

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 21st September 2020

Title: Civic Events

Contact Officer: Communications and Events Officer - Polly Inness

Background

The purpose of this report is to update councillors with the latest information about events planned for the next few months.

Current Situation

All events have, until now, been postponed. But it is proposed that we plan for some of them to be able to happen in different ways but avoiding attracting crowds/public gatherings.

Citizen of the Year

Having consulted with the Compliance Officer and Venue Manager it is possible to hold a very small-scale event involving a maximum of 6 people, in line with new regulations to award the Citizen of the Year winners for 2019. Once it is safe to hold a proper Civic Reception they will be invited to a proper celebration event.

It is usual, this time of year to launch the nominations for the Citizen of the Year Awards – however given that Council wish to recognise COVID-19 Hero's Members are asked to consider whether the usual COYA are paused for 2020. [It is within the gift of the Mayor deciding who the COYA are.]

Car Free Day

This year the Town Council is participating by means of a social Media campaign and a poster. The poster will be circulated at the meeting.

Messages will focus on the practicalities of leaving your car at home such as:

- where all the cycle racks are in Witney
- all the bus routes that come through the town and links to timetables
- popular walks
- accessible walks
- how to report issues on cycle paths and pavements on FIX MY STREET
- a link to the cyclestreets map for journey planning

Remembrance Day

This is very much in flux this year and official updates from the Royal British Legion are still awaited but it still looks absolutely certain that they will not parade or take part in wreath laying for safety reasons.

A verbal update will be given at the meeting that will cover

- What the town council proposes in terms of getting wreaths on the memorial.
- How to involve different groups
- Video presentation of appropriate content for the day such as standard lowering, the town's memorials, the commonwealth war graves, some words from the clergy at St Marys. The Kohima and Exhortation from two RBL representatives, Music from the Town Band. The Last Post, 2 mins silence and Reveille. The bugler and The Mace bearer. Photographs of youth artwork on this year's RBL theme of 'Coming Home'

Officers were approaching Witney TV to assist with this but not certain that they are available to help at this time. The Town Clerk has suggested that the budget normally allocated to Remembrance Day be used to pay for a professionally produced video of the contents above that will serve both as a suitable piece to place on our website and also as archived material that demonstrates some of the adaptations having to be made around events that cannot go ahead as normal.

It should be noted that the Road Closure Orders had to be applied for earlier in the year – which Officers have done covering the usual route of the parade – however in light of the most recent restrictions the Town Clerk would suggest that the application is withdrawn.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Members will be aware from other Officer reports of the measures which have to be taken around assuring safety of the public due to COVID-19, and it is important that the Council isn't seen to be encouraging public gatherings at events which contravene current government guidance.

Financial implications

The cost of making a professional video for Remembrance Day

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider

1. Whether the Council should pause the Citizen of the Year Awards for 2020 in light of the COVID-19 Hero Awards;
2. whether it will make the investment in the production of a professionally produced video to commemorate this years' Service of Remembrance;
3. that the road closure order for Remembrance Sunday be withdrawn.