

PARKS

BUSINESS ncc

AUTUMN 2020

All hands on deck

Industry's plan for surviving coronavirus

**PLANNING
INSIGHTS**
Certificates of
lawfulness

**ENTERTAINMENT
UPDATE**
Keeping happy,
keeping healthy

**BUSINESS
BOUNCEBACK**
Experts reveal their
news and views



Caravan and Holiday Park Specialists

As the ever resilient caravan park market continues to attract strong demand post lockdown, there are many well funded buyers actively seeking opportunities. Get in touch to maximise the value of your park.



SW

Sanderson
Weatherall

Our caravan park specialists have inspected over 300 parks across the UK over the last 18 months with over £60M of park transactions sold or under offer since lockdown.

If you require any advice or are thinking of selling your park please do not hesitate to contact us in confidence for a market appraisal.

ncc PARKS BUSINESS

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The NCC aims to promote, represent and protect the collective interests of its members

DIARY DATES**4 November**

Scottish Caravan & Camping Forum
Via Zoom

9 November

Caravan & Camping Forum Wales
Via Zoom

10 November

CCNL Board Via Zoom

12 November

Holiday Caravan Supply Chain Forum
Via Zoom

19 November

Caravan & Camping Forum NI
Via Zoom

3 December

Touring Caravan Manufacturers' Section
Via Zoom

Spread of virus results in second national lockdown for England

On Saturday 31 October PM Boris Johnson announced a second national lockdown for England – a new Tier 4 starting at 00.01 on Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December at which point it will be reviewed.

Measures will include restriction on non-essential travel, except for work, closure of non-essential retail – which will include leisure vehicle dealerships – all pubs and restaurants to close, no mixing of people inside homes except for childcare and other forms of support.

Overnight stay away from home will be permitted for work purposes only, meaning that hotel accommodation and holiday parks will also be closed.

This follows reports that COVID-19 cases have now passed the one million mark in England and pressure



on the NHS is such that it would be unable to accept more patients by mid-December even if Nightingale hospitals are recommissioned.

One piece of positive news is that the furlough scheme is to be retained through November.

NCC pushes government on Green Homes Grant Scheme

The Green Homes Grant Scheme (GHGS) was launched at the end of September and is currently set to run until the end of March 2021. The NCC continues discussions with both Government (BEIS) and TrustMark (the government endorsed organisation tasked with vetting registered tradespeople to carry out improvement works

under the scheme). The NCC wants to ensure the scheme is open to installers who are technically competent and experienced in working on residential park homes. At present the scheme lists only one company registered as a TrustMark installer to carry out work on park homes. The NCC is concerned that the absence of

recognised park home installers registered under the scheme may push residents to seek improvement work which, without knowledge and competence of the unique structure of park homes, could be extremely detrimental and costly in the long term. These concerns have been raised at the highest level.

- The primary guidance for businesses in England that have gym and leisure facilities has been updated to include new guidance on:
 - keeping users of sports and gym/leisure facilities safe
 - social distancing
 - managing changing rooms and showers
 - protecting staff not able to work at home

- Caravan Guard, incorporating static caravan insurance specialist

Leisuredays, has celebrated insuring more than 100,000 customers. The milestone was reached as the brand celebrates its 25-year anniversary. The family owned business has also reached a five star-rating on review website Trustpilot.

● The Government has announced the first towns that will be offered a Town Deal – Blackpool and Torquay are included. Between them, the 101 towns will receive £178.8m

to support regeneration and economic growth.

Blackpool is to receive £39.5 million to be used to update the Blackpool Illuminations, while Torquay will have £21.9 million to modernise the town centre.

● Businesses are being invited to join in with Rosie Jones's Mission Accessible (Channel 4) adventures around Britain by promoting their accessible experiences on social media. The aim is to

showcase accessible places to visit around the UK as part of #EscapeTheEveryday promotion (see p9).

● Parkdean Resorts is offering all its customers a no-quibble 100% refund or a voucher for a future holiday if their chosen park has to close due to government advice when they are due to be there. The voucher for a future holiday will be at least equal to the amount they have paid for the current booking.

Atlas offers 80 new jobs in Sutton Fields premises

Atlas Leisure Homes Ltd is recruiting for 80 caravan production jobs, due to a strong order book and continued growth.

The company has made a significant investment in 55,000² foot of additional manufacturing space on Sutton Fields to accommodate new production lines.

In June, Atlas created an employee-led taskforce to carry out a COVID-19 risk

assessment. New policies and ways of working were implemented to sustain safe working. Operations director, Colin Jeffrey, said: "Like many others we had to furlough staff during lockdown. When we were able to return to our existing production site, we didn't have enough space to allow our staff to return to a safe environment. We're delighted to be in a position to recruit and to have the space to take them on safely."



Internal fit out of new factory, Atlas electrician Darren Mussett

Park homes debate in the house

The Mobile Homes Act 1983 (Amendment) Bill was debated in the House of Commons on 23 October. The key discussion points of the Bill were:

- Defining pitch fees to prevent the use of variable service charges in written agreements
- Ensuring that residents only pay for the services they are required to pay for through the pitch fee.

The opposition has called for a full impact assessment of the proposed changes to understand why they are needed, and to ensure that this is a fair deal for all involved. It is also noteworthy that the Minister has called for consultation with the industry on the proposals which had consensus.

The debate will resume on Friday 6 November. For more information, please email policy@thencc.org.uk

John's spot...



“ Tiers and fears ... It wasn't easy dealing with three tiers in England, five tiers in Scotland, Wales with holiday parks – plus all hospitality venues – closed until 9 November, and a complex set of regulations for Northern Ireland. For holiday park operations, particularly those with a UK-wide presence, this has been a huge challenge.

It has been a challenge to keep up with ever-changing scenarios, the tightening rules, continually updated guidance, ongoing staff issues, not to mention communicating all that to owners and visitors quite possibly arriving from a different tier.

But as I write this on the final day of October, the news is breaking that a full month-long national lockdown is to take place in England, starting on Thursday 5 November. Business leaders have already hit out at the prospect of a second national lockdown, saying the potential damage 'is immense'. I cannot disagree.

The campaign, with the larger park groups, lobbied for the saving of the half term, arguing its value, not just in terms of revenue, but also jobs. We should be grateful that the late break at least was saved. But for those parks open during November, there will be another round of pitch fee refund requests, of dealing with those shielding on site (and those who uphold they have nowhere else to go), of contacting customers and 'shutting up shop'.

Manufacturers will be permitted to remain open, but we are again faced with the closure of non-essential retail, which will include sales offices on holiday parks and, of course, all hospitality.

With the different measures being implemented across the UK, there are still so many unanswered questions. We have yet to see if the lockdown in England will result in the other devolved administrations reviewing their positions. The NCC is working with officials and will be issuing all the relevant information and any items of clarification on our hubs.

We are here to support our members – if you have any specific questions then please do not hesitate to contact the

NCC team and we will try to help in any way we can.



Wilby rebrands to PIB Insurance Brokers

Caravan and holiday park commercial insurance specialist, Wilby Insurance Brokers, which offers the Park Protect insurance scheme, has changed its name to PIB Insurance Brokers.

The move is part of a nationwide programme that saw a number of businesses under the parent company, PIB Group, rebrand to simplify the business offering.

The West Yorkshire-based business, which has over a decade of experience delivering services in the holiday park sector, covers parks across the UK, from touring sites through to multi-site resorts.

David Moffat, Associate Director at Wilby said: "We've experienced more than 35 years of success operating as Wilby Insurance Brokers. By moving under a single brand as PIB Insurance Brokers, we will be able to continue improving the range of services we offer to our valued clients in the holiday and caravan park sector, while drawing on the expertise of the wider PIB Group."

Wilby Insurance Brokers is one of 11 businesses within the PIB Group Specialty Division which will move under the single brand.

• Park owners who have taken out cover through the Park Protect insurance policy can look forward to a rebate amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Wilby Insurance Brokers, who offer the Park Protect policy, will make a premium rebate to reflect their client's fall in turnover and payroll as part of the COVID-19 lockdown.

The rebates are subject to minimum premiums and will be arranged either as part of a mid-term review or at renewal.

NCC members shortlisted for accolades at the British Travel Awards

The British Travel Awards 2020 has decided to continue to "reflect the consumers' desire to express their appreciation of their favourite travel companies".

Britishtravelawards.com states: "The people working in the travel industry are still hanging in there, trying to ensure there will be great holidays and leisure products available and trusted companies to book with when the current crisis is behind us. So... let us know who are your favourites in travel."

Customers can vote online, and among the NCC members up for accolades are Away Resorts, Butlins, Haven and Parkdean Resorts (Best UK Family Holiday Company).



Pitchup.com is up for Best Family Holiday Company and Best Camping & Mobile Holiday Company. Voting closes on 22 November 2020.

Skipsea development given green light

Plans for a new holiday park with 420 caravan and landscape design services for the application for the 34-hectare site.

planning, heritage, urban services for the application for the 34-hectare site.

built off Hornsea Road in Skipsea, after hearing the development could boost the area's tourism by an estimated £4m+ per annum and create around 70 jobs.

Pegasus Group, on behalf of MB Goodwin (Skipsea) Ltd, provided



Parkdean Resorts is marketing a regal caravan that celebrates "the marvellous Queen Elizabeth II" in a traditional British seaside setting just outside Scarborough. The regal caravan comprises a plush drawing room complete with a chaise longue, chandelier and monumental thrones. The Royal Caravan's corridor is adorned with portraits of the queen on the way to the ultimate throne - a solid gold toilet.



Kingsdown Mobile Home Park to change hands after 40 years

Savills, on behalf of a private vendor, has been appointed to market Kingsdown Mobile Home Park, which is located in Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, at a guide price of £1.2m.

Set across just over two acres (0.85 hectares), the park benefits from a Site Licence for 41 residential pitches, 40 of which have been developed to provide 30 single and ten twin units.

Kay Griffiths, associate director in the leisure and

trade team at Savills Oxford, comments: "Having been under the same ownership for approximately 40 years, this is a rare opportunity to purchase a mature mobile home park business."

"The mobile home park sector provides investors with a good return on investment and is regarded as being reasonably recession proof. We therefore expect to receive a significant number of enquiries from interested parties."

Darwin Development Fund invests

Colliers International says the sale of a 40-acre development site in North Wales to Darwin Leisure Development Fund shows the robust investment appeal of UK holiday parks.

Plas Isaf Lodge Park, located near Caerwys, has planning permission for 57 holiday lodges, of which 12 have already been constructed. It was sold for an undisclosed sum and will join the 'Darwin Escapes' portfolio.



Duvalay's £1.2m factory delivers safe workspace

West Yorkshire based Duvalay has purchased a new £1.2m factory.

The company bought a four-acre site on Station Lane in Heckmondwike in response to rising demand across its full product portfolio. "It's been nine years since we entered the Dragons' Den with our Duvalay sleeping bag, and we've expanded twice since then," explains Sales & Marketing Director Liz Coleran (below right).

"In recent years we've formed exciting global partnerships with Arleigh International Group in Europe and GO Outdoors here in the UK.

"To facilitate this growth, increase productivity and reduce lead times, we've decided to consolidate our operation in a single, bigger factory. The extra space has allowed us to move onto a double-shift pattern for most workers. It has also helped ensure we have a COVID-19 safe workplace and social distancing," continues Liz.

Duvalay undertook an environmental impact assessment during the first phase of construction. "Each contract mattress we produce contains an innovative material made from recycled plastic bottles,"



explains Liz. "We are on target to divert more than 180,000 plastic bottles from landfill each year. Duvalay's new premises will serve as the company's headquarters, and a showroom will also be accessible on site.

Sanderson Weatherall sells Cornish park to Waterside Group

Sanderson Weatherall's (SW) specialist holiday and caravan parks team have sold Tregoad Holiday Park to Waterside Holiday Group following a confidential targeted marketing campaign.

Tregoad Holiday Park, near the coastal town of Looe, had been operated for 17 years by the previous owners. They had grown the business into a well-established and popular resort on a 55-acre site.

Lee Southan, SW's holiday and caravan park specialist in the South, commented: "Following the acquisition by Waterside Holiday Group, the park will undergo a sympathetic, high-quality enhancement of the existing landscape, with a refresh of facilities and the creation of new pitches for premium holiday homes."

"It's been an unusual year for the holiday and caravan park market and this sale of Tregoad Holiday Park only highlights the confidence in the industry. With international travel on the decline, parks across the country are to play an ever more important role in providing holidays."

For further information contact Sanderson Weatherall's Devon office on 01884 256 714.

Welsh Government requests units for vulnerable groups

The Welsh Government has made an urgent appeal for holiday accommodation providers to help by making units available for vulnerable people.

Government says that the Regulations in place to close businesses in Wales mean that there is empty visitor accommodation. Those same Regulations enable Local Authorities or Welsh Ministers to request businesses re-open in order to provide safe accommodation for vulnerable people, whilst also accessing support via the Job Support Scheme and Welsh Government's Lockdown fund. Interested businesses should contact their relevant Local Authority.



● Reminder – support finder:
Coronavirus support is available to employers and the self-employed, including sole traders and limited company directors. You may be eligible for loans, tax relief and cash grants, whether your business is open or

closed. See www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder

● Cash for Scottish businesses:
A £40 million fund will help businesses affected by temporary restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19.

SW markets park on the Gower peninsula

Due to retirement, a holiday village on the Gower peninsula is being marketed for the first time in over 30 years. Sanderson Weatherall describe it as a well-located holiday park with consent for 63 bungalows and 19 touring caravan pitches, with a further 11 acres for development.

SW's Lee Southan commented: "It offers fantastic potential for an investor, with a number of opportunities to develop the offering. The site is for sale off a guide price of £1,750,000; for further information please contact us on 01884 256 741."

Deloitte: consumer concern and a slower pace of growth anticipated

Deloitte (UK and Europe) research released at the end of October says UK consumer confidence has climbed one percentage point in Q3 2020, to -16%.

Restaurants saw the highest quarterly climb in the leisure sector net spending, boosted by the Eat Out to Help Out scheme. However, sentiment around the state of the economy remains at a near-record low.

There was concern around levels of debt, as consumers anticipate the impact of the end of the furlough scheme and mortgage payment holidays.

Ian Stewart, chief economist at Deloitte, commented: "The path of the virus continues to dictate the direction of the economy as a whole, and that of consumer spending in particular. Despite the boost from pent-up demand, staycations and the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, there was less bounce in August's GDP figure than expected. Now... the outlook is for an even slower pace of growth in the coming months."

Sanderson Weatherall sees new buyers and new lenders

Sanderson Weatherall (SW) has continued to see demand for parks significantly outstrip supply. "We are also seeing a number of new entrants and private equity/investor backed operators seeking to gain a foot hold" SW's Adam Burkinshaw commented.

Sale volumes of parks are lower than in previous years although Sanderson Weatherall has continued to transact sales of holiday and residential parks during and post lockdown. They have noticed an increasing demand from sellers wanting to ensure discretion.

