

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

**Monday 18th January 2021 – 6pm**

Present

Cllr Andy Foulsham (Chair)

Cllr Gabby Barody (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Alex Greenaway

Cllr Lorraine Oates

In attendance

Louise Brown                      Communications, Marketing and Events Officer (CME Officer)

Nigel Warner                      Town Clerk

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Cheryl Briggs and Cllr Samantha Bowring (Chair F and GP/ Leader). **Noted.**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**3. Notes**

The Committee received and considered the notes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Cllr Andy Foulsham reminded members that the Community Hub, which was mentioned in point 5 of the minutes, was not a new initiative and had actually been running throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing its services as and when the demand was high.

It was **RESOLVED** that, with the addition of the above, the notes of the meeting of the Covid Response working group held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**4. Matters Arising**

None.

**5. Update from District Council**

Cllr Andy Foulsham updated the members on the Vale of White horse District Council; confirming that the winter funding had been announced and was £1.4 million for the whole of Oxfordshire. Cllr Foulsham confirmed £1 million of this had gone directly to the free school meals initiative. He suggested Citizens Advice Bureau as a first point of contact for any enquiries about it.

Cllr Foulsham also confirmed that the Vale of White horse District Council had administered six different business support schemes. Businesses could sign up at the dedicated website ([www.svbs.co.uk](http://www.svbs.co.uk)) to be kept informed of any updates.

Members felt the Council should be encouraging people to do so and it was agreed that the Communications, Marketing and Events officer would put this on the Town Council website and across the social media platforms.

Cllr Foulsham also confirmed the Covid-19 Vaccination programme was well underway across Oxfordshire with 22 different sites across the county. He confirmed that, whilst an official announcement was yet to be released, it was expected that the Kassam Stadium would become a regional vaccination centre.

Cllr Gabby Barody asked what areas this would cover and Cllr Andy Foulsham confirmed we would know more once the press release was available and he would update members at a future meeting.

Cllr Lorraine Oates asked if anyone was aware if residents would be having their second vaccination in the same location as the first vaccination, or if they might be required to go elsewhere. Members felt that, whilst they did not know this for certain, they would imagine residents will have their vaccinations in the same centre for ease of both travel and admin.

Cllr Andy Foulsham also confirmed a mobile service was operating for very vulnerable residents who could not travel to any of the centres.

## **6. Update from County Council**

Cllr Gabby Barody updated the members on the issue of Digital poverty across the school children of Abingdon. Cllr Barody confirmed that information on funding had been patchy and she still had not received clarity on what was being done locally.

## **7. Digital Poverty**

Cllr Andy Foulsham confirmed that Christs Hospital had been in touch and had kindly offered to fund any laptops required for children in Abingdon. Cllr Foulsham had also spoken to a trusted supplier already known to him regarding refurbished laptops at a good price and felt laptops could be procured for approximately £200 each.

Members thanked Cllr Foulsham for his research and efforts on this and suggested we thank Christs Hospital for such a generous offer.

It was agreed that the Communications, Marketing and Events officer would contact all Abingdon Schools to establish the need and to request the necessary letter to release the funds.

Cllr Foulsham would work with Christs hospital and his supplier to ensure this part of the process ran smoothly.

The Town Clerk asked if the Christs Hospital offer covered internet access and Mr Foulsham confirmed that it did.

Members also highlighted that a lot of internet providers had packages and schemes in place to help vulnerable school children if this was required.

Prior to the offer from Christs Hospital, members had also been made aware of an initiative by 'TrinityLearning' who were requesting residents to donate old laptops which could be refurbished for the children in need of them. Members felt this was a still a very worthwhile initiative that would help any children that might fall through the gaps and that we should advertise this initiative on the website.

The Communications, Marketing and Events officer confirmed to put this on the Town Council Website.

## **8. Update from Abingdon Coronavirus Response group**

Cllr Alex Greenaway provided members with an update on the Abingdon Coronavirus Response group; confirming that requests were still very manageable, and he did not foresee this changing.

## **9. AOB**

Cllr Gabby Barody confirmed that she had been in touch with Willow Shake Shop to establish if any School Meals had been provided over the Christmas holiday, and they had confirmed that unfortunately they had to close due to staff illness and as a result no meals were provided. No reimbursement from the Town Council would be required.

The Town Clerk made members aware that, as was the Government Policy, the nursery stall at the Monday Market was no longer able to currently trade during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lockdown. This had been communicated to the stall holder.

## **10. Next meeting**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January – 6pm

The meeting rose at 6.45 pm.