

Safe Re-opening of the High Street

Summary – This report asks Members to consider recommendations following a meeting with High Street retailers and businesses and receipt of information from Wiltshire Council Highways engineers.

1. Background

Marlborough Town Council is eligible to apply for European funding under the Re-opening of the High Street Safely Scheme administered by Wiltshire Council. The purpose of this is to ensure the safety of shoppers and pedestrians as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted and try help to kick start business and the local economy. It is clear that High Street businesses have suffered with some closing permanently, redundancies made and some others struggling to continue to run a viably.

A set of FAQs about the scheme is at **Appendix 1**

Two meetings have been held with representatives of the businesses in the High Street. Notes of the most recent meeting (24 June 2020) are at **Appendix 2**

The Town Clerk will give a verbal update to follow up to the 24 June meeting

2. Widening Pavements

A major part of the scheme is widening pavements to improve safety measures and the flow of pedestrians as they move along the High Street and queue for entry into shops and other businesses.

Wiltshire Council Highways engineers have been looking at the possibilities for widening High Street pavements in Marlborough. They are sympathetic to the request for chairs and tables for outdoor service for pubs, restaurants and cafes and would try to accommodate them (licences will apply). Two plans have been supplied:

Plan A – showing the current arrangements in terms of existing parking, bus stops, taxi ranks, railings, etc. – **Appendix 3**

Plan B – showing all current car parking arrangements removed on both the north and south sides of the High Street (*there are 38 spaces on the north side and 43 spaces on the south side*) – **Appendix 4**

No change is planned for car parking

Comments are now invited on where parking spaces should be removed or kept. Engineers emphasise that this is a new model and is flexible and can be changed after installation. Bollards would be used to define the new pavement as had been used in Malmesbury (where feedback has been positive) rather than the orange barriers used in Devizes.



Malmesbury High St

3. Parking

As discussed at the last Planning Committee meeting, it is clear that some businesses (but not all) feel that losing the free 30 minutes parking spaces on the sides of the High Street is a concern. The Council looked at some options:

First hour free parking (an option being taken forward by some other towns) -

The price of a free first hour across all WC-owned car parks in the town would cost £337,816 annually (some 47% of the Town Council's annual precept!). However, the price for funding the first hour free in just one car park for two months in the best value car park (George Lane with 160+ spaces) would be £13,300. This would though take 2-3 weeks to set up.

A parking fee redemption scheme - This is where car park tickets could be redeemed in participating shops. This scheme is in operation in Devizes and Melksham and is a good promotional tool for businesses and generally encourages more visitors to the town. There is not a huge take up rate in terms of shoppers actually claiming back the charge. Downsides are that it is complex to administer and takes time to set up and more difficult in terms of telephone payments, but may be worth considering for a long term solution.

Allocation of free parking spaces. The allocation of free spaces given to the Town Council is 1,196 spaces to be used by 1 November. These could be spread out over certain days and in certain car parks or along the middle of the High Street. Saturdays would be a good option though, of course, some of the High Street is given over to the market that day. Members may feel that parking should not start until 10am to avoid shop staff taking too many spaces. We understand that this allocation may not be available to us next year and the current allocation cannot be carried over.

Parking on the Common. This remained an option though feedback from some councillors was that this would not be a preferred option, taking away recreational space during lockdown and beyond. It would need a traffic management plan in place.

4. Re-opening of the High Street Safely Scheme

Any remaining funds can be used for hand sanitiser stations along the High Street, signage and pavement transfers for distancing measures. Wiltshire Council's Recovery team will be in contact with us throughout the scheme and beyond.