Adam adds words of caution: "It cannot be ignored that the global pandemic has already and will continue to have a significant impact on the UK and wider global economy. Whilst

the caravan and holiday park sector provides a very attractive and robust business model in these uncertain times, potential head winds cannot be ignored; increased unemployment and a reduction in disposable income could impact parks in the future.

"We are already seeing evidence of banks tightening their lending criteria, and in some cases their overall appetite to lend. Outside of the private equity market, the sector has traditionally been funded, very successfully, by high street banks. As lending criteria change, we see real opportunity for challenger banks and alternative funders to compete for a share of the market. There are undoubtedly exciting, though challenging times ahead."

Erosion threatens holiday caravans in East Riding

Around four metres of the East Riding coast is being eroded every year, putting 427 caravans and holiday chalets along a 85km stretch of coastline under threat. Stretches of coast near Withernsea have seen the fastest rates of erosion.

In addition, the River Humber is forecast to rise by one metre during the next century which the Hessle Foreshore Tidal Defence Scheme, now being built, is designed to address.

VisitBritain launches its Escape the Everyday toolkit



VisitBritain is aiming to inspire consumers to 'escape the everyday' in its latest domestic campaign. Participants can be part of a collective message to inspire visitors to book a short UK break this autumn/winter. There is also the potential to get featured on their digital, social media and PR channels.

Find out more at: <https://www.visitbritain.org/download-escape-everyday-campaign-toolkit>



● VisitEngland's Annual Attractions Survey shows gardens saw highest growth in visitor numbers during 2019. Visits to England's gardens increased by 10% in 2019 compared to the previous year. Farms and places of worship also saw strong growth in visitors. Historic houses/castles and wildlife attractions/zoo also saw good growth, both up by 5%. The full survey results can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/37p90ZJ>

DEFERRAL OF VAT PAYMENTS

Businesses who deferred VAT due from 20 March to 30 June 2020 now have the option to pay in smaller payments over a longer period. Instead of paying the full amount by the end of March 2021, businesses can make smaller payments, interest free. For those that opt-in to the scheme, VAT liabilities due between 20 March and 30 June 2020 do not need to be paid until the end of March 2022.

UPDATED GUIDANCE ON TAKING PAYMENTS FROM CUSTOMERS

The Working Safely during Coronavirus Guidance Restaurants, Pubs, Bars and Takeaway Services guidance has been updated in relation to taking payments. It now allows for customers to pay at the counter rather than at their tables, provided safety measures are in place. This will help businesses with few or no handheld card machines.

CHANCELLOR'S INCREASED SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

On 22 October, government announced it is to significantly increase its winter support schemes to help businesses and workers. The outline was emailed to all members the following day – more details have since been uploaded to www.holidayparkshub.org.uk.

Don't forget to regularly check the NCC's hubs where there is information on latest Government support, plus advice and guidance.

Staggered shifts and social distance

Parks Business talked to Dean Westmoreland, Group Chairman of Omar



When and why did you decide to reopen your factory?

Omar closed its three manufacturing operations, fully mothballing them, within 48 hours of the Prime Minister's announcement of lockdown on 23 March. Not only was it the socially responsible thing to do, but the pandemic had adversely impacted our inbound supply chain and holiday parks were being told to close.

We also needed time to put in place COVID Secure working protocols for our businesses. We staged a graduated reopening across our three facilities from the end of May – we wanted to take the time to document and then deploy best-in-class COVID Secure protocols. We opened our HQ in Brandon first, followed closely by our Hull and Cradley Heath facilities a week or so later.

Production recommenced at 40% of pre-COVID levels, as we wanted to test our staggered shift patterns and ensure we had appropriate disciplines on screening, hygiene and maintenance of strict two-metre social distancing. As of mid-October, we are almost back to pre-COVID levels of output, but to maintain social distancing, we've had to transfer work from our Brandon facility, which was running at full capacity, to our 165,000 ft² manufacturing operation in Hull.

How did Omar balance the demands of its business with the needs of customers and staff?

The graduated return to work, supported by the furlough scheme, was the right answer for the health and wellbeing of our team – while recognising

the problems with our inbound supply chain. Our customers have been very understanding but we have lost some business due to extended lead times. I'm pleased to report that, thus far, we have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 on any of our three sites.

The prime consideration was the health and wellbeing of our team, as well as protecting our customers, suppliers and stakeholders. We have a strong desire to protect our staff and associates and not to be the centre of a COVID-19 outbreak, as a number of food processing facilities have already been.

What steps were taken for the safety of personnel and visitors?

All visits on-site are strictly by appointment only and we've introduced mandatory temperature checks, health screening and face coverings for all staff, visitors and delivery drivers. We also carry out visitor-logging protocols to track who has been on site.

There are guided walkways, one-way flows, Perspex screens, clear and helpful signage, additional wash stations, sanitisation stations and mandatory two-metre social distancing.

All rooms have clear capacity signage which indicates how many people can attend a meeting in person and shift patterns have been staggered for factory and office staff to reduce congestion in communal areas.

The number of cleaners employed has now been doubled and deep cleaning has been introduced in all public spaces, meeting rooms and show grounds after each individual visit.

Off-site visits now require submission of a health and temperature self-declaration form and the logging of any customer contacts for track and trace. All personnel who work remotely carry a COVID-19 kit which includes a stock of approved face masks, a thermometer, hand sanitiser, cleaning kit, coveralls and gloves.

Mandatory use of face coverings for all personnel and visitors in all indoor communal spaces were introduced ahead of it becoming a government requirement. We



Welding at Omar – by October output was almost back to pre-COVID levels

now also pay our self-isolating staff for 14 days (75% basic pay). The introduction of the pay-whilst-in-isolation is to discourage people from coming to work if they have been exposed to the virus and/or live with someone with symptoms.

How did you communicate with staff, suppliers and customers?

We created an employee only, private group on Facebook and used emails and our websites, in addition to social media, to communicate with employees, suppliers and customers.

When staff returned to our premises, we communicated via email, use of notice boards and briefings held by directors, managers and supervisors.

What about staff furloughed or those you had to let go?

Regular, clear and concise communication has been extremely important. We have email addresses for 99% of our employees and sent letters to those we could not reach via email.

Within individual departments, we have had weekly health-check Zoom meetings and used private social media groups to make sure we kept everyone informed.

We have had to lose staff, particularly in Brandon where we have been unable to operate at the same rate as prior to the pandemic, because of social distancing. We have dealt with this difficult situation honestly and openly.

We formed an Employee Consultation Group to consult on our restructuring process. We then engaged in individual consultations with typically at least three meetings with team members under threat. Where we had a number of people affected in an area, we used skills matrices tailored to each area and its particular skill set requirements. Each area/department's scores were moderated.

Once staff were informed of our decision to make them redundant, there was an appeal process individuals could access. Appeals were heard by more senior members of staff who had not had prior input into the decision.

It is never easy to let someone go, particularly hard-working people with a number of years of service. When you have to do so, you should engage in an open and honest process, so they leave the business with dignity and respect – these are difficult times.

What technology did you use?

Zoom and Microsoft Teams are both excellent tools – I chaired an NCC Park Home Committee meeting on Teams this afternoon.

We have been carrying out customer specifications via Zoom since April, with team members working from home and shielding customers. We use this platform for weekly management team meetings and our more formal monthly board meetings. Video conferencing has been a valuable addition to our arsenal, particularly the screen-sharing facility.

What are the biggest challenges?

Our inbound supply chain has been the biggest challenge since returning. We have unfortunately had real problems with material supply, particularly fit-out materials such as white goods, soft furnishings, radiators, laminate flooring and cabinet furniture.

I am pleased to say we are building units to plan – typically they are a week or two late for collection, while we await fit-out shortages due to late deliveries.

We have learnt how much our senior team care about the business and the team as a whole, and how disciplined we can all be with the adoption of our COVID Secure protocols. We have also learnt how reasonable and decent

people – staff, customers and (most) suppliers – can be when they are impacted by a pandemic.

I have been impressed by the financial support the Government has put in place for businesses via the furlough scheme and business loan schemes. I understand the need to balance the desire to get the economy firing and to try to protect the older and more vulnerable members of society.

Things might be a little easier if everyone accepted responsibility to maintain hygiene, social distancing and the use of face coverings when in communal spaces.

And personally?

My family and I have been absolutely fine. My two sons who are 23 and 25, have undoubtedly missed the opportunity to go out and do what young people do. We enjoyed a socially distanced staycation in Northumberland. I have missed a decent social life, live sport and entertainment. I like dog walks, books and box sets but there is more to life...

Looking to the future...?

The industry bounce-back has been strong. We have seen our order book double since the end of March and we are sold out to summer 2021.

We've been on a recruitment drive in Hull, adding staff in

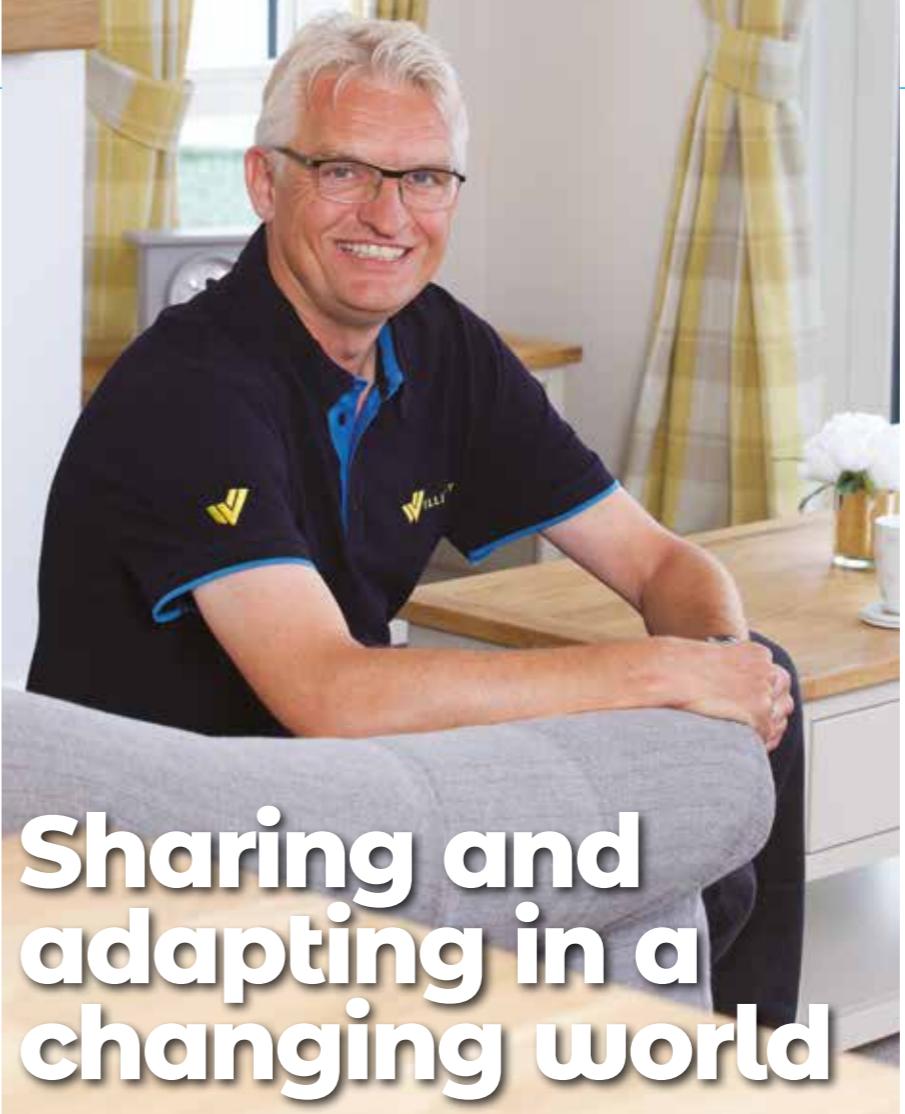
administrative and supervisory roles as well as on the shop floor, as we are seeking to double our output from this facility. We haven't ramped up production as quickly as we would have liked due to material supply, but we will be ahead of pre-COVID levels before Christmas.

I have been in the industry 11 years – not as long as some leaders in the sector – but long enough to see that the industry creates its own cycles, with manufacturers overtrading/over-producing, and some parks over stocking.

We need to better appreciate the dynamics of our marketplace. There is a genuine secular tail wind behind the park home market due to our ageing population, a population whose pension funds aren't perhaps what they hoped they would be. Equity release from a family home and downsizing into a park home has consequently grown in appeal.

We must recognise that the enforced lockdown created two to three months of pent up demand. The outbreak has also driven strong demand for luxury lodges with a staycation boom – the human condition is aspirational and there is a natural 'flight to quality'.

We are forecasting double-digit growth for 2021 – we are planning to build further capacity at Hull and will be recruiting again very soon.



Sharing and adapting in a changing world

Parks Business talks to Peter Munk, CEO of Willerby, about how the manufacturer has coped with COVID

How did Willerby reopen its manufacturing plant?

Willerby closed its manufacturing facility until we were comfortable that we'd put the necessary safety measures in place. We conducted a staged reopening, continually assessing the risk to our workforce during this difficult time. All our production facilities are now open again, running at re-aligned efficiency to accommodate COVID-Secure working. Our production capacity has decreased slightly.

Starting up is a lot harder than dropping tools. When we were ready to restart, a lot of our supply chain were not in the same position. We worked closely throughout, supporting them to get ready for re-opening by sharing our best practices. A holiday home has over 4,000 components from 172 suppliers so we needed every one of our suppliers to be open before we could start production.

Did you adjust your processes as the situation developed?

We took learnings along the way and implemented further safety measures, following reviews and the latest Government guidelines.

We shared our developments and safe working practices with other manufacturers, hosting a Zoom meeting for NCC members. We do not believe that health and safety should create a competitive advantage; it also helped us verify our interpretation of the guidelines and ensure it was consistent across the industry.

The safety of our workforce and stakeholders was a prime consideration. Staff completed a COVID-Safe working practices induction before returning to work. This ensured they understood the safety measures and were comfortable with the procedures. Visitors must complete a pre-visit COVID-questionnaire.

Risk assessments were completed across the business, including production facilities and offices, with internal audits to ensure compliance with guidelines. Consultations with our works committee ensured all decisions were made collaboratively.

How did you communicate with staff and customers?

We utilised a variety of technologies not normally used before COVID-19 and I recorded regular video messages to share business updates. We stayed in contact with our employees and both trade and retail customers by issuing weekly newsletters. These were designed to be informative and supportive but also to offer respite from the challenges of lockdown. We shared recipes, tips for home exercising, and even ran competitions.

Alongside this, we 'checked-in' regularly with our staff via telephone to ensure they were kept up-to-date regarding their furlough. During this period, we provided remote training platforms to improve engagement.

