

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT REPORT
12th July 2021**

1. Town Hall

The Town Hall & Events Manager continues to manage the Works Department with the General Manager whilst managing the Town Hall and Butchers' Hall as well as the Market and Events Officers (in conjunction with the Market Reeve).

In line with the easing of Government restrictions pertaining to COVID19 and the national lockdown, the Town Hall remains on course to re open 1st August 2021 (subject to staff resource and public safety). The Town Hall and Events Manager is currently investigating the feasibility of hosting bar led functions which have been identified as high risk type bookings as well as researching and implementing the various measures required for the Town Hall to be able to re open safely for both hirers as well as staff. Part of this has included the work required to host the Town Council Meetings in the main hall from May onwards. This process will also include a review of our venue capacity with the intention to reduce the figures for certain activities re: maximum capacity to ensure that events can be managed more safely. In circumstances where existing hirers feel that the reduction in capacity impairs the viability of their event full refunds will be available.

The Town Hall continues to receive interest from prospective hirers and we have taken 14 new bookings since May which include weekly Zumba & Dance classes, bar led functions, Fairs, and a theatre show. We have received five cancellations over the period August 2021 to May 2022 due to a variety of reasons including COVID19 concerns & changes in the hirers respective business models. In comparison to the same period in 2019 (August – December) to date we are down on the total number of bookings confirmed by approximately 25%.

The Market & Events team currently has 4 positions vacant (two DO's and two MEA's) of which we have gone to market again to advertise for in local and regional mediums. As you will be aware this is a significant risk area, regarding challenges in recruitment (especially the hospitality industry), around being able to deliver 'business as usual' post the reopening of the Town Hall. The Town Hall & Events Manager has identified the Town Hall events from September onwards which are potentially at risk if the vacant positions are not able to be filled.

Our First Aid at Work training had expired and so the Town Hall and Events Manager has organised the three-day training course for 8 members of staff across the organisation to undertake in the coming weeks. Other core training requirements are currently being investigated for staff.

Repair work to the roof which has localised water leaks above the Mayors Parlor, Office and North entrance have been rescheduled for completion by the last quarter of 2021, works will include redecoration to these areas once repairs have been made.

The General Manager is sourcing 3 quotes for the replacement (on a like for like basis) of the Town Hall external doors.

The Works Department continue to inspect and clear the Town Hall gutters and downpipes on a regular basis to ensure clear flow of rainwater and recently were able to insert access panels to two downpipes which due to their location are notoriously difficult to clear causing excess water run off on the masonry.

Redecoration works to the entrance / reception area is ongoing with an anticipated finish date by the end of July.

Investigations and remedial works to the north entrance stair lift and side ground floor door are ongoing and the significant improvements from the five year fixed installation inspection have been re scheduled to July/August 2021.

The undercounter fridge in the Commercial Kitchen failed the recent service and is beyond economical repair and so a replacement has been ordered. The Town Hall Bar panic alarm previously commissioned however postponed due to pandemic / Town Hall closure has been installed and the Town Hall & Events Manager continues to organise suppliers / contracts etc. in preparation for re opening, which includes a recent meeting with our wine supplier, Sovereign Wines (formally Stevenson Wines) to ensure our wine list is current.

Butchers' Hall

Butchers' Hall continues to attract footfall and interest from perspective hirers, with four new bookings taken since the end of May which includes dates in 2022. The Town Hall & Events Manager is currently in discussions with a local artist reference a two-day art exhibition in August which showcases portraits of NHS key workers from the first national lockdown in 2020.

In regard to the ongoing water ingress issues, the principal contractor is currently on site undertaking the necessary repair work which is anticipated to be completed by the end of July.

The Moor Otter Arts Trail continues to be a success and talking point amongst visitors and the local community.

The Town Hall and Events Manager has appointed a new window cleaner for the Town Hall, Butchers' Hall and Pannier Market windows (internal and external) which will be completed over a three-week period when the venues are at their quietest to reduce on the impact to visitors / trading. The windows were last cleaned in 2019.

4. Works Department

The cemetery continues to receive regular interments, with on average two per week however to the best of our knowledge, to date no deaths have been COVID19 related. A meeting was recently held with the friends of the Green Burial Meadow volunteer group whereby the schedule of works for the ongoing wild flower program was discussed and agreed, which includes clearing of the ferns and landscaping of the brambles at the lower section. In August the meadow is scheduled to have its annual scything.