5. Financial Implications

The measures would be funded under the above scheme apart from the funding of a first free hour parking at a cost of £13,300 which would be a charge to the Town Council.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations following meetings between Town Councillors and High Street retailers are as follows:

- **Use of allocation of free parking spaces** - This was agreed as a good option to help with the parking issue. The question remained though, should these free spaces be spread over 6 x Saturdays in George Lane or 3 x Saturdays in two car parks, or along the centre of the High Street
- **First hour free parking** - Agreed that a request to fund 2 months of this parking (£13,300) for George Lane car park should be submitted to Full Council
- **WC asking contributions** – It was suggested that WC be approached for funding for the free first hours parking

ITEM 5

- **Trialing pavement extension South West of High Street** – Agreement that this would be useful
- **Looking at pinch points along the High Street to include in pavement extension**– Agreement that certain pinch points areas (i.e. close to banks) should be incorporated into a response to Highways.
- **Pavement extensions as requested by the hospitality sector to enable outside service at pubs, restaurants and cafes** –Tourism Officer to investigate this with all in High Street

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that Members are led by the above recommendations from meetings with High Street businesses and consider:

- i) Where pavement widening should be implemented on the High Street
- ii) What measures should be put in place to help ease the loss of free car parking spaces
- iii) What additional funding should be requested under the scheme (i.e. for hand sanitizer stations, signage, etc.)

Town Clerk

25 June 2020

Returning to the New Normal

Summary – This report asks Members to note a verbal update on any new guidance issued by central government on the lifting of restrictions around the Coronavirus pandemic and consider any implications or actions for the Town Council

1. Background

As members are aware, as lockdown restrictions have been lifted, decisions have been made quickly to implement changes necessary to ensure that any open space, buildings, or facility is COVID safe before re-opening. The public have been regularly updated on this via press releases and posts on our website and social media channels. The most recent is at **Appendix 1**.

2. Recent Decisions

At the A&OS meeting of 22 June it was agreed that:

Priory Gardens is re-opened but that, in the short term and being mindful that vulnerable people live in the Priory itself, access is restricted via Figgins Lane only. Appropriate notices will need to be erected at the Figgins Lane gate making clear that there is no access to the High Street.

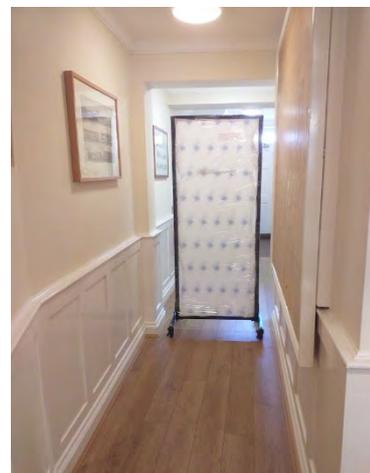
This decision should be reviewed again following further lifting of restrictions by the government when consideration can be given to the opening of the glass tunnel linking the Aster owned buildings at the entrance to the gardens from the High Street.”

At the informal *Returning to the new normal* meeting on 18 June recommendations for decision were:

- a) That decisions on whether Town Council-led events should go ahead be made 3 months ahead of the scheduled date
- b) That once the office is COVID safe then the office can start to open for an initial 2 hours per day.
- c) That staff should continue to work towards preparing all buildings for re-opening and being COVID safe in readiness for lifting of restrictions.

3. Update

Buildings are being prepared and deep cleans booked over the next 2 weeks and equipment ordered or already in place. Staff are following guidelines and working from home where possible and at work in a safe environment if they cannot work from home. Most staff are now returning to work following staggered start/finish times (Grounds Team) or on a rota basis (office). Caretakers are working in the Town Hall and MC&YC. During lockdown services have been maintained.



Screen for Reception

4. Latest Announcements

The Prime Minister announced a number of measures that will impact on the running of the Town Council on Tuesday, 23 June 2020. Details about implementation and guidance have not yet been received at the time of writing this report. However, the announcements do indicate the reducing of social distancing from 2m to 1m (that will mean more people can be accommodated in our venues than first envisaged), re-opening of play areas, holding of various events including weddings all of which will affect the Town Council and its staff.