We used video calls more widely – internally and with both trade and retail customers. We've tried to adapt our ways of working to both accommodate COVID concerns and the change in people's behaviours.

What additional support was made available to employees?

We offered outplacement support via the job centre, gave information on benefits, CV writing and interview techniques to those facing redundancy and offered one-to-one support. Employees were signposted to mental health support via Bupa, through the Employee Support Programme and the Healthcare scheme.

And looking to the future...?

The industry bounce back has been strong. We can see growth in pitch numbers as well as occupancy – not just for ownership but for fleet too.

Now we are exploring avenues to increase production capacity in a safe manner to meet demand. We've realised the importance of remaining flexible and agile in order to react to a changing world.

Operating in a safe environment



Parks Business talked to Echo Lu, Chief Executive Officer of Haulfryn Group Ltd, about how the park operator is coping with COVID



When did you reopen your parks?

Following Government guidance, we opened our holiday parks in

England on Saturday 4 July, closely followed by our parks in Wales on Saturday 11 July.

It must have been very difficult to balance the demands of your business and of park visitors with the needs of your staff. How did you approach this?

The health and safety of our customers and our team members

has been our number one priority throughout this crisis. We provided PPE and rigorous safety training to our teams during lockdown to ensure they not only felt well protected but also bought into the changes made to reduce health risks and improve customer experience.

Through this challenging time, our teams really demonstrated resilience as they adapted to new ways of working, whether it be learning a new contactless check-

in process, how to process cashless transactions, or being able to facilitate takeaway delivery services.

What steps were taken for the safety of personnel and visitors?

At Haulfryn, we have adopted not only government-recommended safety measures but also best practices from G9 (our industry group) and other sectors and countries to ensure the safety of our customers, team members and communities. For example,

“We adopted a COVID case management system used by the Vietnam Ministry of Health, significantly before the Government track and trace system.”

when our teams returned from furlough, everyone is required to conduct a health check at the start of their shift, including temperature checking. We adopted a COVID case management system used by the Vietnam Ministry of Health to provide clarity to our teams early on, significantly before the Government track and trace system.

As the pandemic continues, how is this policed?

All of these measures undertaken are to an extent self-policed and rely on individuals to adhere to the guidelines, but it remains the park managers' role to ensure protocols are being adhered to. Our customers have been very respectful of changing rules - by and large.

Have you had to adjust safety steps as issues develop and guidance changes?

Everybody across the country has had to make changes to ensure not only their own safety but that of others and we are not exempt from this. We have continued to implement and adapt our safety guidance in line with Government advice, responding as quickly as possible. For example, in the last few weeks, we have procured testing kits to be available on parks in case any customers or team members need to be tested urgently.

How did you communicate with staff and customers?

Throughout lockdown, we really dialled up on team communications and engagement through daily/weekly video calls, even those who had been furloughed. We introduced Facebook community groups for owners and Yammer to enable two-way interactive communications with our owners and team members, and to provide them with a platform to engage with one another.

When the time came to re-open, we had to be proactive and prompt in our response, communicating with customers directly and providing them with

the most up-to-date protocols and procedures available to us. We continue to communicate with our customers in this way and I would be confident in saying that we probably speak to them more now than we ever have before.

What have been the biggest challenges since re-opening?

One of the biggest challenges we have come up against was trying to

“I think Haulfryn has learnt the importance of being agile and adaptable”

be ahead of the curve and pre-empt amends and changes in policy from either the Government or Public Health England. We found it especially difficult having parks across both England and Wales with inconsistent policies and requirements in place. We frequently had to modify policies and procedures to ensure requirements were not only met but surpassed.

What lessons has your company learned from this crisis?

As a business, I think Haulfryn has learnt the importance of being agile and adaptable. The pandemic enabled us to make some changes at a much faster pace than we would otherwise. It also highlighted the importance of simple and timely communication, both internally and externally, so that there is clarity and direction in times of crisis.

How have staff coped?

This year has been a testing time for the entire country, but the team at Haulfryn have demonstrated how resilient, supportive and adaptable they really are.

They have not only done their utmost to serve our customers, but also to support each other and their local communities. Summer has been very challenging for our holiday parks teams due to

high volumes. For the office team members, especially those who live alone, it's been difficult in different ways. One of the strengths of Haulfryn are the family values, which have really shown in the way that people support each other.

And what about the future?

I think it will take a number of years for the global travel and leisure sector to recover, which means the staycation demand will stay strong in the short to medium term, which is really positive for our sector.

In order to attract more new customers, an easy and convenient customer experience and clear and transparent information are really important in engendering trust. Also, the pandemic makes all of us re-evaluate our impact on the environment. There are significant opportunities for our sector to innovate at scale to improve our sustainability contributions.



It's great outdoors

Holiday parks and their entertainment offerings have been in a constant state of flux since they reopened in July. Here, four parks explain how they've risen to the challenge of entertaining everyone, anywhere...



Outdoor cinema was high on the Hoburne agenda even before COVID-19 took hold and the pandemic accelerated plans

It's fair to say that when holiday parks opened their doors to the public, the entertainment on offer to returning guests was different from the entertainment parks had planned before COVID-19.

Entertainment teams have had to navigate their way around social distancing, the 'rule of six'

and other – evolving – restrictions. Dancefloors remain unused, park characters are no longer giving children high fives and hugs, while new technology has been developed for bookings and communication. PPE and mask coverings are the new normal, but far from shirk from the challenge,

parks continue to think outside the box, adapt - and thrive.

CHANGING TIMES

What A. Year. In March, as the coronavirus reached the UK, and the government took precautions to try and halt the pandemic, parks were forced to close their doors. It

was an unprecedented situation for an industry that thrives on humans travelling and interacting, two basic freedoms curtailed by COVID. Entertainment timetables had to be confined to the bin, and before new ones could be concocted parks had to try and simply survive.

"We furloughed a large number of our on-park team during the lockdown," explains Xander Weir, Head of Entertainments at Haven. "However, we also had a core group looking at what could be done when we could reopen and prepare new material for rehearsals."

"Where we were able to reintroduce live entertainment, we had to look at what shows we could bring in and how to make them engaging. We probably used around 20% of our planned content for the season, but we now know there's plenty we can do to keep people entertained," continues Xander.

"There are a lot of barriers to the way you can structure your daily schedules," says James Flynn, Head of operation at Bridge Leisure. "We can't have dancing or karaoke in the evening, and we're restricted by the number of people who can join our activities, so it's about finding new ways for families to create memories safely, and while following the guidelines."

"Our entertainment tends to start earlier now, and it's tailored to the whole family all day long. One example is our 'Nearly Live Lounge' experience whereby people can still listen to music, but with the acts performing at home. In time, these acts returned to our parks, first outside and then indoors. It's a constantly changing landscape."

Every park faced similar logistical problems whatever their offering. And when it was announced they could reopen, they had little time to get their ducks in a row.

“We got creative. Instead of providing our usual live entertainment, we live streamed it to all our venues on big screens - with social distancing guidelines in place.

"We had Gok Wan lined up alongside loads of other great acts and dancers until COVID-19 came along" explains Hayley Baber, Hoburne's Group Entertainment & Function Manager. "Our daytime activities traditionally include treasure hunts, den building, craft sessions and messy play, plus sports such as adventure golf and darts. In the evenings, we would have children's discos, plus game shows and live entertainment for the adults. All these have had to evolve."

"When we reopened in July there was no live music and everything went outside," Hayley explains. "In the daytime, we went back to basics with outdoor activities that involved getting people back to nature in their family bubbles. One example was a hunt in which we'd email families a series of challenges that they could do in their own time. Inside, we had to introduce one-way systems, reduce capacities and follow the educational guidelines when it came to children's activities."

at Away Resorts. "Everyone rose to the challenge."

"We got creative. Instead of providing our usual live entertainment, we live streamed it to all our entertainment venues on big screens - with social distancing guidelines in place. Although the entertainment had to be performed from alternative locations, everywhere from people's homes or gardens, to our closed park (Mill Rythe), we are incredibly proud of the fact that the show still went on and we managed to stream live music, and even full production shows, to our customers virtually."

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The good news for most parks was that the number of people looking to 'staycate' was bigger than ever. That brought its own challenges, with parks having to go from zero occupancy to 100mph in the blink of an eye. Even after opening, teams had to adapt to a constantly evolving landscape.

Those with resorts across the UK continue to face contrasting guidelines depending on location.

"Our parks are in various tiers of lockdown, explains James. "I'm waiting to hear whether my home in the north west moves into Tier 3. Co-ordinating our sites around the restrictions has been our biggest challenge. Government changes require immediate action and



Entertainment teams at Away Resorts had 10 days to prepare for the new normal

customers always have questions we need to answer."

"We remain in constant communication with our guests to provide the correct advice," agrees Max. "When the 'rule of six' was introduced we had logistical issues with bookings on park, as we accept much larger groups than this usually, and even have some accommodation types that sleep up to 10. Our contact centre contacted all bookings larger than six to arrange either a date move, or full refund, as per our coronavirus booking guarantee."

Proving the correct advice is one thing, but ensuring guests understand it is another.

"That's the hardest thing we've found," explains Hayley, "people want to be able to do the things they used to do. For example, we're not allowed to have any audience participation at all, which has had a huge effect on character-led evening entertainment. Even at bingo, guests aren't allowed to physically call 'bingo' - they have to wave instead."

THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY

Seven months on and we're still in the thick of the pandemic, with many areas of the country teetering on a second wave and Wales in lockdown until 9 November. We're still having to adhere to social distancing, of course, the 'rule of six' too, while the minutiae of life are constantly changing too.

"People now have to book activities using an app, while when it comes to feedback from our customers we're using NPS tracking whereby guests receive an email in which they can comment on their holiday experience," explains James. "We're also encouraging people to use social media and that's been really positive, while staff are communicating via Whatsapp, Workplace, and Teams."

"Guests now book activities directly with entertainment staff via email, which actually speeds up the process," explains Hayley. "And



Although Mill Rythe was closed, Away Resorts was able to stream from its TV studio

when it comes to quizzes in the evening, we've added to our 'jigsaw' entertainment system whereby guests download an app and join in using their phones rather than using pens and paper; think *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* but on your phone."

THE GREAT OUTDOORS...

One consequence of COVID that all parks can agree has resulted in a change for good, is moving entertainment offerings outside.

"Outdoor cinema was a big part of our plans this year and the situation only accelerated this," says Hayley. "It's the perfect outdoor offering. In fact, all our outdoor activities will continue, and where we've introduced maps and other guidelines for our live acts to reduce the contact they have with our staff, they've loved the experience and the extra measures; all of them have expressed how safe they've felt when they've been with us."

"People have definitely made the most of spending time outside and enjoying the environment that our parks are in," agrees James. "That's a big attraction."

POSITIVES (AND NEGATIVES)

"Activities have proved more successful because of the COVID-secure changes we've made," says

Max at Away Resorts. "Fewer guests at each session has resulted in a better experience; we're taking guest feedback as gospel and will be reshaping our 2021 schedule based on what we have learned throughout 2020."

"The virtual entertainment was so successful that we streamed content every Saturday night to all Away Resorts guests, broadcasting simultaneously across all our park Facebook pages," continues Max. "We also launched PLAY Home and streamed every Saturday morning to families with younger children."

"We were the first holiday company to stream entertainment to holiday guests and remain the only one broadcasting live to our locations featuring guest acts and full stage production shows six nights a week."

"In locations where it has not been possible to run activities in the usual way, we have introduced PLAY Takeaway, allowing guests to take their most loved activities back to their holiday homes, complete with a how-to video guide, that can be watched on any smart device."

"At our Tattershall Lakes park, we have even introduced a new temporary venue, to ensure we can offer our guests the activities and entertainment they love, in a safe, COVID-complaint space."

"Our daytime offering is the best it has been since I have worked here," says James, who believes a mixing pot of ideas has seen the Bridge Leisure team come up with



Holidaymakers enjoy socially distanced music in the open at Hoburne Devon Bay

some excellent solutions. "Our guys have been allowed to express themselves and it's been great. We've also seen a new clientele we've not seen before this year, which is fantastic."

"For all the challenges we've had, there are so many new things we would never had done had it not been for COVID," agrees Hayley. "For example, it's been really nice to know how many children will be attending sessions so our teams can prepare for a specific number. That proactivity has worked well in the day, though not so well in the evenings, where we experience people who book, but don't turn up."

"Also, while it's a shame that children haven't been allowed to touch our park characters, we've been doing walks and waves around the park instead, which has worked really well, and which we will adapt for Halloween, Christmas and into the new year."

"The feedback has been really

positive," says Hayley. "We've had some lovely reviews about how much people have enjoyed the entertainment and how safe they've felt while doing so."

“ Guests can now enjoy entertainment from a hot tub, restaurant, by the BBQ, or on the lawn enjoying the open air... we can entertain anyone, anywhere.

"And we know how much the entertainment industry is suffering as a result of COVID-19, and while we have restrictions we're still out there performing. Many of our colleagues in this industry aren't able to do so, so we feel fortunate," concludes Xander.

2021, AND BEYOND...

"I think 2020 will change the way we entertain guests forever," says James. "We've seen a really positive approach from customers towards the new activities and entertainment and while there'll

Storytime with Larry: Hoburne has found it beneficial to know how many children will be attending sessions so teams can prepare for a specific number



always be room for the things we did before, entertainment will continue to evolve."

One reason for this new positivity across the board could be the increased family time.

"Adults are spending less time on their devices and families are spending more time together," says James. "The daytime element of our entertainment, and the earlier finishes, suit many people, so they could be here to stay."

"We've learned that we no longer have to follow the traditional method of entertainment. We can give people a more blended approach, and that means we can be flexible for whatever the pandemic and the response from the government, throws at us."

There also appears to be a huge appetite for entertainers to work in parks next year and beyond. "We've been overwhelmed by the level

of interest, which just shows how much desire there is for working with Haven and in entertainment," says Xander.

"We're very excited for our 2021 entertainment," agrees Max. "We've innovated and taken chances. We've crafted new ways for our guests to interact with entertainment on their terms. They can now enjoy it from their hot tub, a restaurant, by the BBQ, or on the lawn enjoying the open air... we can entertain anyone, anywhere."

"We know that if COVID restrictions are in place next year we can adapt and still run amazing events," adds Hayley. "We did it this year and with short notice. If we can do that, we can do anything."

While we remain in the middle of an unprecedented and ongoing global pandemic, with no clear response, end point or recovery plan in place, the ability of parks to put on engaging entertainment and activities, and for guests to enjoy it, has been remarkable. Whatever the future holds, parks have proved they can deal with whatever is thrown at them.

“ Outdoor cinema was a big part of Hoburne's plans this year and the situation only accelerated this. It's the perfect outdoor offering.

The decade for staycations

By Richard Moss, Head of UK Parks Agency at Colliers International

The UK staycation has returned. This term that came to prominence following the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/09 has had a resurgence again during this current worldwide health crisis.

