

**Notes of a meeting of the Covid Response Working Group  
held on Microsoft Teams**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – 6pm**

**Present**

Cllr Andy Foulsham (Chair)  
Cllr Gabby Barody (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Cheryl Briggs  
Cllr Eric de la Harpe  
Cllr Alex Greenaway  
Cllr Lorraine Oates

**In attendance**

Louise Brown            Communications, Marketing and Events Officer (CME Officer)  
Susan Whipp            Deputy Town Clerk/RFO  
Emma Rose              Mousehole Café Manager

**1. Apologies**

Ex-officio members Cllr Charlie Birks (Mayor) and Samantha Bowring (Chair F and GP/ Leader). Mr Nigel Warner (Town Clerk) **Noted.**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**3. Notes**

The Committee received and considered the notes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Cllr Gabby Barody requested that the following was added:

*“It was agreed that contact would be made with Barnes Café and Willow shake shop to ask about their availability to assist with the free school meals project.”*

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the addition of the above the notes of the meeting of the Covid Response working group held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**4. Update on news from County Council and District Council**

Cllr Gabby Barody provided an update on the Coronavirus support from the County Council; Cllr Barody had spoken to Cllr Emily Smith from Oxfordshire County Council who was able to confirm that two thirds of the funding available would be going directly to the Schools. It was then likely that the schools would issue this in the form of Vouchers to all Children who qualified for free school meals and anyone that they felt needed it but may, for whatever reason, not qualify for the free school meals system.

Cllr Barody confirmed that the final third of the funding would be available to groups and organisations.

Cllr Andy Foulsham provided an update on the Coronavirus support from the Vale of White Horse District Council; confirming he had spoken to Cllr Helen Pighills who had echoed the update above from Cllr Emily Smith.

Cllr Foulsham confirmed that the Town Council might be able to access some of the funding that wasn't going directly to schools and that contact would need to be made with the Vale of White Horse District Council to determine the best way to do this.

Cllr Lorraine Oates asked about the lack of warm coats and if we had the capacity to help with this. Cllr Andy Foulsham confirmed that his recommended course of action was to sign post individuals to existing organisations that are already set up to assist with this. Potentially in the form of leaflets etc.

A discussion followed regarding whether there was a need for more provisions of hot meals now that a scheme had been established and the funding information had been confirmed.

It was agreed that, based on research of similar schemes in other towns, there was unlikely to be much of an uptake beyond the voucher system, and any need beyond this could be adequately fulfilled by the local cafes who have offered and already have the means to accommodate such requests; such as Willows Shake Shop.

It was agreed that Cllr Gabby Barody and Cllr Andy Foulsham would meet with Sue Wiper from the Abbey Cinema to thank them for their offer of help with the free school meals project, but to explain that as a result of the funding details the need for them to provide provisions was no longer there. It was agreed that if the need arose at a later date we would revisit their offer, but it would not be required over the Christmas holidays.

Cllrs thanked Emma Rose for her willingness to be the lead member of staff on this project and confirmed that they would value her expertise if this project was revisited in the future.

## **5. Update from Abingdon Coronavirus Response group & AbiMeds**

Cllr Alex Greenaway provided members with an update on the Abingdon Coronavirus response group; confirming that since the delivery of the Town Criers there had been a slight increase, but that the demand still remained very controllable.

It was RESOLVED that the community group should be formally thanked for all their hard work at the next full Town Council meeting.

## **6. Feedback from contact with local businesses / organisations.**

The Communications, Marketing and Events officer confirmed that no new responses had been received from organisations and businesses.

Cllr Gabby Barody updated the committee on her conversations with the local supermarkets regarding Vouchers and confirmed that she had spoken to Waitrose who had offered 20 vouchers.

It was RESOLVED that these and any future vouchers that came forward would be given to Citizens Advice for distribution there.

## **7. AOB**

Cllr Gabby Barody informed the members about the Charity 'Gateway' and the work they do to provide food parcels for homeless people across the county. Cllr Barody explained they are currently providing around 100 food parcels a week and that the need was always increasing.

She suggested that some of the funds from the Covid Emergency Fund be donated to the Charity to support the work they do.

A discussion followed where members queried if this needed to go through Community Services Committee and it was confirmed that this working group had the delegated powers to make that decision without referring it to Community Services. Cllr Alex Greenaway questioned if it was possible to establish how much of the money would go specifically on help in Abingdon, but Cllr Barody felt this wasn't necessary.

It was proposed by Cllr Gabby Barody, seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates and RESOLVED that £2000 be made from the Covid Emergency fund as a contribution to The Gateway Charity.

The Communications, Marketing and Events officer made members aware of an email from Cllr Helen Pighills regarding the Vale of White Horse District Council Covid Marshalls who had been contacted regarding moving on the busker in the Market place. Cllr Pighills had confirmed that they did not have the authority to move the busker on and that this should fall to the PCSO's to carry out.

## **8. Next meeting**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December– 6pm  
(Group will meet every week at 6pm on a Monday).

The meeting rose at 7.00 pm.