

ZOOM CALL CONSOLIDATED NOTES

Please note: The next Zoom Group Chat will be on Wednesday 18th November at 7-8pm.

Zoom meetings are now taking place fortnightly and have moved to a Wednesday.

These are the Zoom notes from 4th November. We have added the new notes in red, however, have removed a lot of the comments which are now out of date.

Visit Britain Kite Marque Scheme – We're good to go

To get your kite marque <https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/>

NFAN NEWS

WEBINARS

Available to book now - Leadership in Tough Times – Zoom Workshop

Part 1 - Thursday 19th November

Part 2 - Tuesday 1st December

Nobody relishes change but operating during the COVID-19 pandemic has meant we've all had to adapt. In this 2-part online workshop, discover how to motivate whilst constantly changing operations and how to keep the team engaged. You'll walk away with a robust list of actions.

COST & BOOKING

Two x 1 hour workshop exclusive to NFAN Members. £32.50 per person, per session.

<https://www.farmattractions.net/leadership-in-tough-times-zoom-workshop>

Refocus your business with Peter Redstone (Barefoot Consultancy)

POSTPONED TO 13 JAN 2021

Peter will be running a series of 3 Online Zoom Workshops in November for NFAN Members. The webinars will look at refocussing your business through tough times.

When pressure is on it can be hard to take time to reimagine what you are doing. Peter will help Members to step back, take stock and get clarity on where they want to be.

It will be a very interactive workshop. It is available to book now, with the first workshop taking place on 13th January 2021. <https://www.farmattractions.net/reimagining-your-business-webinar-series/>

Do you want to join the committee?

- We are currently seeking 2 new committee members. If you are interested in joining the committee, please follow this link: <https://conta.cc/36cXgY7>

NFAN LOBBYING:

Thank you to the 120 members who contributed information on October Half Term via the NFAN survey. We combined the data with BALPPA to give us a robust data set which was presented to DCMS and the TIER group. Your submissions have been crucial in demonstrating the importance of the Half Term for our sector and we believe helped keep October Half Term open in England.

NEW NFAN Consumer Website: <https://daysoutonthefarm.co.uk/register/>

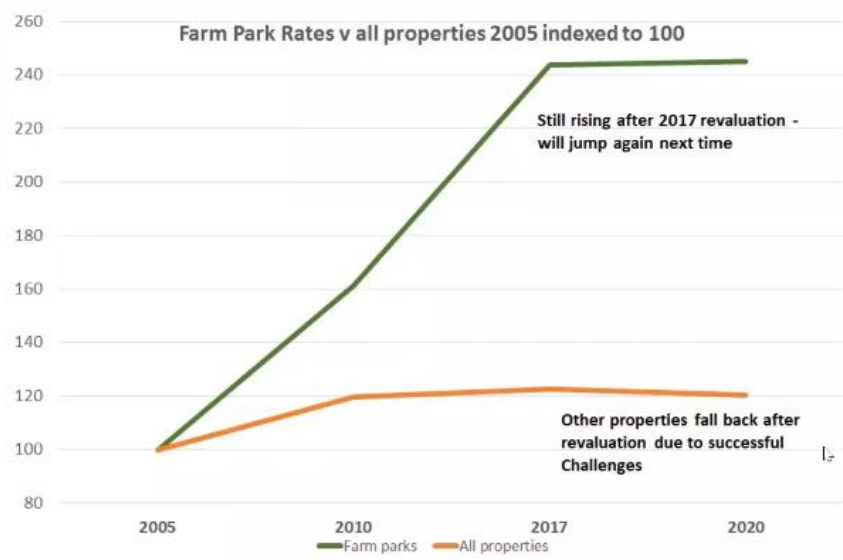
If you haven't yet added your free listing – please do so now. It is completely free for members and is a great opportunity to promote your attraction over the next few months.

BUSINESS RATES

Stop Rate Increases Webinar: Two webinars are being arranged to explain why NFAN are seriously concerned with rate increases, how you can check your rates and what you need to consider if you wish to challenge your rates. It will be led by Kate Lord and Katie Milbourn. First one to take place on 17th November, open to NFAN members. More dates to be released.

Andrew Wolfe concurred that if we do not collectively act, we will end up with rates of 7-8% of turnover which will continue to increase.

The graph below, demonstrates the rise of business rates for Farm Parks versus other commercial properties in the last two rates periods. Without action, the growth will only continue.



If we do not come together to fight rates, we are effectively telling the VOA that we are happy with the rates, and once the rates rise it is very difficult to reduce them again.

NEW NFAN APPLICATION FORM

NFAN are currently reviewing the Member application forms with a view to revamping it. Particular focus to identify farm attractions that need NFAN's support for Industry code of Practice.

NEW WHATSAPP GROUPS

Email info@farmattractions.net if you wish to join the below NFAN WhatsApp Groups:

- The 'not insured' WhatsApp Group
- The 'insured' WhatsApp Group
- 'Welsh Members' WhatsApp Group
- 'Scottish Members' WhatsApp Group

WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND THE UK?

POST MEETING NOTE: New Vaccine

On Monday, it was announced that the first effective coronavirus vaccine can prevent more than 90% of people from getting Covid-19. The developers - Pfizer and BioNTech have tested the vaccine on 43,500 people in six countries and no safety concerns have been raised.

It now needs to be approved by the UK's medicine regulator once the safety data has been pushed and a roll out plan established.

Read more about the vaccine: <https://www.pfizer.co.uk/update-albert-bourla-discusses-covid-19-vaccine-efficacy-results>

England

England have entered full lockdown until 3rd December.