These cross-border events prove to be a spur for national tourism, which typically levels out during the years of stability when the grass seems greener, or the sea bluer, on the other side of the world. They also mark a time when investor interest is further stimulated for the holiday park market. This subsector within the leisure industry has consistently been a top performer for activity since reopening was permitted in July, with many of our clients reporting either a complete catching-up from lost ground during the closed period or even exceeding original forecasts due to a substantial trading bounce during the third quarter.

Following the initial lifting of lockdown, we saw a significant increase in buyers showing interest in UK holiday parks, with enquiries up by three-fold on previous years. The market is attractive due to the nature of the business model which often provides sustainable annual returns, as well as the opportunity to achieve capital growth. The parks that tend to be most desirable to investors are those with opportunities for future development, in addition to an already established business foundation.

The sale of Erigmore Estate, Dunkeld, in January 2020 is an excellent example of the

commercial attraction of acquiring an established business and taking it forward to the next step. The buyers immediately developed additional pitches permitted by the existing site licence and also implemented a range of general improvements. Since reopening, they have experienced an extraordinary demand for both holiday home ownership and for short-stay lodge holidays. The sales of three further parks during lockdown with substantial lodge development potential, Thornton Lodges in North Yorkshire, Plas Isaaf in North Wales and Staxton Vale in Scarborough, further highlighted investor demand for holiday lodge businesses and the confidence in anticipated consumer demand going forwards.

While location is key and is the one thing that cannot be changed about a park, tourist hotspots such as the Lake District and the South West are considered by some to be over saturated. The high level of competition, combined with opportunities to purchase being few and far between (and expensive when they do arise) have led to many buyers considering alternative holiday locations throughout the UK and concentrating their efforts on facilities, experiences and high service levels to stand out from the crowd.

Erigmore Estate



“ The thoughtful provision of on-site facilities is essential to making, or breaking, your customers' holiday in terms of the short stay market

close, instead they change hands, and this demand is only expected to continue.

Councils are more likely to grant permission for the extension of a park, than permit new ones to open on greenbelt land. There is no optimum size unit for a business, it is strictly down to the site's capacity for growth and the local authority's desire to welcome more visitors, or not (confidence in the site management plays a significant role here as well).

By nature, the industry is well placed to capitalise on the more sustainably minded

provision of on-site facilities is essential to making, or breaking, your customers' holiday in terms of the short-stay market. Meeting, and exceeding, the needs of your current and potential future customer base will help you stand out from the competition and is going to bring about word-of-mouth recommendations, good online reviews and, ultimately, the main goal – repeat business.

“ the conclusion of the furlough scheme will result in a rise in unemployment, which will inevitably mean a further tightening of the target markets' belt.

The market's mindfulness of trading conditions going forward centre around the long-term employment market and the associated disposable income of the potential customer base. It is predicted that the conclusion of the furlough scheme will result in a rise in unemployment, which will inevitably mean a further tightening of the target markets' belt. Holidays are a need of

our society, but clearly in some circumstances the available spend will be curtailed by personal circumstances. It might mean an increased range of accommodation types are offered to ensure turnover, but it should not result in businesses pricing themselves into an unprofitable margin.

A meaningful segment of the typical holiday home buyer demographic is financially stable. Most operators have reported a significant "bounce" in holiday home sales activity since July, with many consumers considering the appeal of a rural bolt-hole in the UK for the first time – and with holiday homes generally ranging from £20,000 to £500,000, there are options for almost every budget.

Another reason why now is a good time to make an investment in the sector is Brexit. The cost of travelling abroad is likely to increase, the long, drawn out negotiations have bored the public away from paying attention to the nitty gritty details, which will mean many do not realise the new barriers they face in order to travel abroad. With the current complication of Coronavirus, securing a visa next year may not be easy. This will mean those with the cash for a break will again be looking for a great and unencumbered staycation.

Demand is going to be solid definitely for the next 18 to 24 months and beyond, and if holidays are made luxurious, comfortable and memorable, then that demand period will be extended further.



Plas Isaaf



Staxton

Job Retention Scheme extended

Following the announcement that England is to enter a second national lockdown with effect from Thursday 5th November, the Prime Minister confirmed that the Job Retention Scheme – widely known as the Furlough Scheme – will remain in place until December.

This is a return to the original scheme where employees who are placed on furlough will receive 80% of their current salary for the hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500.

Employers of all sizes, charitable or non-profit will be eligible and can either bring furloughed employees back to work on a part time basis – flexible furloughing - or furlough them full-time, only paying the National Insurance and employer pensions contributions only for the hours the employee does not work - around 5% of total



employment costs.

To be eligible employees must be on the PAYE payroll as at 23.59 on Friday 30th October 2020 and can be on any type of contract. Employers will continue to pay employees for the hours worked in the normal way and will be responsible for paying the tax and National Insurance contributions on these amounts.

Business Grants

Where businesses are forced to close in England as a result of the

second lockdown measures, they will be eligible to receive business grants of up to £3,000 per month under the Local Restrictions Support Grant.

The amount of grant will depend on the rateable value as follows:

- Properties with a rateable value of:
 - £15,000 or less will be eligible for grants of £1,334 per month
 - £15,000 and £51,000 will be eligible for grants of £2,000 per month
 - £51,000 or more will be eligible for grants of £3,000 per month

Devolved administrations will receive monies to use to establish similar schemes.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/furlough-scheme-extended-and-further-economic-support-announced> and additional guidance will follow

Job Support Scheme on hold

To avoid having two schemes running simultaneously, the Job Support Scheme (JSS) has been delayed, with the extended furlough scheme continuing 'until December'. At the time of going to press, the precise furlough end date had not been confirmed.

The following details of JSS have been published – if there are subsequent amendments to this, the NCC will update members on www.holidayparkshub.org.uk

- Businesses that are operating but facing decreased demand can receive wage support through JSS Open. Employers' contributions for an employee's unworked hours have been reduced and the minimum hours requirement is reduced to 20% of the usual hours worked.

- Government will now fund 62% of the wages for hours not worked up to a maximum of £1,541.75 per month. Employees will receive at least 73% of their normal wages where they earn £3,125 per month or less.
- In JSS Closed an employee who cannot work due to the restrictions will receive two thirds of their normal pay (to £2083.33) paid by the employer, which will be fully funded by the government.

Eligible employers can claim under JSS Closed where the premises have been legally required to close under the COVID restrictions and where the employee has been told to stop work for a minimum of seven consecutive calendar days.

HSE undertakes spot checks and inspections

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is carrying out spot checks and inspections on all types of businesses in all areas to ensure they are COVID-Secure. They will check that the measures businesses have put in place are in line with government guidance.

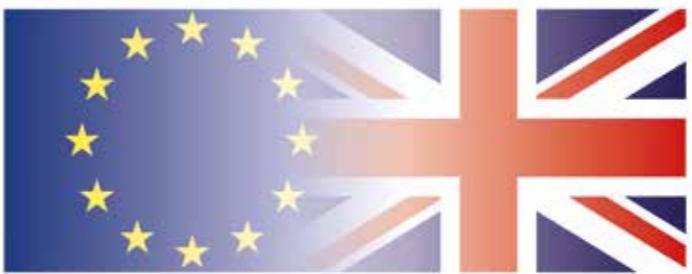
Their website includes further details on this, and also features a short video explaining:

- how spot checks and inspections work
- what their inspectors will need to check
- how they can help businesses

keep their workplace COVID-Secure

- actions they will take if employers are not managing the risk of COVID spreading

See <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/> for more information.



Last weeks of transition

new processes for moving goods between Great Britain and the EU from 1 January 2021.

It is essential that businesses make sure they have a UK Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number and decide how they will make customs declarations. They should also check if their imported goods are eligible for staged import controls.

NB These actions will not change regardless of the outcome of the government's negotiations with the EU.

See <https://www.gov.uk/eori> for more details

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/moving-goods-under-the-northern-ireland-protocol>.

Updated GB-EU Border Operating Model

In October, the Government published an updated Border Operating Model, which provides further detail on how the GB-EU border will work, and the actions that traders, hauliers and passengers need to take.

Read more information here: <https://www.gov.uk/transition>

OPPS and the transition period

The Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPPS) has reminded businesses that the UK has left the EU, and the transition period ends on 31 December 2020.

Businesses will need to take action if they are:

- Placing manufactured goods on the market in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland from 1 January 2021
- Placing manufactured goods on the EU market from 1 January 2021. There will also be a change of status for various conformity assessment bodies.

More on Brexit

Deal or no deal? An article on Brexit and the potential impact on vehicle approvals was published in the Autumn edition of *The Business* magazine (p40-41) – it can be read here <http://leisurevehicleshub.co.uk/pj-categs/ncc-publications/>

Up-to-date information on Brexit can be found online on the NCC's hub at <http://holidayparkshub.org.uk/pj-categs/brexit/>

UK
CA

COVID times



Call Kirstie

kirstieapps@allparks.co.uk

The NCC's legal advisor, Kirstie Apps, takes a look at a few issues that recently came across her desk.

Residential use of caravan holiday homes

These are challenging times for all. When the enforced UK-lockdown was announced on 23 March 2020, holiday parks had to close by law. It was no huge surprise that there were people living in their holiday caravans, but more of a surprise was having to manage this in terms of dealing with complaints from other customers about people being allowed to stay and enforcing the terms of the holiday licence agreement following lockdown has been challenging.

This is my experience of how some parks have managed these residential occupiers post the lifting of the lockdown:

1. Post 4 July 2020, a newsletter was sent reminding everyone that their caravans/lodges must only be used for holiday purposes;
2. Letters were sent to those who remained on the park, asking for documentary evidence of proof of a main residence

elsewhere (the licence agreement suggests a council tax, utility bill or a driving licence in the customer's name), with a reminder of the customer's obligations under the licence agreement, namely *to comply with the terms of the agreement, the requirement to holiday only and not to breach the conditions of the site licence or planning permission*. Customers were also reminded of the potential repercussions of a breach, namely the service of a notice of breach and possible termination of their agreement;

3. Notice of breach has now been served on those who have not provided satisfactory evidence, requiring the breach to be remedied within three months.

“ Terms cannot be changed unless both parties agree. Park owners should not try to change the agreed contractual terms through a change to the park rules.

Often park owners believe if they have an address on file and evidence from the customer that's their main place of residence, that this will be sufficient to satisfy any concerns from the licensing /planning authority regarding breach of condition of the site licence or planning permission.

Many Councils examine the position on the ground and whether, for all intents and purposes, the customer is living in the caravan. Documentary evidence of a main residence elsewhere is not determinative of the issue.

Changes to the terms of new holiday licence agreements and park rules

Some park operators have added contractual terms into new

agreements similar to a force majeure clause if holiday parks were forced to close again, or have sought to introduce new park rules about closure of park facilities in particular circumstances. A force majeure clause in a consumer contract is very difficult to draft in a fair and balanced way. Even with a clause which follows CMA guidance, there is a risk that the clause would fall foul of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and be deemed unenforceable.

In respect of existing agreements, terms cannot be changed unless both parties agree to the variation. Park owners should also be careful not to try and change the agreed contractual terms through making a change to the park rules. Park rules are for the better management and general upkeep of the site – not about the terms and conditions of stationing a caravan/lodge on the pitch.

Tiers and Alerts

Managing customer expectations, as well as managing the expectations which the business has of its customers, has been crucial over the past six months. Parks have needed to clearly communicate information about the extent of the facilities available, decisions on pitch fee refunds and passing on the reduced rate of VAT.

When lockdown came into force at the end of March 2020, the law was clear; it applied to all nations of the UK, holiday parks had to close (with a few exceptions) and non-essential travel was banned. Seven months on, each country has different rules, laws and guidance. and with new 'Tiers' on the horizon, explaining to customers what their obligations are remains a challenge for park owners.

Such an attempt to explain to customers what was expected of them was recently challenged when complaints to the local council asserted that the park was stopping people coming to the site and the council challenged the park owner's communication with owners. The confusion about what is law and what is guidance across the UK has the

potential to create a fractious relationship between park owner and caravan/lodge owner – potentially with little support from local authorities.

It is worth remembering that in the standard licence agreement, there is an obligation on owners/customers to act in a courteous and considerate manner towards staff and not commit a criminal offence at the caravan, on the park or in its vicinity.

If the expectations which you set out for your customers are not followed, such as breaching

“ Many residential parks review pitch fees on 1 January. This means sending a review notice and the statutory prescribed form at least 28 clear days before 1 January.

the COVID laws, this could also be deemed a breach of the behaviour standards. However, there needs to be strong evidence that there has been a breach and a strong legal case, if notice of termination is to be given – which must always be the last resort. Otherwise the customer's defence that the park owner has acted in breach of contract by terminating the agreement will be successful – and could counterclaim for damages.

Site licensing

It is worth noting a few things which authorities responsible for the licensing of caravan parks have sometimes overlooked:

1. The licensing authority should give at least 24 hours' notice of their intention to come onto the park (site) with their reasons.
2. It is not a criminal offence to be in breach of a condition of a site licence in respect of a relevant protected site i.e. a residential park or a mixed holiday and residential park.
3. There is guidance dating from 2015 to local authorities in England on the enforcement of the site licensing regime for residential or mixed parks; similar guidance exists in Wales and Scotland.
4. Chalets which are occupied for holidays or for residential purposes (if they are buildings and not caravans) do not

fall within the definition of a caravan site and are not within the remit of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

Pitch fee reviews – a warning

The standard holiday caravan licence agreement provides that the pitch fee may change on the review date. There is a requirement that notice is given in advance of the review date. Therefore, if the review date is 1 November in each year, the

notice should be sent before this date, not on 1 November because this is when the pitch fee amount may change.

However, we regularly see invoices being sent on or around the review date with payment terms, say by the end of January, and without explanation of any increase. It is important for practice to mirror the contractual terms.

In the park home sector, many residential parks review the pitch fee on 1 January in each year. This means sending a pitch fee review notice and the statutory prescribed form at least 28 clear days before 1 January. If the statutory form is not served with the notice, the pitch fee review is of no effect. If the notice and form is sent late, the review is classed as a late review and the review does not take effect until 28 days after the notice is served.

Park owners have three months in which to make an application for the determination of a new level of pitch fee if 28 days' notice was given before the review date and four months from the date of service of any late review. Residents are not obliged to say whether they agree with the review or not. If a resident is not paying the reviewed amount and no application is made to the Property Tribunal, the resident can lawfully continue to pay the old amount.

