

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

Monday 10th May 2021 – 6pm

Present

Cllr Andy Foulsham (Chair)
Cllr Charlie Birks
Cllr Samantha Bowring
Cllr Lorraine Oates

In attendance

Louise Brown Community Services and Events Officer
Nigel Warner Town Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Gabby Barody, Cllr Cheryl Briggs, Cllr Eric de la Harpe and Cllr Alex Greenaway

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Notes

The Committee received and considered the notes of the meeting held on 12th April 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the notes of the meeting of the Covid Response Working Group held on 12th April 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Update from Vale of White Horse District Council

Cllr Foulsham provided an update from the Vale of White Horse District Council; confirming that Covid rates are still falling, and that stage three of the lockdown release is still going ahead as planned from 17th May 2021. Signage from the Vale of White Horse District Council had been put up in play areas and the Market Square to remind residents to be cautious and maintain social distancing.

The Abingdon Leisure centre was continuing its faced return and staff were managing the flow of people well.

5. Update from County Council

Cllr Andy Foulsham confirmed that there were no significant updates from the County Council as the recent Elections had occupied a lot of their time.

Cllr Charlie Birks asked about the pods at 'The Spread Eagle' pub in Abingdon and why they had been closed.

Cllr Andy Foulsham confirmed that prior to Christmas the pods had been allowed but that changes in the government rules when reopening in April meant that any outside areas now had to have at least 50% of its sides open, meaning the pods could no longer be considered covid safe. Members sympathised with the Spread Eagle, but felt the precautions were there to protect residents from the risk of transmission.

6. Covid recovery

At the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 30th March 2021, three key objectives were identified for Covid Recovery within the town.

Members considered the logistics and next steps of these objectives:

- **Grants** – Cllr Andy Foulsham suggested a targeted approach where officers email any grant recipients from the last 2 years to ask if they had any Covid Recovery Projects planned that the Town Council might be able to assist with financially or practically.

It was **RESOLVED** that officers would email Grant recipients from the last 2 years.

- **Additional seating within the Town Centre** – Members felt that the Outside Services Manager needed to be consulted on this matter and it was **RESOLVED** that another meeting would be held on Monday 17th May at 6pm that the Outdoor Services Manager would attend so that his input could be considered.

Members discussed possible locations for new benches in Abingdon and discussed the options available if the land in question was owned by another authority.

Cllr Samantha Bowring requested that we publicise memorial benches and let residents know this was welcomed. It was **RESOLVED** that this would be added to the June edition of the Town Crier.

Cllr Samantha Bowring also suggested temporary seating (such as hay bales and logs) in order to provide quick options for people while lockdown restrictions ease and outside gatherings were still being encouraged where possible. It was agreed this could also be discussed with the Outside Service Manager at the meeting on 17th May.

It was also agreed that officers would email members for their suggestions on possible bench locations within their wards.

- **Engagement with businesses** – Members agreed officers could contact Melanie Smans from the South and Vale Business Support group to

see what they have planned to assist local businesses. Members also felt we could encourage the use of the Market place for fundraising events etc and that there were particular Town Council events coming up (such as the Jubilee) that we could involve the local businesses in.

Members felt there was potential to hold a meeting with local businesses to establish what they felt would be useful.

It was **RESOLVED** that officers would contact South and Vale Business Support first to establish what is already in place and plan from there.

7. AOB

Cllr Andy Foulsham raised an item on behalf of Cllr Gabby Barody regarding purchasing some reusable cups for the Carbon Cutters event that is taking place on 29th May.

Members agreed that this was a good initiative to support and discussed allocating a budget. Cllr Samantha Bowring felt that we should be purchasing a large amount to reduce the cost per item.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Community Services and Events officer would obtain some pricing and bring this to the meeting on Monday 17th May for consideration with the aim of agreeing an amount and ordering them that week ready for the event on 29th May.

8. Next meeting

The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 17th May 2021 – 6pm

The meeting rose at 7:00 pm