

SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting	Full Council Item 10.12
Date	13 th January 2021
Author	C Starkie, Town Clerk
Subject	Impact of Coronavirus Lockdown

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Councillors on the latest pandemic lockdown and consider any actions needed to be taken by the council.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Due to increasing spread of the coronavirus the government announced on 4th January 2021 that the entire country enters a period of lockdown, that will last a minimum of 5 weeks. This has an impact on the town council.

3.0 PANDEMIC ACTION

31. During the first lock down in March 2020 the council responded quickly and provided support to the community. A small Pandemic Action team with delegated authority was established and met weekly to discuss matters with staff and take key decisions. The staffing team continued to work from their respective homes, visiting the town and office on occasion. Council meetings quickly transferred to the zoom platform. Staff will continue to work from home and council will continue to meet on Zoom. The office remains closed to any visitors. Things that were established then now need to be considered if they are revived.

a. Signage. Banners were placed around town to direct people to the 0800 phone number. Some of those banners have been removed. A consideration is now being made that all the banners in town are removed and replaced with a refreshed design that encourages people to social distance, etc, as well as directing them to a phone number of Local Council Support managed by SCC and MDC. Approximate cost £300.

b. 0800 phone line. This is managed by the Town Clerk and other staff on a daily basis, but only Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. It is not receiving a high volume of calls. If the number of calls increases, then to seek several volunteer councillors who can receive those calls and signpost people for support.

c. Pandemic Action Plan – those who would be staffing the phone line will receive an updated Pandemic Action Plan which contains useful information. This is a confidential document as it contains personal data.

d. Help Shepton website. This is out of date, and does contain information that is misleading, as some of the groups that are listed are now closed, the phone line hours have been reduced and other agencies have set up their own websites/pages. It is suggested that this website is unpublished and work down to simplify it before re-publication.

e. Events. It was necessary to cancel Collett Festival 2020, to advertise a door step VJ Day and Remembrance Day was a paired back event with wreath laying only. Collett Festival is normally in June. By this time of the year all the infrastructure would have been booked. The staff are unable to make any progress and therefore it is proposed that Collett Festival 2021 is postponed. It might be possible to create a small scale family event in the autumn of 2021, but it is more likely and realistic that Collett Festival return in 2022, refreshed and restyled maybe. There is the new People and Promotion Committee that has the remit of organising events and they may wish to work with members of Collett Park Management committee to bring a new event in 2021.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 For Councillors to note this report and to consider/agree the following:

- a. Signage – any ideas for refreshing the banners?
- b. 0800 phone line – any volunteers to assist?
- c. Pandemic Action Plan (V6) – to be updated and circulated to councillors.
- d. Help Shepton Website – to either be removed, or refreshed, by Councillor Kennedy
- e. Collett Festival 2021 to be postponed to 2022.