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PRESS RELEASE

WEEKLY CHAIRMAN'S' COLUMN – 30 July 2020

After 18 weeks I am pleased to announce that the playground and toilets in Collett Park have been reopened. It has been a long slow process and all health and safety concerns have been carefully considered, as always, by the Town Clerk. We have banners in place to remind you to be respectful of other people's personal space when using the play area with your children and when queuing for the café.

I and other councillors have been asked if The Lido will open this summer. I think it's safe to say that unfortunately it won't be viable. Fusion are working across their portfolio to reopen facilities but, like many firms, they are struggling with the viability of certain facets of the estates they manage. The leisure facilities are held on a 50-year lease and as such, neither Mendip District Council or us as a Parish Council have input on the operation of services. Let's hope things improve and we are able to swim next year. I know it's frustrating missing out on your sport and leisure activities. I am in the same boat, as I have not been told yet that parkrun will resume anytime soon and as I write we have missed 19 weeks.

As you read this on Thursday, I will be in a meeting with the County Council and will be able to bring you some news on our long awaited and much needed Market Place resurfacing project. I think this should be a priority if you look at the work that has happened in other towns in the District. Wells had substantial improvement work carried out a decade ago and Frome is currently having a town centre revamp so I don't see why we should be left out, especially when we as a council have committed a considerable sum of money to the project which should really come from the coffers of the County Council.

The Clerk and I had a walk round the Town Centre last week and we highlighted a few areas where we could make some quick improvements to the appearance of the town centre. This includes looking at alternatives to our seasonal planting beds, which we were unable to acquire this year due to the closure of the nursery. During our visit of the town centre, we noticed the Book Roost at the Market Cross was being well used by children. This is a project by the Seven Starlings community group and grant aided by the town council, set up in response to the limited service offered by the library due to coronavirus this summer and the impact this could have on children's access to reading material.

Well that's it from me this week. I actually found this column easier to write than those of late with quite a lot going on. See you all next week.

Edric Hobbs Chair Shepton Mallet Town Council.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Shepton Mallet Town Council, Town Clerk – Ms Charlotte Starkie
Shepton Mallet Town Council Chairman – Councillor Edric Hobbs