See full summary document for England here: <https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/England-Covid-Restrictions-and-Financial-Support-Summary.pdf>

Comments on restrictions from our England Members:

- DEFRA confirmed farm attractions currently need to close, however, the following members have agreed with their EHO to stay open to offer countryside trails.
- Lee (Sacrewell) feels the lockdown will not end on Dec. 3rd. In talks with local council and has managed to get approval to open from local council for use of outdoor play areas and walking trails so long as they block off animals. They are not allowed to charge entry but can charge a car parking fee. They will take the risk to open but will reduce capacity even more. They argued to council that they can manage social distancing far better than a public (unstaffed) park.
- Rupert (Roves Farm) will also open for walks, as they did 8k car loads and did good trade on takeaway back in May and June. Not expecting that level of visitors, but

they are getting support on social media. They will be offering takeaway drinks and snacks. Will ask for £3 per car in an honesty box.

- Mo from West Lodge Farm Park had previously opened for outdoor walks but decided not to at this time of year and to focus on Christmas instead. **Rescheduling Visits due to Lockdown**

Scotland

Scotland have moved from '3-tier' to '5 Level' System.. :

<https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Scotland-Covid-Restrictions-and-Financial-Support-Summary.pdf>

Comments on restrictions from our Scottish Members:

- To operate their Drive Thru Christmas event, James Gammell (Conifox) needs his area to drop to Level 2.
- Soft plays seem to have had some funding, but many of the councils are not yet aware of this. With indoor play remaining closed attractions in Scotland have suffered due to recent bad weather.
- Small grants available for every 4 weeks of closure, apply through local council.
- Robin (Briarlands) and James Gammell (Conifox) agreed that a lockdown in November (usually a poor trading month) would be welcomed if it meant they were able to open in December.

Northern Ireland

See full summary document for Northern Ireland here:

<https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Northern-Ireland-Covid-Restrictions-and-Financial-Support.pdf>

Comments on restrictions from our N. Ireland Members:

- Lyndy (Ark Farm) reports that in week 3 of 4 of heightened restrictions (not full lockdown). Outdoor attractions have been able to remain open.
- The restrictions have not had the desired effect so they may review and continue the heightened restrictions.
- Lyndy hoping for English system of a full lockdown in November if it means they can open for Christmas in December.
- A lot of indoor visitor attractions have been closed, fortunately Pumpkin Patches were allowed to remain open, as they are classed as outdoor attractions.
- Southern Ireland has even stricter lockdown, Lyndy (Ark Farm) reports that families have been travelling over the border in order to visit their attraction which is not allowed.

Wales

Wales exited their firebreak on Monday 9 November. See full summary document for Wales here: <https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Wales-Covid-Restrictions-and-Financial-Support-.pdf>

Comments on restrictions from our Welsh Members:

- Prior to firebreak, lots of local areas were on lockdown since 8th September anyway. No tier system.
- Gwen & Colin (Cantref) had pulled their October half term event in advance due to impact of local lockdowns.
- Infection rates are still rising even though Wales is in lockdown. Gwen feels that at the end of the lockdown they will rise even more, potentially leading to a lockdown in December. For that reason, they have decided to pull the Christmas event at Cantref. Gwen feels the English lockdown makes much more sense.
- Gwen managed to get a £5k pay-out from government. ERF grant scheme was released but was already oversubscribed in 24 hrs.

Managing cancellations and rescheduling.

Doug (Avon Valley) shared some learnings from cancelling/rescheduling past events:

- Cancelling Annual Memberships gave him good insight into how people will interpret your terms and conditions.
- Has cancelled Christmas until 18 December and had to refund bonfire night.
- Believes you need to balance what is in his T&Cs with what is morally fair.
- For bonfire night, decided to refund 3,000 tickets. They were clear up front that there was a non-refundable ticket transaction fee so took a bit of money to cover the admin/vending fees. Their guests took it really well and

Lyndy (Ark Farm) trialled a waiting list for cancellations for people who missed out for Pumpkin Patch but found it was too much admin.

Sally (Pink Pig) advises being firm with customers and letting them know that as a small family business that you simply cannot manage the swaps and changes.

A few members agree that the good will generated by working to help your visitors with bookings goes a long way.

Anita (Agility Marketing & NFAN Managing Agent) advises that it is great if you can afford to be accommodating, but if you are not in the commercial position to help people then just be honest about why that is.

Doug recommended online app <https://freshdesk.com/> for easy management of customer queries across multiple channels (e.g. Social Media and Email).

Furlough Scheme Extension

Extended until 31 March 2021. It was initially thought that employees will need to be off for at least 7 consecutive days, but this refers to the claim period not employee working hours.

The government will review the policy in January to decide whether economic circumstances are improving enough to ask employers to contribute more.

Approximately 50% of call attendees (informal survey) felt that furlough would help them to save at least one job (rather than simply delaying redundancy).

Full guidance on furlough scheme can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extension-to-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme/extension-of-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

TIPS TO ENFORCE GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE.

Carolyn Crowe joined the meeting to give some top tips on how to deal with difficult customers. Carolyn is running the 'Leadership when it's tough' workshops for NFAN in November.

How to deal with difficult customers

1. Have a clear policy and make sure this is clearly advertising on the website and on your front door. Every member of your team should understand exactly what the policy is so that they may feel confident in what they are asking. Whenever there is a grey area you need to decide what your policy is.
2. Train your staff to expect emotion to be thrown at you. This way it is less likely to trigger an emotional response in you/your staff if it is expected.
3. Customers will use words like discrimination. When words like discrimination are used, reinforce that you are not trying to discriminate, the rules are in place for their safety and the safety of everyone. The top tip is to hang it on something other than what the customer is trying to hang it on (it is not discrimination, hang it on safety).
4. Consider having an informal prestart staff huddle at the start of each day to reinforce the policy and also at the end of each day for feedback. If staff feel supported, they are more likely to follow policy and contact you whilst it is happening rather than afterwards.
5. If you don't actively manage situations, it has a waterfall effect. One family will see another family not follow the rules and then they will think they don't need to follow them.

6. Try to be intrigued and interested by people's behaviour, rather than irritated and frustrated by their behaviour. The majority of people do not have the intention to be a nightmare. Usually fear, uncertainty, lack of clarity, lack of understanding and emotion which cause a situation, so if you can begin in a teaching role, you can be clear about how they need to behave.

