

Covid-19 updates from the BIAZA Office

BIAZA Office staff are working from home until further notice. If you need to contact a member of staff, please do so via their email address (which you can find here: <https://biaza.org.uk/biaza-office>) or via admin@biaza.org.uk. If you have an urgent concern you can contact Nicky on 07789 038565.

Covid-19 Member Update – 21/05/20

Dear members and others,

Today there are some announcements from the Scottish Government which are the focus of this update along with our work on the Zoo Support Fund in England.

Update from Scottish Government

Today the Scottish Government [has published a new 5-phased \(including current lockdown\) route map](#), with the intention of initiating Phase 1 on the 28 of May. According to the route map, Phase 1 may include the opening of outdoor places of work and cultural, leisure and recreation facilities under social distancing (page 22). We will seek further clarity with Scottish Government on what this will mean for our members. The route map also contains a commitment to publish sector specific guidance which may well answer some of our outstanding questions.

The further phases detailed in the route map consist of the gradual easing of lockdown and precautions. Also introduced in the document is the announcement of a ‘Test and Protect’ strategy that will consist of contact tracing. BIAZA continues to assist the Animal Health and Welfare Division of Scottish Government in establishing the arguments in support of giving zoos and aquariums the flexibility to reopen when appropriate for their own sites.

As ever we will keep you abreast of the developing situation in Scotland.

Zoo Support Fund in England

We continue to liaise frequently with the Zoos Policy Team at Defra on a number of topics, including the Zoo Support Fund. We continue to encourage collections who are in financial difficulty due to Covid-19 and reaching the point of having reserves amounting to operating costs of 6 weeks or less to apply to this fund. We are aware of some difficulties arising in access to the fund, please do continue to let us know if you apply to the fund and what outcome you receive as this feeds into our ongoing discussions with Defra.

One point that has led to some delays in processing applications is where applicants have not provided full information on whether they have accessed other Government financial support including the available loans (e.g. CBIL, Bounce-Back). Please note that you can still apply for the Zoo Support Fund where you have decided not to apply for those loans due to evaluating them to be inappropriate for your organisation but you need to include your reasons for these decisions (e.g. don't meet eligibility criteria, inability to repay loan) on your application to evidence that you have considered all available support.

Covid-19 Member Update – 20/05/20

Dear members and others,

Today's update focusses on a number of small announcements from Westminster.

CBIL loan extension

The UK Government has announced an extension of the maximum loan size available through the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBLS) from £50 million to £200 million. Since lockdown several members have been successful in securing a CLBLS loan. For more information [click here](#).

Sick pay rebate and holiday entitlement

The government has made further announcements on issues of sick pay and holiday entitlement during this pandemic. This includes advice to employers when necessitating holiday from their furloughed staff. [Click here](#) for more information on holiday entitlement.

A coronavirus-specific service has been established to allow small-medium sized employers (fewer than 250 employees) to claim the cost of SSP due to coronavirus from HMRC. This [service will be launched online on the 26th of May](#).

You may need to inform you staff and colleagues of these changes. We hope this might be useful to some of you and will keep you informed of further changes.

Changes to employment allowance eligibility

The eligibility criteria for employment allowance has been updated. Probably the most relevant concerns companies which are part of a group of charities and companies which can now claim employment allowance where the total employers' Class 1 National Insurance liabilities for the group are less than £100,000. For full criteria and condition please [click here](#).

Covid-19 Member Update – 19/05/20

Dear members & others,

Another quick update for you today:

Andrew Rosindell MP Letter to the UK Prime Minister

Andrew Rosindell MP, Chair of the Zoo and Aquarium APPG, has written a letter to the Prime Minister supporting our calls for zoos and aquariums to be given the flexibility to reopen when they feel appropriate (based on their site, ability to implement social distancing measures & economic viability). His letter can be seen on our website [here](#). His team will also be reaching out to other MPs with members in their constituencies to add their support.

Updated BIAZA Covid-19 Resources

We have updated the [Covid-19 resources](#) on our website to ensure they remain as up to date as possible and have removed some of the older resources to make it easier to find what you are looking for. Most of the resources are accessible to everyone, but there are a few resources that only members can access (you can find these by logging in to the [members area](#) before using the resources link). Recently updated resources include [BIAZA Covid-19 Advice document](#) and the template letters for members to send to their local [MPs](#) and [TDs](#) regarding reopening. Please keep letting us know whenever there are further resources you would find useful.

Finally, we would like to wish Irish members [Fota Wildlife Park](#) the best of luck for their reopening tomorrow!

Covid-19 Member Update – 18/05/20

Dear members & others,

A short update email summarising today's Covid-19 related news:

Reopening Updates – Devolved Nations

More information is being released regarding the reopening plans across the devolved nations of the UK. Last week saw the publication of the Welsh Government's [traffic light guide to moving out of lockdown](#) and the Northern Ireland Executive's [summary of their approach to decision-making](#) (with further announcements on details expected this week). This week has begun with Nicola Sturgeon announcing that the [Scottish Route Map](#) will be published on Thursday and will include information on the first phase of lifting restrictions which will start on 28th May. We will keep you informed of any changes and will work with members in each nation on appropriate reopening lobbying.

Covid-19 Symptoms & Testing

Please note that the UK Chief Medical Officers have today announced that anosmia, the loss of normal sense of smell (which can also affect sense of taste) should be regarded as a symptom of Covid-19. This means that from today anyone (in UK) who develops a new continuous cough, a fever OR anosmia should self-isolate (for 7 days) and their households should also self-isolate (14 days). You may need to update any Covid-19 policies and guidance for your staff etc. The announcement can be seen [here](#).

Testing regimes also continue to be expanded. For example, today it has been announced that shortly anyone in Scotland over 5 years with symptoms will be able to access testing.

Finally, please note that Madelon is currently out of the office, if you need to get in touch with us please email me (Cerian.Tatchley@biaza.org.uk) and Nicky (Nicky.Needham@biaza.org.uk).

Covid-19 Member Update – 15/05/20

Dear members & others,

Reopening in England – template letter for members to send to MPs

As stated in previous updates, we are currently lobbying the Westminster Government regarding the UK Recovery Strategy and the restrictions preventing the public from visiting 'ticketed outdoor attractions' such as zoos. We are requesting the removal of the ticketed attractions restriction in step two of the roadmap, which will then provide the flexibility for collections to open when appropriate for each site. Following our letter sent yesterday to the Prime Minister, this [new template letter](#) can be used by our members to send to your local MP to encourage them to voice their support on this issue.

Welsh Roadmap & Update

This morning we had a meeting with members of the Welsh Government's Animal Welfare & Animal By-Products Team. They acknowledged the challenges being faced by our Welsh collections and provided an overview of the current support available to Welsh zoos and aquariums, including that of the Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) and Third Sector Resilience Fund (TSRF). Their analysis of the financial data which has been provided by zoos and aquariums suggests that currently the ERF and TSRF should be sufficient to meet essential animal welfare funding requirements in the short term, but they are continuing to assess this situation and any need to bid for more sector-specific funding. All Welsh licence holders should receive communication from the Animal Welfare

Team today. We will be continuing to lobby the Welsh Government and will be in touch with our Welsh Members regarding this soon.

Additionally, the Welsh Government published their own [Roadmap out of lockdown](#) earlier today. It presents a traffic light guide to their approach to easing restrictions over the coming weeks but does not give detail of timescales, or explicitly reference zoos and aquariums, so it remains unclear when visitors will be able to return. The roadmap highlights the Government's intention to create more specific guidance over the next few weeks in consultation with various sectors and we are looking to feed into this. Can our Welsh members therefore please email Nicky (Nicky.Needham@biaza.org.uk) with details regarding their reopening plans and preparedness to enable us to work on reopening lobbying specific to Wales.

Jersey Zoo Reopening

We are sure that many of you are watching closely the progress of fellow member Jersey Zoo as it reopens. This [video](#) posted by the Zoo and the Government of Jersey shows some of the social distancing measures they have successfully put in place in action.

Public Engagement Campaigns in Ireland

There are currently several public campaigns that may be of interest to our Irish members as opportunities for public engagement and conservation education during lockdown. Follow the links for further information:

- [Cruiniú na nÓg](#) - Ireland's national day of free creativity for children and young people on 13th June
- [Knowyour5k](#) - a new initiative from the Heritage Council and National Museum of Ireland which provides an opportunity to share discoveries about our hidden heritage (including flora & fauna)
- [NPWS Kids Biodiversity and Nature Art Competition](#)

We've also been helpfully reminded by Noirin Burke at Galway Atlantaquaria that you can share resources with teachers in Ireland at <https://www.scoilnet.ie/>

Covid-19 Member Update – 14/05/20

Dear members & others,

Today's update brings news of letters sent today to key ministers in the UK and Ireland regarding reopening plans, and other support requests:

UK/England Reopening

We continue to work for clarity on Government guidance in all regions here and are extremely grateful to those of you who have already submitted your reopening plans and details on readiness to Nicky. Today we submitted a letter to the Prime Minister, as well as the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister for Animal Welfare, expressing our concern at the restriction on visiting "ticketed outdoor venues" in the UK Recovery Strategy published on Monday, and setting out our request for removing this restriction for step two of the strategy given how well prepared and able many zoos and aquariums are to reopen with careful social distancing measures. We will update members as soon as we have any new information.

Irish Lobbying Update

Following our meeting with NPWS and the updated template letter for members to send to their TDs, we have now sent further letters directly from BIAZA to several Ministers in order to raise the

profile of our sector and its collective support and reopening requests amongst those directly involved in decision-making.

Scotland Update

This morning we had a constructive meeting with Dr Beverley Williams (Scottish Government – Animal Health and Welfare Division). We will be working with her in supporting the bid for Scottish zoo and aquarium funding, and in ensuring that zoos and aquariums are considered appropriately within the Scottish Reopening and Recovery Plans. We encourage members and other licenced zoos in Scotland to complete the Government zoo support questionnaires so they have data available to assist in their bid.

Covid-19 Member Update – 13/05/20

Dear members and other recipients,

Today's update focuses on reopening and a call for information from you all to support lobbying on this topic:

UK/England Reopening Update

We are continuing to stress to Government officials that members have plans in place to re-open safely, whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines, and lobbying to ensure they are able to do so soon as possible. We are confident that Defra are sympathetic towards the arguments we are making and want to provide them with as much information and evidence as possible. We are also broadening our lobbying efforts in an attempt to influence other departments and No.10, who have overall responsibility for drawing up re-opening guidelines.

Call for Information:

We will need information to be able to confidently lobby that our members are ready for reopening (across all of the BIAZA region).

