

Report No 1: MTC's COVID 19 Response Action Plan and Associated Actions

The COVID 19 Situation is unprecedented in modern history.

It is proposed that while the COVID 19 situation continues MTC's objectives are to:

- (i) Keep delivering our operations and services as well as possible, with an emphasis, where required, on maintaining essential services
- (ii) Support the creation of the best possible assistance for vulnerable and at risk members of our community, and
- (iii) Support efforts being undertaken to protect our local economy and in the preparation for a return to 'business as usual'.

This Report details our proposed actions based on information available as at the 23rd March 2020.

Part A. MTC Operations and Services – As circulated. This may be updated from time to time.

It is agreed the Town Clerk may incur costs implementing remote working and communications.

Part B. Community Support

It is noted that:

1. There is a wide community willingness to participate in supporting vulnerable and at risk members of our community during the COVID 19 situation. This is evidenced by the emergence of a number of individuals and individuals in small groups offering to volunteer to provide practical support to vulnerable and at risk members of the community, for example prescription collecting, shopping, food preparation, befriending and other support, as well as lots of informal neighbourly, friendship based and street by street arrangements being put in place.
2. The efforts of volunteers reaching out beyond informal neighbourly, friendship based and street by street arrangements are more likely to succeed and be sustainable if the volunteer effort can be co-ordinated to some degree, and volunteers themselves have access to support, back up and reasonable direction. This includes volunteers and individuals requesting the help of volunteers having access to clear safety guidelines and individuals requesting the support of volunteers previously unknown to them are volunteering under a co-ordinated scheme.
3. The COVID 19 situation is fast moving, will be of an unknown duration (but almost certainly for a minimum of twelve weeks, and possibly many months more), and the needs of the community and individuals within it have yet to be fully understood or assessed and will be likely to change over time.
4. There is likely to be benefit for government and other agencies to have easy access to the help of volunteers on the ground and for efforts to be reasonably co-ordinated where possible. This may include the storage and distribution of essential supplies and suitably organised meeting spaces.
5. The direct response to the emergency is in the hands of other parts of government (nationally and Wiltshire Council), the NHS and social services the emergency services. A key role for MTC is to support them. We have limited access to resources we can directly control and organise and we have to be realistic about else what we might take on.

Taking account of the above and following internal discussion with MTC officers and councillors and consultation with local community groups, schools and other organisations Malmesbury Town Council, it is proposed:

1. MTC forms a Partnership with HEALS¹ to co-ordinate and lead a sustainable community response and support for vulnerable individuals and families where it is helpful and beneficial to do so.
2. It is recognised the scope and operation of the Partnership must comply with relevant national and local government guidelines and may be reduced or increased as the COVID 19 situation develops.
3. The Partnership will run for three months until the 30th June 2020 or for the duration of the COVID 19 situation if longer, unless agreed otherwise.
4. The Partnership will be managed on a day to day basis by the Town Clerk and the Manager of Heals. They will report on a regular basis to the Deputy Mayor (to be reviewed May 2020) and Chair of HEALS. Together this group will be the Supervision Team. The Supervision Team may make operational decisions to ensure the partnership delivers the best possible outcomes in the keeping with MTC's objectives and such decisions may be delegated to the Managers as reasonably required.
5. Substitutes for these managers and other members of the Supervision Team may be made from time to time. MTC substitute managers may be the Deputy Town Clerk and Town Hall Administrator. Substitutes for the Deputy Mayor and Chair of HEALS may, in the first instance, be a chair of any Town Council Committee or other Trustee of HEALS respectively.
6. Summaries of the Partnership's activity will be provided to MTC Full Council members each two weeks, or otherwise as agreed.
7. MTC will make available to the Partnership without charge the use of all appropriate space, facilities and services in the Town Hall.
8. The Town Clerk may allocate MTC staff members to provide direct assistance to the work of the Partnership subject to the overall achievement of MTC objectives.
9. MTC will allocate up to £5,000 to HEALS for direct costs incurred delivering the work of the partnership in the Malmesbury area during the period 20th March to 30th June 2020. This funding may be spent by HEALS on additional direct staff costs and the expenses and other costs incurred operating the partnership as agreed by the Supervision Team or as delegated by the Supervision Team to the Managers. This funding will be transferred to HEALS by 30th March 2020. HEALS will follow normal receipt based accounting record keeping as far as reasonably possible. Any funds not spent will be returned to MTC. MTC will allocate this funding first from remaining community grant funds, then from any other underspent current year budget allocations and otherwise from reserves.
10. Additional and/or longer term funding needs for the Partnership will be assessed by the Supervision Team and activities put in place, (which, on MTC's behalf, may be by other councillors or officers) to seek other appropriate sources of funding, including but not limited to central government, Wiltshire Council, grants and donations. Identified requirements and actions will be reported as required.

¹ HEALS offers Help, Empowerment and Local Support for people in Malmesbury and surrounding villages who may be in poverty, vulnerable or disadvantaged. HEALS enables individuals and families to make a positive change through access to local services.

HEALS strengths as a partner include: Established and trusted local provider of support services to vulnerable and at risk members of our community, established links (doctors/ schools etc), established Volunteer vetting and approval protocols, established data handling and management protocols, strong knowledge of at risk groups, experienced manager and volunteer team, Trustees fully supportive, registered charity, based in the Town Hall.

11. Neighbouring parishes with residents in the geographical area served by HEALS may link to the Partnership. As at the 23rd March it is expected that St Paul Malmesbury Without will link. Parishes that link will be expected to contribute pro-rata by resident headcount to the additional spend being allocated by MTC and will be required to adhere to the operational terms included in this proposal.
12. This partnership will be announced publically on Wednesday 24th March 2020.
13. The Partnership arrangements noted above may be updated from time to time.

Part C: The Local Economy

It is proposed that MTC continues to work through its existing Partnership with Malmesbury Town Team to support the series of practical actions being undertaken by Malmesbury Town Team to support the local business community. This includes hosting a call with this group on the 25th March.

Further reports and proposals will be made as appropriate.

Financial Implications of these proposals

1. If the Partnership Agreement with HEALS is agreed, MTC will make an allocation of £5,000 to HEALS.
2. MTC is likely to incur some controlled additional facility and service costs supporting this Partnership and/ or other activities linked to the COVID 19 situation. Material increases will be reported.
3. If the COVID 19 situation changes or is prolonged beyond the 30th June MTC is likely to incur further costs.
4. It must also be noted that during the COVID 19 situation MTC income will be reduced through reduced room letting, event sales, TIC trading and rental income and this effect will exceed any reductions in cost or increases in other revenues. This impact will largely occur in the 2020/21 financial year and will become more significant if the COVID 19 situation is prolonged beyond June 30th 2020.
5. It is proposed that the possible implications of the COVID 19 situation for MTC's finances and operations is produced and reported to Council in due course.
6. In the meantime, none of the proposals in this report has substantial financial implications affecting the long term financial integrity of MTC or the achievement of other agreed projects or plans being undertaken by MTC.

Campbell Ritchie
Deputy Mayor

23 March 2020