

MIDLANDS ENGINE

MIDLANDS MATTERS ISSUE 3

midlandsengine.org

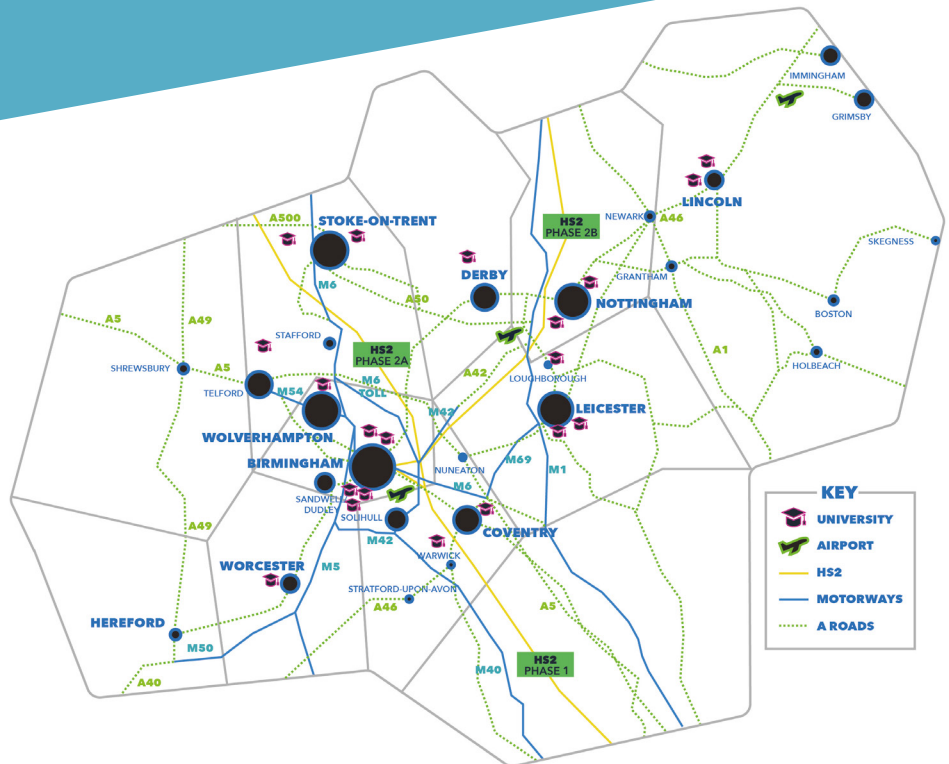
Welcome to an earlier than planned third edition of our partnership newsletter, Midlands Matters.

We are living through unprecedented times - and Covid-19 is a challenge to us all, on both individual and organisational levels. I would like to take this opportunity to personally send you my very best wishes, and hope that you, your colleagues and your families are well and remain so in coming weeks.

But there are positives we can find in this situation - and the early issue of this newsletter is here to recognise the phenomenal work that is going on in our partnership on a day-by-day basis to help with the fight against Covid-19. Partners across the region have been contributing to the cause in all manner of ways and I wanted to share just some of these stories with you - examples which show our Midlands spirit, ingenuity and resilience - in every one.

Our businesses, including our SMEs, organisations which are so crucial to the economic prosperity of the Midlands are feeling the huge impact of this pandemic right now. The Government recognises this and partners are mobilising to bring forward announced interventions with exceptional pace so that firms can quickly access the support they need. One of the sections in this newsletter highlights the financial and business support being rolled out already, across our region - thanks to the speed of partner responses to quickly deliver Government support.

We've highlighted too the wide variety of ways that partners are making the adjustments we are all facing, with social distancing and self-isolation, both easier to understand, and easier to bear. It's been just incredible to see the support now being provided to individuals and communities - and to our businesses as we all try



to adjust, try to keep fit and healthy and establish a new work-life balance.

And with so many simply extraordinary responses from partner organisations right across Midlands Engine, on work to combat the virus in a medical and clinical setting - I wanted to share with you the remarkable work of those teams involved here too. From donating supplies of personal protective equipment, to producing hand sanitiser on an industrial scale, helping DNA sequencing of the virus and providing testing kits, the Midlands has truly delivered when called upon - and will continue to do so.

I hope this positive news bring a small reprieve to the heavy workloads we are all carrying right now, and serves as an uplifting reminder that there is great work going on to defeat the virus. In time, this same community resolve and entrepreneurial spirit will see us recover both physically and economically - of that I am certain.

Finally, please continue - as you will be, to encourage those around you to follow Government advice to keep yourselves and our communities safe at this most challenging time.

**With my best wishes,
Sir John Peace, Chairman, Midlands Engine**



Midlands universities spearhead groundbreaking research and donate vital equipment



Nottingham universities enable 20,000 COVID-19 tests a day, supplying 16 machines with a total value of £1million that use a testing technique called Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR).

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University of Birmingham's Collaborative Teaching Laboratory produces urgently needed hand sanitiser, supporting frontline social care workers to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

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UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

University of Leicester trials new approach to testing for COVID-19, which could determine whether a person is infectious or not even before symptoms are present.

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Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham join COVID-19 genome sequencing alliance, which aims to deliver large scale, rapid sequencing of the cause of the disease and share intelligence with hospitals, regional NHS centres and the Government.

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NHS Trusts work with Staffordshire, Coventry, Worcester, Wolverhampton and Birmingham City Universities to recruit around 200 third year paramedic students to support the NHS.