It's all about the evidence

Planning expert Ian Butter takes a look at lawful development certificates

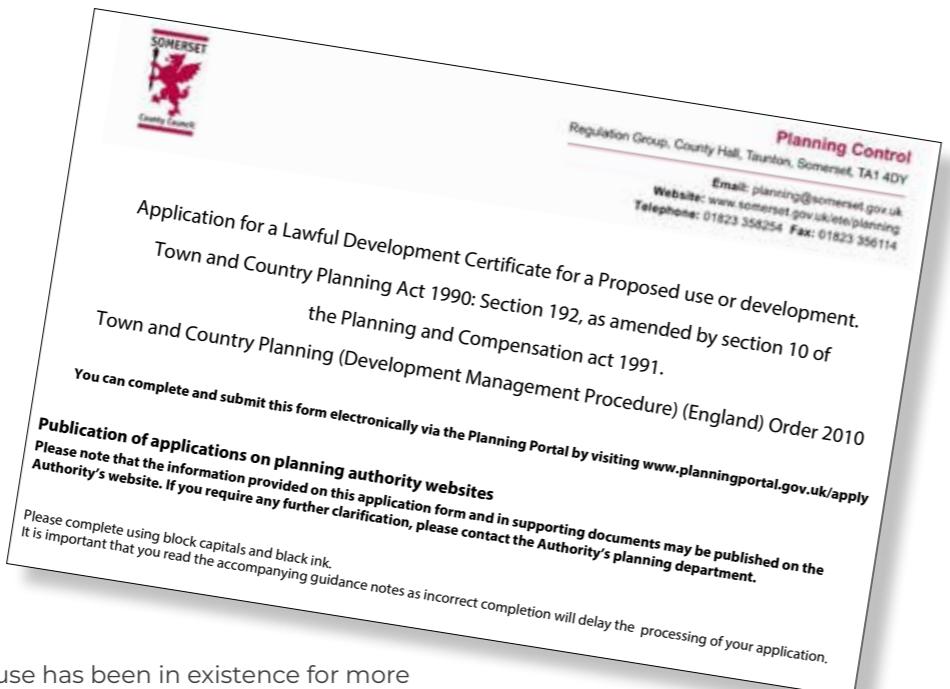
Lawful development certificates have been a part of the planning system for some time now. They replaced the former Established Use Certificates. However, they can still cause confusion and are not necessarily the instant answer you may require.

There are two types of Lawful Development Certificate (LDC); the first is if you want to be certain that the existing use of land or buildings is lawful for planning purposes, and the second is if you want to confirm that your proposed development (which hasn't started yet) does not require planning permission.

A lawful development certificate is commonly applied for in circumstances where there has been a use of land or buildings, or engineering or other operations carried out, that have occurred without planning permission and the intention is now to legitimise the position. This may be as a potential defence against the threat of an enforcement notice or, quite often, to ensure the planning position is clear and unambiguous prior to a sale.

Before you go rushing off to make your application, stop and consider your evidence.

Do you really have sufficient information to make a reasonable case? For use of land or breach of condition cases, you will need to be able to demonstrate that the



use has been in existence for more than ten years from the date of the application. Engineering or other operations will require proof of more than four years. Ten years is a long time, and you may not have thought to save all those useful pieces of information to support your case.

In any LDC application the onus is on the applicant to prove 'on the balance of probability' that the development or use is lawful.

The test is not as strong as might be the case in a court of law, i.e. 'beyond reasonable doubt', but applications generally fail because of insufficient or unsubstantiated evidence.

One of my most memorable cases concerned a park operator

who had (thankfully) saved every booking receipt he ever issued over a large area used for touring caravans. I had to hire a van to move the boxes of paperwork to the authority offices. Needless to say, they were content we had proven the case 'on the balance of probability'.

That may be an extreme example and LDCs have been issued on far less evidence. Sworn affidavits are helpful and increasingly requested by authorities, even though they are not mandatory. Dateable photographs, receipts, building materials order forms and contractor correspondence,

Sworn affidavits are helpful for a Lawful Development certificate, as are dateable photographs, receipts, building materials order forms and contractor correspondence, aerial photographs, newspaper articles and advertisements



FOR MORE information

RUPC Ltd provides independent professional planning advice and consultancy. MD Ian Butter specialises in the holiday and home parks market and rural planning and regeneration initiatives, heritage projects and sustainable settlements.

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letters from customers, aerial photographs, newspaper articles, advertisements; there is a wealth of information that can be brought to bear. You just need to find it.

The real problem is that if you are applying for a LDC to confirm that an existing use has become lawful, you are effectively putting your head above the parapet. Once the issue is out in the open, you really need to be certain you have good evidence in place, or you may find that you have simply alerted the authority to a breach of planning control and an enforcement notice may follow. Making an application very close to the relevant time period is always going to be tricky.

A local planning authority will consider the submitted evidence and may investigate and produce its own evidence. You will have an opportunity to respond. Evidence may also be provided by third parties such as

neighbours or the Parish Council, although statutory consultation is not required. "If a local planning authority has no evidence itself, nor any from others, to contradict or otherwise make the applicant's version of events less than probable, there is no good reason to refuse the application".

The planning merits of the case in Local Plan policy terms or any separate legal issues (such as rights of way or covenants) are not relevant to the determination.

A refusal of a LDC is not necessarily conclusive that

Certificates can be revoked if the evidence is inaccurate or untrue. It is an offence to make a false or misleading statement, use false or misleading documentation, or withhold any material information

something is not lawful, it may mean that insufficient evidence has been presented to satisfy the legal tests. A further application may be necessary once that information has been gathered, but it is better to have submitted it from the outset. There is no point drip-feeding information or holding anything back.

It doesn't follow, however, that what you consider to be sufficient evidence is adequate for the authority. They may keep asking for more. There is, however, a right of appeal to the Secretary of State if you are unhappy with the Council's decision.

Certificates can be revoked if it is later found that the evidence was inaccurate or untrue in any way. It is an offence to make a false

or misleading statement, use false or misleading documentation, or withhold any material information in order to obtain a certificate.

Committing an offence can result in a fine on summary conviction, on indictment, the maximum penalty is two years' imprisonment or a fine, or both.

The other thing to bear in mind is that any breach of planning control should be evident, but for the fact that no one has challenged it before. The famous case of Fidler's Castle has altered the law in the last few years. In that case Mr Fidler

built himself a large castle-like dwelling in the Surrey countryside, hidden behind a barrier of hay bales. After the requisite four years he proudly revealed the building, believing he was safe from enforcement. After a 10-year legal battle, the building was eventually demolished. Deliberate concealment can now be taken into account when assessing the relevant enforcement periods.

If you know of issues or uncertainties in the planning history of your property it is never too early to start compiling the evidence, well before you might ever need to make an application. Always take advice, and think twice before putting yourself in the firing line. Just keep building that evidence base.

PARKS BUSINESS WINTER 2019: Update

My long-held and cherished understanding that entrance signs for caravan parks benefitted from Permitted Development (PD) Rights took a knock this year, following Counsel's opinion on the point. In short, you do need to apply for express advertisement consent under the Advertisement Regulations for any new/replacement entrance sign. These regulations are distinct from the Planning Acts and therefore the PD Rights in the General Permitted Development Order relating to caravan sites are not linked.





Luxury holiday lodges in demand



David Middleton, Director Leisure (Planning) Savills, expects demand for holiday lodges to remain strong throughout 2020 and beyond

At the beginning of 2020, the holiday park industry was excitedly

predicting a three to five-year boom in UK tourism and inward investment. Demand for holiday caravans and lodges was expected to rise following the final outcome of both Brexit and the general election results at the end of 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic certainly provided uncertainty, but since the nationwide lockdown eased, the UK holiday park industry has seen an incredible level of demand for high-quality holiday caravans across almost all sectors.

At first, this simply reflected the pent-up demand from holidaymakers and purchasers

alike following the lockdown period. However, more recently this demand has continued to surge and we have seen new demographics entering the holiday caravan and lodge market; particularly with semi-retirement and retirement groups looking to invest in UK holiday property rather than property overseas.

The feedback we have received from both individual and group park operators throughout the UK is that this demand looks set to continue throughout 2020. With continued uncertainty surrounding

travel abroad, the pandemic appears to have accelerated the predicted three to five-year tourism boom with the popularity of UK holiday destinations arguably never having been so great.

The luxury lodge market has always experienced fluctuations. Like any commodity, the development of luxury holiday lodges on new and existing holiday parks is driven by the economic climate and consumer confidence.

The holiday lodge market very much contributes to the tourism spend within local communities.

In honey-pot locations, small scale and bespoke holiday lodge developments are equally popular with our clients reporting increased demand and net rental incomes in the region of £30,000 pa

We have seen most of the UK caravan operators investing in the luxury holiday lodge sector in order to meet the enhanced levels of demand from holidaymakers seeking high-end accommodation – both in terms of park sales of holiday lodges and holiday lodges for rental.

In honey-pot locations, small-scale and bespoke holiday lodge developments are equally popular with our clients reporting increased demand and net rental incomes in the region of £30,000 pa in the right location.

With holiday lodge sales and particularly holiday lodge rentals being so strong, we are receiving many enquiries to assist with

“ We are receiving many enquiries for the upgrade of existing parks

planning for the upgrade and improvement of existing holiday parks. This includes the provision of high-quality lodges as part of fleet hire stock.

Whether a new site, extension to an existing park or an exchange of holiday caravans with larger holiday lodges the sector continues to grow. Our specialist knowledge of the holiday park industry has enabled our clients to secure some lucrative planning permissions over the last year or so.

At Savills we expect the demand for holiday lodges to remain strong throughout 2020 and beyond. The lodge market is at the forefront of this demand.

To learn more

Whether for re-sale or rental, Savills planning team has the knowledge to secure permissions on parks in leading UK tourism destinations.

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Web: www.savills.co.uk

Our data reveals a distinct trend



Parks Business talks to Pitchup's Dan Yates about seasonal shifts and upward trends

About Pitchup

Founded in 2009 by former lastminute.com man Dan Yates, Pitchup.com lists over 3,500 outdoor accommodation locations in 65 countries in the UK, Europe and beyond. It provides 22 million annual users with a platform to search for and book a holiday.

Pitchup.com lists products from multi-park operators through to one-off sites and unique outdoor accommodation options, which may have previously lacked a web presence.

Awards include 2020, 2019 and 2018 inclusions in the FT1000 (Financial Times' 1000 fastest growing companies in Europe), one of only 90 to be listed all three years.

in extending the summer holiday season well into September and beyond this year – September arrivals were 197% up overall on this time last year. Many of the 10 million people furloughed may still have accrued holiday allowance that needs to be taken before December – so there's potential to make up for lost group bookings with more, smaller holiday bookings.

Bookings already made on the platform for 2021 breaks are now 337% up on those at this point in 2019. Many of these are repeat customers, some unable or unwilling to stay at hotels. So there is good news for the industry for the year ahead.

• Dan Yates was interviewed in mid-October.

Marketing to 22 million

Guidelines from the ICO on collecting data

What must you collect, how to store it, what can you use it for and how long you can keep it

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) says it understands that organisations have lots of new measures to put in place so that they can re-open safely. For many, this includes collecting customers' and visitors' personal information for the first time, to support the various contact tracing schemes in the UK.

It has published five simple steps to follow to help ensure that data protection is not a barrier to your business's recovery.

A. Ask for only what's needed

You should only ask people for the specific information that has been set out in government guidance. This may include things like their name, contact details and time of arrival for example.

You should not ask people to prove their details with identity verification, unless this is a standard practice for your business, e.g. ID checks for age verification in pubs.

B. Be transparent with customers

You should be clear, open and honest with people about what you are doing with their personal information. Tell them why you need it and what you'll do with it. You could do this by displaying a notice in your premises, including it on your website or even just telling people.

If you already collect customer data for bookings, you should

Recording customers' contact details

Designated venues in certain sectors, including hospitality and tourism, must have a system in place to request and record contact details of their customers, visitors and staff to help break the chains of transmission of coronavirus.

They must:

- ask at least one member of every party of customers or visitors (up to 6 people) to provide their name and contact details
- keep a record of all staff working on their premises and shift times on a given day and their contact details
- keep these records of customers, visitors and staff for 21 days and provide data to NHS Test and Trace if requested
- display an official NHS QR code poster so that customers and visitors can 'check in' using this option as an alternative to providing their contact details
- adhere to General Data Protection Regulations

Hospitality venues must refuse entry to those who refuse to participate. Failure to do any of these requirements will result in fixed penalty fines.

make it clear that their personal data may also be used for contact tracing purposes.

C. Carefully store the data

You must look after the personal data you collect. That means keeping it secure on a device if you're collecting the records digitally or, for paper records, keeping the information locked away and out of public sight.

The ICO's website has guidance on simple security measures you can take

D. Don't use it for other purposes

You cannot use the personal information that you collect for contact tracing for other purposes, such as direct marketing, profiling or data analytics.

E. Erase it in line with government guidance

You should not keep

the personal data for longer than the government guidelines specify.

It is important that you dispose of the data securely to reduce the risk of someone else accessing the data. Shred paper documents and permanently delete digital files from your recycle bin or back-up cloud storage, for example.

More information

There is more detailed guidance on this topic at www.ico.org.uk. If you need further help, you can call the ICO on 0303 123 1113.

The NCC Training Academy has a course on GDPR (the overarching regulations on data protection) see www.nccacademy.org.uk/Essentials_of_GDPR

Note: Government guidance has been published and varies for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Keeping those new customers satisfied



The 'new normal' world is creating an unexpected influx of new customers. *Parks Business* talks to the NCC's Jo Chubb about strategies to keep them.

The post-COVID world we find ourselves in is creating an unexpected, but welcome, influx of new customers.

A different audience, looking to secure their future holidays in a COVID-safe 'bubble' by investing in a holiday caravan, is flocking to parks up and down the country keen to purchase a holiday home in order to secure quality leisure time for their family whilst the pandemic continues.

This is unique opportunity to showcase our industry to those customers who would normally be heading for the airports and cruise liners for their family holidays and have never seriously considered taking their main holiday in the UK before.

The challenge, however, will be in keeping these new purchasers within the sales chain, maintaining their current enthusiasm and ensuring that they remain holiday caravan owners for years to come. This

new audience will be more demanding and have higher expectations. Frequently, they'll be swapping high-end cruises and long-haul luxury holidays for regular breaks on a UK holiday park. We may quickly find that they are much more fickle in their buying patterns.

To maximise on the longer-term opportunities from this unexpected boom in holiday caravan ownership, it is worth taking a moment to evaluate whether your business is ready to serve the younger, more demanding generation that is suddenly considering the benefits of owning a holiday home on a caravan park.

Here are some hints, tips and ideas for reviewing your current business model. What can you do to assist this new generation in their first purchase, whilst ensuring that you secure their loyalty throughout the lifetime of their holiday park experience?

Attracting new business

This is a new generation who are used to the immediacy of internet shopping. To ensure that you are in with a chance of securing your fair share of this new market, you may want to consider the following:

- A review of your website
Ask someone independent of the company to spend some time on your site and then listen to their feedback:
- Were the photos high quality? Could you upload videos as well as photos?
Consider showing pictures of the park in different seasons.
- Did web visitors get all the information they wanted easily?
- What other information would visitors have liked to have? If your website is not fast, attractive and informative, potential owners will be seduced by another park in their chosen area.

