

COUNCIL COMMITTEE

Date: 7th of December 2020

Title: Covid-19 Update

Contact Officer: Compliance and Environment Officer – Angus Whitburn

Background

On the 2nd of December West Oxford entered Tier 2 of local restrictions. Officers have now made all necessary adjustments for the new tier restrictions; they have been outlined in this report.

Current Situation

Office

All working in the Town Hall offices are encouraged to work at home when possible. The town hall has been made Covid safe with foot operated door openers being installed on every pull door, one-way system, sanitisation points and the re location of some officers. The Town Hall will remain closed to members of the public for the duration of the three tier restrictions, ending the earliest of February the 3rd 2021. During this period, the Gallery Room in the Corn Exchange can be used for small meetings.

Public Halls

Both Burwell and the Corn Exchange were made covid safe when restriction were lifted back in September. All groups were able to return once they had provided a covid-19 risk assessment and if required a floor plan detailing social distancing. The Corn Exchange has been operating as a public hall, office space and coffee shop/bar when permitted. This has been a more challenging situation than that at Burwell as the facility is operating as a multi-use facility.

Monkey Music at Burwell continued through the November lockdown due to the exception of support groups being allowed to continue.

Outdoor sport

Over the summer officers received many requests to use Winey Town Council land for exercise classes, group running sessions and activity clubs. In line with government restriction and guidance we have allowed any group providing they supply the correct paperwork to have access to Town Council land. Most smaller exercise classes and activities clubs couldn't provide the requested paperwork, so they did not commence activities on Town Council land. An outdoor gathering of over 6 persons must be for professional business reasons so without PLI it was in doubt to Officers the business purposes of these requested gatherings.

Play parks, MUGAs, skate park and public toilets

All play parks remained open during the lockdown with enhanced sanitisation carried out daily by caretakers. Going forward in tier two the busier play areas with non-porous surfaces will be sanitised daily (King Georges, Burwell and the Leys). This has been assessed based on the man-hours we have available and the risk posed at each playground. New clearer simplified signage emphasising user to sanitising their hands, social distance and to avoid the play area during busier times has been created. This signage has been printed on correx plastic to survive the winter period and on into next year.

The MUGAs at King Georges and Burwell along with the Skate park at the Leys were all closed during lockdown but have now all reopened. Public toilets have been kept open since late summer with a new cleaning contractor sanitising them twice daily in line with what the district council are doing.

Cemeteries

Witney Town Council precautions for the interment process have been largely unchanged from the first lockdown. The maximum attendance to funerals is 30 that is communicated by the undertakers to mourners. The chapel at Tower Hill is now Covid safe and available for ceremonies with a maximum capacity of 16 people not including staff.

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.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report.