Putting theory into solution

Facemasks – Lee from Sacrewell shared a big problem is that customers are saying they are exempt from needing to wear a facemask. Anita mentioned that the English Government Guidance states "Those who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering should not be routinely asked to give any written evidence of this".

Carolyn highlighted that whilst this is a very difficult situation to handle, having a clear policy on what you will do communicates clarity to the team.

The rule of 6: Lyndy (The Ark Open Farm) is having problem in N. Ireland where groups of 15 are allowed outside but groups of 6 allowed inside. So when they head inside, the staff have to split up their family groups. Often groups react badly/angrily when being told to separate.

Some tips from Carolyn on dealing with this situation.

- Hold your ground and reiterate policies on your website in advance and at the entrance to everyone who enters (even groups under 6), i.e. 'we will ask you to separate.' This will set the expectation right from the beginning. When someone then needs to be approached you can say to them 'We know that you understood this was the rule before we approached you.'
- Debrief with team after an incident to give support and spread experience. Can be stressful even for experienced staff - people can be personal in attacks and staff can take it personally too. Lyndy has been doing this and has found it helpful as staff do not necessarily come to management straight away with their issues.
- Think about the language being used when you talk to your staff. Avoid negative, dramatized language as this will make situation feel much bigger. The phrase 'it's not ideal' rather than 'it was a disaster' will calm staff down. Focusing on lessons learnt is more useful to your team.
- Recommendation of huddles at the beginning of the day – opportunity to give expectations for day, reiterate plan of action to give staff confidence. Also, able to discuss any changes in government guidance that are new.
- Important for staff to deal with things as soon as they see them. If people see others breaking the rules, they are more likely to think it is ok and follow suit. If you turn a blind eye once it will feel unfair to everyone.

- Tom (Chairman) also adds that it is useful to reassure less experienced staff that the senior team members will come and back them up if needed. Otherwise they may think it is easier to turn a blind eye and if you are not consistent with your expectations of guests, they are going to be more likely to flout the rules.
- Carolynne agrees and recommends buddying up staff members so they have someone to help them if needed.

Social distancing disagreement between customers: Ella (Bluebell Dairy) experienced a social distancing issue on bouncing pillows which led to a full on fight between two customers. It came about as there was a disabled child on the bouncing people who wasn't social distancing. One staff member went over to diffuse the situation, but the customer became aggressive with the staff member.

Ella felt that they are stuck in the middle between people who are serious about social distancing and those who think it is rubbish.

Some tips from Carolynne on dealing with an emotional situation such as the one Ella describes above:

1. Acknowledge that the situation has become aggressive/out of control/emotional.
2. Tell people clearly what you need them to do.
3. If what you are asking is not possible for them, let them know you will need to find an alternative way of dealing with the situation.
4. Ensure clarity of leadership and define boundaries.

Christmas

Feedback from members:

- Avon Valley shared what they are doing for Christmas. Tickets will be refundable but if they do have to refund, a small fee will be charged for admin. Their Christmas model is operating the week prior to Christmas. To drive numbers, they have extended open hours after having seen the success of pumpkin nights in October half term. They will operate the farm in two sessions for xmas. Session one will end at 3, with session two starting at 4. The night time targets a slightly older demographic. They are not offering gifts for day or night visits to differentiate from usual Christmas offer to protect the usual product. Tickets for this year is a quarter of usual price.
- Grant Bell (East Links) suggests making Santa mobile rather than children.
- Sandra (Farmer Palmer's) put a poll out on Facebook to ask customers how they would like to see Christmas done and they have had some good suggestions.
- Mark Navin will get everyone to see Santa first before visiting indoor North Pole.
 - Making grotto bigger to allow for socially distanced photo.
 - Dropped build a bear but giving away a bear toy still.
 - Ticket sales have been positive so far.

- Darren Lamb has already cast team for Christmas, they have revamped the event to make it socially distanced. Children will go through into rooms for 10 minute slots. There will be more distance between Santa and the kids. Selling 50% capacity but will sell more if social distancing allows. Price will increase.

Delivering Socially Distanced Christmas

- Matt Heast (Mead Open Farm) is selling groups of 6 in time slots. Must be friends or family in each group of 6. Six people enter every 5 minutes. Actors will be in 'portholes' – you will look through a window to see them. Father Christmas is going to be on top of the roof. No photo opportunity. Not sure if Father Christmas will need to wear a mask, will not be doing Build A Bear. Socially distanced shows will be going ahead. Not wrapping presents. Elf will hand a present.
- Both Tom (National Forest) and Matt (Mead Open Farm) have both sold 'groups of 6' and have received very negative feedback on social media, however Mead tickets are selling.
- Tom's EHO has mentioned that Actors will need to wear face coverings. Anita mentions there are Christmas themed face masks available to match a Santa outfit.
- Tom has heard from American that they are setting up Christmas photo shoots with Santa in sleigh behind a non-glare screen, with family in front.
- Mark Edwards is going to have 'Facetime' Santa, with gift given by Elf. As families go around Christmas experience there will be huge digital screens that the elves will press for families to interact with Santa. The presents are wrapped. In between each family, everything that can be touched will be sanitised. The photo opportunity is for children to sit around a chair and with the magic of Christmas, a Santa is super imposed onto the photo. The same Santa will appear who has spoken to the family.
- Angela Broadhead is organising remote Zoom video calls with Santa, with Santa in different places across the farm. People will be able to book their 1-on-1 Santa zoom call in the location they wish.

TRACK AND TRACE

From 18th September, operators have had a legal obligation to collect names and contact details of visitors (including telephone numbers) and keep for 21 days. Even with the new app, it is still mandatory this is done.

Larry from Noah's ark reinforced that people need to collect telephone numbers for track and trace. They've had to add this into their online ticketing and for walk ups.