Can you please let us know as soon as possible, whether you are, or when you can be ready to re-open in accordance with the BIAZA Reopening Guidelines or your own? If you have developed your own reopening plans, please let us know as well. If re-opening does not make sense for your organisation, until e.g. all restrictions are lifted, or furlough support ends, we would like to hear this as well.

Please email this information to nicky.needham@biaza.org.uk (with 'Reopening' in the subject header) as soon as you can.

Irish Lobbying

As per yesterday's update, the new template letter for Irish members to send to their TD is on our website [here](#). Please let us know if you use it so we can include that information in our lobbying activities.

Covid-19 Member Update – 12/05/20

Dear Members and other recipients,

As you will be aware there have been some big announcements in the UK so far this week, our email today provides updates on these, as well as a new resource for our Irish members:

UK Government's Covid-19 Recovery Strategy

Further detail on the [Government's Recovery Strategy](#) were published yesterday (see also accompanying [FAQ document](#)). The guidance is currently applicable in England, with the devolved administrations producing their own guidance (which we are also watching closely).

The Recovery Strategy includes a Roadmap with three steps for the loosening of lockdown restrictions. Step one begins tomorrow and although there is greater freedom for people to visit outdoor spaces, **the Roadmap is clear that visiting ticketed outdoor attractions is not allowed** (page 27, under Public Spaces). Workers are encouraged if they that cannot work from home to return to work (if their workplace is able to follow [workplace social distancing guidance](#) also released yesterday).

We are collaborating with Defra and other relevant associations and departments, on the interpretation and the removal of the restriction on 'ticketed' attractions in Step two, which is envisioned to start 1st of June.

UK Furloughing Scheme Extension

The UK Chancellor today announced that the [furloughing scheme is being extended](#). It will continue unchanged (Gov providing 80% salary up to £2500 per month, same eligibility requirements) until the end of July. The scheme will then continue from August to October with changes that allow greater flexibility to support transitions back to work including ability for part-time working. We now await the publication of the full details of this extension.

Zoo Support Fund in England

Reminder that the Zoo Support Fund is open for applications from licensed zoos in England. Defra reports that they can process applications quickly (within a week) and encourage collections to apply as soon as possible once they have around 6 weeks of operational funds remaining. They are also able to signpost zoos to any other potential funding support they may not yet have accessed.

Irish Lobbying Work – Template letter to TDs

Following our recent meeting with NPWS and the input from our Irish members, we have now updated [our template letter to support members in contacting their local TDs](#) to request their assistance. This is going to be essential for raising the profile of zoos and aquariums and applying pressure for greater support to be provided for the sector – we thus need the help of all our Irish members to utilise the template letter and reach out to their TD in support of our lobbying work.

Covid-19 Member Update – 11/05/20

Dear members & other recipients,

Today's update focuses on two big topics: an update on lobbying work in Ireland following our meeting with NPWS this morning, and of course the announcements regarding lockdown and reopening across the UK.

Lobbying in Ireland

This morning we have had a meeting with staff from National Parks and Wildlife Services involved in zoo licencing in Ireland. They are very aware of the importance of zoos and aquariums to the Irish economy (e.g. through tourism and associated spends) and to local communities (e.g. through provision of green and blue spaces for wellbeing, local employment) and we were able to provide further insights into how Covid-19 and associated restrictions are impacting our members. They

have been paying close attention to the support packages being implemented in other countries and are making recommendations to relevant departments regarding support that is needed in Ireland. We will be continuing to support them in doing this.

We also discussed reopening, the Irish Roadmap and the role that zoos and aquariums can play in restarting economies and allowing people to safely return to leisure activities in settings that are carefully implementing social distancing measures. It was recommended that collections looking to reopen should submit their back to action plans to both the Dept. of the Taoiseach (Elizabeth.Canavan@Taoiseach.Gov.IE) and to NPWS (Amanda.Maguire@chg.gov.ie). There was no further clarity at this point as to whether the Dept. of the Taoiseach expects zoos and aquariums to open within specific phases of the Roadmap, so plans can be put forward on a case by case basis that reflects the individual nature of the sites of each of our Irish members. We will update you if this changes. The [BIAZA Reopening Guidance](#) contains advice on social distancing measures you may wish to consider when developing your plans.

Over the next few days we will be actioning our next steps for lobbying work in Ireland, including producing new template letters for members to send to their local TDs to raise the profile of zoo and aquarium support needs.

Lockdown Restrictions in UK

Following from the announcement by Boris Johnson yesterday evening, we are sure many of you will have further questions about reopening your collections. We will be looking closely at the guidance expected to be released by the Government later today and requesting further clarity where it is needed during our meetings this week with Defra.

We are also paying close attention to the different exit strategies now emerging in the devolved nations. We have meetings arranged over the next week with the animal welfare and zoo policy teams within each administration where we will be discussing reopening, as well as the Zoo Support Fund, and will provide updates as these meetings take place.

Covid-19 Member Update – 08/05/20

Dear all,

During the Bank holiday for the UK we wanted to send you a brief update on the BIAZA Task Forces and their progress:

BIAZA's Task Forces:

- Reopening Task Force – has compiled feedback from across the membership and from Defra, and is now available [here](#) on the Covid Resources page of the BIAZA website. This guidance will continue to be updated as and when more information is made available from relevant Government Departments. We will continue to liaise with the relevant Government departments on this and will now be working on a comms strategy to support our members as they reopen.
- Permanent Closure Task Force – is working proactively on guidance documents to offer support to zoos and aquariums, Local Authorities, and the relevant Government Departments in the case of closures due to the direct impact of COVID-19. Madelon and Andy, our Snr Comms and Public Affairs Officer, will be working on the development of communication strategies and messages as well.
- Financial Forecasting & Viability Task Force – will be kicking off with a meeting on Tuesday to identify and model means (e.g. tax deferments, loan period extensions/pay-back holidays

etc.) to tackle the long-term cashflow challenges impacting on the financial viability of our zoos and aquariums into the future.

- Public Affairs Working Group – is continuing to work with Defra with regards to administration of the Zoos Support Fund and support for larger zoos, and is starting to discuss longer time support requirements. We are also meeting with representatives from Irish Gov NPWS, Scottish Government and Welsh Government over the next week to ensure our members in these regions are being properly supported. We will continue to keep you informed of any developments.

We will be checking the admin@biaza.org.uk email today and during the weekend, so please do get in touch with any urgent queries.

Covid-19 Member Update – 06/05/20

Dear all,

Today's email includes updates on work on reopening strategies and lobbying in Ireland:

Reopening Strategies

BIAZA has strengthened its' networks and partnerships, with meetings in place with BALPPA, NFAN and ALVA to ensure that our lobbying efforts and guidance are aligned. Collaborating with other sectors will provide lobbying benefits, but we continue to point out the uniqueness of our zoos and aquariums; despite loss of income and visitors we need to continue to provide statutory requirements. Most of our members will be ready to open as soon as restrictions are lifted. Look out for an update on the work of our new Task Forces, including the Reopening TF, in tomorrow's update.

Lobbying for our Irish Members

Ireland has announced the [road map](#) to ease COVID-19 restrictions. BIAZA will be meeting with the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Services early next week. We will ask how NPWS sees the Irish zoos as reopening and share our BIAZA reopening guidelines where necessary. We will also take this opportunity to clearly set out the support needs of zoos and aquariums in Ireland. Please get in this week touch if you have any further suggestions for useful government support (financial and other, short and longer term) as an Irish collection. We would also appreciate any updates on the situations facing our Irish members that may help us to illustrate the essential and urgent nature of our requests for support, case studies and specific examples of challenges have proven valuable in our work with Defra.

Reminder – Invitation for Financial Forecasting and Viability Task Force : BIAZA is initiating another Task Force; are you a whizz in business aspects such as taxes, loans (and their terms) and other measures which could be used to secure longer-term financial viability for our sector, please contact [Madelon](#). The first meeting will be held on Tuesday.

EAZA Guidance - Impact of Covid-19 on Population Management

Those collections who support EEP species should be aware that EAZA has produced a new document "Reducing negative implications of Covid-19-related economic challenges for Members on population management in EAZA", which will support your contingency planning and is now available on the EAZA Sharepoint.

Covid-19 Member Update – 05/05/20

Dear all,

Please find below updates on the Zoos Support Fund and lobbying work to secure support beyond this for members across the BIAZA region, and a call for financial experts to assist with some of this lobbying work:

Defra Zoos Support Fund Announcement

Yesterday we sent out a communique about the further details released on the [Zoos Support Fund](#) being coordinated by Defra for licensed zoos in England, which is now open for applications.

We have also received the following update on work on zoo support in the devolved nations: *Government officials are actively considering the needs of zoos in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Welsh Government has recently written to zoos in Wales about existing COVID-19 business support schemes and a questionnaire to identify key animal welfare concerns and whether any funding gaps exist which may need to be addressed.*

We will be following up directly with the relevant policy teams in each devolved administration and we are working with our members in Ireland to ensure they also receive the support needed and will provide further updates as soon as possible.

We have met with the Defra team today and continue to work closely with them as the Fund is being rolled out. Defra is also acutely aware that this Fund won't be able to provide the level of assistance required by some members and we continue to lobby in consultation with those needing further support in order to develop frameworks into the future for good zoos.

Call for experts for BIAZA's Financial Forecasting Task Force

We are calling for astute financial experts (from within our membership or extended networks) to join this BIAZA Task Force. We will be identifying and modeling ways (e.g. tax deferrals, loan period extensions/pay-back holidays etc.) to tackle the long-term cashflow challenges impacting on the financial viability of our zoos and aquariums into the future. Please contact [Madelon](#) if you would like to join or know someone who may be willing to participate. We will be kicking off our first meeting on Tuesday 12 May.

Covid-19 Testing in Scotland

Covid-19 testing in Scotland has now been extended to include those that need to work outside the home, which will include essential zoo and aquarium staff. For further information see the Scottish gov website [here](#).

UK Bounce Back Loans

This loan scheme opened for applications yesterday. For more information see [here](#).

Covid-19 Member Update – 01/05/20

Dear members,

As we reach the end of another week, today's update gives a summary of key information from the last 5 days, as well as looking ahead to next week:

Key Updates from this Week:

- [UK Bounce Back Loan Scheme](#) details were released. This scheme is expected to go live on Monday morning.

- [Covid-19 testing](#) was extended in England to include anyone who needs to work out of home that has symptoms (& their households).
- Irish member update – a communique updating our Irish members on lobbying work we are undertaking in Ireland was sent out at the start of this week. We were pleased to report that we then also received a response to our letter from the office of Mr Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Finance and are preparing to follow up through further communications with the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht and the NPWS Biodiversity Policy Unit.
- Defra zoo guidance and questionnaire – all UK licenced zoos should now have heard from Defra or the relevant devolved administration, if you haven't let us know ASAP. Please remember to include us when sending back your questionnaire if possible so we can use the information to lobby on your behalf.
- ALVA Reopening After Lockdown webinars and public sentiment tracker – further information on this useful research from ALVA can now be found [here](#).

