



PRESS RELEASE

MARLBOROUGH MOP FAIRS TO BE DEFERRED FOR 2020. PRESENTATION TO TAKE PLACE TO MR. WILLIAM WHITELEGG

In consultation with Marlborough Town Council, the Vice-Chairman of the Western Section of the Showmen's Guild has come to the decision that it must endorse the view of Public Health Wiltshire that the Mop Fairs should not proceed this year in view of the current public health crisis. This is a regrettable though inevitable decision, but the Showmen's Guild's primary concern has always been public well-being and it is appropriate to defer the holding of the two Marlborough Mop Fairs for 2020. These would have taken place on Saturday, 10 October and Saturday, 17 October.

'We had put in place necessary measures to enable our fairs to go ahead, including social distancing, disinfecting, the identification of appropriate density levels and special training', commented the Marlborough Mops Steward, William Whitelegg. 'The one thing we cannot control is the number of people entering the High Street and, since public safety is the number one concern amongst Showmen, we have taken the decision to defer the Mop Fairs for this year. To defer an institution that has been part of the fabric of the town for centuries has not been an easy decision. We know many people will be disappointed and showmen have suffered a severe loss of livelihood in the current crisis, but we know this is the right decision.'

The Marlborough Mops are Statute Fairs, governed under the Fairs and Markets Act of 1847 which confers an absolute right for the fairs to occur annually in Marlborough High Street – a right that can only be nullified by an Act of Parliament. To maintain the tradition of the statute, the Mayor and Town Crier will proclaim the Mop on Saturday, 10 October.

After the traditional opening, a plaque will be unveiled at the Town Hall, commemorating Mr. Whitelegg's 70-year association with the Marlborough Mop Fairs and he will be presented with a Marlborough 'Lifetime Achievement Award' in honour of this association and the support the Showmen's Guild has given to local charities over many years.

'It's particularly sad for me that this great tradition has to be deferred', said Marlborough Town Mayor, Cllr. Mark Cooper. 'The Mop Opening is one of the highlights of the Mayoral year. At least we will have the opportunity to honour Mr Whitelegg's great contribution to the life of the town and, in so doing, renew our warm relations with the Showmen's Guild.'

For more information contact:

Mrs Shelley Parker, Town Clerk at townclerk@marlborough-tc.gov.uk
Marlborough Town Council, 5, High Street, Marlborough, SN8 1AA
Tel – 01672 512487 Email - townclerk@marlborough-tc.gov.uk
www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk

or

Mrs Jan Richardson, Showmen's Guild, Western Section, 1 Broad Lane, Yate, Bristol, BS37 7LD
Tel - 01454 228890 Email – jan.richardson@showmensguild.co.uk
www.showmensguild.co.uk/sections/western