- Make sure that you have claimed and updated your “Google My Business” page. This is a free facility and will not only improve your Google search rankings but will also make your website more easily accessible.
- Make the best use of social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest can all attract this new generation of buyers. Make sure your pages are active and upbeat, and that you are projecting a welcoming and friendly image.
- Check your online reviews and ensure comments are responded to. Reviews can be influential in the purchasing decisions made by the online generation – whether it is a weekend break or buying a three-bed lodge. If your review score is poor, your potential customers will often purchase elsewhere. If you do have any negative reviews, make sure they are responded to in a polite and professional manner as this will demonstrate that you listen to, and care about, any unhappy customers.
- Proactively ask holidaymakers and new owners to post a review about your park. Nobody will mind being asked and it could improve your review scores.
- Consider classified advertising sites to extend your exposure.

Selling

The new demographic of purchasers who are entering the industry have higher expectations, and often less patience, than the more traditional older customer. They are making a considerable financial investment and expectations will be high – if something is wrong, they expect it to be fixed without delay. They are aware of their rights and expect retailers to go the extra mile.

Here are some suggestions:

- Make sure your pricing structure is clear and transparent.
- Double check the suitability of the holiday caravan before proceeding with the sale;
 - Has your customer read and fully understood all the paperwork, including the invoicing, finance

- documents, park rules and, most importantly, the licence agreement?
- Is your customer fully aware they are purchasing a holiday caravan with limited occupancy rights and not a permanent residence? Have they provided evidence and have you checked that that they have a permanent residence elsewhere?
- Does your customer fully understand that they are purchasing a lifestyle rather than making any form of financial investment? It is, of course, key that customers understand that, in order to benefit from their outlay, they will need to use the holiday caravan regularly for several years. It is a long-term purchase and may not be suitable for someone who is looking for a ‘temporary fix’ whilst waiting for the world to return to normal!
- Does your customer fully understand the additional costs such as pitch fees and utilities, and that these may increase each year?

- Make sure it is clear how the warranty is administered and how to report any faults – including any timescales that must be adhered to.
- Review your current PDI procedures and ensure sufficient time is allowed for thorough checks of every aspect of the holiday caravan before your customer arrives to take possession. Expectations will be high and even a small issue is likely to cause disappointment and potentially a complaint.
- Ensure that all new customers understand the roles of the park staff and know to whom they should refer in the case of a query or complaint, and any processes they need to follow.

Aftersales care

This demographic is likely to understand their consumer rights, hit review sites and escalate complaints if they perceive that their problems are not being dealt with efficiently and in a timely fashion.

- If the customer has been correctly advised about the suitability of their purchase, the PDI has been thorough and the handover and follow up information has been up to standard, then you have already hugely reduced the likelihood of a complaint.
- Take some time to follow up with your customers a few weeks after they have purchased. A quick courtesy call to see how they are getting on and whether they have any questions gives you the opportunity to identify and deal with any concerns or grumbles they may have before they become complaints.
- If you do receive a complaint, deal with it quickly and professionally. Manage expectations - this generation are not used to having to wait for parts to arrive to effect a repair. Be realistic at the outset and never make false promises.

Top Tip: If all else fails, it is amazing how much goodwill a hamper or a bunch of flowers can buy you! A £50 investment, delivered to your customers door, can buy you thousands of pounds worth of future loyalty.

These are your customers of the future, if their first experience of holiday caravan ownership is negative or difficult, they will simply sell on and go back to spending their money on package holidays and luxury cruises. Putting the effort in now to build loyalty and goodwill could pay dividends for years to come, long after the COVID threat has receded.

Ultimately, we are in the business of selling memories, so let's make sure that each and every one of these ‘new to the market’ customers gets to create the great memories they deserve. That way they become passionate ambassadors for the fantastic experience of staycationing on a caravan park... and we all win!

New customers, old pitfalls

Trading standards expert Peter Stonely re-examines the precautions a park operator needs to take to ensure that they keep their customers happy, while keeping firmly on the right side of the law.

Marketing material

How is it cleared and by whom to ensure it is compliant? If park management is allowed to develop their own marketing material locally, how is this cleared for compliance?

Staff training

Are staff trained, and kept up to date with their responsibilities – to ensure consumers have all the correct information that they need? Do staff know how to deal with any consumer complaints and in particular, how to deal with any COVID-related concerns?

Documentation

Is all of your contract documentation up to date, and following the latest NCC guidance? The use of NCC contract documentation forms part of the Code Approval Scheme for member parks.

Do your staff fully understand the contract documentation, and do you ensure that they encourage and allow consumers time to read through everything properly (whether or not they want to) so that they are completely clear about their own commitments and responsibilities?

Do you have stocks of the NCC guidance leaflet *Making the best use of your holiday caravan or lodge* to give to prospective purchasers at the point of sale?

Due diligence

How do you audit your processes to make sure that they are being followed? Who does this and

how often, and what steps do you take to rectify any issues identified?

Do you contact new owners to ensure that they have been provided with all of the correct information and that your procedures have been followed?

Complaints

How are complaints reacted to, in particular where they have identified that a consumer has been misled or not dealt with properly?

NCC guidance

Are you following NCC guidance on complaint handling and their option to refer the matter to the independent resolution service? NB This service requires payment from both the customer and the park.

Record keeping

Record steps you have taken to retrain staff where a failure to follow your procedures has been identified.

Make sure that all of this is documented properly – ensure that records of marketing materials being signed off are kept and that there are up-to-date training records for your staff.



Making the best use of
your **holiday caravan**
or **lodge**

What every caravan holiday
home/lodge buyer should know.

Peter Stonely can be contacted at
<https://stonelytraining.co.uk/>
or by emailing
stonely.training@virginmedia.com

New members

The NCC is delighted to welcome the following companies into membership

SUPPLIER

Newmor Wallcoverings

Madic Works, Henfaes Lane, Welshpool, Powys, Wales SY21 7BE

Contact: Neil Fletcher

Tel: 01938 552990

Email: neil.fletcher@newmor.com
www.newmor.com



Newmor specialises in commercial quality, wide-width fabric-backed vinyl wall coverings for markets including the caravan, leisure and park home industries. The company has thousands of stocked surfaces, customisable digital prints, designer collaborations and an in-house graphics department.

Studio Vans Ltd

Design Workshop, 4 Eabhal Business Park, Balivanich, Western Isles, Scotland HS7 5LA

Contact: Robert Hall

Tel: 07739 759565

Email: hello@studiovans.com
www.studiovans.com



Studio Vans design and build interior fitouts for campervans, motorhomes and other spaces. The company chooses materials based on sustainability to create a healthy living space. Studio Vans offers calm-inducing environments that inspire focus without the distractions of modern life.

In Phase International Limited T/A Road Angel Group

DB House, Rani Drive, Nottingham NG5 1RF

Contact: Gary Digva

Tel: 0115 975 8600

Email: Gary.Digva@ipiltltd.net
www.roadangelgroup.com/

ROAD ANGEL™

Road Angel believes that it can help make Britain's roads safer by educating and empowering motorists to make better decisions about their driving. Proudly British, the company designs and manufactures speed awareness products, front and rear dash cameras, reversing aids and varied accessories.

They constantly update members about the ever-changing conditions on the busy road network – from variable speed limits and mobile speed cameras, to accident black spots and the new Smart Motorways.



Safe, CHAS and the government endorsed quality scheme Trustmark. All employees have their CSCS cards and training.

SERVICE

Tourer Techs Caravan Services Ltd

Unit 6 Mill Batch Farm, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4JN

Contact: Garry Lee Fitzgerald

Tel: 01934 512 571

Email: lee@tourertechs.co.uk
www.tourertechs.co.uk



Specialists in all leisure vehicle servicing, repairs and accessory fitting at its centre and mobile workshop which covers north Somerset, Somerset and north Devon. They are Swift and AWS fixed and mobile approved, Gas Safe and LPG certified.

L & S Electrical Limited

Unit 3 South Orbital Retail Park, Hedon Rd, Hull, West Yorks HU9 1IN

Contact: Richard Ness

Tel: 01482 650084

Email: richard.ness@landselectrical.co.uk
<https://landselectrical.co.uk/>

L&S Electrical, based in Hull, has over 20 employees offering a range of electrical, plumbing, gas and heating services to leisure,

industrial and commercial clients in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and across the UK. Due to expansion, the company has recently moved into a new office and workshop facilities close to the centre of Hull.

They are members of the ECA, NICEIC Approved Contractor, Gas



Safe, CHAS and the government endorsed quality scheme Trustmark. All employees have their CSCS cards and training.

Pitchup.com Ltd

The Light Box, 111 Power Road, Chiswick, London W4 5PY

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Email: alex.russell@pitchup.com
<https://www.pitchup.com>



Europe's leading booking platform for outdoor holidays.

- Pitchup.com has 22m annual visitors
- It invests in marketing and PR internationally
- Pitchup.com is translated into 16 languages

- It integrates with over 60 booking systems
- £120m of holidays booked so far
- £577,000 sent to its top seller over the last year
- 3m nights booked last year.

There are no listing fees, no joining fees, no booking fees and no commitment. Pitchup only takes commission if it brings you bookings.



Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show postponed until 22-27 February 2022

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and recent government announcements, NCC Events has postponed the 2021 Caravan, Camping and Motorhome Show. The event was scheduled to take place from 23-28 February 2021 at the NEC in Birmingham.

John Lally, CEO of show organiser, NCC Events, explains: "Whilst the trajectory of the COVID-19 virus is still very much unknown, it is clear that the restrictions – and their impact upon businesses – are likely to be in place for up to six months or more.

"We did not take this action

lightly, but we feel that it is the only sensible option to safeguard show partners, exhibitors and our visitors from the financial exposure of a late show cancellation.

"The team is extremely disappointed, as they have done everything they can to prepare a COVID-Secure floor plan, ensuring that both exhibitors and visitors would have a safe environment.

We want to thank all our partners, clubs, exhibitors, visitors and suppliers who have supported our endeavours to plan for this important industry show.

"We understand that this

decision will be a disappointment to many people who, following the cancellation of the October show, have been eagerly awaiting our February 2021 event.

"The 2022 Caravan, Camping and Motorhome Show will run from 22 to 27 February 2022 – be sure to put the dates in your diary."

John concludes: "In the meantime, NCC Events will work closely with the NEC, exhibitors, partners and industry experts for an enjoyable and productive event in keeping with the high standards they have come to expect from us, the show, its exhibitors and the NEC."

- An announcement on Twitter states that: "Due to the recent introduction of new government restrictions on events, we have rescheduled the Holiday Park & Resort Innovation Show to take place on the 18-19 March 2021, at the NEC Birmingham."

- Also on Twitter is the statement: "We are disappointed to share that the Scottish Caravan Motorhome & Holiday Home Show, due to take place in February 2021, is not able to take place as planned. This follows on from the confirmation that the SEC will continue to be in

use as NHS Louisa Jordan Hospital throughout the winter and into spring 2021." The show organisers said they had reviewed alternative dates and venues, but not been able to find a solution. Skipping a year, the show is scheduled to return to Glasgow from 3-6 February 2022.

● **Motorhome & Caravan Show 2020**, also organised by NCC Events, has been postponed until 12-17 October 2021. All 2020 visitors and exhibitors are entitled to a full refund of monies paid for tickets and stand costs. Read more at <https://mcshow.co.uk/>

Winterisation of caravan holiday homes

NCC TA offers an online 40-minute course, which is free to NCC members, on the winterisation of holiday caravans. This course covers tips and guidance for closing down your holiday park caravan or holiday lodge. It also has an accompanying assessment you can undertake to consolidate your knowledge. Read more here: www.nccacademy.org.uk/Winterisation-of-a-Holiday-Park-caravan-or-Lodge



Learn More. Be More.



Park Management Qualification: PMQ
The only accredited qualification exclusively designed for caravan park management.

The centre for training and specialised skills development for the leisure vehicle and holiday park industry. **93% of our delegates rate our courses as excellent.**



Siting of Single & Twin Units
We use 360 VR technology which is ground breaking for our industry.



Combined Purchase & Licence Agreement
The only online course to cover all of the code of practice in selling purchase and licence agreements to consumers.

Free courses for Lincolnshire coastal businesses

Greater Lincolnshire LEP, in association with the NCC Training Academy, is offering selected online courses to local businesses on a fully funded basis, through the Coastal Communities Fund.

Courses initially available are all 'bite-sized' and include Acts and Licences (seven courses – a short introduction to statutory and licensing regulations) and Health and Safety (six courses).

The Academy's Sallyann Adams said: "Subject to project limits, all

staff that successfully complete a topic will receive funding.

You can enrol staff at any level either to boost existing knowledge and skill sets, or to provide development opportunities for front-line staff.

"Please get involved for your team or yourself and connect to any other coastal businesses to ensure funding for our industry remains available in Lincolnshire."

Apply directly online via NCC TA at www.nccacademy.org.uk

- See <https://www.nccacademy.org.uk/> for more training opportunities. The NCC TA has put social distancing measures into its training centres by reducing the number of delegates in classrooms until February 2021, or as Government guidance directs.

ncc Park Management Qualification

This is a fully online course with live one-to-one personal tutor sessions. The Park Management Qualification has been developed for aspiring or newly appointed holiday home park managers. It provides a sound basis for a successful career in park management.

The qualification can be personalised, allowing participants to choose modules based on staff or personal requirements. All courses are CPD Certified or endorsed by Awarding Bodies.

Successful completion will result in a qualification equivalent to diplomas and high-level degree. Training will cover compliance topics mandatory to the industry, along with a thorough understanding of the Combined



Purchase and Licence Agreement Code of Practice.

The total cost of the qualification starts from £2,970 +VAT per person. The Academy recommends that you allow a minimum of 12 months to complete the course, with most applicants expecting to take between 14 and 18 months.

Combined Purchase and Licence Agreement – programme of courses

If, as a park operator, your staff need to better understand your *Combined Purchase & Licence Agreement for a Caravan Holiday Home: Code of Practice* and your obligations under it, the NCC Training Academy offers a comprehensive programme ideal for NCC members.

This has been broken down into 13 manageable online courses, available independently or as a one-off purchase.

Each takes between one and two hours to complete and has its own assessment to consolidate the candidate's learning and understanding of best practice.

- Core commitments
- Marketing & advertising
- Sales, warranties & maintenance
- Rights to and terms of the Licence Agreement
- Occupancy of the pitch
- Charges & changes in pitch fees
- Changes in arrangements on a park
- Resale of the holiday caravan
- Removal of holiday caravan from pitch or park
- Bequeathing a holiday caravan
- Complaint handling
- Misuse of holiday caravans
- Arrangements in Northern Ireland (optional for non-residential NI operatives)

Legionella awareness – offices and parks



The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued a bulletin about the dangers of Legionella and the risks during the coronavirus pandemic.

Recent cases of Legionnaires' disease are a powerful reminder that employers and people in control of premises (such as park operators) have a duty to identify and control risks associated with legionella.

