

Joint statement regarding Eid al-Adha 2020

This period of extended lockdown has been a considerable challenge to residents and businesses, forcing us to explore different ways of doing things. Workplaces have changed, how we communicate with each other has changed, and the way we celebrate the things that are important to residents across Leicester and Leicestershire have changed too.

As we continue our efforts to do all that we can to prevent the spread of COVID19 in our areas, we have to focus the minds of our communities on the very simple things as we currently understand them and that will help us to continue to reduce the level and transmission of COVID19 in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Over the last few months, celebrations and community events that normally take pride of place in the festivals calendar have changed or not taken place at all. With Eid al-Adha coming up, another important religious event in Leicester and Leicestershire, once again things will no doubt take place very differently.

Meeting other families or members of the extended family network is usually an important part of Eid al-Adha. Here in the city of Leicester and in Oadby and Wigston, people can meet outside their immediate households but can't come together to pray, share and celebrate in the usual way.

Under the current enhanced lockdown arrangements, when people do come together outside, they must limit numbers to no more than six people and of course still apply the expected strict social distancing measures, staying two metres apart.

We also know that congregational prayer is an important part of many religious practices, and unfortunately that hasn't been possible for many months now because of the increased risk of COVID19 transmission.

Though a review of the lockdown arrangements is expected to take place towards the end of the week, it is unlikely that changes will occur in time to allow congregational prayer as part of Eid al-Adha this year, either inside or outside.

For those who traditionally visit cemeteries at this time to remember and pay respects to loved ones, that experience will be different again this year. Government advice around limiting social contact, travel and gatherings still applies, and for some making this journey should be avoided if possible. If you still feel duty-bound to attend, your patience and cooperation is requested as council staff work hard to enable your visit to take place safely.

Finally, we wish you all an early Eid Mubarak and look forward once again to sharing stories of how our residents have responded to this crisis, particularly as we continue to find new ways to worship, pray and celebrate safely together.

