

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

Monday 25th January 2021 – 6pm

Present

Cllr Andy Foulsham (Chair)
Cllr Gabby Barody (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Charlie Birks
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)
Nigel Warner Town Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from 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 18th January 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the notes of the meeting of the Covid Response working group held on 18th 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 members on the Vale of White Horse District Council; confirming that the NHS vaccine centre at the Kassam Stadium had opened today and was operating for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week (8am – 8pm). They are looking to vaccinate 8000 people per week by week 4. Medacs Healthcare had provided some staff to assist.

The Town Clerk updated members on the request received from The Vale of White Horse District Council for staffing resource for a lateral flow testing centre in Wantage. He confirmed the only staff with availability was the Museum staff, but most of them did not have transport to get them to Wantage and worked very part time hours. The Town Clerk confirmed we were looking into it and would help were possible. He asked members if they knew of any plans to open testing centres in Abingdon as we would be able to provide more support to this.

Cllr Alex Greenaway provided members with more details about lateral flow testing and confirmed it required very regular testing to be effective, he felt it unlikely that people would travel to Wantage regularly enough and members felt a more local testing centre would be advisable to encourage residents to use this system, and to discourage leaving the local area during lockdown. Cllr Gabby Barody would contact the County Council to find out more about any plans for this.

Cllr Andy Foulsham reminded members that the Vale of White Horse District's Community Hub was supporting residents with more than emergency food and felt we should be encouraging residents to use this service.

Cllr Foulsham was awaiting confirmation if the free school meals funding covered half term and Cllr Helen Pighills would update him when she knew.

6. Update from County Council

Cllr Gabby Barody confirmed there were no updates of note this week from the County Council.

7. Digital Poverty

Cllr Andy Foulsham updated the committee on the latest steps to tackle digital poverty for the school children of Abingdon.

All schools had now been contacted regarding the funding and Grant applications were being received and sent on to Christs Hospital.

The Communications, Marketing and Events officer, and Cllr Andrew Foulsham are carrying out the necessary admin between Christs Hospital and the schools to ensure this initiative is carried out as quickly as possible.

Members asked if schools could be approached for photos of the laptops once delivered to publicise this on Social Media.

Members felt that, when lockdown eased, the Mayor should hold an event to officially thank Christ Hospital for this generous contribution.

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.

Cllr Greenaway was aware of some volunteers setting up a driving service for residents unable to drive themselves to vaccine and testing centres. This was in the early stages, but he would update the committee when he knew more. Cllr Greenaway confirmed the Covid Response group would not be doing the actual driving but would be able to pass on requests from residents requiring this service.

9. AOB

Cllr Gabby Barody raised a concern that the gate in the Market Place had been found unlocked on numerous occasions and flagged this as a security issue. The Town Clerk confirmed we would pass this to the Outside Service Manager, Mr Tim Badcock, to request that the works team keep an eye on this during their daily visits.

Cllr Gabby Barody also raised the issue of the public bins in Abingdon being too full and felt this was a health and safety issue. She felt coffee cups from local coffee shops was contributing largely to the waste and also dog waste.

The Town Clerk confirmed the difficulty with bins as there were 3 authorities within Abingdon clearing the bins, but he confirmed we would speak with the Outside Services Manager to enquire if more regular bin emptying was required for the bins under the Town Council Authority. Cllr Charlie Birks confirmed that the outside works team had already been extending their bin collections beyond the bins under our authority to assist with this issue where possible. Members felt it might be wise to contact the Coffee Shops to work with them directly on more sustainability and Cllr Barody made members aware of an initiative from Costa Coffee who were accepting old coffee cups back to dispose of in a sustainable way. It was agreed Cllr Barody would email the Communication, Marketing and Events officer with the details and this would be publicised on the website.

10. Next meeting

Monday 1st February – 6pm

The meeting rose at 6.40 pm.