

Chairman's Report

21st May 2020

After nearly two months of lockdown many of us will probably be feeling the strain of not seeing loved ones. Would anyone really like to be trapped in The Big Brother House? I doubt it!

This week is mental health awareness week. It is important at this time to stay in touch with friends and family particularly those who already live alone but are having to isolate. Maybe offer to walk a dog for a friend and chat at distance from the end of the garden? I have noticed several people sat at a respectable distance in front gardens having a natter over coffee. Social interaction is important for everyone.

As many of you know, I am a parkrun volunteer, and as an event it has been highlighted as a way to get out and meet people, whether running or stood on a corner cheering, everyone can benefit from the mental stimulation. Unfortunately, we are unlikely to see us back in the park until much nearer the end of the year.

Mental health awareness is a cause close to my heart and I was proud to raise money for the charity MIND at the Yeovil half marathon last year. There are many charities out there who offer support in a time of crisis. The Samaritans being one of the best known, their Freephone number is 116123.

On a lighter note, it has been good to see signs of normality around the town as Government guidance suggests we can mingle a bit more, albeit from a safe distance. The park was quite busy on Sunday but everyone was nicely spaced and obviously in family groups. The lanes around the area have also seen an increase in use as people walk, run and cycle away from busy areas. On this note, it was good to see the Government reaffirm their pledge to provide some money for improved cycle infrastructure. It still isn't enough, but hopefully we can make progress at last on The Strawberry Line cycle route to Wells. The Town Council has earmarked funds to go towards this project which should see a route on a dedicated path and quiet roads leaving town at West Shepton Playing Fields.

This leads me nicely in to say that thanks to a determined effort, by Town and District Councillors, the playing field road and carpark at long last has been resurfaced. This news will be well received by the football club, the junior soccer school, the Scouts and the shooting club as well as anyone who takes their children to skate or BMX there.

Well that's about it for this week, the DIY is on hold and I'm going for a bike ride!

Edric Hobbs, Chair, Shepton Mallet Town Council