It is hoped that more information will be available for the Full Council meeting on 29 June so that Councillors are able to make decisions to move ahead with returning to the new normal. There is a particular demand around bookings for the Town Hall (notably weddings) and staff would like to move forward and start to confirm these as soon as possible)

Town Clerk's Recommendations

The Town Clerk recommends that Members agree the recommendations listed at para.2 a) – c) and, depending on the verbal update about government guidance (hopefully received in the next few days) agree that, where possible, buildings and facilities are re-opened from Monday, 6 July 2020 as long as all are COVID compliant.

Town Clerk

25 June 2020

Ear Marked Reserves

Summary – In line with the Town Council’s Financial Regulations, this report asks Members to consider a recommendation from the Finance & Policy Committee of 16 March (Min.528/19) to approve Ear Marked Reserves for 2020/21

1. Background

Ear Marked Reserves are monies in reserves that are set aside for a stated purpose. These are a means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities and ongoing projects. Funds should be used for the item for which they have been set aside or be transferred in whole or in part, to the General Reserve if it is found they are no longer required.

2. Financial Regulations

Unspent provisions in the revenue budget cannot be carried forward to a subsequent year unless placed in an ear marked reserve. Members should periodically judge whether earmarked reserves are still required.

3. Finance & Policy Committee - The resolution from the F&P meeting of 16 March (Min. 528/19) was:

RESOLVED: that

- i) all existing earmarked reserves remain for 2020/21 with the exception of those for the *Civil War Re-enactment* and *Events* where balances should be vired into the ear marked reserve for the Workshop
- ii) if balances allow, ear mark reserves should be increased for lines for the Workshop, Town Hall Restoration/Maintenance and Cemetery Extension and new ear mark reserves created for Staff Training and Development and a Coronavirus Emergency Fund. Allocations to be delegated to the Town Clerk/RFO in consultation with the Chairman of Finance & Policy
- iii) final figures for ear marked reserves should be submitted to Full Council for approval

Following the above guidance and the balances remaining at the closedown of accounts for 2019/20, the Ear Marked Reserves for 2020/21 are as follows:

Ear Marked Reserves 2020/21	
Town Hall Works	£170,000
Open Spaces Maintenance	£ 9,197
CCTV Fund	£ 1,918
Heritage Fund	£ 17,000
Civic Fund	£ 5,000
New Cemetery Extension	£ 32,000
Neighbourhood Plan	£ 2,458
Skatepark Lighting/Youth Council	£ 4,460
Equipment for MCYC	£ 3,384
Informal Car Park	£ 10,000
Sale of Chantry Lane	£ 12,902
Bye-Election/Referendum	£ 9,000
Devolution of Services	£ 46,000
Workshop	£ 116,589
Jubilee Field	£ 24,343
MCYC Donations	£ 200
COVID Emergency Fund	£ 14,500
Staff Training & Development	£ 2,500
CIL (Unallocated)	£ 27,132
Total	£508,583

4. Points to Note

The allocations are as at the start of the FY and do not show current balances as at June 2020

Town Clerk's Recommendations:

The Town Clerk recommends that Members agree the Ear Marked Reserves for 2020/21.

Town Clerk

24 June 2020

Update on Skatepark Floodlighting Proposals

Summary - To note the outcome of the Acoustic Survey and Skatepark Floodlighting Consultation and agree the next steps

Background

At a meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee on 3rd February 2020, Members noted an update report by the Assistant Town Clerk and the next steps in the process which would include an acoustic survey and a public consultation exercise.

