

# News Release



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**PR 16408**

For Immediate Release

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## **Roads to reopen in Penrith town centre**

In line with updated Government guidance on social distancing which is due to come into effect from next weekend, Cumbria County Council has worked closely with partners and members of the business community in Penrith to review the temporary emergency traffic measures which were introduced in Penrith town centre last weekend.

As a result of discussions, Middlegate and Devonshire Street will be reopened to all vehicles today (Friday 26 June). Restrictions will however remain in place for all vehicles at the top of King Street due to the narrow pavements at the pedestrian crossing outside the British Heart Foundation shop.

Residents and visitors are encouraged wherever possible to make use of the free car parking which is available in Eden District Council car parks in an attempt to reduce the volume of vehicles travelling through the centre of Penrith. This is especially important for areas of the road around the 'narrows' so that pedestrians are able to maintain social distancing measures without stepping off the pavement into the road. In addition, shoppers are asked to 'follow the arrows through the narrows' and walk in one direction, on both sides of the road which faces the traffic. Those walking into town are asked to walk through Little Dockray.

On street parking will be restricted on Middlegate in an effort to discourage cars to travel through the centre of town. General parking will only be available on the right hand side although loading bays, disabled parking places and taxi ranks will remain. Pedestrian barriers will be installed this afternoon along this stretch of the road, leaving gaps for pedestrians to cross. The same restrictions will apply on Devonshire Street although there will be no general parking in this area.

Drivers are asked to respect the restrictions in place as they are essential to maintaining the latest public health guidance regarding COVID-19.

Signage will be improved around the town to clearly show where the free parking is available and that Penrith is very much open for business.

Cumbria County Councillor David Whipp, Chair of Eden Local Committee, said:

“I’d like to sincerely thank our residents and visitors for their patience and comments over the last week. These updated measures should help ensure that our visitors are able to shop in our town safely and also enable the businesses to open and thrive. I’d ask that everyone respects the temporary restrictions which have been put in place. These will continue to be reviewed in line with government guidance and feedback.”

Councillor Jackson, Deputy Mayor for Penrith Town council added:

“We’re pleased that stakeholders have been able to work together to review the situation. The changes that have been made are welcomed and it is good that we will continue to work in partnership to review the situation weekly. Although there is some reduced on street parking in Middlegate, disabled parking, loading bays and the taxi rank will remain and all off street car parks are free until the end of August. These revised plans allow people to pop in and shop quickly if they so wish, supports our town centre businesses and allows safe pedestrian movement.”

Stephen Macauley, Penrith Chamber of Trade and Commerce added:

“We welcome today’s decision. We’d like to see business back to normal as soon as possible, encourage a return to the High Street and avoid any further roadblocks to recovery.”

Darren Broad, Penrith BID added:

“We are delighted with the decision and we would like to reassure shoppers that Penrith is open for business. With free parking until the end of August, and a great range of local, independent shops as well as national retailers, we’d love our local community to shop local and support our traders.”

The county council will continue to work together with partners and the business community to review the situation on an ongoing basis.

**Ends.**