

Slowly back to normal...

mineheadbid and Free Press join in local economy support initiative

MINEHEAD BID manager Andrew Hopkins has paid tribute to local traders who have battled on through lockdown to keep their customers satisfied.

As the Government starts to sanction the cautious re-opening of some non-essential businesses, such as garden centres, he says local people have every reason to be grateful for the ingenuity and dedication which has allowed the local business community to maintain as much of a service to the public as possible during some very challenging weeks.

"No-one has ever experienced such draconian Government measures before and obviously an order simply to shut the doors until further notice came as a very severe shock to all the local traders," he said.

"But so many have managed to devise



Shops in Minehead are displaying rainbows in their windows to show their support for health workers in the coronavirus crisis.



ways of maintaining some kind of service to their customers. Whether it be restaurants and butchers offering home deliveries or others such as Mr S.E. Haircare and Lovely Boutique which have been doing online tutorials and online sales promotions.

"These have been incredibly frustrating weeks for all of us and have exposed some unexpected weaknesses in the supply chain. For example, the lack of flour in shops has not been caused by any shortage but by the industry's lack of capacity for packing it into small bags for home baking."

The Minehead BID consortium was set up in 2018 with the support of more than 240 local traders to raise the town's profile as a resort and organise regular entertainment events – though this year's programme has been severely restricted by the virus.

Mr Hopkins said Minehead's shops would

be re-opening strictly according to the Government's official advice – though some might not be trading normally until July.

He added: "In the interests of keeping us all safe and protecting the NHS, all customers should faithfully adhere to whatever restrictions are in place as regards face masks and social distancing.

"But, equally, I would urge them all to continue supporting those local traders who have done their utmost to keep calm and

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