



# Holiday Home Association News

Edition 166 July (end) 2020

## A busy summer of uncertainty

**As the holiday industry swung back into top gear, frequent changes to guidance and laws on a local basis made for continued uncertainty and a rush for the relative safety of a holiday in England.**

Following the re-opening of holiday accommodation in early July, accommodation around England has been reporting fully-booked status as families void the risks associated with travel abroad. Leading cottage agencies had no availability for the first week of August and the BBC reported that hotel chains were also seeing a big increase in demand for stays in holiday accommodation in England.

As the government has demonstrated a willingness to suddenly impose quarantine restrictions on returning holidaymakers who travelled abroad when there were no restrictions, customers have understandably eschewed the lure of sandy beaches drenched with sun in far-away places lest they lead to house arrest on return. The inclusion of Spain, a leading destination, on the list of countries to which travel is against Foreign Office advice, even including the

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Canary Islands (where infection is very slight!) has added to the pressure for accommodation in the UK.

The introduction of “local lockdowns” has added more uncertainty. As this edition of HHA News was being drafted new guidance was issued restricting the good people of Manchester from meeting in each other’s homes although there would appear to be no legal ban on travelling to other parts of the UK for holidays, provided they are not in another household’s house. The travel guidance – which is advisory – says that people should only travel into or out of local lockdown areas if the travel is essential. As usual the announcement was made first, then the guidance, with the actual law following. (not available at time of writing).

There is no longer any guidance that restricts use of public transport to essential journeys so people can go on holiday by train or coach. There is

extensive guidance on how to behave provided but much of this is impracticable (e.g. stay outdoors rather than indoors). If travelling by car the advice is for households to travel in household groups where possible and to minimise transmission by measures such as opening the windows, sitting apart, and so on.



*Ideal rail travel, according to the government guidance!*

HHA has written to the Competition and Markets Authority to seek their stance on the issue of cancellation rights where cancellation is pursuant to guidance rather than law and awaits their opinion on this.

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## Public Health England – It's on the Cards

PHE has published advice cards for holiday accommodation businesses on what to do if there are two or more cases of covid-19

in your accommodation. Essentially the advice is to contact PHE and they will give you guidance about how to contain the outbreak, and ask for details that will be passed to NHS track and Trace.

You can obtain the detail from <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/reporting-an-outbreak/resources/residential-workplace-action-cards/>

## The VAT Bonus

VAT on holiday accommodation has been reduced to 5% until January 12<sup>th</sup>. This is good news for tourism, of course, although it won't benefit the majority of home owners who are not registered for VAT. If the holiday cottage is booked now and the holiday is taken before January 12<sup>th</sup> then everything is easy. But what if the deposit was paid long ago and 20% VAT was charged? And what if the holiday is next year after January 12<sup>th</sup>?

In the first case, (where the deposit was paid at 20% but the holiday is before January 12<sup>th</sup>) you (but not the customer) have the option of charging the VAT rate for the whole holiday to 5%. To do this you need to send the customer a credit note for the difference between 5% and 20% on the monies already paid, and you have to do that by 28<sup>th</sup> August. This allows you to charge VAT at the “basic tax point” rate, which is the dates of the holiday. When you invoice for the final payment it will be for the whole cost, plus 5% VAT, less the cash already paid. The customer cannot insist on this. And you cannot do this if the booking is cancelled and the deposit retained.

If you are taking deposits for 2021, you can charge 5% on any payment made before January 12<sup>th</sup>. This means that there is an opportunity, with the government’s blessing, to get cash in early. If your customer loves your decrepit Tumbledown Cottage so much that he wants to book again for August 2021 you can offer him the option of paying the bill in full by 12<sup>th</sup> January and paying 5% on the whole bill. Anything he pays on 13<sup>th</sup> January or later will be at 20% VAT.