The Meadows is receiving a spike in interest for bookings for August which includes a community church event, the Tavistock Lions Dog Show, an inflatable funfair, Tavistock Athletics club, U3A and a litter picking event as well as regular bookings such as the weekly mother and baby classes.

The General Manager and Town Hall and Events Manager continue to hold weekly team meetings with the Works Department.

The Town Hall & Events Manager arranged for the Council summer bunting to be erected around the market perimeter to support the tourist season as well as the town bunting which with the assistance of the Works Depot, Tavistock Lions has agreed can remain in situ until September.

Since the last report various works to Market Road and Duke Street properties has been completed and include damp proofing and redecoration in preparation for new tenants as well as pest control. In addition, the tree in Plymouth Road Cemetery identified as having extensive fungi has now been safely removed by an external contractor with the assistance of the Town Council Works Department.

The external works to the failing chimney on 15 Duke Street has been outsourced to a specialised contractor with an anticipated start date to be confirmed.

Looking ahead the schedule of works for the Works Department include hedge trimming at Bannawell Play Park, Plymouth Road Cemetery and Plymouth Road, play park repairs, tree works as well as commitment to our ongoing grass cutting programme.

TTC have yet to receive a response to their submitted proposal reference the Welcome Back fund.

The Town Council continues to water/feed the Tavistock BID hanging baskets on a weekly / twice weekly basis (depending on the weather) with the remaining locations now having their baskets erected.

Two of the three categories (Sargent Cup & BID) in which the Town Council are part of in respect of Britain in Bloom were judged over the course of two days' week commencing 5th July. On the day feedback from both judges was extremely positive, with high praise for what the Town Council, Volunteers and Tavistock BID have been able to achieve over the last 12 -18months during the pandemic. The Town Hall &

Events Manager would like to thank the Works Depot and all the Volunteers involved for their continued hard work in creating and maintaining such areas of diversity and beauty throughout the town. The "In Your Neighbourhood" judging is scheduled for Thursday 15th July.

The Town Hall & Events Manager is pleased to confirm the abandoned vehicles outside Plymouth Road Cemetery and Pixon Lane Open Spaces have now been removed by West Devon Borough Council.

Whilst there has been a noticeable reduction in the amount of alcohol litter left in the meadows over recent weeks, unfortunately, the anti social behaviour in the Meadows reported on in previous reports continues to be a significant issue for the Council and local community. The Town Council were recently invited to a meeting with local stakeholders by West Devon to discuss issues in relation to ASB and next steps over the summer period. A follow up meeting has been arranged for Friday 16th July. Reference re introducing the PSPO, the Town Council are awaiting a response from West Devon.

Goose Fair

The Operational meeting held in May went well with key stakeholders including the Showmen's Guild showing support for the event to take place this year.

As reported on in the aforementioned minutes, the Town Hall & Events Manager is working on plans for this year's event to taking into account the latest Government announcements pertaining to step 4 of the COVID recovery plan. The management team will continue to monitor the messaging re: public health and government guidance, recognising that the viability of Goose fair 2021 happening similar to its current format is low if such aspects as social distancing are expected to remain for large scale events, due to the challenging infrastructure specific to multiple entrance points, park and ride pinch points etc.

To date and in summary, all exhibitors have been written to reference Goose Fair 2021 to explain exhibitor expectations going forward (drug paraphernalia ban, reduction in single use plastics etc.), a new logo has been commissioned as part of the re branding exercise, the majority of services, open spaces have been booked and a on-site meeting has been held with our new West Devon Borough Council representative following the forthcoming retirement of Honey Fosket, of whom the Town Council would like to thank for all her years of support in relation to partnership working.

Reference the Town Council's park and ride sites, Yelverton and Gulworthy have confirmed their support again this year however we are currently investigating potential new sites to replace Harford Bridge which is no longer available. In addition to this Tamar Lions have advised they are no longer in a position to support the Yelverton Park and Ride service and so after consultation Tavistock Lions have agreed to pick this up in addition to the two other sites they manage. The Town Council would like to thank both Harford Bridge Holiday Park and Tamar Lions for their support over the years in regards to providing such valuable services to Goose Fair.

REBECCA ROWE

TOWN HALL AND EVENTS MANAGER

JULY 2021