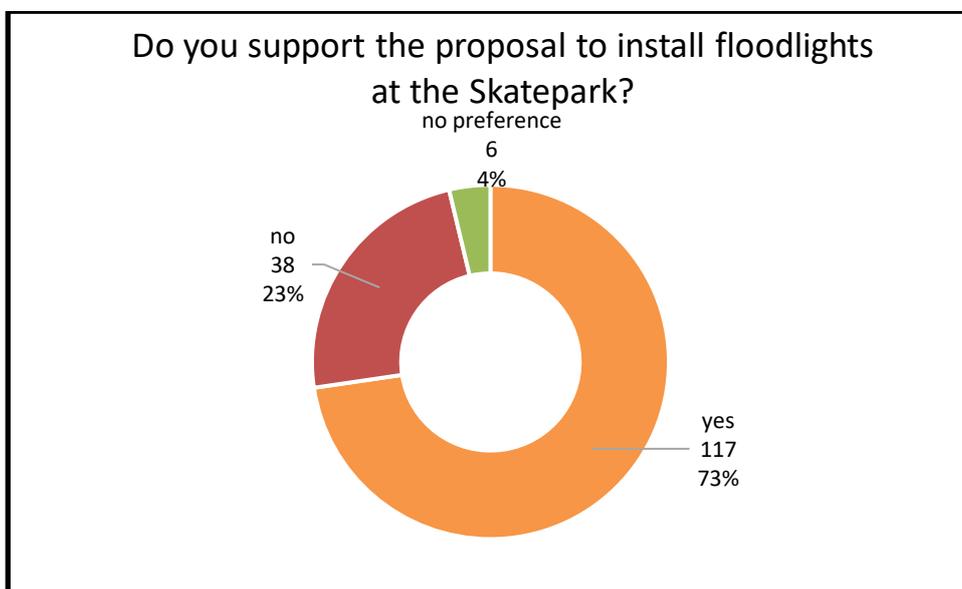


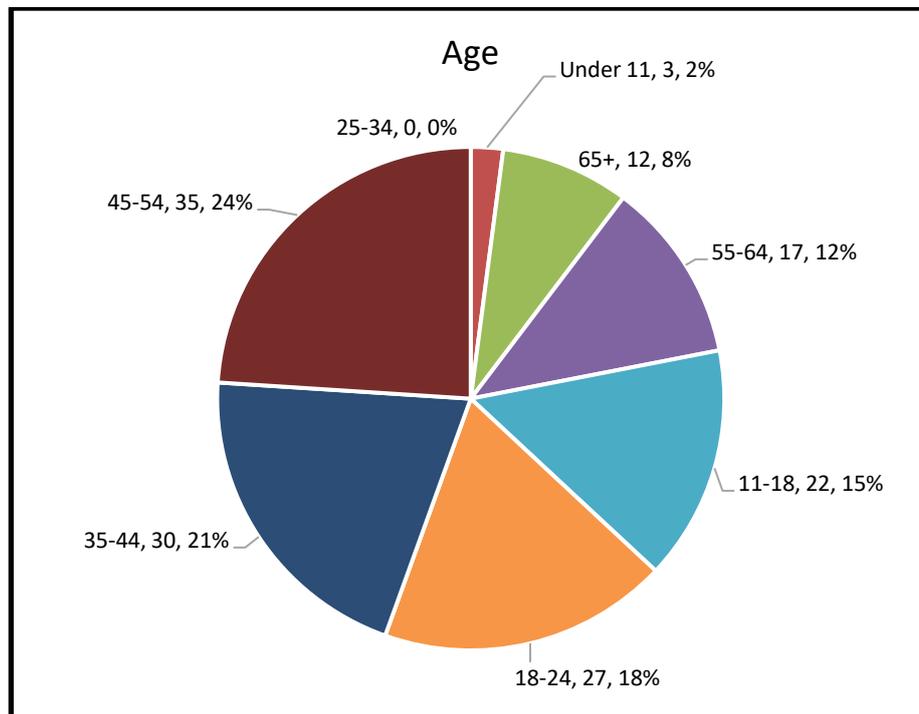
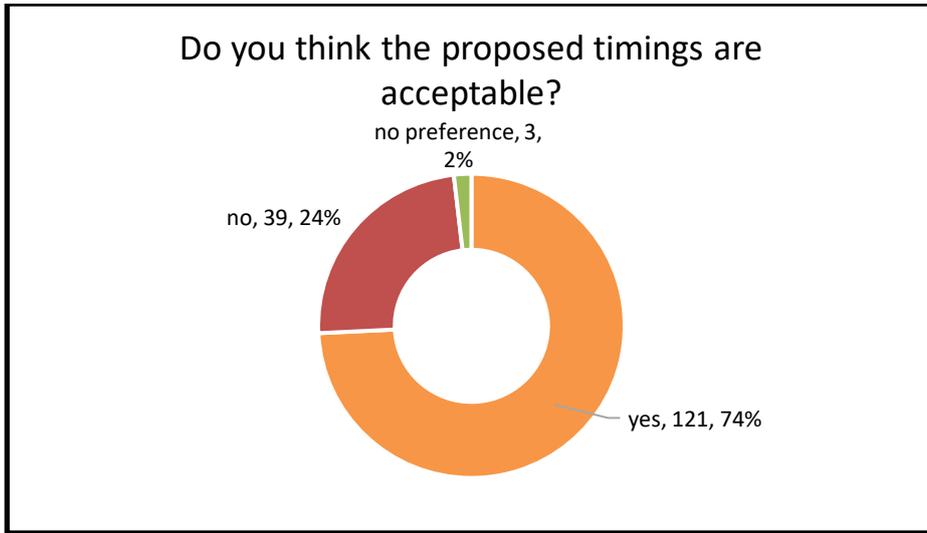
Current Situation