You can catch up on any missed updates on our website [here](#).

Focuses for Next Week:

- We are expecting that more information on the Zoos Support Fund will be released very soon and will be updating you all when that happens. In the meantime, we have been preparing for how we can support our sector in accessing this fund when it is launched.
- BIAZA's Reopening Task Force will be continuing to work on guidance for members and with their support, the Office will be lobbying to position zoos and aquariums to be first in the queue when restrictions are being lifted.
- As well as lobbying work around reopening, we will also be continuing efforts to secure further long-term support for our sector in both the UK and Ireland.

Covid-19 Member Update – 30/04/20

Dear members,

Today's Covid-19 update is fairly short, focusing on some research by ALVA looking at public attitudes towards attractions' reopening, as well as the latest business support to be launched in Scotland.

ALVA Reopening after Lockdown Webinars

Today we have participated in a series of webinars hosted by the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions on the topic of reopening. Of particular interest was a session focused on public sentiment around visitor attractions reopening, underpinned by some interesting research tracking public attitudes amongst UK attraction visiting adults. This has provided a range of useful insights into current UK public attitudes towards visiting attractions, specifically including zoos, in the context of the pandemic such as intentions to visit attractions and key anxieties and expectations about aspects of visiting attractions. We are utilising these insights in our developing reopening strategies and guidance. We hope to be able to share more insights from this work with you in the future, but in the meantime we continue to collaborate with other relevant bodies to represent our sector.

Business Support Funding in Scotland

Applications for the [Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund](#) are now live. This Fund provides grants of up to £25,000 for small (up to 49 employees) creative, tourism and hospitality companies that are experiencing hardship because they are ineligible for other Covid-19 Government grant support.

Covid-19 Member Update – 29/04/20

Dear members,

Today's update focuses on the expansion of Covid-19 testing in England and a response from the Irish Minister for Finance:

Covid-19 Testing

The Westminster government yesterday announced an expansion of the testing regime in England to include, amongst other things, those with symptoms whose work cannot be done from home. As the government has confirmed several times that zookeepers cannot work from home, our interpretation of this announcement is that those staff are eligible for testing if they develop Covid-19 symptoms. This also applies to members of their household. It is also reasonable to assume this extends to other essential animal care and zoo and aquarium staff that are not able to do their work from home. For more information and to find out how to arrange testing see [here](#). We will try to get official confirmation of this interpretation, but in the meantime please let us know if your essential animal care staff have any difficulties accessing testing when they need it.

There are different rules in place across the rest of the UK that do not so far appear to include animal care staff needing to work outside the home (for further details go to: [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), [Northern Ireland](#)).

Ireland also has their own testing regime in place, with greater focus on contact tracing. Key workers are still prioritised, but others may also be referred for testing by their GP if they experience symptoms, particularly if exposed to others known to be infected. Information on Ireland's testing rules can be found [here](#).

Response from Irish Minister for Finance

We have received a response to our letter from the office of Mr Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Finance acknowledging the "excellent and valuable contribution" our members make to Irish society. We now intend to follow up, as recommended, with the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht, Ms Josepha Madigan TD (who also received our earlier letter), using the latest information received from our Irish members highlighting the further support needed to complement measures already introduced, including looking towards reopening.

Medimark Scientific Presentation

BIAZA corporate members Medimark have put together a short presentation on Covid-19 and hygiene measures that may be of interest to you: <https://prezi.com/view/v0tMurks84oFgepieUqw/>

Covid-19 Member Update – 28/04/20

Dear members,

Please find today's Covid-19 email which includes further details on the Bounce Back Loans and updates on a number of other ongoing activities:

Irish Member Update

We have this afternoon sent out a specific communique updating our Irish members on lobbying work and requesting input from those members to help us plan and implement our next steps of this work. If you are an Irish collection and have not received this communication, please let us know.

UK Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Further details on this scheme announced by the Chancellor yesterday can be found [here](#). Small and medium sized businesses will be able to apply for loans of between £2,000 - £50,000 with no fees, interest or repayments due in the first 12 months. To be eligible the business must be based in the UK and have been negatively impacted by coronavirus. Note that you cannot use this scheme if you are already using the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), although if you have received up to £50,000 via CBILS you can transfer instead to the Bounce Back Loan Scheme if you arrange this with your lender by 4th November 2020. The scheme opens for applications on 4th May at 9am.

Parliamentary Question

A written parliamentary question, tabled by Selaine Saxby, MP for North Devon, asking the Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Affairs what he is doing to ensure the welfare of animals in zoos is safeguarded during the pandemic was answered yesterday. The response can be seen [here](#). Although it does not contain new information, it is very positive to see the plight of our sector is being kept high on the agenda in parliament, and we encourage collections to keep liaising with their local politicians. If you have not yet reached out to your local MP, TD or devolved government equivalent and would like to, you can find template letters to support you in doing this on our website: <https://biaza.org.uk/covid-19-guidance-for-zoos-and-aquariums>

Free Wild Boar Carcasses

We have been contacted by an organisation which is able to supply a number of in-fur wild boar carcasses, free of charge but collection to be arranged in the Gloucestershire area. Any collections who are interested can email admin@biaza.org.uk and contact details will be provided.

Visit Britain Code of Practice for Visitor Messaging

BIAZA was invited by Visit Britain to represent zoos and aquariums in their virtual meetings to discuss the possible value of some form of Code of Practice that could help with consumer messaging across the tourism sector. We will keep you updated as this progresses.

Insurance

It has been highlighted to us that some collections may be able to negotiate a reduction in insurance premiums due to lack of public presence reducing risks. Our direct discussion with an insurance broker suggests any reduction may be minimal and therefore not worth cost of administration fees, but it may be something you wish to consider checking with your own insurance provider directly. Chris Moiser from Tropiquaria has also helpfully let us know their insurance provider has indicated they may be due a premium reduction as their staff wage bill, which is included in their insurance calculation, has been reduced following the cost cutting measures they have implemented as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions. Thanks to Chris for passing this on, and please do let us know if you have any similar successes that may benefit other collections.

We have also had this reference link regarding Business Interruption Insurance from the Association of British Insurers passed on to us that may be of interest: <https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/topics-and-issues/coronavirus-hub/business-insurance/>

Covid-19 Member Update – 27/04/20

Dear members,

Defra Meeting Update

We continue to have regular meetings with Defra. During today's meeting we were able to provide some input into the intended processes for implementing the Zoo Support Fund and push for Defra to release more details of the Fund as soon as possible, reiterating the urgency of the situation for many zoos and aquariums. While the Zoo Support Fund focuses on supporting collections in maintaining animal welfare during the pandemic restrictions, we were also pleased to hear Defra acknowledge the broader impacts of our sector and the need to also work in collaboration with other departments in the future to support zoos and aquariums given their roles as visitor attractions, conservation organisations and community engagement and recreation centres.

Bounce Back Loans

The Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, has this afternoon announced a new type of loan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Bounce Back Loans are micro-loans of up to £50,000, or 25% of turnover and government will pay the interest for the first 12 months. These loans are intended to launch for applications next Monday, and be quickly accessible with no complex eligibility criteria and money arriving within 24 hours of approval. Information on these loans is so far limited, and it is not yet clear whether zoos and aquariums will be eligible. We will be monitoring for further announcements and details in order to assess their value and accessibility for our sector, and will update you as soon as possible, but information released so far can be seen on the Chancellor's twitter account: <https://twitter.com/RishiSunak/status/1254782809157169157>

Defra Guidance and Questionnaire

Hopefully all zoo licence holders in England, Scotland & Northern Ireland have now received the information from Defra regarding support for zoos and aquariums. Contact us asap if not and we will connect you to the Zoo Policy Team. Please do also spread awareness of the Defra resources to other relevant zoo and aquarium operators you are in contact with.

Please try to include the BIAZA Office (admin@biaza.org.uk) when you respond to the Defra questionnaire, as we will use this information to support our lobbying work and continue to push for appropriate support for our sector.

Covid-19 Member Update – 24/04/20

Essential Worker Testing in UK

Yesterday the government advised that employers of essential workers will be able to obtain a test for any of their workers, and also that essential workers themselves will be able to book their own appointments for testing. We've sought clarification once again regarding the definition of "essential" workers and established that in this instance it applies only to those already defined as "key" workers, as listed [here](#), so testing is not currently available for zoo and aquarium staff. Please be assured that we are monitoring government information as it is issued and will advise of any changes to this guidance.

Defra Zoo Guidance & Zoo Support Fund

This week Defra released specific Government guidance for zoos and aquariums during the pandemic, communicating their commitment to establishing a Zoo Support Fund to provide emergency funding to collections. If you have not already received it, please see our [membership communique](#) for our full comments on this announcement.

Communications Round Up

We are seeing increased media interest in stories about the impact of Covid-19 on zoos and aquariums and have been able to contribute to several articles and news items. For example, Christoph Schwitzer, our Chair of Council, was this week interviewed by Sky News and Madelon has done an interview with Al Jazeera today. We will be using these opportunities to increase awareness of the unique situation our sector faces and generate public support for zoos and aquariums.

We also released the latest edition of BIAZA BiteSize this week, our monthly membership newsletter. In this issue we were pleased to introduce our new Snr Communications and Public Affairs Officer Andy Hall who has now been with us in the (virtual) office for a month. Andy has settled well into the team and is now managing our social media accounts and coordinating our responses to media requests. Andy is also able to support members with their media enquiries so do contact him directly if you need any support at Andy.Hall@biaza.org.uk

Fundraising Opportunity – the 2.6 Challenge

Open to all UK charities, the [2.6 Challenge](#) aims to help plug the current gap in normal fundraising, particularly in this case from the London Marathon. Encourage your supporters to help you fundraise as part of this challenge, but be quick, it launches this weekend. More information can also be found [here](#).

Thanks go to Lynn Whitnall from Paradise Wildlife Park for sharing this with us and also giving us the below list of possible 2.6 themed activities you or your supporters could quickly do to help get you started:

Any type of sport they can do around their local area or in the garden; jogging, cycling, walking, skipping, hopping

If people are not fit they could sit in their arm chair and raise one leg at a time – 26 times!

So it could be 2.6 kilometres / 2.6 miles up to 44k or 26.2 miles (and anything in-between or new ideas)

Or 26 burpees x 26 times with 26 sec break in between!!

26 Golf chips

Pancake tossing 🥞

Juggle 26 times or 26 reps of 26

Belly rolling

26 times around your garden

26 times up and down stairs

26 minutes of dancing

We wish those of you participating the best of luck, let us know what you do.

