

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT REPORT
14th January 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 view of the negative impact of the ongoing COVID19 crisis and following careful consideration and discussion, the Town Hall closure has been extended until the end of July 2021, therefore there are no new bookings to be reported for this period.

Looking ahead to post July 2021 the Town Hall has received interest from existing annual hirers to book their functions and events and we have secured rescheduled wedding bookings for the 2022 wedding season. To date we have refunded approximately £5,000 (deposits and full balances) to hirers in respect of their cancelled booking (this figure does include a small percentage of Butchers' Hall bookings) from March 2020.

The third national lockdown which came into effect Tuesday 5th January 2021 resulted in the closure of the Pannier Market and Butchers' Hall. Whilst in the previous two national lockdowns a decision was made to furlough two of the eligible staff from the market and events department, due to the amount of maintenance, housekeeping and administrative work currently available within the Town Hall and Market complex a decision has been made to not furlough staff however this decision will be reviewed at the end of January.

One of the Market and Events Assistants resigned at the start of the month and so currently we have One Duty Officer and two Market and Event Assistants on the establishment, with the administrative resource on maternity leave. The resignation supported our decision to not furlough the eligible staff members at this time.

Recruitment started for the third available MEA position in December however due to the National Lockdown the job application deadline has been extended as has the interview process.

The Market and Events staffing resource remains primarily focused on supporting the essential market activities on Bedford Square which has been offered to those traders who are eligible as well as maintaining the town hall and market complex and providing much needed administrative support to management with flexibility to provide support to the Works Department when required.

Repair work to the roof which has localised water leaks above the Mayors Parlor, Office and North entrance have been scheduled for completion by end of March 2021.

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 no further blockages in other areas identified as having issues during long periods of poor weather conditions.

The Town Hall Boiler has now been repaired and a heating schedule has been implemented to gradually heat the building following the long period of which the Town Hall has not received any source of heat which unfortunately has caused further issues to the internal fabric of the building. Investigations are on going to identify whether the cause of failure might be linked to unrelated works in the vicinity.

The Town Hall contract with the supplier who provides the bar gas cylinders will not be renewed until the Town Hall is in a position to re open in order to generate a cost saving.

2. Butchers' Hall

The Butchers' Hall Christmas Markets which marked their third year in December yet again proved a success in terms of trader participation and reinforced our understanding that Butchers' Hall has developed a strong reputation within the market industry as a popular trading venue with applications to attend being received from a diverse range of artisan traders from throughout the South West. Despite not advertising the themed markets due to the current pandemic and public health concerns visitor numbers were positive and we were able to operate a safe market activity.

Butchers' Hall will now remain closed due to the national lockdown with the offer of an East End store being made available to Tavistock BID should they wish to re commence the Click and Collect Service.

Butchers' Hall has received further bookings for 2021 and interest from existing and perspective hirers from April onwards. The Tavistock Arts Market has been pushed back due to the national lockdown and anticipated future implications and so the regular themed market will commence (subject to the pandemic) 1st April and will run once a month as will the other Butchers' Hall themed markets from April onwards of which the schedule of dates will be released in the coming weeks.

Processes and procedures continue to be reviewed in line with the latest Government Guidance pertaining to COVID19 safety measures.

It would appear the water ingress in Butchers' Hall has stopped since the plastic sheeting was installed to the louvers towards the end of last year. Please see the General Managers report for further information.

3. Staffing

Over the festive period we allowed for an additional casual worker resource to alleviate the anticipated pressures, this spend fell within budget parameters and was only required during peak times for short periods.

4. Works Department

The 2020 Christmas Lights and the Tavistock Lions Trees of Light received an outpour of positive feedback with the display being well received by the town. Work is now underway to take the Christmas lights down and complete a full audit for management to review and prepare for the 2021 display. The Tavistock Lions Trees of Light have been removed from the Town Hall and discussions are planned with the Lions in regards to arrangements for this year following some operational concerns raised in 2020.

Over the festive period Officers did not report an increase in vandalism in the Meadows / Skate park although litter and dog waste was reported as high.

In addition to the removal of the Christmas lights the Works Department have continued to work in Plymouth Road Cemetery, maintaining the hedges and clearing the spoil heap in the compound to create more space and make it more aesthetically pleasing.

The cemetery continues to receive regular interments, however to the best of our knowledge no deaths have been COVID19.

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

Looking ahead projects for the Works Department include full maintenance of Dolvin Road cemetery which requires approximately three weeks' worth of work.

The EDRF Reopening of the High Street Safely grant which was awarded to Tavistock Town Council and Tavistock BID in December provided funds for a High Street Ambassador which we recruited for the anticipated busy period in December. The role was well received by the high street businesses as well as market traders and the general public however we did learn the footfall in the town was overall steady with peak times being limited to Saturday trading and so looking ahead if we were to use this scheme again it would be prudent to review the set period. This funding is valid until March however due to the national lockdown and lack of interest in applications for the Ambassador role The Town Hall and Events Manager will arrange a follow up meeting with BID to discuss alternative options for the funding such as more hand sanitiser units, noting the funding criteria is particularly strict.

**REBECCA ROWE
TOWN HALL AND EVENTS MANAGER
JANUARY 2021**