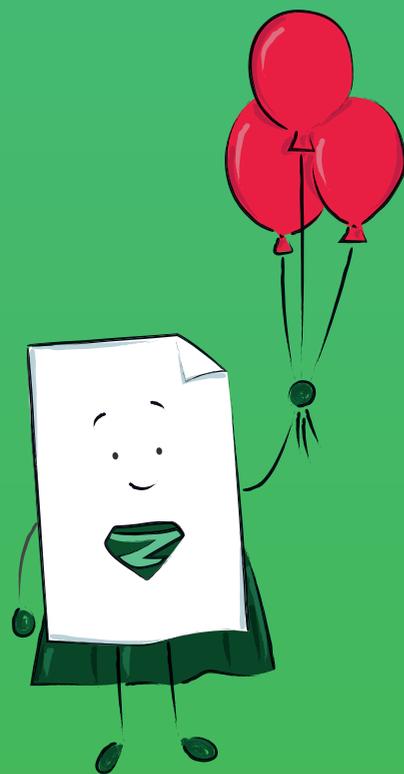


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Company gives schools laptop boost



TECH BOOST: Simarco's Simon Reed with New Rickstones headteacher Damian Lee

SCHOOLS have teamed up with a global logistics company. The move has seen New Rickstones and Maltings academies in Witham receive ten free Chromebooks from Simarco. The firm made the donation to encourage pupils into the logistics sector. Simarco chief executive Simon Reed said: "We are delighted to continue our support for

local schools and charities. With so many children in internet poverty in this country, we realise how important it is for us to continue to help our community." Simarco supports the two schools' careers open days by introducing students to its apprenticeship programme which see pupils achieve BTEC qualifications in business

administration and logistics. New Rickstones headteacher Damian Lee said: "For them to recognise the difficulties that some students have in being able to access computer facilities and then provide us with these Chromebooks is both amazing and heart-warming. "It shows a real commitment on their part to support their local community."

'Back businesses,' urges MP Priti

Call follows fact-finding mission to Witham pub

By Alex Gidden
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WITHAM'S MP has called on her constituents to support local businesses following the coronavirus lockdown.

Priti Patel made the appeal after visiting the White Hart Hotel in Newland Street.

The Home Secretary was given a tour of the hotel and sat down with owners Tracy and David Arnott to find out how they were running the restaurant and bar areas during the pandemic.

Bosses have put in a range of safety measures to meet government guidelines on social distancing and hygiene.

They include regular deep cleans, a reduction in table numbers and encouraging guests to order via a smartphone app and not at the bar.

Sanitisation stations have also been set up at various points in the hotel.

Speaking after her visit, Ms Patel said: "I was very impressed by how hard the hotel has worked to create an environment that is as safe and as comfortable as possible for its clientele and staff.

"It has all been very professionally and thoughtfully done.

"After the long lockdown period, it is essential for local people to once again have leisure facilities that will encourage them to come out of their homes for the



FACT-FINDING MISSION: Priti Patel MP speaking to White Hart owners Tracy and David Arnott in Witham

People are still slightly reluctant to visit places like pubs and hotels, but we have done absolutely everything we can to make them feel safe

Tracy Arnott

social contact that we all need.

"I hope that Witham residents will give the White Hart their full support, particularly because it is such a well-known landmark and institution in our town.

"Local businesses need our support now, more than ever."

The White Hart is one of a

number of businesses to sign up to the Government's Eat Out initiative, which sees it pay for 50 per cent of meals to encourage people to visit restaurants.

Mrs Arnott said: "My thanks to Priti for popping in to see our facilities and all we have set in place to prepare for our reopening, earlier this month.

"We very much appreciate her support and encouragement.

"People are still slightly reluctant to visit places like pubs and hotels, but we have done absolutely everything we can to make them feel safe and welcome and we will continue to do so.

"I hope that having seen or heard about the new socially distanced and ultra clean facilities here they will feel safe enough to give us their support."