Clearly doing this will be to the advantage of the customers is they can afford to pay in advance. Putting the money in the Borsetshire Building Society would not attract enough interest to pay the extra VAT. However there are risks for the customer in doing this and it is only fair that they should realise them. If the owner of the property dies, goes bankrupt, goes out of business etc or if Tumbledown Cottage is burned to the ground, the holiday won’t be possible and the customer might struggle to get his money back. Paying by credit card certainly mitigates that risk.

There is no change to the level of VAT on agency fees.

Holiday accommodation businesses using the VAT flat-rate scheme will be pleased to hear that during the cut-VAT period the flat rate will be 0%.

A useful series of articles by tax specialist Neil Warren is at

<https://www.accountingweb.co.uk/tax/business-tax/the-5-vat-holiday-paradox>

## More Grants for Small Business Recovery

The government has made an announcement of more funds to support small business recovery after the pandemic. The announcement looks rather similar to a previous one (See News 165) but with more cash attached.

The government press release says that “Small and medium sized businesses will have access to grants of between £1,000 - £5,000 to help them access new technology and other equipment as well as professional, legal, financial or other advice to help them get back on track.” Tourism businesses will be eligible if they have suitable opportunities. As before, applications will go through growth hubs run by local enterprise partnerships. These do cover the country and you can find the details of your local hub – which on a straw poll might not be up to date – at:

<https://www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/>

## Back in the Swim

The last edition of HHA News reported that swimming pools had to remain closed although we questioned whether pools for private use might be outside the scope. Within a few days the government changed the law yet again and now there are no known restrictions on swimming pools at holiday homes. This illustrates how hard it is to keep up with the breath-taking speed of changes to the regulations!

## Stamp Duty Land Tax Reduction

There is news for those of you purchasing a second or additional property. Where previously there would have been the higher buying tax rate and an additional 3% tax fee, now anyone looking to purchase will only have to pay 3% up to £500,000. For this reason, buying property will now be cheaper if you're buying for self-catering.

## Advice Galore

The Recovery Advice for Business scheme, supported by the government and hosted on the [Enterprise Nation website](#), will give small firms access to free, one-to-one advice with an expert adviser to help them through the coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for long-term recovery. The platform is now live.

Advice offered will include bespoke, specialist assistance from accountancy, legal, and advertising to marketing, recruitment and digital to help businesses adapt to difficult circumstances and to bounce back as the UK economy recovers.

Business experts, supported by the UK's major professional and trade bodies, have rallied behind the government-backed initiative, with thousands of expert advisers already on hand and ready to do their bit to help small businesses recover and rebuild.

## Keep Your Holiday Homes Hygienic

This article has been provided by the makers of Zoflora, a cleaning product, which we have included in HHA News as an educational feature.

With more and more holidaymakers booking a staycation this year, self-catering holiday home owners need to exercise more caution than ever in keeping their rentals hygienically clean and germ-free between guests, particularly the kitchens and bathrooms.

Leading disinfectant brand Zoflora, has teamed up with **GP Doctor Ellie Cannon**, who provides her guidance on choosing the best cleaning product:



*“First of all, it is important to make sure that cleaning products not only clean but also disinfect and kill viruses as well as bacteria. Make sure that you are using disinfectant as regularly and as frequently as possible and concentrated on those high frequency areas, that people are coming into contact with more often, for example door handles.”*

Sarah Fozzard, Head of Home Hygiene for Zoflora, shares her expert advice for keeping your accommodation and its guests safe, clean and fragrantly fresh:

- Hard Floors - We all know floor surfaces are a bit downtrodden, they're always being walked all over by everyone. Dirty shoes or pets can bring bacteria and germs from the outside in, so it's vital that floor surfaces are not only cleaned, but disinfected correctly.

Add 4 capfuls of Zoflora per 1.6L of water into a mop bucket and use the diluted solution to mop over and disinfect hard surfaces.

\*Do not use on polished wood.

- Worktops - If clean is a battle, your worktops are the battleground. Take the fight to germs and keep your worktops clean and germ-free.

Dilute 1 capful of your favourite Zoflora into 400ml of water, either into a trigger spray bottle or into a sink of warm water. Use the diluted solution to wipe down surfaces with a clean cloth.