Another mandatory requirement

Additionally, to this, there is also a legal requirement to show the track and trace QR code poster. People don't have to use it, but it is **mandatory that operators display the poster**. If you don't display the poster with the QR code, you will be breaking the law in England and Wales.

Hannah Douglas explained that it's really easy to get the QR code, which needs to be displayed. You will receive an A4 PDF to print off which should then be displayed at every entrance. [Click here to get your code and poster.](#)

Please note Scotland uses a different app.

RULE OF 6

Current legal requirement for operators

The rule of 6 is now law. During the call, there was some differing interpretations, however, on the rule of 6 at attractions. Janice indicated that people from different households could not visit the attraction together, whilst others thought that anyone could visit in a group of 6, as long as they maintained social distancing between different households.

England:

In England the Rule of Six means that up to six people from any number of different households are able to meet-up indoors and outdoors although the members of each household have to maintain social distancing from the members of other households. If the number of people in a single household (including support bubble) is larger than six, they are allowed to meet-up.

Scotland:

In Scotland, you can meet in groups of up to six from two different households outdoors (children under 12 don't count towards the total). However, in indoor settings you cannot meet with members of another household unless they are part of your extended household. An extended household is one where two households have joined together to form a single household and can be formed by a person who lives alone - or only with children under 18. They and another household of any size can agree to form an extended household. An extended household can also be formed by a couple who do not live together, and their children.

UPDATE: New Restrictions in Scotland from Friday 9th October

In Scotland, all pubs and restaurants in the central belt will have to close, both indoors and outdoors, from 6pm on Friday 9th October.

The stricter restrictions will apply in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Arran, Lothian and Forth Valley health board areas.

Licensed premises will have to close until 25th October, although they can still serve takeaways.

Cafes which do not serve alcohol can stay open until 6pm.

Pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes in the rest of Scotland will not be allowed to serve alcohol indoors. They can only open between 6am and 6pm for food and non-alcoholic drinks.

Licensed premises away from the central belt can continue to serve alcohol outdoors until the 10pm curfew which was introduced last month.

Wales:

In Wales the Rule of Six only applies indoors where up to six people from an extended household can meet. Unlike in England, children under 11 are exempt and will not count towards that total.

Northern Ireland:

Like Wales, the Rule of Six only applies indoors but the six people can only be from two households and children are counted as being part of the six.

Feedback from operators

- Doug mentioned that as operators we all have a responsibility to make sure people are socially distancing when visiting. He felt people should be challenged if they are breaking the rule of 6 as operators are the ones who will be fined.
- Anita indicated tour groups of 30 can still run as long as the rule of 6 is being adhered to and there is socially distancing between the different groups.
- Merlin have added maximum of 6 people per booking limitation across their clients. Lyndy from Ark Open Farm agrees with this approach. Lyndy indicated she won't let anyone purchase more than 6 tickets. Every box should be ticked to cover the operator.
- Others have added text to the booking process to ask customers to limit groups to 6.
- Mark (Cockfield's) strongly feels that businesses should not police the rules.
- Tom (NFAN Chairman & National Forest) reports a local landlord of a pub being reported to the police for not policing the rules on site and they are coming down on him harshly.
- Wayne says a lot of the confrontation can be avoided in the way the staff approach people. Sometimes if the staff are nervous of enforcing the rules it can come across.
- Grant Bell (East Links) finds that having simple clear instructions helps to avoid need for staff confronting people.
- Katy Cullimore (Cattle Country) thinks the Rule of 6 will make it harder for people to misinterpret the rules.

FACE MASKS AND COVERINGS

Face masks are mandatory for all retail, leisure and hospitality indoor venues for customer facing staff and customers (except when they are seated to eat/drink).

Visors, however, have now been deemed not to be a suitable face covering across all 4 nations.

In England there was some confusion about Perspex screens which we have now resolved.

If businesses have taken steps in line with HSE guidance for COVID Secure workplaces to create a physical barrier (e.g. perspex) between workers and members of the public, then staff behind the barrier will not be required to wear a face covering. This position has been cleared by DHSC legal in conjunction with HSE.

Guidance Links:

England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-you-do-not-need-to-wear-a-face-covering>

Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings/>

Ireland - <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/> and <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-face-coverings>

Wales - <https://gov.wales/face-coverings-guidance-public#section-43644>

INDOOR PLAY GUIDANCE (scroll down for Q&A)

Indoor Play

Across the UK, government guidance is different for indoor play.

- **Ireland** – Indoor play can now reopen. They don't have their own guidance and direct anyone to England's guidance.
- **Scotland** – Cannot yet open indoor play but outdoor attractions can reopen.
- **Wales**: Soft play has already reopened in Wales, however, due to the lockdown currently everywhere is closed. <https://gov.wales/indoor-play-areas-children-coronavirus-guidance>
- **England** – Reopened and venues have to Soft Play Reopening Guidance acts as the official government guidance. [Click on this link to view.](#)

Not all members have opened their indoor play for a number of reasons:

- Concerns about capacities and if a small area very difficult to make viable and monitor.
- Some using the space for alternative uses (seating areas/themed for events).

- Others working out how to meet ventilation requirements and some concerns about ventilation in winter when it is cold. Want solution for winter before they open.
- One member thought the way system poses problem. Most people have placed arrows and signage to get around this problem.

When English guidance introduced, Phil highlighted following from guidance.

- Crows nest, ball pools, dead ends with no space to social distance must be closed.
- Ventilation requirements – same as gym system and based on litres of air within the facility and balancing that with the number of people that can be within the soft play area.
- Cleaning all surfaces every 2 hrs. Fogging is not a mandatory requirement in the English version of the guidance.

England Indoor Play Q&A

Janice Dunphy joined the Group Chat for a Q&A with members. Janice used to be Chair of the Balppa Family Entertainment Centre Subgroup and has now left to setup her own indoor play association.