We will be continuing to monitor government announcements over the weekend and will keep you updated if there are any important developments. If you need urgent support with anything over the weekend please contact Nicky, Madelon or I and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Covid-19 Member Update – 21/04/20

Conservative Home Article

Andrew Rosindell, MP, Chair of the APPG for Zoos and Aquariums, has published an article calling for more support from government on the Conservative Home website. This article complements our own lobbying work with similar focusses on securing additional urgent financial support for zoos and

aquariums during the pandemic, as well as looking to the future and ensuring that our sector is included in the re-opening strategies. You can read the article [here](#).

UK Government Business Support Finder

The UK Government has launched a new online tool to help businesses identify what business and financial support is available to them. If you have been struggling to navigate the myriad schemes available or you simply want to check that you haven't missed any possible sources of support from Government then you can use the tool [here](#).

HMRC Furloughing Webinars

Now that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is open for applications (see here), HMRC is also running webinars to support businesses in making their claims through this scheme. There are three sessions taking place tomorrow (Wed 22nd) at 12, 1 & 2pm. You can register to participate [here](#).

BIAZA Covid-19 Resources

We continue to keep our library of Covid-19 resources updated and accessible to all on our website: <https://biaza.org.uk/covid-19-guidance-for-zoos-and-aquariums> (BIAZA members continue to have access to a wider range of resources by logging into the members' area)

Covid-19 Member Update – 20/04/20

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The HMRC registration portal for the furloughing scheme went live earlier today and can now be used to claim reimbursement for 80% wages of eligible furloughed staff. Find out how to make a claim [here](#). Employers should receive the money within six working days of making an application.

Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme

This scheme, providing government backed loans for large businesses, has also gone live today. Applications should be made directly to the British Business Bank's accredited lenders. For more information on how to do this please see [here](#).

Please keep letting us know of your successes and failures accessing financial and business support. We continue to highlight any barriers to access that we are made aware of directly to Defra and other government contacts.

Answering Call for Feedback from UK Government

We are taking every opportunity available to provide information to government that illustrates the unique challenges facing our sector and strengthens our calls for greater support. There are several consultations, calls for evidence and inquiries taking place now and we will be responding on behalf of our members and all zoos and aquariums. If you come across any that you think we may not be aware of, please do send them our way. We have today responded to a [call for feedback](#) from the attractions sector to the Department of International Trade and the Department of Culture, Media and Sports, using statistics gathered via our annual questionnaire and from the financial impact information many of you have sent to us over the past weeks.

Finally, a reminder that we are using a new, expanded contact list for these updates to hopefully increase their reach across the zoo and aquarium sector - let us know if you are aware of anyone else from the sector who would like to be added to this mailing list, and similarly if you would prefer not to receive these updates from us.

Covid-19 Member Update – 17/04/20

Here is today's update with the latest Covid-19 developments. Please note we are using a new, expanded contact list for these updates to hopefully increase their reach across the zoo and aquarium sector. Do let us know if you are aware of anyone else from the sector who would like to be added to this mailing list, and similarly if you would prefer not to receive these updates from us.

UK Lockdown Extension

The social distancing measures currently in place in the UK have been extended for at least a further 3 weeks in an announcement made by Dominic Raab yesterday. For more information please look [here](#).

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Extended

The Treasury has announced this afternoon that following the Government's extension of social distancing measures, the furloughing scheme has also been extended. The scheme will now be open until the end of June. Further information is available [here](#). The HMRC portal for this scheme is expected to open on Monday.

Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan

The Chancellor yesterday released further details on this new loan scheme which launches on Monday. This government-backed loan scheme is open to applications from large businesses with a turnover of more than £45 million affected by coronavirus. The details of the announcement can be seen [here](#). It is designed to complement the existing [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan](#) for SMEs and the [Covid Corporate Financing Facility](#).

Contingency Plans

Thank you to those that have been able to share details of their contingency plans with us. We are establishing a task group to provide further guidance on contingency plans and to assist in supporting collections that need to implement such plans. Please do share your contingency plans with us and keep us informed about actions you are taking so we can provide all possible support to you.

Reopening Plans

Several of you have contacted us about reopening plans. We would like to reassure you, that while our priority at the moment is our lobbying work to secure additional support from government for zoos and aquariums during this crisis, we are also looking to the future including working, and lobbying, on reopening plans.

We will be monitoring emails and government announcements over the weekend and will update you on any important developments as soon as possible.

Covid-19 Member Update – 16/04/20

The impact of COVID-19 on British and Irish Zoos and Aquariums

Following our update yesterday regarding putting together some key talking points for media enquiries related to the impact of Covid-19 on zoos and aquariums, we have also now released a public update on this topic on our website which can be viewed [here](#). Please feel free to utilise this update for your own communications as needed and get in touch with us if you want any support with media enquiries or other communications.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Please note that some further changes have been made to this scheme, including adjusting the eligibility cut-off date for when an employee had to be on your PAYE payroll to the 19th March. The scheme is expected to be fully operational next week. More information on this announcement can be found [here](#).

Zoo and Aquarium APPG Lobbying Efforts

The BIAZA Office continues to have regular contact with Andrew Rosindell, MP, Chair of this APPG, and he is fully aware of the key needs of our sector at this time. Mr Rosindell continues to take action and has today contacted key ministers, including the Prime Minister, the Chancellor and the EFRA Minister, to support BIAZA's calls within government.

Updates from the Devolved Administrations

We have now received responses to our letters from both the Welsh and Scottish Governments confirming that they are aware of the key needs of zoos and aquariums and are including them within their support packages and plans. Both responses also confirm they are collaborating with Defra where appropriate and appreciate the work we have done as a community to provide Defra with important information and updates to clearly illustrate challenges.

Please keep letting us know of any devolved administration specific requests for support and changes to implementation of existing support so we can include these in our discussions with these governments.

Covid-19 Member Update – 15/04/20

Covid-19 Mitigation Media Talking Points

The BIAZA Office team have drafted a set of key talking points for responding to journalist requests for updates on how UK zoos and aquariums are coping with the Covid-19 restrictions. We have seen an increase in journalists contacting us following some news stories being reported around comments made by a zoo in Germany. While it is important that any statements made by zoos at this time are carefully presented and sensitive to the wider impacts of Covid-19 on people's lives, they do offer an opportunity to clearly communicate the serious and unique challenges facing zoos and aquariums at this time, while emphasising the high standards of animal welfare that you are all working hard to maintain.

We are happy to share these with talking points and to support you if you are similarly contacted by journalists. You can also see the quick top tips communications guidance created for us by members of our Communications Working Group on the website [here](#).

New Business Support Announced in Scotland

The Scottish Government earlier today announced some additional financial support for businesses including:

- £100m fund for SME businesses that are so far ineligible for previously announced Scottish & UK Government support
- £120m additional funding to extend the existing grant scheme to be on a per property basis

- Widening eligibility for the original grant scheme

Visit the [Scottish Government website](#) for more information.

Political Lobbying Communiqué

We sent out a communiqué on Friday to our members summarising BIAZA's political lobbying activities and successes to date, as well as our current focuses. Any members who have not seen this can additionally access it on our website [here](#).

BIAZA Committee & Working Group Activities

Following furloughing of BIAZA Office staff, and also new amendments to the Government Guidance on volunteering during furlough, we will be pausing the majority of Committee and Working Group activities until further notice and recommending that furloughed staff from our members do not voluntarily continue to undertake activities on behalf of BIAZA. We are hugely appreciative of all those who contribute their expertise to BIAZA work and look forward to picking up these projects again in the near future.

Covid-19 Member Update – 14/04/20

Dear Members and other recipients,

We hope that you all managed to take some time out to recuperate over the Easter weekend and spend some time (virtually or otherwise) with family and friends. We continued to monitor the announcements by Government, and maintained our regular communications with the Zoos team at Defra, and, as expected, no significant further news was released over the weekend.

Furloughing Reminder

We are continuing to lobby both HMRC and Treasury for clarity here as a matter of urgency and will update you of any change as soon as possible, but please be reminded that (although some collections have received specific permission from HMRC) the Government Guidance still states that furloughed employees cannot volunteer for their collections. Also, to reiterate, normal employment rights such as sick leave and holiday are retained during a period of furlough. Further guidance can be found [here](#) on the members area of the website.

Insurance: Call for information

We are assessing whether any collections have successfully made a claim through business interruption insurance policies. We would be extremely grateful if you could let us know if your insurers have responded (positively or otherwise) to any claim you have made as a result of this pandemic, with their reasonings.

PPE

Please contact us in the office if you are either experiencing difficulties in sourcing enough PPE (gloves and facemasks) for your vet teams and keepers, or have plenty of PPE to spare. We will put collections in touch with each other wherever it may be possible to usefully redistribute these items.

Covid-19 Member Update – 9/04/20

Defra Meeting

We have had another constructive meeting with the Zoos Policy Team at Defra today and continue to make progress in raising the concerns and needs of our sector. Defra have prioritised zoos and aquariums in their activities and our concerns are being escalated to the highest possible level. The information that many of you have provided us with over the last few days has been critical in achieving this and we again thank you all for your support. We will continue to collaborate closely with Defra for the benefit of our sector at this time.

Updated Government Guidance Documents

We have been asked by Defra to share with you the following updated Government Covid-19 guidance documents. The first is PHE's [Guidance for employers and businesses on staying open safely during coronavirus](#) and the second is sector specific guidance from BEIS on [social distancing in the workplace](#).

BIAZA Office Bank Holiday Arrangements

BIAZA staff will be working across the bank holiday weekend in order to monitor any developments and continue to support you with any urgent issues. We will send out update emails if there are any significant announcements or changes of relevance to our sector, and tomorrow will also be sending out a special communiqué to our members summarising the political lobbying activities we have been undertaking on your behalf and the key successes achieved so far. If you need to contact us over the weekend, please email [Nicky](#) or [Cerian](#) and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Covid-19 Member Update – 8/04/20

Dear Members,

Thank you to all those who have been in touch to provide their financial figures as requested yesterday and updates on your situation. Your input has been invaluable and significantly strengthens our ability to fight for crucial support our sector.

Economic Value of BIAZA members

Please find attached our infographic on the economic value of BIAZA members to the economy, conservation and community. We have been using this in our lobbying efforts and it may be helpful for you as well when you talking to your MPs or TDs.

Animal Collection Contingency Planning

In these challenging times we expect that all collections are reviewing their contingency plans, and potentially exit strategies. We anticipate that Defra and Treasury will soon be requesting information regarding the processes surrounding animal management in the event of zoo and aquarium closure and we expect them to enquire specifically on the methods used to prioritise species or specimens for potential rehoming/management. We would therefore be extremely grateful if you would be prepared to **share your collection contingency plan** with us, and/or the manner in which you will determine the purpose and value of the species and specimens within your collection. We would like to compile these so we can provide examples to Defra and ensure we have the necessary support from the authorities if and when it is required.

