmented operation with respect to the pandemic, which was distributed through Scotland's Towns Partnership, applied for by One Linlithgow, and undersigned by West Lothian Council.

This allow us to continue that augmented operation (including supplying and/or subsidising various items of PPE) and to be there for our businesses in a more meaningful sense, without eating into funds collected through the "BID levy" in the short term.

As such, businesses struggling to pay bills due to having to close down need not worry about settling any levy payments with

respect to One Linlithgow until September 2020.

We're also working with LCDT on the "mylinlithgow.com" site, which is already a fantastic resource, but which we're now collaborating on to update with details of regular online classes and events run by local businesses. We'll be announcing progress in that regard through our mailshots.

If you are a member business (i.e. levy payer) of One Linlithgow, but don't receive the mailshots, please contact office@onelinlithgow.com to be added. It's the single best way to stay informed, alongside following our Facebook page, checking "onelinlithgow.com" for operational updates, and of course contacting us directly by email.

Particularly with current restrictions on visits in person that could be seen as "not strictly necessary", and the immediate urgency of uniting businesses with the equipment they need (and training, where necessary), it's more pertinent than ever to receive the mailshots, so please do get in touch.

ADAPTING TO NEW MEASURES BY SHOPPING LOCAL

Several businesses on Mill Road industrial estate have diversified significantly to help meet some of the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic - the supply of hand sanitiser, personal protective equipment (PPE), and signage for social distancing.

Some are doing so in quite small ways, but with real potential for expansion given that Covid-19 is not likely to be going away anytime soon. For others, the change has been much more dramatic.



The stock-in-trade of **Newbridge Construction Supplies** has been in supplying everything from screws to tools for the building trade, as well as protective face masks and hand sanitiser. Last year it supplied the construction industry with a fair number of masks - and two litres of hand sanitiser. Since lockdown it has supplied 5,000 litres!

Director **Grant Paterson** said that it has been "disgusting - a complete disgrace" how some manufacturers and suppliers had taken advantage of the crisis with hugely inflated prices.

"We have now sourced a company in Wishaw who are very fair to deal with, and we are not only selling to the trade, but also supplying other providers. We're doing a 500ml bottle for £6.50, 60ml for £1.10, and a five-litre can for £40."



Peter Woods, who owns the long-established printing firm **JMK**, said that with businesses getting up-and-running he was beginning to receive requests for social distancing wall and floor signs.

"Unfortunately, we're struggling to source vinyl decal for outdoor signs and for floors. There's obviously a high demand for the product."

Added Peter, *"It's all about how quickly businesses in the town, many of them customers of ours, can get going again. I would certainly expect we'll have a fair demand for signage for social distancing."*





Linlithgow Distillery was one of the first distilleries in Scotland to diversify into producing hand sanitiser, experiencing a steady demand for the product, but it has not abandoned its core business, with its popular range of gins available online, both the original Lin Gin, and the quartet in The Four Marys range. **Customers have particularly been appreciating the “lockdown kit”**: gin, tonic, chocolates, sweeties, crisps... and hand sanitiser!

Details of prices for various volumes of sanitiser, including bulk, can be found on their Facebook page, which is shown on the list at the end of this magazine.

network promotions

effective, targeted branding

Another for whom the pandemic has meant a significant shift in emphasis in business - some of it with great potential, - has been **Jill Wardrope, owner of Network Promotions**, which does corporate neckwear, school ties, and promotional wear for events.

“We had an expression of interest from someone involved in the airline industry for scarves for cabin crew which carry a logo, are fashionable, but can double as a face mask. They would have hidden loops for ears and would be washable and reusable. I’m waiting for samples I’m having made up abroad.”

Jill added that the company was also sourcing wall-mounted hand sanitisers, ideal for sports clubs and businesses, which could carry a logo. They cost £50, and they were arousing interest, with one already going to a local golf club.

There’s no doubting where the priorities lie for **James Riding**, owner of the highly specialised car detailing and wrapping service **NRJ Customs** - it’s the local community.

He’s just taken delivery of a new anti-bacterial vinyl film to wrap around door handles, and for applying to desk tops, touch screens, and other at-risk surfaces.

“I’ve already had interest from McDonald’s in Glasgow, but I’d much sooner help out the local community, either businesses or individuals.”

James added that he was also using his large format printer to produce social distancing graphics, creating a catalogue to show what could be done. **Anyone interested could contact him on T. 01506 492640.**

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Bright Star Toys

As a relative new boy on Linlithgow High Street **Ian Melville** was reluctant to “furlough” himself when lockdown began - he wanted his fledgling business to remain as visible as possible, even though its doors were closed.