An acoustic survey was carried out in early March to determine the noise levels associated with the skatepark, to address concerns flagged by Wiltshire Council during the pre-application planning stage. The full report is available should members wish to view it, however, the report did not raise any serious issues in terms of increased/unacceptable noise levels. Measurements were taken from 6 locations around the skatepark during periods of inactivity and activity. Locations shown in **Appendix 1**.

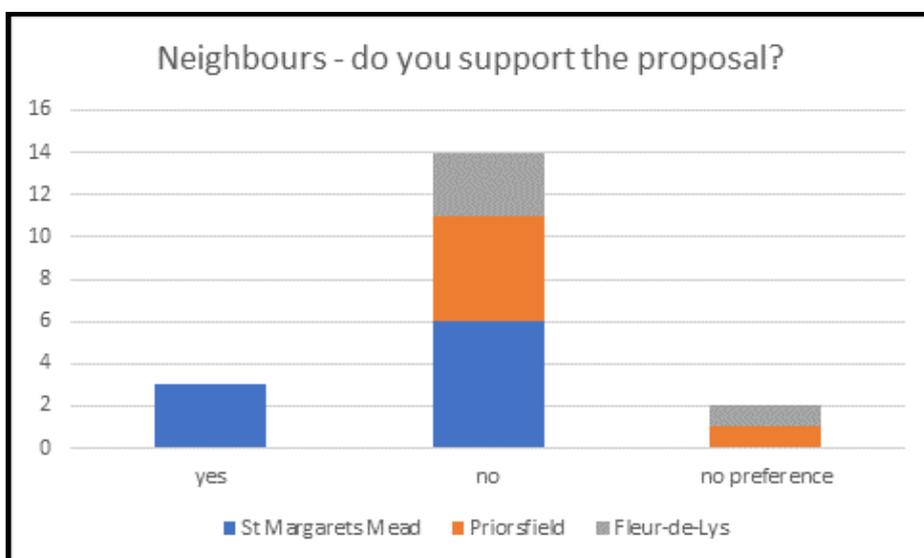
A 'face to face' public consultation at the MC&YC was planned for late March, however due to COVID 19 and the subsequent restrictions, this event had to be cancelled. An online (and paper) consultation was produced, and this ran from 13th May until 12th June 2020. A copy of the paper version of this questionnaire is attached at **Appendix 2**. This consultation was posted on our website and Facebook page (and was subsequently shared on Marlborough Notice Board). Marlborough News Online published the details, links were shared with Marlborough St Mary's and St John's Academy and other organisations/groups within the town. Paper copies of the consultation were also hand delivered to residents, whose properties adjoin the Skatepark, to include St Margaret's Mead and Priorsfield.