Reiteration of our key points of clarification:

Tomorrow we have another meeting with Defra officials and we hope to receive more clarity on our following main asks:

- The developments of the emergency funding for zoos and aquariums – ensuring our zoos and aquariums can continue to provide the statutory requirements of animal welfare while on lock-down

- Whether furloughed keepers can volunteer to provide animal welfare activities at their organisations/ and or whether animal welfare staff can be otherwise subsidised.
- The status of keeping staff – can they be considered as key workers considering they provide life-supporting activities?

We will of course keep you informed of any further developments. Please continue to contact us if you have any concerns or comments of focus areas.

Covid-19 Member Update - 7/04/20

Dear Members,

We are delayed sending you today's update as we have been working to quickly respond to a request from Defra in support of their activities – more information is below.

Request for Information - Thank You!

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to those who shared the information we requested in yesterday's update, and those who at short notice today were able to provide further information. We were contacted by a Defra economist this morning requesting exactly this kind of information to use in their ongoing work with the Treasury to develop frameworks around financial support for zoos and aquariums.

Continue to seek information

We have another meeting with the Defra Zoos Policy Team scheduled for Thursday and will keep you abreast of any developments.

For collections who have not yet done this, please provide us with the answers to the below questions – it really helps to make a strong case to the Minister and Chancellor for support:

1. What are your current monthly operating costs? (after you have adjusted your operations to the current situation of being closed etc.)
2. What proportion of your staff have you furloughed? (if possible also the number of staff furloughed)
3. Based on your collection's current financial situation, how long can you continue to operate under the current conditions?

Furloughed Staff and Volunteering

Current [Government Guidance](#) states that furloughed staff cannot volunteer for their own employers to provide services or generate income. Furlough records must be kept for 5 years and can be audited at any point in those 5 years so (as things stand) any companies that go against this guidance may have to repay funds if found to be in breach of this guidance. Some collections have been successful in contacting HMRC through the HMRC PAYE webchat and asking for permission to bring a portion of furloughed staff back in to provide essential animal care and welfare. In these cases they are given a reference number which is attached to their unique PAYE number, and have kept transcripts of the webchat in case of future audits. We continue to lobby with authorities to clarify that furloughed zoo staff can volunteer at their organisation to provide animal welfare activities only, and we will notify you as soon as we receive confirmation.

WAZA Webinar

WAZA have made available a [video of a webinar session](#) with Michael Boos, Executive Director of Ocean Park in Hong Kong. Mr Boos is able to give a perspective on operating under long-term pandemic restrictions, with Ocean Park having closed to visitors on 26th January.

Covid-19 Member Update - 6/04/20

Dear Members,

We start the week with a few Covid-19 updates from over the weekend including more on furloughing, the changes to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and our response to the news of a captive tiger in the US testing positive for the virus. We also include a request for information that will help us to illustrate the severity of the challenges zoos and aquariums are facing at this time.

Request for Information

In order to assist our lobbying efforts, we request your help to provide us with some information on how your organisation is currently impacted by the pandemic. This information will be confidential and used only to enable us to more clearly and accurately represent the challenges facing our membership from the Covid-19 pandemic to Defra and other Government departments (information shared with Government will be summarised and anonymised). If you are able to support us in this way, please can you email us the following information:

1. What are your current monthly operating costs? (after you have adjusted your operations to the current situation of being closed etc.)
2. What proportion of your staff have you furloughed? (if possible also the number of staff furloughed)
3. Based on your collection's financial situation, how long can you continue to operate under the current conditions?

Further Furloughing Guidance

The UK Government made some additions to their [guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) which gives greater clarity on a few points:

- You must keep documentation related to furloughing, including signed furlough agreements for 5 years.
- HMRC retains the right to retrospectively audit all aspects of your furloughing refund claim.
- Employees can be furloughed multiple times, allowing you to take them on and off furlough if needed, but each furlough period must be at least 3 weeks duration.

In direct liaison with HMRC and the Defra Zoos Team we are pursuing clarity on whether furloughed staff can return as volunteers to perform essential animal welfare activities, and we will provide further updates as soon as we can. If you are also liaising with HMRC about this, please continue to keep us informed about what guidance and outcomes you receive; it helps us to inform our lobbying efforts and drive clarity through the current ambiguity.

Changes to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Our lobbying efforts and those of other sectors have resulted in changes to CBIL scheme as formally announced by the Chancellor. The changes give access to more businesses and removes the requirement to demonstrate that you cannot access

commercial loans, as well as banning lenders from asking for personal guarantees for loans of under £250,000. For full information on this scheme see the [British Bank website](#).

The Chancellor also announced the [Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#), for businesses with an annual turnover between £45 -£500 million.

A full up-to-date summary of all available financial support to UK businesses can be found on the Government's [Business Support website](#).

Covid-19 Infection of Captive Big Cats

The USDA has confirmed a tiger at the Bronx Zoo is infected with Covid-19. This is the first confirmed infection of a zoo animal. The statement from the USDA, which includes some FAQs for the public, can be found [here](#) and the statement from the Wildlife Conservation Society which runs the Bronx Zoo [here](#). We have worked with our Vet Focus Group to update our advice in light of these developments and would recommend that extra biosecurity measures are taken wherever possible by those keepers working in direct contact with primates, felids and mustelids, and we recommend you update your own risk assessments and protocols to reflect this new information. We have also drafted our own short [statement](#) ready for any media and public enquiries.

Covid-19 Member Update - 4/04/20

Dear Members,

This is just a brief update to report on a couple of points.

Firstly, the Chancellor yesterday announced changes which should make the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme more accessible. The changes are summarised [here](#).

Secondly, a small collection has successfully petitioned HMRC directly for permission to bring a portion of furloughed staff back in to volunteer for their organisations. To be clear, the Government Guidance currently states that volunteering for your own collection during a period of furlough is not allowed, but this example does suggest that HMRC are able to provide dispensations in special cases. FYI the manager of the collection involved went through the following process:

- Initiated a web meeting with HMRC via the PAYE webchat. Provided their unique PAYE Reference and address.
- Explained situation, emphasised that there was currently zero income and that staff could not be paid, therefore they could not carry out their statutory responsibility of animal care. Animal welfare was thus being impacted.
- Was officially informed that they would be able to furlough staff, then bring back a portion of animal care staff to perform 'life protecting services'.
- Obtained a meeting reference which was immediately applied by HMRC to their PAYE Reference.
- Saved a print out of the web chat dialogue.

If you do choose to petition HMRC in a similar way we'd be extremely grateful if you could let us know in the Office if you have been successful, as this will inform our continued lobbying efforts. As

ever, please do get in touch with any queries or anything else we might be able to support you with at this time.

Covid-19 Member Update - 3/04/20

Dear Members,

A short update today from the BIAZA Office to share some new resources we have made available on our website to support you at this time.

Fundraising Resources

Many of you are developing your fundraising processes and providing new opportunities for the public to support your collections with emergency donations. In order to support you in this we have worked with John Regan Associates, to create a brief Fundraising Advice document available [here](#) on the website.

Staff Accommodation

Some of our collections are now housing staff on site, in order to reduce their chances of infection and facilitate ongoing operations with a reduced staff. To that end, the Zoological Society of Hertfordshire have kindly shared a template [Staff Accommodation Agreement](#) document to help in managing staff accommodation.

If there are any other resources or templates which may be of value to you at this point, please get in touch with the BIAZA Office and we will do what we can to help locate or develop them for you.

Over the weekend, the BIAZA Office Team will be continuing to monitor any announcements from Government but we will only be sending out a members' update if there is urgent news to share with you. The Senior Team will also still be checking our emails across the weekend so you can continue to contact us with any issues you need support with.

Covid-19 Member Update - 2/04/20

Dear Members,

We have had another meeting with the Defra Zoos Policy Team so our update today contains information about that, as well as some small updates on access to Covid-19 loans and grants, and an offer to help you with accessing livefood.

Update from Defra Zoos Policy Team Meeting

Today we had another meeting with the Defra Zoos Policy Team. They updated us on their recent meetings with HMT and Lord Goldsmith, Animal Welfare Minister, which we have supported by providing information and case studies on the impacts of Covid-19 on zoos and aquariums and by making clear requests for necessary additional support from Government.

They were able to confirm that the Minister has set supporting zoos and aquariums as a Defra priority at this time, and the Zoos Policy Team has been significantly expanded to provide the

staffing resource to work on doing this. They also confirmed that HMT are developing an emergency circumstance fund to provide support in urgent cases where other Covid-19 support measures and direct fundraising options are not sufficient. Our lobbying work means that zoos are being included within this fund as a priority sector.

Funding will be assessed by HM Treasury on a case by case basis, with Defra supporting eligible zoos with the application process. No further information is available yet but we once again stressed the need for urgency and expect more details soon. The Defra team are working to create guidance and signposting documents to highlight all support measures accessible to zoos and aquariums, and to gather required information to assess additional support needs. They will be contacting all zoo licence holders with this information next week.

While this work is ongoing, we are continuing our activities to highlight the need for support for zoos and aquariums through working with Andrew Rosindell MP on parliamentary questions, and remain in regular contact with the Defra team.

Access to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans

We are aware that some members have had difficulty accessing these loans with banks pushing them towards other commercial loans with fees attached instead. This has also been the case in other sectors. Yesterday, Business Secretary Alok Sharma told banks they must not be unfairly refusing access to these loans. It is reported that HMT are also changing the rules on accessing the loans so that banks are able to roll them out faster. His full statement can be read [here](#) and wider news coverage including regarding rule changes [here](#). Please do continue to let us know if you have problems (or successes) in accessing the Government's Covid-19 support measures.

Eligibility for Small Business and Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants in England

Additional guidance for local authorities in administering these grants has been published [here](#), including information on eligibility criteria. The criteria for the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality (RHL) grants is also expanded on further [here](#), which includes tourist attractions as part of the definition of a leisure business. We have had confirmation that eligibility is ultimately determined by the Local Authority, so we recommend that if you are otherwise eligible (i.e. rateable value below £51,000) you contact your LA to seek access to these grants.

Livefood Offer

Peregrine Livefoods have responded to the recent challenges faced by zoos and aquariums with a generous offer of support. Peregrine will offer all BIAZA member zoos and aquariums up to £250 worth of free livefood (locusts and silent brown crickets) per week, for the next 4 weeks. This offer is to help those in need the most on a temporary basis. There is [more information](#) available with the other Coronavirus resources on the BIAZA Members' area of the website. Please contact Peregrine on 01279 438 658 after 10am for further information on how you may be able to benefit, or email zoosupport@peregrine-livefoods.co.uk with your contact details and one of the team will give you a call.