Bright Star Toys hardly surprisingly, has been largely about catering for youngsters. With his recently-introduced doorstep delivery service, Ian has been finding a fair chunk of his business has been catering for adults.

Hardly surprisingly in these lockdown days the demand for board games and jigsaws has gone through the roof. A good part of Ian’s week has been about chasing hard-pressed suppliers to meet his demand, particularly for adult jigsaws.

His bestselling line however, remains as it has been since he opened last September - Squishmallows! They were hugely popular and really colourful, with new ones coming out regularly, and had become much-loved collectables.

Ian said that he had been enjoying getting to connect with customers in a different way since the unexpected change of direction for his business.

“We chat on the phone when they place their orders, then it’s amazing later in the day to see their smiles and waves when we drop off their purchases.”

Ian said the feedback they had received since launching their delivery service had been “unbelievable”.

“We have been so touched by all the support. I can only say a massive thank you to all our customers, old and new.”

He said they were now launching a new website, brightstartoys.co.uk, and they would be increasing their delivery days, as well as offering a click and collect service.

In a sentiment shared by many, Ian added, “Ultimately though we can’t wait until we open our doors again and welcome customers back into the shop.”



His bestselling line however, remains as it has been since he opened last September - Squishmallows!

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Sweet Little Cheesecake Café

Draw up a list of treats to see you through lockdown, and cheesecake would feature in most. Even as it eases, the delicacy is still likely to be a feature of many picnics and barbecues.

After the huge disappointment of having to close the doors of her recently opened **Sweet Little Cheesecake Cafe on Linlithgow High Street, Carol Paton** decided home delivery of her main product would be a viable option.

It has effectively meant her returning to what she did in Armadale prior to realising her long-held dream of opening a cafe in Linlithgow.

“My cheesecake production facility was a huge success, largely through word-of-mouth. Aside from locals, we had a range of corporate clients.”

Continued Carol, *“It’s almost gone full circle for me, making up bespoke orders instead of welcoming customers to my cafe. I’m supplying quite a lot of them, as well as delivering to new customers.”*

She said that delivery could be arranged via Facebook, Instagram, by calling 07475 793239, or through Scoffable at weekends. *“I’m doing six individual cheesecakes for £20, or a large one for £28. Tablet, strawberry, white chocolate, and our lovely Freedos are the most popular.”*

Carol said she was also doing afternoon tea for two at £18 with dainty sandwiches, cream scones and meringues with fresh fruit, and canape-sized cheesecakes.



She added, “I’m delighted to be able to offer the sweet part of the cafe menu to customers across West Lothian. In these tough times our cheesecakes and afternoon teas can definitely brighten someone’s day.”





BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

The Line Gallery

You've no choice but to cancel a large part of an exciting programme planned to celebrate 25 years of running an intimate, nationally recognised gallery on Linlithgow High Street. What do you do?

Answers on a postcard please to Gail and Elisabet at The Line Gallery. We should in fairness point out they've already come up with a solution by pinching an idea - from themselves!

"Lockdown Postcards from The Line" is a logical, online extension to their quirky, and hugely popular, annual "Postcards at The Line" exhibition. It features a wide range of small paintings, sketches and photographs from a raft of artists throughout Scotland, most of them regular exhibitors at The Line. As in the annual show, none of the works sells for any more than £100. There is also a selection of craftwork and jewellery.

Aside from maintaining an online profile for the gallery, it further demonstrates the continuing passion Gail and Elisabet - some of whose stunning black and white photography is featured - have for encouraging artists and craftspeople from Scotland and wider afield.

Gail said that lockdown was proving particularly hard for artists, for whom exhibitions were their bread-and-butter. *"Artists seem to be enjoying, and appreciating, our initiative. Because we do not have to have their work physically at The Line, we have been able to lower our commission considerably, which means more money for the artist when their work sells."*

The artist then organises delivery directly to the new owner. Only the other day a postcard went to Sweden. We are putting two or three each day on Facebook, and there has been a lot of interest, with quite a few selling."

Gail said that she and Elisabet were actively supporting "Saying Thanks to Key Workers" along with a range of artists in the way they knew best.

"If a key worker identifies themselves we will do our best to put them in touch with an artist who will make them a portrait, either a painting, sketch or photograph free of charge. To date Lorna Pirrie, Ruth Nicol, Elisabet, Victoria Ross and Elaine Woo MacGregor are all involved."

"We have nurses, auxilliary nurses and police officers taking part. But bin collectors, posties, delivery drivers - any key workers - are welcome to come forward."

Gail added that although Covid-19 had left their programme for the year "in tatters", they were busy rejigging it for when they could re-open, and would be starting with the exhibition by **Ruth Nicol**, which had to be closed after only six days.