Janice also runs her own indoor playcentre in York, with a small outdoor area. To get open during the summer she ran a funfair without indoor play. Now indoor play has reopened, she's kept the outdoor funfair, allows a total capacity of 350, caps visits to 2.5 hours and allows visitors into the indoor play for 45 minutes. A grave concern to her sector though is that people don't feel confident enough to return in any volume.

Ventilation and Indoor Play

****NEW**** As of Thursday 2nd October, DCMS have updated the official guidance created by BALPPA. They have removed the minimum requirement of 100sqft per person but retained the requirement for an air ventilation flow of 20l/s/p of fresh air with no recirculation by mechanical means. To work out what you need to have you will need a heating engineer. [To read the full current guidance, click here.](#) The ventilation section is on section 12.

Don't cause additional problems

Janice mentioned in the guidance of changing the set up for COVID and finding you are creating another problem (for example introducing a one way system that then contravenes fire regulations). She indicated risk assessments are vital.

Strangulation risk from wearing masks within the playframe was another concern for Janice and her members. In the UK masks only need to be worn by children over 11, but this varies in Wales, Scotland and Ireland). Initially they heard no masks inside the play area due to strangulation but now the law has changed, Janice is unsure which supersedes the other. Janice has asked DCMS for clarification.

Other indoor play requirements/tips

- For cleaning table surfaces Janice shared an idea to have a double sided A4 sheet with rules of play on one side and on the other a heart. Once people vacate the table, they are asked to turn the sign over to show the heart 'please give me some love' so the cleaning staff know which table should be sanitised.
- Janice also reminded everyone that hand sanitisers are needed at every entry and exit point. Janice talked about the added costs of deep cleaning.
- The Rule of 6 now means it's not possible for indoor playcentres to do parties.
- Doug asked about local EHO's and whether people should be listening to their local officers, but Janice said no, the EHO's should be following law and not guidance.
- Matt Heast asked if your playframe is one end of the building and the eating area is the other, would this ventilation guidance still need to be adhered to. Janice said DCMS have told her that at this time there needs to be an actual physical barrier from ceiling to floor, for the guidance needing to be different.
- Janice has invested in a heat monitor for all their dishwashers to monitor the temperature and to make sure it reaches the maximum heat to kill coronavirus.
- Janice stressed to the DCMS that operators need to know ASAP whether they will be closed over October half term as a lot of investment has already been put in place.

How to get involved with AIP Forum

Association of Indoor Play is the new association Janice has formed.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3370591716313010/>

The Association is charging £150 for the year or £15 per month DD. People can join and leave whenever they would like. The reason why Janice wants paid up members is to prove to government they are a sizeable voice for the industry.

It is currently free of charge to join the Facebook page. Doug said he's a member of the page and that it's been very sad to hear the stories members have been posting on the forum. Some haven't been able to open yet.

Doug and Janice agreed that everyone needs to work together to get the right regulations. Janice said they are losing between 2/3 member per day who are shutting their businesses

Learning from fellow members

Lee (Sacrewell) – reopened indoor play at 35% capacity. Shutting intermittently for 1 hour periods to fog and clean. It is charged as additional £2.50, which generated some complaints initially. The session is pre-booked online along with the farm entry ticket.

Neil and Katie (Walby) – They are doing pre-booked sessions, cleaning every 40 minutes. It is included in entry fee.

Sally (Pink Pig), suggests charge extra for optional soft play as capacity for rest of the Farm Park will be higher than for the soft play. Reduce capacity.

Matt (Mead Open Farm) before they increased size of play area at Mead they used to give out wristbands which had a 30 minute timeslot and call out children if necessary or if the soft play is quiet they can allow them to stay longer. This worked well in the past, however you would have new problem of sanitising wristbands. Thinks a system for people to enter and exit one way is possible, but unlikely to get children to play in a one-way system.

David Taylor suggests that if you can work a one way system it should be fine. Also recommends having a staff member manning the slides at bottom with a 'stop' and 'go' sign system.

Rupert (Roves) said they set themselves up now, so all activities are outdoors. Likely to have a one way system through Christmas. Imagine indoor play will become part of a slot in a day.

Gwen (Cantref in Wales) ran her soft play in the Summer as there was an expectation from the public it would be open:

- Hardest part is seating the parents who are spectating.
- They have not promoted the soft play but allow people to queue outside the soft play and let them in on the hour and half past the hour. Staff clean for 10 minutes; kids play for 20 minutes. Staff sanitise hands as they go in and out. As its been hot, people haven't really wanted to go into soft play, so format not yet put to test. They haven't charged extra for soft play but have increased price across the board for everyone.
- Fogging required morning and night.

Eat Out to Help Out

One member was contacted as they were questioning the number of people, they reported having through being so high. The current guidance states that you are allowed to run offer provided people are eating on your premises.

Anita mentioned that the guidance is all on weblinks currently so it could be edited quite easily, she has put the current guidance in a PDF so that she has a record and shared it with everyone: <https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/government-publications-eat-out-to-help-out-scheme-.pdf>

OPERATING WITH COVID

NFAN REOPENING GUIDANCE: A big thank you to Hannah from Bocketts, Gwen from Cantref, George from Wynford Farm and all other contributors. You can download the document via the following link: https://www.farmattractions.net/sdm_downloads/nfan-reopening-guidance/. Please be aware this is a moving document and will change.

NFAN's reopening guidance has been informed by researching current guidelines and reviewing the BALPPA, IAPPA, BIAZA, Government, HSE, World Health Organisation.

Other Guidance

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE FOR ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.

Please see NFAN website for the official government guidance links.

<https://www.farmattractions.net/join-the-national-farm-attraction-network/coronavirus-member-support/>

BALPPA. (The British Association of Parks, Piers and Attractions) have given us permission to share their [Balppa's social distancing guidance notes](#) for our NFAN members.

See link: <https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BALPPA-COVID-19-Attraction-re-launch-advice.pdf>

BIAZA have launched their reopening guidance which can be found on their website.