The HSE points out that if your building has been closed or had reduced occupancy during the pandemic, water system stagnation

can occur due to lack of use, which increases the risks of Legionnaires' disease.

The NCC TA offers an online 30-minute course on this subject.

As part of your Risk Assessment in the workplace, this course aims to enable duty-holders and those responsible for implementing management controls to better understand the hazards, risks and compliance requirements associated with water systems, plant and facilities. See <https://www.nccacademy.org.uk/legionella-awareness>

All modules have received or are in the process of application for accreditation with CPD Certification.

The temporary 5% VAT rate.

Does it apply to me?



Richard Holm, VAT Director at RSM UK Tax and Accounting

Ltd, explains the main issues park businesses are likely to face and offers his advice to help them avoid costly mistakes

On 24 September, the Chancellor announced that the period covered by the temporary 5% VAT rate would be extended until 31 March 2021. Although this is obviously good news for park businesses, the rules associated with a change in VAT rate are complex and can lead to mistakes. The reduction in the VAT rate also leads to opportunities for park businesses to reclaim VAT that has been overpaid as a result of the temporary reduction.

What has become clear since the VAT reduction was first announced in July is that the impact of the changes will vary from park to park. This article therefore provides a recap on key changes and some common queries, but you should speak to your own advisers before acting on the points covered below.

What does the 5% VAT rate cover?

The supplies included within the temporary 5% VAT rate include:

- Fees for caravan pitches and associated facilities (e.g. unmetered utility charges)
- Fees for tent pitches or camping facilities

- Holidays in caravans, lodges and all other forms of self-catering accommodation
- Food and non-alcoholic drinks sold on the park; and
- Hot takeaway food and hot takeaway non-alcoholic beverages for consumption off premises.

Unless the special VAT provisions apply – see example below – when these supplies are made during the temporary reduction, VAT at 5% must be charged.

Items that already qualify for VAT at the zero rate (e.g. cold take-away food) will continue to benefit from the zero rate and are not affected by the change.

Much of this article concentrates on pitch fees and other associated activities.

Does the 5% rate apply to the sale of a caravan?

No, there is no change to the VAT treatment of the sale of a caravan as a result of the introduction of the temporary VAT rate. You should continue to account for VAT on caravan sales as usual (e.g. in line

“ What has become clear since the VAT reduction was first announced in July is that the impact of the changes will vary from park to park

with the examples contained within Section 8 of VAT Notice 701/20).

How do I know whether the 5% VAT rate applies?

When making a supply that qualifies for the temporary reduced rate, you will need to establish when that supply takes place (the 'tax point'). If the tax point is treated as taking place during the period covered by the reduced rate, then the 5% rate will apply. The tax point rules for VAT are complex and vary depending on the way you operate commercially. Due to the complexity, only the basic rules are covered below.

In normal circumstances, the 'tax point' for a supply of services (which will include pitch fees and holidays) is the point at which the service is performed (i.e. completed). However, if an invoice is issued within 14 days of this date, then the invoice date becomes the tax point. If an invoice is issued, or payment is received, in advance of the service being performed, then the earlier of the invoice/payment date becomes the tax point.

Special tax point provisions can be applied where a supply of services spans the date of the change in the VAT rate and a tax point has been created by the making of a payment (or the issue of an invoice) with the old rate of VAT applied. These rules are optional, but if applied, gives a choice of accounting for VAT at 20% or at 5% on the part of the service that covers the period covered by the 5% VAT rate.

How these rules apply in practice will vary from business to business, so it is important to establish how these rules apply to you.

If I apply the special rules and am eligible for a VAT refund, do have to pass this to my customers?

This is a common question, but it is difficult to answer succinctly as there are several factors that will influence the outcome.

From a strictly VAT perspective, the rules state that you are required to pass the benefit of any refund to your customer if you have issued a VAT invoice, as where a VAT invoice

has been issued you must issue a credit note. A 'VAT invoice' must contain the information set out in Section 16.3.1 of VAT Notice 700.

This includes:

- A sequential number identifying the document
- The time of supply (the tax point)
- The date of issue of the document
- Your name, address and VAT registration number
- The name and address of your customer
- A description of the goods or services supplied
- The net amount due for each supply
- The total amount payable (excluding VAT)
- The rate of any discount offered
- The total VAT chargeable (in Sterling).

However, the special rules governing a change in VAT rate state that a credit note in these circumstances must be issued within 45 days of the VAT rate change, which has now passed.

If you don't issue VAT invoices, then you will need to establish whether there are any contractual arrangements that require you to pass the benefit to your customer. You will also need to consider the rules around 'unjust enrichment' for VAT, as if they apply, HMRC can refuse to make a refund unless you agree to refund your customers.

You will also need to consider other commercial factors, such as whether your customers will expect a refund.

Can the 5% rate apply to pitch fees that cover periods after 31 March 2021?

Yes, in certain circumstances it can. For example, if you issue a VAT invoice to caravan owners for pitch fees and the invoice is issued before 1 April 2021, this will crystallise the VAT tax point and the 5% VAT rate will apply to the entire pitch fee.

Similarly, if you don't issue a VAT invoice, but caravan owners pay for their pitch fees in full by 31 March 2021, then it is the receipt of payment that crystallises the tax point and again the 5% rate will

apply. However, if you don't issue a VAT invoice, any payments received on or after 1 April 2021 will be subject to VAT at 20%.

Does the 5% rate apply to charges for gas and electricity?

Yes. If you meter these supplies to the caravan owners, then they will be eligible for the 5% VAT rate irrespective of the temporary reduction.

If the supply to caravan owners is not metered, then the charge you make to the owners is treated as further payment for the pitch. As a result, the temporary 5% VAT rate will apply.

What about charges for non-domestic rates, does the 5% rate apply to those too?

Yes. Charges for non-domestic rates are treated as further payment for the pitch, so the temporary 5% VAT rate will apply.

I am entitled to charge a commission to a customer who is selling a caravan. Is the commission subject to the 5% rate?

Yes. Once again, this is treated as further consideration for the pitch fee, so the 5% VAT rate will apply.

I offer my customers a 'draining down' service. Does the 5% VAT rate apply?

HMRC does not consider that a draining down service relates to the provision of the pitch, so will expect 20% VAT to be accounted for on this type of service, even during the period of the temporary VAT rate reduction.

SUMMARY

Although the temporary reduction in the VAT rate is welcome news for park businesses, the rules are complex, and you will need to carefully consider how these rules apply to you and the way you operate. There are, however, opportunities for you to generate VAT savings and to generate customer goodwill if they are applied correctly.

Bridge Leisure reports healthy advance bookings

UK Holiday park operator Bridge Leisure launched their 2021 advanced booking campaign at the end of September and say they are already seeing a high demand for peak dates next year. It attributes this to the continuing uncertainty around the impact of Covid-19.

The operator quotes research from The Cumberland building society that found that 71% of the 1015 adults they surveyed are intending to plan to holiday in the UK in 2021.

CEO of Bridge Leisure, Andrew Howe said: "We are seeing a significant increase in our 2021 bookings compared to this time last year and many people just don't feel confident enough to travel overseas.

"There also seems to be a reconnection with the nostalgia felt by many of holidaying in the UK ... many families have realised just how far holiday park facilities and accommodation have come since they were kids and are already booking again for 2021."

Bookings can be secured at Bridge Leisure's nine holiday parks across the UK with a low 10% deposit, and all bookings come with a 'Holiday with Confidence' guarantee.

● The Camping and Caravanning Club is promoting its 26 sites which are open until the end of the year, 14 of these are open all year-round. Simon McGrath, Head of Communications at the Club, said: "This summer has seen a big increase in people new to camping, caravanning and motorhoming. Club membership is booming with new joiners up 36% one week in August compared to the same week in 2019."

Away Resorts achieves massive increases for 2021

Demand for staycations is booming across the country and park operator, Away Resorts, says bookings are at an all-time high.

CEO Carl Castledine commented: 'Demand for 2021 holidays is currently greater than we've ever seen, with bookings up 96% on last year, and with all months seeing very positive growth.'

"And that's not just as a result of customers perhaps moving their bookings to next year, we've seen new customers, too – with more and more people

choosing staycations for their next trips. Many people are realising just how great Britain is, which of course is where we come in!"

"To keep up with these increases, we're continuing to invest in all of our parks, including working on a brand new look and feel for Mill Rythe in Hayling Island - as well as doing everything we can to help increase capacity at all sites. In such uncertain times for many, we are happy and grateful to keep safely welcoming our existing and new guests."



CEO Carl Castledine: "bookings for 2021 holidays are currently greater than we've ever seen"

Haulfryn confirms strong performance ahead of last year

Echo Lu of Haulfryn confirms that the park operator has had a very strong and busy summer, like the rest of the industry. "Things quietened down a bit after summer holidays, but business is still ahead of this time last year," Echo said. "I hope to see the strong momentum continue despite new restrictions, as we provide a very COVID-safe environment for customers."

Haulfryn is also continuing to invest in its parks but says that the demand for accommodation types varies by location. "Hot tubs are always popular. More unique accommodations have also done well, such as tree houses and four-bedroom lodges etc."



Pitchup enjoys increased appetite for domestic trips

Pitchup.com, which lists around 2,100 outdoor accommodation locations in the UK, reports there was a last-minute rush to book trips, as many families anticipated a half-term lockdown.

There was concern that tighter social-gathering restrictions will have further impact on holidays, along with other regulations introduced in response to Covid-19.

Founder of Pitchup.com Dan Yates says: "Growth remained buoyant in early October with arrivals 153% up year-on-year from UK residents. We saw people rush to book trips before anticipated lockdowns towards the end of the month.

"We also saw a flurry of activity from glamping venues as they released stock following cancellations by wedding guests, after attendance was capped at just 15 people."

Omar's Dean Westmoreland looks ahead to 2021

"Although we cannot compare 2021 directly with 2020 due to the COVID-19 disruption, we are forecasting double-digit growth for 2021 – we already have seven months of the year with order coverage," Dean explains.

"We are seeing equally strong demand for park homes and lodges. Park home demand is being driven by the stamp duty holiday, whilst holiday home sales are being driven by concern over travelling abroad. Park homes were the first out of the block, as the holiday parks hadn't had a chance to sell stock taken in in the first quarter. We are now seeing stellar demand for holiday lodge deliveries in the first half of 2021."

He sees the desire for high-quality short breaks in the UK, allied with people's wish to get out of the cities, driving strong demand for higher-end luxury holiday developments and well-developed, well considered, park home estates.



"The future should be bright for the industry if we can navigate the pandemic and grow in a well-balanced and sustainable manner and play our part in building a better greener Britain," Dean concludes.

Omar predicts double-digit growth in 2021

Willerby sees challenges and opportunities

Peter Munk, CEO of Hull-based manufacturer Willerby, reports that there is "record demand with an order book that's full of firm orders, across both caravan holiday homes and lodges. The markets are buoyant and there's a lot of confidence that 2021 will be a strong year - that feeling is mirrored from manufacturers, right the way through to park owners."

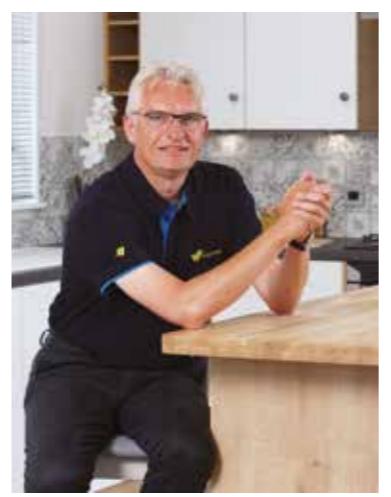
"There will be challenges, not only with the continuing impact of COVID but with Brexit uncertainty, and how

it will impact the whole manufacturing supply chain. Willerby is working on practical steps to mitigate the risk.

"We need to adapt and anticipate changing consumer demand, considering areas such as the functionality of the homes we build, as well as new technology and energy efficiency."

Peter continues: "We know consumer behaviour has changed dramatically during the last six months - the industry is now attracting a totally new type of consumer with 50% of new 2020 owners* being completely new to caravan parks. With this change in customers, there's been a huge shift towards online research and a much shorter buying process. The industry needs to remain ahead of this curve and ensure we're offering our customers what they want, before they even know it themselves!"

*Source: 2020 Willerby/OC&C consumer survey - The Caravan Park Consumer Post COVID



Operators' hard work pays off, Sanderson Weatherall reports

Sanderson Weatherall (SW) reports that park operators' hard work has evidently paid dividends. SW's Adam Burkinshaw comments: "The majority of operators we have spoken to have enjoyed a brisk trade, with strong occupancy and bookings across all accommodation types from tents, tourers and glamping units to statics and exclusive lodges."

"Undoubtedly this has in part been driven by a huge pent up demand, although we consider it is also reflective of the fact that our holiday and caravan parks offer a very attractive option for 'open air' holiday in spacious surroundings, a pre-requisite for a safe holiday environment."

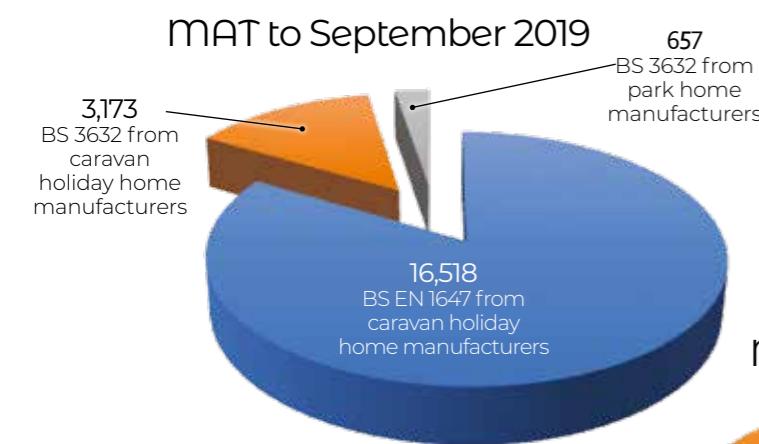
"There have been issues to mitigate, with many parks unable to offer the full range of services and amenities including the restricted operation of bars, entertainment and leisure facilities, although it is clear that this does not appear to have dampened the situation."

"We had already seen a return of caravan sales following the opening of showgrounds in June. This has continued, enabling many operators to make up, and in some cases exceed, lost ground on sales forecasts following the enforced closure."

Indicators for 2021 look very positive, with many parks having a head start on letting bookings, with a substantial pipeline of holidays transferred from 2020. SW believes there is a real opportunity for further growth in the UK market."