Covid-19 Member Update - 1/04/20

Dear Members,

Today's update includes some clarification on animal care staff as essential workers, access to childcare for essential workers and takes a moment to celebrate our community and its response to this pandemic.

Status of Animal Care Staff in Zoos & Aquariums

Yesterday Government confirmed that although zookeepers are not classified as key workers, they are seen as essential staff and will not be prevented from travelling to and from their work. This clarity was provided via a formal written question to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs submitted by Dr Luke Evans, local MP to BIAZA member Twycross Zoo. The full response can be seen [here](#).

We have also been advised, that although not automatically entitled to access childcare, essential workers are able to approach their local authorities and childcare providers to identify suitable spaces available for their children where it is not possible for them to be cared for at home. A template letter from BIAZA that can be used in support of making such a request is now available to download from our [website](#).

Thank You to Our Members

We continue to hear from many of you about actions you are taking to encourage political support for the financial and other business support requests we are making to the Government on your behalf. We know that lots of you have contacted your local MPs calling for them to support our requests and putting them in touch with us or Andrew Rosindell. These actions have led to MPs sending their own communications to the Chancellor and other key Ministers asking them to take action for zoos and aquariums, as well as tabling questions in parliament too such as the one by Dr Luke Evans above. There has also been a joint letter to the Chancellor from a consortium of zoos, on behalf of BIAZA member zoos and aquariums, putting further weight behind our requests. When there is not much positivity, seeing our community come together, raising our voices and influence from different angles, sharing expertise and resources, and working for greater support for all through this crisis, is definitely one we should celebrate.

Covid-19 Member Update - 31/03/20

Dear Members,

Here is today's update from the BIAZA Office team on Covid-19 related news including a request for you to share with us any experience you have had of food supply disruption due to the pandemic.

Zoo and Aquarium APPG

Andrew Rosindell MP, Chair of the Zoo and Aquarium APPG, is following up his letters to the PM, Chancellor and EFRA Minister with letters to each MP with a BIAZA zoo or aquarium in their constituency as part of further efforts to encourage wider political engagement with our requests for further support from the Government at this time.

Request for Information on Food Supplies

We have been asked to compile information on any disruptions to food supply chains zoos and aquariums are experiencing. Please get in touch and let us know if there are specific feed types or

items which are already less available to you, or are a potential concern. We will be sharing this information with Defra.

UK Zoo Licence Inspections

Defra are working with APHA and Local Authority representatives to produce guidance for Zoo Inspectors and develop a plan for those inspections that are due imminently. Any collections expecting an inspection soon should be provided with further information shortly.

Grant for Small Charities

Charities Aid Foundation has launched a [Coronavirus Emergency Fund](#). Grants of up to £10,000 can be applied for through this rapid response fund to smaller charitable organisations (income of £1 million or less) affected by the impact of Covid-19 in the UK.

Covid-19 Member Update - 30/03/20

Dear Members,

We have a short update for you to start the new week off, mostly regarding our second meeting with the Defra Zoos Policy Team earlier today.

UK Lobbying Efforts

The BIAZA Exec Team and Gareth Siddorn, Public Affairs Manager from Chester Zoo, heard from the Defra team this morning that access to emergency funding for zoos and aquariums will be discussed with Lord Goldsmith, Animal Welfare Minister, and the Treasury in the next couple of days. The Defra team are also following up on needed clarity on a number of issues including whether zoos and aquariums are being considered as leisure sector businesses (opening up more access to [funding opportunities](#)) and that keepers are identified as essential staff. We are sure these requests are helped by our letters to the Chancellor and the letters from the Zoo & Aquarium APPG Chair, Andrew Rosindell MP to the [PM](#), [the Chancellor](#) and EFRA [Minister George Eustice](#). We will have further meetings with the Defra team soon and will keep you posted as soon as there is any further news to share.

Furloughed staff & Volunteering

Furloughed staff ([Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)) are not able to volunteer for their own organisations. However, the [government guidance](#) does allow for volunteering to be carried out for other organisations. If any furloughed member of staff from a BIAZA collection wishes to continue to carry out BIAZA-related activities (e.g. Committee or Working Group members and/or award judges) during their period of furlough, please ensure to get approval from your organisation's HR department first, and then get in touch with the [BIAZA Office](#). We are, as ever, grateful for your expertise and support.

BIAZA Covid-19 Resources

The full set of BIAZA resources continues to be available to our members [here](#), but we have now made some of these resources additionally available to non-member zoos and aquariums through a link from the homepage of our website: www.biaza.org.uk.

Covid-19 Member Update - 29/03/20

Dear all,

Today we provide you with a summary of last week's BIAZA's key information on Covid-19:

BIAZA zoos have now closed to the public. The lack of income is after this first week already causing some serious concerns for some of our members, fearing for their continued operation until lockdown restrictions are lifted.

BIAZA, supported by members and others who are actively lobbying their MPs, are stressing the urgent need for flexibility in loans, access to grants and designation of animal keepers as Essential Workers, in order to get past this critical time of (undetermined) weeks with no income. Letters have been sent either directly by BIAZA or the APPG, and others, to the UK Chancellor, Environment Minister and Minister for Animal welfare, as well as to the Irish Oireachtas, Northern Ireland Executive, Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament. These letters outline how unique our sector is and that we need urgent help to ensure we can deliver on the statutory requirement of caring for our animals.

Please find all our resources via this [link](#). We have information on furloughing, on the Coronavirus Bill, template letters to MPs, etc. We have also updated the [Member advice on Coronavirus](#) to include more detail on financial support for all countries and regions. For direct links to the UK government initiatives go [here](#).

Covid-19 Member Update - 28/03/20

Dear all, please find below a summary of our Covid-19 related efforts – today with a bit more information for our Irish members. Please feel free to share this update far and wide.

Corvid-19 measures in Ireland

The Irish Government is now implementing further measures aiming to delay the spread of Covid-19. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced yesterday evening that for the next two weeks people should stay at home, limiting exercise to within 2km of their home, and only travelling further away if necessary, for food shopping or essential work that cannot be done at home. All public gatherings are banned, and most businesses must remain closed. For more information please see [here](#).

Ireland Political Lobbying

With the feedback from our Irish members we have sent a letter to the Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe TD, with in Cc. Josepha Madigan TD, the Minister in charge of charge of NPWS, highlighting the biggest challenges facing zoos and aquariums in Ireland at this time and additional support measures, and areas of clarification, that are needed. For our Irish members, please contact us as we are happy to provide a template.

UK Political Lobbying

Having sent our second letter to the Chancellor and HMT this week, BIAZA has now also sent similar letters to the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Executive. These letters again highlight the specific challenges facing zoos and aquariums from Covid-19 and make further requests for support, focusing on those areas where implementation is devolved such as business rates relief and some grants.

We have another meeting with the DEFRA team on Monday morning to provide them with an update on the situation concerning zoos for DEFRA's update to Lord Goldsmith, Minister for Animal Welfare, on Tuesday. We will be sure to (continue to) stress the urgent financial support that is required to be able to provide the statutory requirements for the animals in your care.

Communication resources: the Dutch Zoo Association (NVD) has created a list Covid-19 and Zoos FAQs for answering questions from the public or the media. We have translated it into English and the NVD is happy for our members to use this – please have a look [here](#). We have been sharing any good news stories and the new initiatives of our members to keep in touch with the public on our social media – it brightens everyone day and may give others ideas too.

Please let Nicky, Cerian or Madelon know if you have any questions or comments.

Covid-19 Member Update - 27/03/20

We are providing you with these daily updates in order to summarise our Covid-19 related efforts and highlight support and resources available to you at this time. We are receiving feedback that these emails are extremely helpful, especially to those with smaller teams, which is great to hear. Please feel free to forward far and wide to your teams.

Please do not hesitate to contact Cerian, Nicky and Madelon, if you have any questions/comments or suggestions of other actions we can carry out to support you.

Political Lobbying

We are taking every opportunity of communicating to the authorities the seriousness of this situation and uncertain future now faced by many of our collections. The letter sent to the UK Chancellor, DEFRA, the APPG and ZEC really hones down on securing the critical financial support and frameworks for flexibility in loans that the sector needs. We received a response from the [Chair of the APPG, Andrew Rosindell](#) today and have provided support in finalising the APPG Chair's letter. Andrew's office has confirmed that their letter will be sent to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor and Secretary of State of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs today.

Our key asks:

- Additional financial support for salaries for staff who cannot be furloughed and other essential costs related to animal welfare
- Ensuring access to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme for all in our sector (even if there are already outstanding loans/debts)
- Confirming the essential worker status of animal welfare staff

- The need for access to additional emergency funding in some situations
- A special exemption that furloughed employees can volunteer at their own employer (due to their specialist expertise and need to deliver animal welfare standards).

We know members have been in touch with their MPs and we continue to encourage you to use these key asks ensuring we are aligned. Please find [here](#) a template letter for those members who would like to contact their local MPs to encourage them to support these asks on behalf of our sector.

UK Furloughing updates:

The UK Government updated their furloughing guidance last night: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

New key points include are:

- The minimum period of furloughing is 3 weeks
- Staff on variable hours and zero hours contracts can be furloughed
- Pensions can be based on 80% of salary during furlough
- Seemingly no work or volunteering for their own employer is allowed by furloughed staff, although current wording suggests that volunteering for other organisations may be permissible.

Our BIAZA guidance including templates for managers is updated and available with our other [coronavirus resources](#). Thanks to all those who have contributed, especially Chester and Wildwood.

Cerian, Nicky and Madelon will be checking any changes over the weekend and will provide you with an update on both Saturday and Sunday.

Covid-19 Member Update - 26/03/20

Dear Members,

Our update today includes more information on our follow up letter to the Chancellor and news of a significant additional financial support scheme for our members in Ireland.

Political Lobbying

We have sent a follow up letter to the UK Chancellor today providing further information on the impacts of Covid-19 on our sector and support measures, and areas of clarification, that are urgently needed to assist our members at this time including additional financial support for essential costs related to animal welfare, ensuring access to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, confirming the essential worker status of animal welfare staff and the need for access to additional emergency funding in some situations. We will be sending similar letters to the devolved Governments imminently regarding their business support measures. We are updating our template letter for those members who would like to contact their local MPs to encourage them to support these additional requests on behalf of our sector and will make this available shortly.

We have also been continuing our discussions with the Defra Zoos Policy Team and the Zoos Expert Committee who are working on further contingency planning as well as updating the Chair of the Zoo and Aquarium APPG.