<https://biaza.org.uk>

Operators tips on Pinch Points & Bottle Necks

Tractor and Trailer Ride and Bottle Necks

Majority of Farm Parks are now running Tractor and Trailer Rides again, but some are finding that they can create bottlenecks.

- Sandra (Farmer Palmer's) Tractor & Trailer Ride running with £1 charge for standard ride or £2 for Deer Safari taking cash on the day, running for as long as people want to do it. Their system is to use a 1.5 metre piece of water pipe so that family groups can measure the space between themselves and others as they sit down. It is a back to back tractor ride with visitors facing out away from each other. People have to wait in queuing system to come in and out and they drop the pieces of pipe into sanitiser between rides. The tractor driver sprays and wipes down the trailer seats between rides. The ride lasts less than 15 minutes (not long exposure).
- Tom (National Forest) has a large trailer and is using a 2 metre distance, they are on turn around all day long. They would consider going to 1.5 metres as the ride is only 8 minutes long (less than 15 minute exposure time).
- Rupert (Roves) is planning to keep tractor ride back until the Autumn as they are time consuming and will be extra value to push following the summer holidays.
- Robin (Briarlands) is finding people are still very cautious so haven't done them. People don't seem to have missed the Tractor Rides but will go back to it.

Toilet Bottle Necks

- Sally (Pink Pig) has made all the toilets unisex to avoid business of ladies' loos (and quiet men's loos). They have taken signs off the doors and put changing tables in both. There have been no objections from the public and they may carry on with this system afterwards.

- Rupert (Roves) has always had unisex toilets since before lockdown and no problems with unisex toilets and people are actually happy about it. Toilets are likely to change to legislation and fluid gender.

Sheep/Goat Racing Bottle Necks

- Tom (National Forest) was worried about people crowding. He has placed stakes and painted red on stake with white markers to get family groups to stand in the red sections.

How farms are managing Animal Handling

Animal activities are now allowed but must be socially distanced. Some attractions are allowing families to go in, in family groups when washing hands before and afterwards. Includes pony grooming/egg collecting/guinea pig petting. Cannot attract crowds. Could be offered as a paid for activity.

- Sandra (Farmer Palmer's) is doing pots of feed for pygmy goats as the children can throw the feed on the floor. Also allowing them to put hazel branches on floor. Tokens to correspond with different times to avoid overcrowding. They have also got council to allow them to use an extra agricultural barn for the next few months as an extra space for animal activities to avoid overcrowding.
- Matt (Mead) has been selling animal feed since they reopened. Currently just gets rabbits out at unscheduled times.
- David has traditionally had wandering goats and donkey in pens/paddocks so that families can go around in their own groups and feed them. Haven't started guinea pig petting or donkey grooming yet.

Children's Birthday Parties

- With Rule of 6 birthday parties not possible.

Paying Supplier Invoices

We discussed whether members chose to pay supplier invoices for services/products which were not required during lockdown (leaflets, bin collections etc):

- Anita (NFAN & Agility Mktg) said all of the leaflet contracts for her marketing agency clients have been deferred to 2021 and they have not paid invoices this year.
- Mark Navin (Cockfields Farm) continued paying most suppliers and they have either refunded, given credit or holidays or provided extra months of service when the service hasn't been required.
- Sally Jackson (Pink Pig) advised that you can schedule Biffa bins collections so that you only pay for bins to be collected when needed.

Answering Phone Lines

Doug (Avon Valley) thinking of going phoneless as the staff don't always have time to answer calls and feels it looks bad when staff trying to juggle admissions and phone calls. This topic was discussed further on the call:

- Mark Navin (Cockfields Farm) says he personally finds it infuriating when he can't call a company and recommends changing the voicemail message instead. Anita (Agility Mktg) agrees.
- Jackie Vinden (Odds Farm) says they have changed holding message and are not answering phones when team are too busy and says this is frustrating customers. Unfortunately, it is necessary for the business and people have come to expect this throughout lockdown with high volumes of enquiries and skeleton staff.
- It was suggested to look at VOIP phone lines that may save you some money.

Staffing 'Cohorts'

- Ella (Bluebell Dairy) mentioned there will have 3 different cohorts of staff to reduce exposure to one another.
- If one member of the team then tested positive, only the other staff in their cohort would then need to isolate instead of the entire team.
- Sandra (Farmer Palmer's) has 3 volunteers who have been looking after the animals for duration of lockdown who will take a mentoring role when the others return so she feels it is not possible to create cohorts of staff – one of the 3 must be on with the others at all times.

Staff training

- NFAN Member, Timely Intervention provide E.Learning for staff on a wide range of subjects including COVID-19 and the Industry Code of Practice. Already used by a number of farm parks, more details are at <http://www.timelyintervention.co.uk/lms-2/> or by phone on 0333 012 4263.
- Tom (Chairman) - Ray Hipkin (HS consultant) made it clear on his webinar ([Click here to watch the recording](#)) that staff training must be much more than a sort of check sheet exercise. You have got to have well thought out, well-structured training.
- Sally (Pink Pig) - all of her staff have been doing online training courses, but be aware that they cannot do more hours of training than they would typically work when not furloughed (unless they volunteer)

How farm operators are running Outdoor Play

- Sandra (Farmer Parmer's) is introducing capacity for play equipment and a one way system. For the Go Karts, staff will 'invite in' visitors. During their 1 hour closure at the end of the morning session, they will use a knapsack sprayer to disinfect equipment.
- Phil (Innovative Leisure) said some research pointed towards the virus being destroyed by sunlight within an hour, although this is not yet accepted by Sage. Felt that with climbing walls and high ropes it is not practical or possible to sanitise effectively. Same probably applies to some outdoor play.

- Bouncing pillows – Tom (NFAN Chairman) says they plan to disinfect at start and end of day and at midday with knapsack sprayer. Limit capacity. Social distance and half usual capacity. Family groups only.