A total of 119 online responses were submitted and a further 42 paper/email/text responses received. Full comments can be viewed at **Appendix 3**. A summary of the main question responses is shown below. Please note that whilst these results demonstrate support of the proposals, members are requested to consider the comments made, many of which share similar concerns in relation to existing anti-social behaviour in that area.





The statistics have been filtered (using the postcodes supplied) to highlight the responses received from residents who live adjacent to the skatepark, and therefore most affected by the proposals.



Recommendation

Members are requested to note the results of the Acoustic Survey and Public Consultation report and agree the next steps.

Author – Assistant Town Clerk

23rd June 2020

Outside Bodies

Summary – This report asks Members to consider that the 2019/20 representational roles continue into 2020/21 and it also gives an opportunity for them to update on external organisations

1. Background

Each year, Councillors are appointed to external organisations and invited to give updates at Full Town Council meetings. At the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 11 May 2020, Members agreed to extend the membership of committees and working parties into 2020/21 with an option of review. Members may now like to consider doing the same with representational roles to outside bodies. These are listed in the table below.

The only changes relate to roles historically held by the Town Mayor (Market Towns Forum, Marlborough Area Board, Christmas Lights Switch-on, Sports Forum, Great West Way,) which move from Cllr Hall to Cllr Cooper. Other roles allocated to the former Mayor (Cllr Hall) are CATG and the Neighbourhood Plan and can remain with him rather than move to the new Mayor. Cllr Wilson will want to note his role with the Sports Forum and Allotment Association. Cllr Forbes has left so Cllr Hillier (who was co-opted following his departure) may like to consider taking up the seat on the Christmas Lights Committee.

Outside Body	2019/20 Representative
Marlborough and District Chamber of Commerce	Cllrs. A Kirk Wilson and G Loosmore
Market Towns Forum	The Town Mayor and Cllrs G Loosmore and N Barrett-Morton
Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)	Cllr S Price Reserve: Cllr B Castle
The Richmond Fellowship	Cllr B Castle
Marlborough Area Board	The Town Mayor and Cllr P Cairns
Community Area Transport Group	The Town Mayor Reserve: Cllr P Cairns
Marlborough and District Link Scheme	Cllr B Castle
Marlborough Fire Station Liaison	Cllrs P Dow and L Farrell
Emergency Flooding/Snow Wardens	Cllr P Cairns Reserve: Cllr A Kirk Wilson
Transition Marlborough	Cllrs P Cairns and G Loosmore
2293 Air Training Corps	The Town Mayor and Cllr N Barrett-Morton
Kennet Community Transport	Cllrs A Kirk Wilson and D Heath
Sports Forum	The Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Local Youth Network	Cllr S Price Reserve: Cllr L Farrell
Christmas Lights Switch-on Event	The Town Mayor and Cllrs H Forbes and A Wilson
Neighbourhood Plan	The Town Mayor and Cllr P Cairns
Great West Way	The Town Mayor, Cllrs L Farrell and D Heath
Lansdowne Monument	Cllrs D Heath and P Cairns
Stonebridge Management Committee	Cllrs B Castle, P Cairns and D Heath
Allotment Association	The Deputy Mayor and Cllr L Farrell
Schools Liaison Group	Cllr L. Farrell
Marlborough Youth Council	Cllr L. Farrell

Town Clerk's Recommendation – The Town Clerk recommends that Members consider taking forward the 2019/20 roles into 2020/21 with only changes as set out for the Mayor, former Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cllr Hillier – if, of course, all are willing to take on the roles. Members could also offer any updates on these external organisations at the meeting.

Town Clerk – 25 June 2020