

Chairman's Report

4th June 2020

Those of you who know me will be aware that I am not usually lost for words, so how do I find it difficult some weeks to fill this column?

Very soon non-essential shops will be allowed to open again. I would like to think that we will support our businesses in Shepton first and foremost before looking elsewhere. We have a myriad of shops in the Town Street and the High Street and beyond, supplying daily essentials, as well as gifts, collectables etc. The latest Government press release is allowing Street Markets to resume as well, so expect to see the Friday market back soon. It will be good to see a vibrancy return to the town centre. We will, however, still need to respect each other and give people the space they require.

The Town Council have announced this week a Shepton Mallet and local area Business Award event. We are aware that the Mendip District Council Business Awards are not happening this year and we thought it important to fill the void locally and recognise the efforts made by local entrepreneurs during lock down to keep their businesses afloat.

As mentioned here very recently, plans are afoot to make headway on the Strawberry Line Cycle path. Plans are being resubmitted for the section across the District Council car park and through the cutting to bring you out in Station Road. This will give safer access for pupils to get to school on the East-West route across town. The Town Council wholly supports this plan and has funding set aside to help pay for the project.

Next week, 6th to 14th June, is Bike Week 2020 and you may be surprised that the idea is nearly 100 years old. It may be time, if you haven't already, to dust your bike off (after all, you've tidied the shed in the last two months!), get a quick service from one of our local mechanics and go for a ride.

Whilst on the subject of cycling, I would like to offer a tip to anyone riding the relief road from Wells, please don't ride inside the solid white line at the edge of the road. I think some cyclists and drivers think it's a cycle lane, but all it is, is to mark the edge of the road. You are safer to ride a couple of feet out from that as you increase your visibility and have a space to move into if traffic comes too close. Hopefully, the need to use the main road will decrease as we build more paths towards Charlie Bigham's and beyond. The cycle path to Dulcote has been very busy of late with people taking their daily exercise and I think this is why some folk are opting for the main road to commute between Shepton and Wells.

I think that's enough from me, I stood on the scales this morning and got told "one at a time", so I'm off for some exercise!

Edric Hobbs, Chair, Shepton Mallet Town Council