Some disinfectants claim to last for 30 days. It was highlighted that members should be cautious as some of these claims are not backed up with science. A product that claims to protect surfaces from COVID-19 for 30 days is currently being questioned by scientists. Recommendation to ensure you pick a disinfectant with science behind it.

How operators are running Shows & Walk Pasts

A discussion took place concerning character shows, attraction events (such as concerts) or end of day parades.

- Rick (Big Sheep) feels that this guidance is written in reference to venues which cannot enforce social distancing for shows and walk pasts. Felt risk assessment was more important. Suggests a lot of these guidelines are open to interpretation by EHOs.
- Paulton's Park will be doing a Peppa Pig show.
- Tom (NFAN Chairman) - reminder that guidelines are not statutory and risk assessment is the tool to get around the guidelines.
- Mark Edwards (Farmer Teds) says working along with EHO very worthwhile, they have filmed walkthrough of the site to get EHO on board, which saves them from needing to visit.
- Graham Parker also highlighted that you have the right to appeal any decision your EHO takes within 14 days of any decisions.

How farms are managing Annual Memberships

Some attractions in Europe and elsewhere have introduced a booking fee for members to ensure that they do not book up all the slots available. Mixed reactions to this (very negatively received in some cases). Where the fee is exchangeable for a coffee voucher, they have been inundated with people who do not want the coffee.

- Sandra (Farmer Palmer's) is going with no more than 50% members on any given day. Based this on past data.
- Steve (Odds Farm) says first week was solely for members and they were getting 30% no shows. Introduced £5 refundable booking fee for members to overcome this. The percentage of no shows seems to have dropped so seems to be working so far. Change in strategy as they used to try and convert day visitors to members, but they are now seeing the value of day visitors instead. There are other ways of running membership programme (ie similarly to football clubs, paying £25 per year and getting first refusal on tickets or discount on tickets/spend).
- Doug (Avon Valley) has about 4k members from 160k per year visitor number. They are not reliant on them for a massive portion of income, however, 40% of entrance capacity goes to members. They feel it is simply not cost effective and they are planning on

closing during quieter months this does not fit well with annual membership scheme. They have decided to get rid of their annual membership programme.

Going Cashless (Card only payments)

About 10 attendees said they were going completely cashless for safety reasons.

- Sally (Pink Pig) said from their experience of running farm shop in lockdown, people are more than happy and usually prefer to go cashless. Very occasionally she's allowed exact cash but does not think she will be going to go back to cash now.
- Some are asking visitors to go cashless but saying they will accept cash.
- Barleylands have kept some cash in the business as they have coin operated cars.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessments for reopening will be vital and this came out of the meeting that Tom Robinson had with Visit Britain. Some farms have asked their insurance companies for the risk assessments they would be happy to insure the farm on.

NFAN's Risk Assessment Webinar: A big thank you to Ray Hipkin who gave a useful webinar last Thursday on COVID-19 risk assessments. You can now watch the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bE1vsMozYiA&feature=youtu.be>

Download Ray's dynamic risk assessment template here:

<https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RAY-HIPKIN-C19-Farm-Park-Dynamic-Risk-Ass-v2-1.pdf>

Definition of PPE for Risk Assessments

Tom (NFAN Chairman) notes that his Health and Safety Advisors today who were at pains to point out that masks are not technically part of PPE provision for your employees (a mask is there to stop people, spreading the virus not protecting them from it).

Thanks to NFAN Trade Member, Finch-Consulting who have created a podcast on PPE. (<https://www.finch-consulting.com/finch-video-masks-are-not-ppe-its-not-all-about-you/>)

Regency Purchasing have put together PPE Guidance, see link here:

<https://www.farmattractions.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Covid-Safe-Advice-and-Guidance.pdf>

Across other industries use of PPE:

- Several members pointed out that supermarkets and other businesses which are currently open have allowed staff to make the choice about whether they wear masks etc.
- John Lewis opened this week and they have said their staff have access to PPE and it's their choice, what they feel is appropriate where.

- Local council state staff do not have to wear any kind of PPE, but they support any staff that wants to wear it.

Trade members who can help with antibacterial stations/PPE:

Aardvark FX

“The ‘new normal’ is going to include hygiene screens, sanitising stations, signage and other infrastructure challenges, so we want to be there to help our trusted NFAN customers adapt towards this situation.”

Contact Aardvark FX:

01179 863 051 | E: enquiries@aardvarkfx.com

D M Gould Wholesale

“Back to Work PPE Packages from D M Gould Wholesale starting at just £199+VAT. Each pack contains what masks, gloves and sanitisers you’ll need to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 and keep you all safe. 10% discount on PPE packages for all NFAN members and free nationwide delivery.”

Contact D M Gould Wholesale:

01539 729 900 | E: tom@dmgould.co.uk

Greenspan

“Greenspan are valued distributors of two unique mobile solutions – sanitising and temperature screening stations. The Amorgard SaniStation is one in a unique range of fast deployable handwashing and sanitisation solutions. Exclusive product available for quick delivery. Comes ready stocked and filled with sanitising products.”

Contact Greenspan:

023 80 467 130 | E: info@sentry-scan.co.uk

Pacific Computers Limited

“Pacific now offer LCD Hand Sanitiser Stations. These not only dispense hand sanitiser but contain customisable digital signage screens that can be used to convey information or promotions to your guests. These complement our Interactive Handwash Station that we demonstrated at the NFAN Trade Show in January.”

Contact Pacific Computers Limited:

01256 312700 | E: geoffa@pacific.co.uk

Regency Purchasing

“Our core aim is to save you time and money



whilst delivering quality.” Facemasks, sanitiser stations and other PPE is available. Sanitiser stations available in a range of applications from wall mounted, table top or free standing.

Bespoke branded is also an option. Regency are also offering “Covid-Safe site visits and assessments to help guide operators through re-opening.