Wage Support in Ireland

The Irish Government has updated its previous support package for businesses to now include the Temporary Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme to help employers pay their employees during the pandemic. Employers will be refunded up to 70% of an employee's wages (up to €410). Any employer who can show they have lost at least 25% of their trade due to Covid-19 is eligible. Further information is available [here](#). If any Irish members have concerns or need clarifications regarding this scheme, or have requests for additional support needed from the Irish Government, please let us know as soon as possible. We intend to send a letter to the Irish Government shortly and will include these where possible.

UK Furloughing Support Materials

We are making good progress with these documents, thanks to significant contributions from the team at Chester Zoo, as well as additional input from several other members regarding their experiences implementing furloughing. We expect to have general guidance, FAQs and template letters and agreements uploaded to the members' area of our website within the next 24 hours. We will include links to these in our next update, but you can also keep an eye out for them [here](#). We have also been supporting members with specific questions where we can in collaboration with HR and employment law experts from our community, so if you do have questions that are not covered in these documents then do ask us.

Covid-19 Member Update - 25/03/20

Dear Members,

We are a bit later in sending this communication out today because we have had a busy but productive morning in the BIAZA Office with several meetings working on political lobbying to raise the profile of the challenges facing our members, including a meeting with the Zoos Policy Team at Defra. Our email today contains updates on these lobbying activities and other developments related to the pandemic.

Developments in Ireland

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced further protective measures against Covid-19 yesterday. These included requesting people stay at home, restricting gatherings to no more than four people, and closing non-essential retail outlets and many other businesses such as theatres, gyms and leisure centres, while social distancing guidance must be followed everywhere else. These restrictions have initially been put in place until 19th April. More information is available [here](#).

Political Lobbying

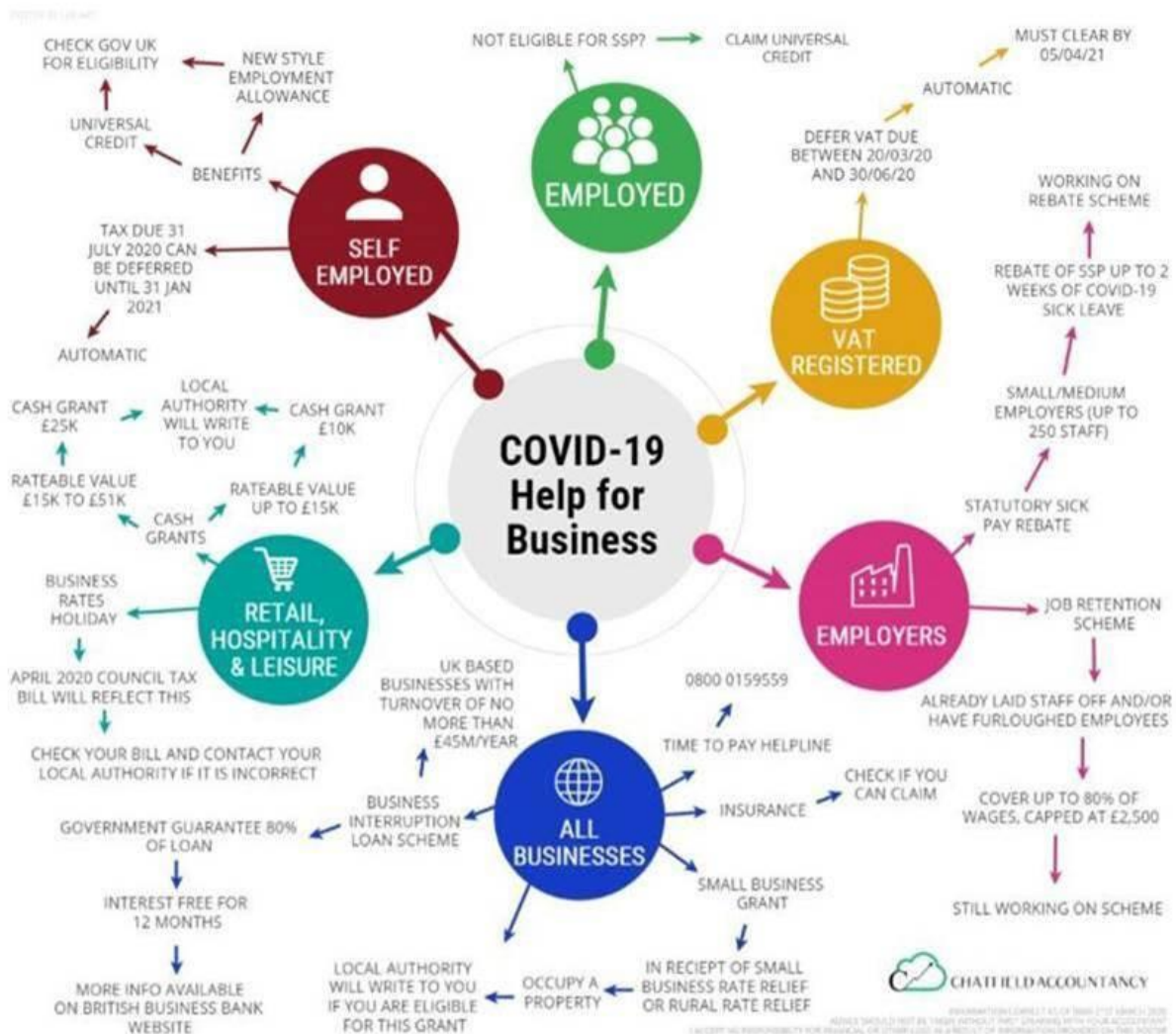
Earlier today BIAZA had a successful meeting with the Zoos Policy team at Defra and the Chair of the Zoos Expert Committee. Having received our earlier letter, the purpose of the meeting was to share more information on how the pandemic and associated restrictions are impacting zoos and

aquariums and how well our members are able to access the current business support packages introduced by the Government. We were able to highlight the biggest challenges facing our sector at this time and make requests for additional support packages, as well as seeking clarification on several details relating to implementation of current support and restrictions. The Defra team are now reporting this information back to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Minister for Animal Welfare and are working to be able to respond to our requests. We will have further meetings with them in the next week.

Based on the feedback we have received from you all over the last few days, as well as our discussions with Defra and others, we are also currently drafting follow up communications with the Chancellor and HMT, to refine our requests for financial and other support for zoos and aquariums. These will be sent imminently and we will update you further on this in future emails.

Business Support

We have come across this visual representation of the current support packages in place in the UK which some of you may find useful as a quick summary of what is available at the moment:



Furloughing Staff

We are aware that many of you have questions about how to implement furloughing. The team at Chester Zoo have kindly agreed to put together some information and template resources on how

they have approached it and we hope to be able to share this soon. We are also putting together some FAQs for employers on this topic, so if you have questions and queries about furloughing, or you have useful advice on it that you are willing to share with BIAZA members, please get in touch and we will endeavour to include it.

BIAZA Collections

We continue to update our spreadsheet tracking the status of BIAZA collections which can be found on our website. Currently 121 of our members are closed.

Finally, a reminder that all of our resources and guidance related to Covid-19 can be found on our website [here](#), including the co-signed template essential worker travel letter and communications advice.

Covid-19 Member Update - 24/03/20

Dear all,

In today's update from the BIAZA Office we provide information of the further Covid-19 control measures and restrictions as announced by the UK Prime Minister yesterday evening as well as some new resources we have prepared to support you.

If you have any questions or comments make sure to hit 'Reply All' as Nicky, Cerian and myself are all working slightly different office hours and we want to make sure that we can respond swiftly to your comments and questions.

We are ramping up our political lobbying efforts to push for greater support for Zoos and Aquariums, particularly around additional financial support for your operation expenses (providing care for your collection and ensuring the upkeep of animal welfare standards). If there are specific support packages that would be of benefit to your collection (whether you are in the UK, Ireland, Northern-Ireland and devolved Gvts.) as well as the wider zoo and aquarium community, make sure to continue to let us know so we can include these in communication with the authorities and Ministers.

Business Closures

The UK Government has now stated that non-essential businesses and premises must now close and remain closed until further notice. Initial measures are in place for 3 weeks. Further information on this can be found [here](#).

Essential Workers

The UK has now changed its guidance to clearly state that people should stay at home except for to carry out some specific activities. The majority of people should no longer be travelling for work purposes. However, travel for essential work is still permitted. It is our interpretation that providing animal care is essential work, so staff involved directly in this can continue to do so. We recommend you provide any essential staff with identification and a letter explaining their status as essential workers. As a BIAZA member you can use this joint template letter [here](#) (as adapted from the letter from the Ocean Conservation Trust)

Communications Advice

Together with Caroline Sanger-Davies (Chester Zoo) and the other experts of the Communication Working Group we have compiled some key pointers to help you manage your communications at this time. The document is available [here](#).

Other Resources and Guidance

You can find all of the resources we have put together for members on Covid-19 [here](#). This includes our general guidance document on the virus, the spreadsheet of member status, template letter to your local MP, guidance on risk assessments and resources from other associations we have been given permission to share. Key information about Government support for businesses in the UK can be found [here](#), and in Ireland [here](#).

Covid-19 Member Update - 23/03/20

Dear all,

In these fast changing times we are committed to continue to update our members regularly. We have summarised the UK Government's critical updates over the weekend including implementing additional precautions in place to slow the spread of Covid-19 and providing further financial support to businesses and outline some of the BIAZA initiatives ensuring that we raise our collective influence and we can support each other in these challenging.

Government Closures of Businesses

On Friday 20th March Boris Johnson announced further closures of businesses including pubs, cinemas, museums and indoor leisure centres, as well as stopping the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises (for the full list see [here](#)).

Zoos and aquariums are not included in the list of businesses that must close and it is the decision of the individual collections to decide on the most appropriate course of action. If you decide to continue to be open to the public we recommend that you take the following actions:

- Have thorough and frequently updated risk assessments and risk management plans that clearly specify actions in place to minimise any risks of infection to visitors and staff and ensuring animal welfare standards can be maintained at all times.
- Have a communications plan that includes clearly communicating the measures you are taking to minimise risks to your staff and the public and responses to criticisms of the public or others

BIAZA Member Closures & Responses to Coronavirus

We have been following all of your updates on your collections through your websites and social media channels and have compiled a spreadsheet regarding the [status of BIAZA member collections](#). We hope this document, along with discussions on our member only Facebook groups, will help the community come together to support each other at this time. Currently, the majority of our members are now closed, or operating with significant restrictions in place (e.g. safari park elements only). We would also like to start sharing case studies of how members have responded to the pandemic, in order to share expertise and ideas.

Business and Financial Support

The new UK Government business support measures begin today. This includes the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, providing loans to small and medium businesses which are interest free for 12 months, and the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility. For more information see [here](#).