Vital statistics

Make sure you are signed up for the NCC's monthly market brief by contacting membership@thencc.org.uk



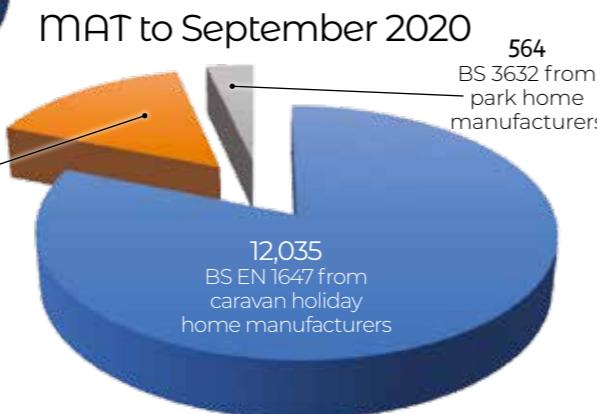
September M.A.T.	
TOTAL DESPATCHES TO UK HOLIDAY PARKS	
2019	20,348
2020.....	15,289

Figures are taken from monthly forms submitted by member companies to the NCC

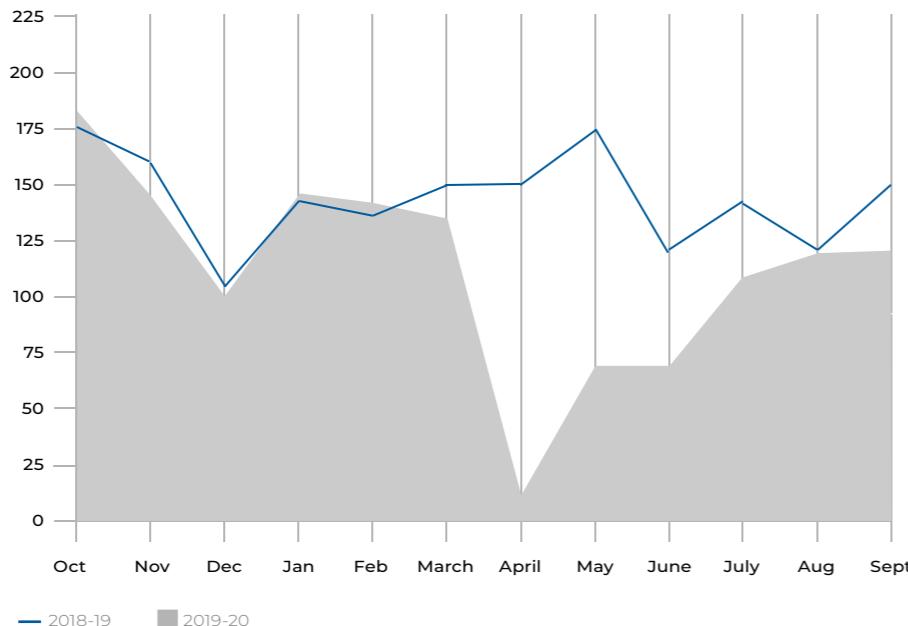
September M.A.T.	
BS 3632 PARK HOME DESPATCHES TO UK RESIDENTIAL PARKS	
2019	1,732
2020.....	1,357

Figures are taken from monthly forms submitted by member companies to the NCC

Despatches to UK holiday parks – BS EN 1647 plus BS 3632



BS 3632 despatches to UK residential parks



NCC Vital Statistics are kindly sponsored by **blackhorse**

Urban flight

The great city escape: are we falling out of love with the built environment, as nostalgia for a simpler, literally greener, life overtakes the nation?

Research suggest that a post-pandemic flight from urban areas is being replicated in cities throughout the world. In a Harris poll conducted among US citizens, 39% of urban dwellers said they were considering moving to a less densely populated area of the country, while 43% said they were web-browsing the suburbs. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that home purchases in non-urban areas had increased by a third in a four-week period compared with the same time the year before.

Where the US goes, so often the UK follows. Canary Wharf is now described as a chose town, as the idea of the central city office suddenly seems outmoded. In the summer, south west-based estate agent, Bradleys, reported that over four weeks, there had been a 76% increase in enquiries with the bulk of demand in the £400k+ price range. Areas like the south west have always been a favoured lifestyle or retirement location. Will we now see the economically active – those with jobs who have seen how technology allows them to successfully operate from home – on the move?

Back in April in the UK, a survey by Hamptons estate agents found the proportion of Londoners looking for houses outside the capital had almost doubled. Savills has found prospective buyers, particularly those with school age children, now find a village/countryside location more appealing.

So can the residential parks industry benefit from this exodus from the city – an unexpected bonus of a new landscape in which many of us work from home?

Dean Westmoreland of Omar believes so. "The heightened presence of COVID-19 in the metropolitan heartlands is driving urban flight; park home estates tend to be in more suburban, rural and semi-rural locations.

"Additionally, park homes themselves by way of their mandatory six-meter spacing, are 'socially distanced by design'. The park home sector has come a long way in the past 10-15 years."

Rise in senior living rental properties predicted

A new survey predicts a rise in the number of older people opting to sell their homes and rent a 'senior living rental property'. Parks Business talked to Tony Watts OBE, later life living expert, about this trend.

"The big player is McCarthy and Stone, but curiously – at least to my mind – after something of a boom in the late 1980s, the market for these units has remained relatively low when compared to the rising number of older people: only around 5,000 are built for sale each year.

"There is another market that could – say the experts – really accelerate in the next few years. According to Knight Frank, the number of private senior living rental properties in the UK is forecast to increase by 160% in the next five years, from almost 5,000 to more than 13,000 by 2024.

"Pipeline data suggests a further 8,500 specialist senior living rental units will be built in this time, provided by 'housing with care' operators."

The benefits of this include:

- It frees up equity to invest and draw down
- It can help with inheritance tax for owners of higher priced properties
- No long-term commitments in case you need more specialist care
- A location of your choice and a nicer environment, again without commitment.

Issues like lease security will be important. Tony continues: "No-one wants the prospect of being cast out on their ears. But long leases are available with many properties, while specialist operators like Girlings now offer lifetime tenancies."

Can the park home industry profit from these shifts in behaviour? The industry has come a long way in the past decade and the chances are it will march even further ahead in the next 10 years.

ncc seeks leading counsel's opinion on the statutory definition of a caravan

The NCC is to seek an opinion from leading counsel on the statutory definition of a caravan. This follows consultation with member manufacturers.

"The opinion will help identify the boundaries and set the policy/framework for this sector of the industry going forward," the NCC's Deputy Director General, Alicia Dunne explains. "When innovation pushes the boundaries beyond the existing

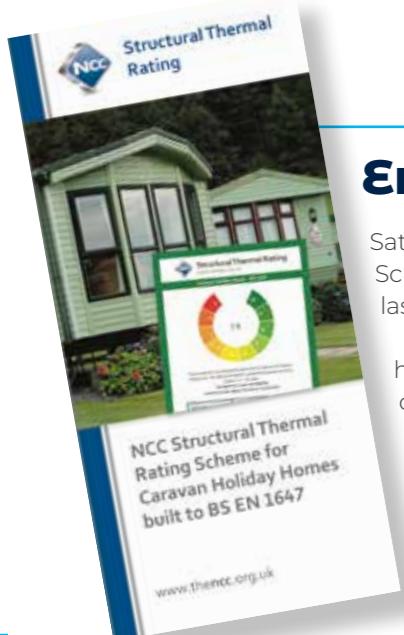
definition, it risks inviting Government to look at the definition and – potentially - change it, if it is deemed that current designs and models are now outside the original definition.

"Ultimately, without a specific statutory definition, there is risk. If we are moved into building regulations, then the unique position of the industry is lost."

HSE issues guidance on gas safety during coronavirus

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published a bulletin for landlords and registered gas engineers on working during the coronavirus pandemic. It links through to the Gas Safe Register advice and, although this is written primarily for engineers working in people's homes, many of the principles can be applied to working on tourers or in holiday or residential caravans on parks.

You can find links to the HSE advice in the guidance section of www.holidayparkshub.org.uk



Energy Rating Schemes

Saturday 7 November 2020 marks the fifth anniversary of the Structural Thermal Rating Scheme for Holiday Caravans and the Energy Rating Scheme for Park Homes. Over the last five years the NCC has received and processed more than 35,000 submissions.

The schemes were designed to give purchasers of holiday caravans and park homes an indication of thermal performance to assist them in making an informed choice when deciding between home manufacturers. The rating of one home can be compared with a rating of another home of similar size and fuel installation.

The NCC's Jonathan Andrews concludes: "Manufacturers devote significant resources to preparing ratings. However, for the schemes to fulfil their purpose, rating labels affixed by manufacturers should be left in the front windows of each home until it is sold! The NCC nevertheless believes that a great deal has been achieved since the schemes began."

Manufacturer Approval Scheme moves forward

The NCC Product Approval Scheme for touring caravans, motor homes, and holiday caravans is changing to a Manufacturer Approval Scheme. The three leisure vehicle sectors and the park home sector will now operate under one combined scheme to give flexibility to the manufacturer and flatten seasonal spikes in the assessment process.

Manufacturers moving over to the Manufacturer Approval Scheme attended a video conference on 20 October to discuss the new rules and entry qualifications. In November, technical representatives from manufacturers will attend a sector specific video conference to discuss the habitation standard in detail.

The scheme goes live on 1 January, 2021. Contact Jonathan Andrews on Jonathan.A@thencc.org.uk.

Code of Practice 501 undergoes revision

The Code of Practice for chassis, wheel and tyre configurations used in the manufacturer of holiday caravans and park homes has been under review by an industry working group and work is nearing completion.

The revision set out to provide clear instructions, a process for joined-up design between home and chassis manufacturers, and to accommodate modern homes which are far heavier and more complex than those when the Code was first written.

A subsequent meeting, initially postponed due to COVID-19, has been scheduled to work through the remaining details. Once complete, the Code will be published to the industry for comment.

BS3632:2021 review

Following representations from government through BSI, there is an agreement that the specification and requirements of BS3632 (the residential park home standard) should align with the building regulation requirements detailed in Approved Documents as they apply to conventional brick and mortar dwellings.

The agreement was that the BS3632 standard should not fall behind the Approved Documents by more than two revisions. During lockdown in April 2020, BSI confirmed that a revision of BS3632 was required.

The NCC has drawn up a first draft revision document which considers a number factors:

- manufacturer's comments
- changes to technical principles in other codes
- the Future Homes Standard
- condensation in Buildings (BS5250)
- knowledge gained through the NCC Manufacturer's Approval Scheme assessment process
- knowledge gained from NCC technical awareness seminars
- historic technical queries received by NCC Technical Services from manufacturers working with the current version of BS 3632.

The draft has been prepared to consider governmental expectations for residential dwellings, to be clear and logical, and to address areas of confusion.

An industry working group is to be set up to advance the first draft which will be put forward to the Technical Panel to consider and agree to its submission to the secretariat of BSI B/511 committee as the industry proposal. Once the BSI B/511 are happy, the draft will be sent for public consultation. The BSI documentary review and publication process will follow.

More information from: Jonathan.A@thencc.org.uk

Robert Gale-Hasleham retires after six years with Savills

Robert Gale-Hasleham IRRV (Dip FNAEA, FICBA has retired from Savills, where he was Head of Agency for the Leisure and Trade Related Property division.

His involvement in the leisure Industry spans four decades – he is pictured with brother David receiving his NCC 40-year award.

He joined the Port Hamble Marina and Holiday Park as Assistant Manager in 1976, later becoming General Manager of Red Triangle Caravan Park in Cornwall. Robert's specialties include holiday and residential parks, touring and camping sites, marinas and golf courses. He spent six years with Savills, following their acquisition of Charles F Jones in 2014.



Peter Nevitt steps down from Victory

Peter Nevitt has stepped down as Chief Executive of Victory Leisure Homes after 11 years. Peter, who spent two decades at Cosalt before its demise, has led the Hull-based holiday home manufacturer since its launch in 2009.

Although the company was founded in the midst of the global

downturn, under Peter's leadership, Victory managed to buck the trend, achieving a turnover of £25m in 2018/19.

Peter told *Parks Business* last year: "We had the policy that if we give the customer what they want, when they want it, then we will eventually get what we want – the sales order." He said he is proud of what he has achieved at Victory.

His role will be taken over by James Doyle, main board director at Victory's parent company, J R Rix & Sons Ltd.



Hoburne announces new fifth-generation chairman

The long-established, family-run Hoburne Group has announced the appointment of a new chairman.

After more than 18 years at the helm of the Group, Rosie Kennar, Hoburne's fourth-generation chairman, has announced she will be stepping down. Her son, John Butters (right), will now take the business into its next chapter.

Rosie said: "The greatest challenge for family businesses is that of succession planning, and we have been mindful of the need to prepare for the future.

"In a long-established family business like ours [founded in 1912], it was important that the best possible solution be a family member who would remain committed to our values, and I am delighted the boards unanimously approved John as my successor."

John has served as a non-executive director on the Hoburne Ltd. board since 2016, and was appointed to the Burry & Knight Ltd. board last December.

Hoburne has always been a part of John's life, although he worked briefly in the public sector and politics before entering the world of finance, where he worked as an economic strategist at a start-up hedge fund. He worked in the wealth management industry and is currently Chief Investment Officer at the family-owned Weatherbys Private Bank, a role he will continue.

Commenting on his appointment, John said: "My mother and grandfather have created a wonderful culture of warmth, friendliness, and integrity, which... makes Hoburne a very special place."



Omar appoints MD Designate and UK Sundecks Operations Manager



Omar Group has announced the appointment of Rob Frankum (above) as UK Sundecks Managing Director Designate.

Acquired by Omar Group in October 2018 to "further strengthen the groups' offering as a solutions provider to the luxury lodge and park home marketplace", UK Sundecks is a leading supplier of PVCu decking. Omar says the business is going from strength to strength.

Peter Stonely receives Outstanding Achievement Award

Peter Stonely, who has been a frequent presenter at NCC seminars and a contributor to The Business magazines, has been awarded the Chartered Trading Standard's Institute's Outstanding Achievement Award.

NCC Deputy Director General Alicia Dunne commented: "Peter's many wise words on keeping

on the right side of the law have been hugely helpful to the caravan sector. Thanks and congratulations go to him."

You can read Peter's words of wisdom on the Perils of mis-selling on p30-31 of the Spring 2019 issue of Parks Business. On page 33, you can re-read precautions park operators should take.



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Since lockdown lifted, bookings have soared:

- £100k earnt by an activity centre in Hampshire in its first month
- 71 sites that joined Pitchup since July have received 200+ bookings
- We recently hit a new record of 6.5k bookings on a single day
- Advance bookings for next year are already more than 310% up. One site has already had over 160 bookings for 2021
- It's not just camping - one Scottish site received over 500 static caravan bookings last year and 1,200 locations now list their lodges, cabins, pods and static caravans with us.

“When we saw that we could sell our static holiday homes through Pitchup.com, we jumped at the chance to give it a try. The results were outstanding as we filled completely to capacity.

Auchenlarie Holiday Park

“We have received three times the number of bookings [than last year], and would recommend it to anybody looking to increase the number of visitors to their park.

Crows Nest Caravan Park

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