

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE
26 MAY 2021**

Officer: Helen Ball – Town Clerk

COVID UPDATE

Purpose of Report

To update Members on COVID related matters involving the Town Council.

Areas of Work/Activity

1. Lockdown Road Map

We are currently working within Phase 2 of the Lockdown Recovery Roadmap. All sports facilities are open, all retail is open and hospitality has recently commenced indoor service.

The only thing left to open in the Council's estate are the Community Centres. These require COVID Risk Assessments and in the case of Ditherington consideration of major expense to bring it into a workable and safe facility. This will be looked at shortly with a view to reports to the next Committee cycle

2. Staffing

By mid June staff who have been shielding should have returned following use of rolled over annual leave entitlement. Staffing remains an issue as there is as some are still covering additional COVID affected/related duties.

Staff have all the necessary PPE & Sanitisation facilities to keep them safe and all staff are encouraged to have lateral flow tests twice a week.

It is pleasing to report that the majority of the workforce have had their first vaccination and a good number have had their second.

Demands on the Senior Management Team have been considerable throughout covering additional COVID management activity as well as cover for recent sickness episodes within the team.

3. Finances

The Head of Finance has briefed the Finance & General Purposes Committee on financial projections for the year end. It is envisaged at this stage that the overall deficit outturn shall be in the region of £90k, but this will be dependent on how long and severe the current lockdown continues for.

The end of year accounts are due to be presented to F&GP on the 14th June.

4. Communications/Social Media

Staff have continued to maintain a high presence communicating to the public. All notice boards have COVID Updates, there is a special section on the [Website for COVID](#) related matters and social media regularly posts updates regarding COVID matters, also picking up on Public Health Shropshire matters.

5. Markets

Both the General Market and the Sunday Market are trading fully and trader levels are back to pre-COVID levels. Both Markets are still operating to COVID Regulations.

6. Parks & Open Spaces

All Parks & Open Spaces remain open, unless they have had to be closed for flood reasons. The Quarry has been exceptionally busy as the public continue to use the facility for their daily exercise.

The Dingle has operated a one-way system with no seating. It is the intention to plant up for summer during the restricted access arrangements and then open up the site fully after the 21st June phase of the Recovery Roadmap is introduced.

7. Play

Under current Government Guidelines, all play areas have remained open. All have been COVID Risk Assessed and new signage has been in place. A number of complaints have been received from the general public questioning the Town Council's decision to keep them open particularly when schools were closed. The mental and physical benefits of keeping these facilities open far outweigh risk of transmission. The current message has been for parents to act more responsibly when using these facilities and ensure they and their children continue to follow the HANDS-FACE-SPACE rules.

Commissioning of the Splash Park has been carried out. It is the intention to open it to the public from 28th May onwards.

8. Sports Facilities

The winter facilities have now closed season following a 2 week extension to meet fixture backlog. Bowling, Croquet, Cricket & Tennis seasons are underway.

9. Toilets

Toilets have remained open albeit some facilities within the toilet blocks being closed to ensure social distancing can be maintained. These measures will be reviewed in conjunction with the Government COVID roadmap.

There remain infrastructure problems with the Top Quarry facilities as water pipes have been damaged and an emergency feed from the depot is susceptible to poor supply during freezing conditions.

Butcher Row Facilities whilst open continues to be the target for drug use issues.

10. Grass Cutting

The grass cutting season has now resumed with operatives out working on Town Council and Shropshire Council land. Whilst the team benefitted from a cold dry start to the growing season, May's rain together with projected rises in temperature will see the grass bolt on.

11. Fisheries

Fisheries have remained open but are restricted to Shrewsbury residents use only where they can justify the activity as part of their exercise. Preparations are underway to ensure the Coarse Fishing facilities are ready for the start of the season on 16 June. All fisheries are regularly inspected by bailiffs which work with both Environment Agency Personnel and the Police.

12. Allotments

All allotment sites remain open and are working to guidelines issued by the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners.

13. Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce

The Town Clerk and Head of Operations continue to attend the fortnightly Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce meetings and have supported the work of the partnership throughout. All town centre road closures are back in place and will continue in place until the 21st June. Discussions are underway regarding partial pedestrianisation of the High Street after the 21st June. Work continues with the development of a Local Traffic Zone for Town Walls.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Report be noted.