The Chancellor Rishi Sunak provided a [statement](#) on additional financial support measures for businesses on 20th March which included the establishment of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. This will provide Government grants to cover 80% the wages of staff who are furloughed (not working, but kept on payroll rather than being laid off) up to a total of £2500 a month, backdated to 1st March. All employers are eligible for this scheme, which will be administrated by HMRC. It is initially opened for 3 months, but Government intends to extend it if necessary. The Chancellor also deferred the next quarter of VAT payments. Full information on all UK Government business support measures can be found [here](#).

We are aware that this is welcome support for many of our members, however there are many other challenges. In particular, the issue of needing to continue to pay wage bills and other costs related to providing good animal care for your collections even if closed to visitors. This is something we are continuing to work towards finding solutions for through many channels including the Zoos and Aquariums APPG and other visitor attraction and animal welfare groups.

Actions to Support Irish Members & those in the Devolved Nations

We are also actively working at the moment to refine our messaging from Westminster targeted communications to similarly engage with the Irish and UK Devolved Governments. If you have key issues that you feel need additionally raising in these regions please let [Nicky](#) know ASAP and we will incorporate them where possible.

Coronavirus Guidance from the Charity Commission

The Charity Commission has published some guidance on postponing AGMs and other key meetings, or holding them via video or teleconferencing in response to Coronavirus, available [here](#).

BIAZA Social Media Communications

We intend to use our social media channels to encourage public support for our members and share good news stories – something we are all in need of. As the majority of collections are now closed to visitors, we will now switch to predominantly promoting alternative ways the public can engage with you and provide proactive support for their local BIAZA member. If you have special activities, webcams & virtual tours, educational materials and fundraising campaigns you would like us to promote, please email information to admin@biaza.org.uk

If you have any questions or comments, please make sure to send us ([Cerian](#), [Nicky](#) or [Madelon](#)) an email.

Covid-19 Member Update - 20/03/20

Dear Members,

Further to today's special issue of BIAZA Bitesize we wanted to provide some more details regarding the steps we are taking to support the BIAZA membership in this challenging period.

A BIAZA Covid-19 Public Affairs Working Group has been formed to make direct representations to key political stakeholders in order to highlight the concerns and challenges faced by zoos and aquariums. A letter has been sent highlighting these concerns to the Chancellor, the Secretary of State for the Environment and Andrew Rosindell, MP, as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Zoos and Aquariums. Similar letters will be sent to the Scottish and Welsh Assemblies and the Irish Parliament. We are also strengthening connections with other tourism sector groups in order that we can work together on lobbying and share political intelligence.

Please find attached a template letter which is available should you wish to engage your own local MP and ask for their support on this matter. You may wish to edit it to include your own contingency plans and highlight specific challenges. [the latest version of this is [available here](#)]

We are also aware of the concerns surrounding the issue of Key Workers. The Government has now published its list of professions which qualify for 'key worker' status, which is available [here](#). Those meeting the criteria, as well as all vulnerable children, will be able to continue to access statutory childcare provision (although, where possible, key workers are still encouraged to keep children at home). Whilst somewhat broader than previous definitions of key workers, this new interpretation focuses on those involved in the front-line response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. At present it does not include people with responsibility for ensuring animal welfare, with the exception of those vets involved in the production and supply of veterinary medicine, involved in food production or providing emergency care. The RCVS and BVA have produced a statement [here](#).

The intention of the Government's policy appears to be two-fold:

1. To ensure as many front-line workers are available to respond to the immediate crisis as possible.
2. To still limit those included on the list so as to promote social distancing.

We are seeking urgent clarification from Government about the status of essential employees within the zoo and aquarium community, principally keepers and veterinary staff. Whilst it is unlikely that the Government will significantly broaden their definition of key workers we are seeking reassurances that, in the event of further travel restrictions and closures of buildings and public spaces, zoo keepers and vets are considered to be essential workers and can continue to care for our animals.

We are pursuing this directly with the Government, as well as via tourism trade bodies (such as ALVA and UKinbound) and in dialogue with other animal welfare organisations.

We will provide regular updates as this situation develops, but in the meantime please feel free to contact us if there is anything else we can be doing to support you at this time.

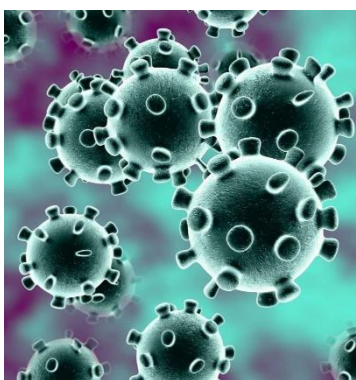
[Covid-19 News from BIAZA BiteSize March 2020 - 20/03/20](#)

FROM THE OFFICE

We are entering into an extremely challenging period and would like to remind all our members that we are here to support you however we can. We will continue to update our [advice to members](#) regarding management of Covid-19, and to provide helpful resources and forums for discussion wherever possible. Through a new Covid-19 Public Affairs Focus Group we will also be liaising with Government officials over the coming days and weeks to represent the interests of our community as new policies are implemented to manage this situation. We will keep [this page](#) updated with the latest information.

Madelon hopes to be back with the Office in early April, but in the meantime please do continue to contact us if you need anything. The team are currently working from home and unable to answer the phones at this time or receive post, so please use our email addresses to get in touch for the time being. (admin@biaza.org.uk)

Nicky & Cerian



BIAZA BUSINESS – COVID-19 MANAGEMENT

Coronavirus Guidance

There is a guidance document on the [BIAZA website](#) providing basic advice and some useful links. If you have any specific queries which are not addressed within the document or on the links then please get in touch with [Nicky](#). If you have lost your login details or need help accessing this area, [ask Alex](#).

BIAZA Covid-19 Public Affairs Focus Group

This Focus Group will work with the Office to lead on making direct representations to key political stakeholders (MPs, Whitehall, HMT Select Committee) in order to highlight concerns and challenges faced by zoos and aquariums. We have submitted a letter highlighting our concerns to the Chancellor, George Eustace and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Zoos and Aquariums. Similar letters will be sent to the Irish Parliament and Scottish and Welsh Assemblies. We will also be lobbying through wider tourism sector bodies to ensure the voice and needs of zoos and aquariums are represented in their ongoing conversations with the Government.

A template letter will be shared for individual members to write to their constituency MP's in order to update on the work being put into contingency plans, highlight specific challenges, and ask for their support.

Business & Budget

A major new scheme has been launched by the Bank of England to help businesses through this difficult financial period. Businesses can borrow up to £5 million through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, with the first 6 months of that interest free. All retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England will receive a 100% business rates holiday for the next 12 months. There will be grants up to £10,000 for small businesses eligible for Small Business Rate Relief and £25,000 grants to leisure businesses operating from smaller premises, with a rateable value over £15,000 and below £51,000.

The government advice to avoid pubs and theatres etc. is sufficient for businesses to claim on their insurance where they have appropriate business interruption cover for pandemics in place. [Read more](#) and [watch the speech](#).

Further financial support measures are expected to be announced by the Chancellor later today.



Covid-19 Guidance for HR staff

ACAS are holding sessions for businesses on how to handle the impacts of Coronavirus - [Coronavirus, an advisory webinar for employers](#) - This free webinar will provide practical advice for employers to help manage the impact of Coronavirus in the workplace. Multiple dates available. [Register to attend](#)

Covid-19 Communications

Optimism on Social Media! #BIAZABrightSide

In these uncertain times, we would like to share as much positivity as possible. We will be aiming to post regularly on our social media featuring fun facts, fabulous animal photos, live webcam footage and any virtual tours available of your sites and interesting stories or projects currently happening. If you have anything at all you think might be an interesting or useful positive social media feature, please email [Frankie](#)

Facebook Groups

We work best as a community, so we are encouraging our members to keep in touch, both with the office and with each other on forums such as our Committee and Working Group closed Facebook groups. Please use these spaces to share concerns, plans, ideas on how to manage this situation and even requests for help in these exceptional circumstances. For a full list of BIAZA closed Facebook groups please see the bottom of this newsletter.

Utilising Social Media

Alongside our own #BIAZABrightSide there are lots of zoo hashtags going round including #ClosedButStillCaring and #BringingTheZooToYou which you can use to promote your posts.



Digital outreach

If schools are unable to travel to your site you could use skype to run sessions instead. You can head outdoors with a tripod [like ZSL here](#), get creative with resources they can print to use during the session, and go places you wouldn't be able to fit a whole class. Another idea is offering online resources for school groups, like [ZSL](#), [Dublin](#) and [Chester](#). Now is a great time to utilise your collection's social media channels to connect with schools and families. If you would like more detail on any of these ideas we can help put you in touch with collections already using them to get advice – [email the BIAZA Office](#).

Love Your Zoo

Love Your Zoo week is an annual nationwide event and an opportunity to remind our visitors of the amazingly important work you do in terms of animal care, conservation, education and research. We will be adapting this year in light of the pandemic, so when you choose to celebrate is up to you. You may find it useful to hold your LYZ campaign online during closure, or it could be a useful tool in recovering your visitor numbers as we come to the end of this pandemic and are able to reopen our gates. If you do choose to participate this year then [let us know](#) so we can help promote it and support you.



Key Dates

The BIAZA Annual Conference, scheduled to take place 8-10 June at Dublin Zoo, is likely to be postponed until later in 2020. We will provide more information on this as soon as possible.

The Reptile and Amphibian Working Group conference, scheduled for May, has been cancelled. We will continue to assess the situation in relation to our many other Committee and Working Group conferences scheduled for later this year and will update [the events page](#) with more information on these once available.

If you need to update your event on the BIAZA website to reflect that it has been cancelled, postponed or moved online please contact [Frankie](#).

Covid-19 Member Update - 18/03/20

Dear Members,

I hope you are all staying well.

Please see the attached, updated advice on how best to manage and mitigate risks presented by Covid-19. [[Latest version available here](#)] Please note that at this stage we would recommend that all collections have a plan for enforced closure and lockdown, which could be implemented at short notice over the next few days/weeks.

As a community and as individual organisations we are facing a challenging time. Please do keep in touch and let us know how we can best support you.

Covid-19 Member Update - 17/03/20

Dear BIAZA Member,

As a precaution against the spread of COVID-19 the BIAZA Office staff will be following Government advice and working from home until further notice. This means it is likely you will not be able to reach anyone at the office by telephone.

If you need to contact a member of staff, please do so via their email address (which you can find here: <https://biaza.org.uk/biaza-office>) or via admin@biaza.org.uk. If you have an urgent concern you can contact Nicky on 07789 038565.

We will continue to work to support you throughout this challenging time. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have queries or concerns which we may be able to help with. There is Coronavirus Advice on the members' dashboard of our website (<https://biaza.org.uk/members/dashboard#page>) which we will keep updated.

Wishing you all the best,
The BIAZA Office Team