

DURSLEY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES and REPORT of the MEETING of the TOWN IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE of the Council held **on the online via the 'Zoom' meeting** platform at 6:30pm on Tuesday, 9th June 2020 for presentation to the Council on Tuesday 7th July 2020.

PRESENT

Councillors: W Thomas, P Hayes, A Sheffield, A Whitwell, M Woodward, J Rubin, J Ball (from item 3), N Grecian, L Patrick.

In Attendance: J Kay (Town Clerk), L Wellings (Deputy Town Clerk), M Airy (Gazette Reporter), B Cleere (Stroud District Council), District Councillor D Cornell and 7 traders/members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr J Burdge (Vice Chair) (personal).

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Traders present raised the following concerns and issues regarding Covid-19 and the reopening of the high street:

- Organised queuing systems in the street and space for social distancing when everything opens.
- Recognition that some shops have limited queuing space along shopfront and use outside space for goods.
- Conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and traffic along Parsonage Street.
- Prolonged parking on Parsonage street, blocking shopfronts/queuing space, and the restart date for parking enforcement.
- Social distancing within premises and one-way systems in and out where possible.
- Use of outside space to help with social distancing/customers e.g. cafes.
- Guidance on the safe reopening of customer toilets and the reopening date for public toilets.
- Signage and notices for windows regarding social distancing and customer limits (no guidance on numbers relating to footage).
- Risk Assessment templates, advice and guidance.
- Silver Street is very narrow with no passing space making it impossible to queue and social distance safely.

Councillor Ball joined the meeting.

In response, the following points were made:

- Traders were encouraged to read the Government guidance on reopening and operating.
- County Councillor Patrick confirmed that parking enforcement would be restarting and a date would be sought; a link to Trading Standards free advice and support for businesses would be shared on the traders WhatsApp group.
- The Stroud District Council website contains links to guidance and a useful checklist for

- Stroud Chamber of Trade have developed very good posters and resources that could be used by Dursley.
- Stroud District Council Environmental Health team are able to provide advice and support, they can deal with specific questions businesses may have; they do not have the capacity to visit all but they can help over the phone and via email.
- Stroud District Council have access to £106,000 from the Government's 'Reopening High Streets Safely Fund', an EU grant with funding criteria relating to public information and making temporary practical changes to the public realm. The guidance is being reviewed by the District who plan to work with towns to identify issues that can be funded so that the fund is spent fairly and wisely across the district.
- Councillor Ackroyd volunteered to assist with queuing systems and marshalling when shops reopened.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Town Improvements Committee held on Tuesday 7th January 2020, having been circulated among the members were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

The Chair had no matters to report.

6. TO DISCUSS ANY RELEVANT MATTERS RAISED IN AGENDA ITEM 3 &
7. TO DISCUSS ANY SUPPORT THE TOWN COUNCIL CAN OFFER BUSINESSES AND TRADERS WITH THE PAHSED RE-OPENING OF BUSINESS AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

(Item 6 and 7 have been recorded together as no distinction was made between the two during the discussion which flowed.)

Signage

It was noted that the Town Council had ordered 18 social distancing signs which would be placed along Parsonage Street, Silver Street and the Market Place, on street furniture and windows, as a visual reminder to people visiting the town, delivery is expected before the 15th June 2020.

Councillor Hayes offered to assist with sign installation if required.

Queuing & Traffic

The issues raised under item 3 in relation to traffic along Parsonage Street and queuing outside shops were discussed.

The measures taken in Yate shopping centre were discussed as an example.

Councillor Ackroyd volunteered to help with queue management.

It was noted that traffic management/changes on Parsonage Street and Silver Street would be an issue for Gloucestershire County Council Highways department, this included those relating to access, the use of barriers, temporary markings, one way systems and the

It was resolved that the Town Clerk would speak to Gloucestershire County Council Highways to find out what could be easily implemented in the town to create a safe high street in terms of social distancing in the different areas and acceptable road markings.

Communication

Members discussed public awareness and confidence in the high street.

It was suggested that the Town Council promote the town reopening and being 'open for business' via social media, the website and local news outlets.

It was noted that public toilets would need to be opened to coincide with the reopening of shops.

IT WAS RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders so that members of the public present could make further representations.

Members were informed that the opening of public toilets would be important for businesses like the Bank Café who would find their customer toilet under pressure if there was no other option for shoppers/visitors to the town.

District Councillor Cornell confirmed that the District Council planned to reopen public toilets on 15th June 2020, plans were being made and there would be restrictions due to cleaning regimes and social distancing guidance. Mr Cleere confirmed this and the importance of public toilets to town centres.

The use of public space for business use e.g. outside shops/ cafes, where it was safe to do so, to help with social distancing, was raised.

District Councillor Cornell highlighted that both the County and District were open to this and that Councillors should support temporary changes for town centres.

It was suggested that Parsonage Street is marked out with tape at 2m distance points, traffic and cyclists are stopped to allow people to walk freely in the middle of the street, signage should also be placed outside shops detailing how many people can be accommodated inside premises and people are encouraged to wear masks.

The Chair thanked all for the further comments and referred back to the earlier resolution that the Town Clerk would speak to Gloucestershire County Council Highways to find out what could be easily implemented in the town to create a safe high street in terms of social distancing in the different areas and acceptable road markings.

IT WAS RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

8. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR FUNDING TO STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THE REOPENING HIGH STREET SAFETY FUND

It was suggested that the Town Council could apply for funds related to the 'open for business' public communications, signage and notices, road markings, tape and barriers and, following advice from Highways, a small temporary traffic scheme for Silver Street, to

It was noted that the Gazette would be running a story on the reopening of the high street, a news story would also be published on the Town Council website ready for Monday morning.

It was suggested that a suitable 'Dursley Open for Business' banner could be purchased and placed on the Town Hall and the Pet Shop as part of the public communications.

It was agreed that measures in the town should not be too complicated and that they should not put people off visiting.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Town Council make a request for funding, following advice from Highways, to include all items that meet the funding criteria including for public communications (incl. banners), signage and notices, any road markings (incl. spray, tape and barriers) and following advice from Highways, a small temporary traffic scheme for Silver Street, to widen the pavement.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:30pm.

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Chairman

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Date