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University of Aston Business School is offering expert advice for businesses dealing with COVID-19 in its new podcast series giving voice to SMEs handling the ongoing impact of the global pandemic.

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Aston, Derby, Keele, Loughborough and Warwick Universities all donate vital PPE equipment to support their local NHS hospitals and communities.



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University of Worcester delivers state-of-the-art equipment, including beds, mobile hospital screens, trolleys, syringes, stethoscopes and more to the Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

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Student pharmacists at De Montfort University help out in local pharmacies during the crisis, and also create a website to match pharmacist volunteers with community pharmacies.

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Universities of Lincoln and Derby use their rapid manufacturing kit to make safety visors for Lincoln County Hospital; the hospital needs up to 50 of these visors a day to help keep patients and staff safe.

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PhD students and research staff at Coventry University volunteer to help Coventry and Warwickshire University Hospitals test patients for COVID-19 in the coming weeks.

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Nottingham Trent University donates all the produce from its vertical farm, including pak choi, spinach, swiss chard, lettuce, coriander and basil, to Tracy's Street Kitchen, a small team of chefs who make and distribute food to people living on the streets.

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Staff members at Loughborough University support the local community and the country by providing a range of vital resources and research expertise.

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Midlands businesses respond with urgency, commitment and innovation



The region's Local Enterprise Partnerships react quickly to share information and re-organise their support for businesses.

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British Business Bank responds to the crisis, setting up the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to provide financial support to smaller businesses whose cashflow is affected.

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Birmingham NEC commits to become a field hospital during the pandemic, with the much-needed capacity to provide around 4,000 vital beds.

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The Native Antigen Company introduces novel coronavirus antigens, derived specifically for use in infectious disease research and vaccine development.

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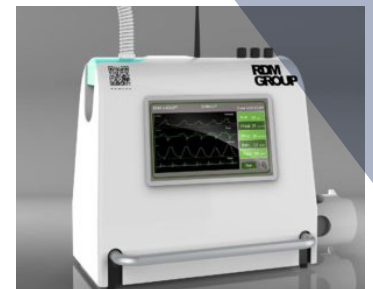


Staffordshire gin company switches to making hand sanitiser for the Council to support recycling and waste operations.

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West Midlands businesses answer the call to supply ventilators to the NHS, helping to rapidly solve an unmet immediate clinical requirement at low cost.

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A new service for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire helps to match recently redundant workers with new jobs in sectors experiencing high demand.

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JCB announces it will join the national effort to manufacture ventilators at its Staffordshire factory soon as part of a huge nationwide effort.

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Midlands Engine Partnership - continuing political stakeholder engagements

The Midlands Engine Executive has continued important meetings with political stakeholders from across the Midlands, including meeting Jack Brereton MP, MP for Stoke-on-Trent South, and Saqib Bhatti MP, newly elected MP for Meriden, in recent weeks to discuss the work of the Midlands Engine Partnership.



Rt Hon Robert Jenrick

Given the changing times, these important meetings will continue, but in a virtual form! Future meetings are planned with new MPs from Staffordshire, Theo Clarke MP and Jonathan Gullis MP, amongst others.

And whilst coronavirus has temporarily disrupted plans for the Midlands Engine community and our regions MP's - led by Midlands Engine Champion, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick to meet at our Parliamentary Reception in April, we'll be shortly progressing plans for the resumed event - watch this space for further details in due course!



Saqib Bhatti MP



Jack Brereton MP

Midlands communities come together to support each other

The region's local authorities are quick to provide guidance and support for our communities, such as Birmingham City Council's online hub to make accessing information easier.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)



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Nottinghamshire
County Council

Nottinghamshire County Council sets up a Community Support and Volunteering Hub, with the support of seven District and Borough Councils.

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The Midlands Engine funded Mental Health and Productivity Pilot supports employees and employers by sharing resources such as #EveryMindMatters from Public Health England for and advice on coping with anxiety and stress linked to COVID-19.

mental health
+ productivity
pilot

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Loughborough University produces practical tips for parents on how to provide physical activity and development opportunities for children at home.

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Staffordshire libraries livestream children's story time and 'bounce and rhyme' sessions every day from 3pm providing parents with much needed support.

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West Midlands
Combined Authority

West Midlands Community Support Hub helps people to find information at this difficult time, on issues and services such as foodbanks, help for the elderly and mental health support.

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The region shines a spotlight on the incredible dedication of our healthcare workers with major landmarks such as Lincoln Cathedral shining blue and 1000s applauding and cheering.

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University of Birmingham catering team hands out food donations to those in real need in the local community.

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University of Derby's student union donates £2000 of food packages to students and vulnerable residents in the city.

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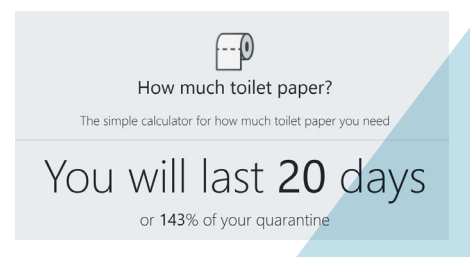
Nursing student at Birmingham City University sets up a volunteer group of over 1000 to help vulnerable members of her south Birmingham community.

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And finally ...

A University of Birmingham computer science student has created an app to prevent panic buying ... by telling you how long your toilet roll supplies will last!

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The Midlands Engine is a coalition of Councils, Combined Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Universities and businesses across the region, actively working with Government to build a collective identity, to enable us to present the Midlands as a competitive and compelling offer that is attractive at home and overseas. Copyright ©2020 The Midlands Engine, All rights reserved.

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