- Cupboard Doors - You might not think cupboard doors would be the dirtiest of places, but those handles and edges can be a secret breeding ground for bacteria - especially if these areas have come into contact with mucky food fingers.

Add 2 capfuls of your favourite Zoflora fragrance to an 800ml trigger spray bottle of water, then spray the solution directly onto the area to be disinfected and wipe over with a cloth.

- Bins - The bin takes most of the punishment in daily kitchen life, and

breeding bacteria from food waste can quickly start to make things smell bad.

Don't accept defeat when it comes to bin smells. To get things back to their germ-free and fragrantly fresh best, soak a clean cloth in diluted Zoflora (1 capful per 400ml of water) and use it to wipe the whole bin, not forgetting the lid and surrounding areas inside and out.

- Sinks - Sinks, drains and plug holes can not only harbour harmful bacteria and viruses but also be responsible for bad odours. Using Zoflora regularly can eliminate germs and keep things smelling fresh.

Pour 1 capful of Zoflora straight from the bottle down plug holes to kill unwanted germs and get rid of unpleasant smells. To disinfect the sink, run some warm water and add 1 capful of Zoflora for every 400ml of water. Soak a cloth in the diluted solution and wipe over the sink to eliminate bacteria and viruses.

- Shower Heads - They're clean, right? Not necessarily. Did you know your shower head can contain 300,000 times more bacteria than your front door keys? It's because bacteria love warm, damp places, even those that are used for cleaning.

To kill nasty germs, such as Legionella and Pseudomonas, that can live in hard-to-reach places, unscrew the showerhead and soak in a bucket filled with 4 capfuls of Zoflora and 1.6L of water to kill 99.9% of bacteria and viruses.

- Toilet Brushes - Even more so than bins, toilet brushes and their holders are the ultimate germ hot spots when it comes to bathroom hygiene. These tools may form part of your regular cleaning kit, but don't forget they need to be disinfected too!

To ensure you kill the harmful bacteria which can live on the brush and in its holder, try soaking it in a bucket with 4 capfuls of your favourite Zoflora fragrance added to 1.6L of water. This will not only kill the bacteria but also restore fragrant freshness.

**Notes:**

Zoflora is part of the Thornton and Ross product portfolio which was founded in 1922 and is one of the largest OTC pharmaceutical manufacturers in the UK, exporting to over 80 countries worldwide.

**\*Important note:**

Use disinfectants safely. Always read the instructions before use. Zoflora can be kept for up to two weeks after dilution, whilst still maintaining its germ killing power, both at 1:20 and 1:40 dilutions. When correctly diluted, Zoflora disinfectant may be used where most pets are kept. Do not allow pets to lick or walk on wet treated surfaces. Keep off until dry. Not suitable for use in fish tanks or vivaria.

**BS EN Testing**

Zoflora is tested to BS EN standards for disinfectants, so you can rest assured that it will keep your workplace safe and hygienically clean. Zoflora meets the requirements for the following;

- EN 1276.2009
- EN 13697.2015
- EN 13623.2010
- EN 1650:2008 + A1 2013
- EN 14476 2013

Zoflora kills 99.9% of viruses & bacteria including: Coronavirus, Human Herpes virus, Influenza -Type A (H1N1), Respiratory Syncytial virus (RSV), Rotavirus, E.coli, MRSA, Listeria, Salmonella.

Visit our website for more information at <https://www.zoflora.co.uk/efficacy-details/>

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## Green Tourism Backs Green Staycations



The Green Tourism Business Scheme has produced a number of graphics for use by businesses wanting to press home green credentials as the tourism industry recovers. If you're not already fully booked and have a green tinge use them to encourage greenery!

[www.green-tourism.com/staycation](http://www.green-tourism.com/staycation)

## VE Excellence Awards

The short-listed candidates for this year's prizes will be preparing for a glittering ceremony in August..... at home. For like everyting else the awards ceremony will