Contact Regency Purchasing

01934 646 135 | E: info@regencypurchasing.co.uk

Trade Members who can help with Temperature Scanners

George Hogg advised that Government’s Chief Scientists have said temperature scanning is not worthwhile, however, the advice is changing quickly so this may not be the advice at some stage. Temperature scanners could, however, give people greater confidence.

Trade Member, Greenspan have created Sentryscan

Sentryscan offers a range of fever-scanning entry control units designed to keep visitors and colleagues safe. All personnel are scanned prior to entry.

Contact: Matt Young at Greenspan

02380 476737 | E: matty@greenspanltd.com

Trade Members who can help with food ordering:

Below will provide Click and collect tech solutions for ordering food:

Mobile web app

Trade member Haven are introducing a new mobile web app so that guests can pre-order and pay for food using their mobile devices. Contactless payments are being updated with a new EPOS integration, and their Self-Service ticketing application is about to be launched. The ‘self-order and pay’ ticket application runs on stand-alone touch screen kiosks or tablets. This is being enhanced to include food ordering sub menus. **Contact - Tim Richards, Haven Systems:** tim.richards@haven-systems.co.uk

Paging system

Trade Member, Merlinsoft have created a café paging system enabling orders to be taken onsite, customers given pagers and orders sent direct to the kitchen. Low entry cost.

Contact – Owen Gleadall: owen@merlinsoft.co.uk

HR OPTIONS BEYOND FURLOUGHING

Tom Robinson’s HR Consultant Tara Warner joined the 8th May call for a Q&A session.

Please see download links for two helpful documents Tara has shared with us:

1. **[Click here for a Basic Redundancy Flowchart](#)**
2. **[Click here for an Employer’s Guide to Redundancy](#)**

Annual Leave and Furlough

Taking annual leave on furlough: You can allow or impose holiday during furlough as long as you give notice to employees. The notice period must be double the amount of time you are asking them to take as holiday. In addition, you need to top up their 80% furlough money to 100%.

Under special amendment to the Working Time Regs, up to 4 weeks Annual Leave can be rolled over for the next 2 years. This may be helpful or unhelpful to you depending on your circumstances. However, as an employer you are entitled to dictate when an employee can take holiday. For example, you may want to impose holiday later in the year when it is quieter and deny holiday when you are reopening and busy. If you have a rationale/objective justification behind treating different employees differently with holiday entitlement that is allowed.

Lay- off

Lay-off is an alternative to redundancy – If you do not want to make someone redundant, you could lay them off instead.

If you have a lay-off clause in your employee's contract it means you could do this immediately, if not you will need to agree with staff. Statutory lay off pay does apply. The maximum you will need to pay is £30 a day for first 5 workless days in any 3-month period - so a maximum of £150. If you wish to extend the lay-off period, you would need to pay this again. You can lay-off employees for either 4 consecutive weeks or up to 6 weeks in a 13-week period, before which the employee has a right to request to be made redundant.

If staff want to volunteer to be laid off or take unpaid leave (applies to parents in particular, if their children are not back at school when you reopen), then you can still make them redundant at a later date if circumstances require, but this could result in them tripping into another year of service and therefore more redundancy pay.

Redundancy

It was acknowledged nobody wants to make staff redundant, however, Tara ran through the options.

Making employees redundant whilst on furlough – You are able to serve redundancy notice on employees who are on furlough, which is an advantage as government will still pay 80% of wages until 30 June (now 31st July) during the notice period whilst the employee is in furlough. Once the future is clear and if you need to make redundancies, you can start your redundancy consultation straight away.

30 or 45 day redundancy collective consultation periods – Tara advised that these do not apply if you are making less than 20 people redundant.

Advice if you have a pool of people doing the same/similar job – the process works to ensure you are fair and objective. This should be done by creating a matrix of objective selection criteria. You will want to consider the skills/experience/competence/attributes which you value the most and in scoring employees against these, you should naturally identify those most valuable to your business. Might include attendance record, reliability and skills etc.

Selection of people for redundancy needs to be on a fair basis and age should not come into scoring. Length of service can be used but only up to a max of 5 years, ie no additional scores for over 5 year's service in order to comply with Age Discrimination.

You may also ask for volunteers to take redundancy, but you do not have to accept all applications for voluntary redundancy.

It is recommended you create a transparent general briefing and follow up by letter/email, which states, for example, 'We believe we need to lose XX posts or enough posts to make £xx saving'.

Advice if you are making a single, unique job role redundant - if you have a single unique role to be made redundant, you do not need to create selection criteria.

Consultation Meetings (can take place via video call) - At least 2 consultation meetings should take place with individuals at risk. This will help you to demonstrate meaningful consultation and a fair process, therefore minimising the possibility of unfair dismissal claims.

- The official purpose of consultation meetings is to prevent the redundancy from happening if at all possible. In the first meeting, both parties can put forward any idea (i.e. cut hours or take a sabbatical). If an employee has been scored on a selection matrix, it is common for these to be questioned at this meeting. If no points are raised, then you can terminate the post, but it is better to go to a second meeting.
- In second meeting, address points raised in first meeting.
- Consultation period for short serving staff (less than 2 year's service) is not required, however, do not cherry pick short service staff. You may be better off assessing all staff on skills rather than service length if you think it would be beneficial to you to keep short service staff.

Statutory Redundancy Calculator – there is an online calculator for you to work out how much redundancy pay an employee is due. It is typically a week's pay (up to £538) for every year's service (min. 2 years service). <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-redundancy-pay>

Change in contract terms

To keep employee on but change their contract terms you must consult with the employee and get their agreement. For example, if you decide you want to keep an employee, but change to zero hours contract. If the employee does not agree, you can go through dismissal

and reengagement instead, but be aware that this could open the door to unfair dismissal claims.

**The next Zoom group meeting will be on Wednesday 18th November between 7-8 pm.
Email info@farmattractions.net for the link or request to join our NFAN Facebook group.**