



Coronavirus (Covid-19) Position Statement – 24th July 2020

The Town Council has been regularly monitoring the Coronavirus situation both locally and nationally. Following the most recent announcements by Government, setting out the exit strategy out of lockdown, the Town Council has reviewed the measures it has put in place, as follows:

TOWN COUNCIL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The most recent Government announcement has advised that members of the public may exercise as often as they wish in outside spaces, including the use of outside recreational facilities such as play areas and outside gyms. The Town Council urges members of the public to do this responsibly, complying with guidance on social distancing:

The current Government advice is: 'We can all help control the virus if we all stay alert. This means you must:

- stay at home as much as possible
- limit contact with other people
- keep your distance from people not in your household (2 metres apart where possible)
- wash your hands regularly and thoroughly, [in particular when you have been outside your home]
- Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.
- continue to meet outdoors in groups of no more than six people from different households, following social distancing guidelines'

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

Allotments: These have remained open throughout and members have been urged to follow the National Allotment Society Covid-19 Emergency measures. Signage has been put at the entrances of the allotments informing allotment holders that the lock should be cleaned before and after each use and asking that all allotment holders adhere to social distancing g rules.

Apple Day 2020: The Town Council has taken the difficult decision to **CANCEL** this event

Big Lunch 2021: As you will be aware, Big Lunch 2020 had to be cancelled due to Coronavirus, however, we are hopeful that the 2021 event will go ahead and the Flypast has been booked!

Coronavirus Support Group: The Town Council administers the database for this group and will continue to do so whilst necessary. We have also supported the community by delivering emergency parcels.

Farmers Market: We are immensely pleased to announce that Stony Stratford Farmers Market returned from Friday 29th May 2020, 9am-1pm in the Market Square and will continue to trade in accordance with social distancing regulations. To ensure your safety there will be a one-way system in place and social distancing rules will apply: please keep at least 2m apart.

Landscape Maintenance: Serco have asked us to bear with them during these uncertain times. They are trying to fulfil the contract to the best of their ability under the circumstances.

Library and Meeting Room Hire: Milton Keynes Council have not yet re-opened libraries. Also, due to the impending work on the 5-7 Church Street building (which houses the Town Council Offices), it is highly unlikely that Stony Stratford Library will re-open this year. Before Coronavirus, MKC Libraries Service were going to provide a mobile library service, however this is not an option at present due to the inability to socially distance on the vehicle. There may be alternatives in the future for receiving library services, such as 'click and collect' Library books.

Litter and Dog bins: There has been a huge increase in litter across the parish during the pandemic. This has led to increased reporting to MKC (most Litter Bins are their responsibility). Our contractors have been working very hard to collect all the additional rubbish from the SSTC owned litter bins. If the Litter or dog bins are full, please take your rubbish home with you or find another litter bin that isn't full. Please don't just leave it next to the bin. In recent years national guidance on the disposal of dog waste has changed and it is no longer necessary to separate dog waste from other types of household waste. Dog waste can be disposed of in any available litter bin or your black household bin.

Play Schemes:

Sports sessions: due to Coronavirus MK Dons are not running their normal programme of free summer sports sessions in the parishes, therefore the Town Council is not able to provide free sports sessions this year.

Play sessions: Stony Stratford Town Council is very pleased to announce that the summer play schemes run by Milton Keynes Play Association will take place this summer. They will be hosted by the Town Council at Wolverton Road Recreational Ground and Spider Park, Fullers Slade (dates below). Due to Government guidelines on social distancing and hygiene management each play day will be divided into 25-minute sessions. These sessions will take place in sectioned off activity areas. Each activity area has space for up to six children per session. These 25-minute sessions will run throughout the day. Places on these sessions must be pre-booked with MKPA. There will be handwashing facilities and hand sanitizer available and all equipment will be fully sanitized in-between 25-minute sessions.

Booking is via the MKPA website: <https://www.mkpa.co.uk/open-access-play/>

Dates: Wolverton Road Rec: Fridays: 31st July, 14th August and 28th August.

Spider Park: Fridays: 7th August and 21st August.

Times: 10.30am – 4.30pm (last slot 4pm)

Public Conveniences (Silver Street): As these are cleaned automatically after each use and cleaned on a regular basis under the contract with Healthmatic, it was deemed a minimal risk to keep them open. This was very much welcomed by the key workers using them.

Town Crier Newsletter: We had to cancel the full Summer issue due to Covid-19 and as many of the organisations who regularly contribute were not meeting or running events. However, we produced a 2-page A4 Town Council Annual Review as usual. This was publicised on social media, noticeboards and copies were available from Odell's. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like a copy.

Youth clubs (funded by SSTC and held at York House Centre): York House are cautiously optimistic that, barring any local outbreaks of coronavirus, these will be up and running again in September. Please check the website for details and look out for information on Social Media

TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES:

Overall, the Town Council finances will not be adversely affected. This is explained in more detail below:

INCOME: SSTC is more fortunate than many Parish and Town councils as it does not heavily rely on income to run services and only owns two buildings (5-7 Church Street and the Public Conveniences, Silver Street). Also, the budgeted income for 5-7 Church Street was deliberately set at minimal levels due to closure of the building for scheduled refurbishment works, it is therefore unaffected. In addition, the cancelled events have resulted in both a loss in income balanced out by reduction in expenditure.

Table 1: Summary of the estimated losses in income

| Income Budgets affected by Covid-19 | | Actual Year to date | Current Annual Budget | YE Forecast due to Covid-19 | Comments |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1015 | Floral Features | 0 | 385 | -385 | Stony Business Association doing smaller scheme therefore no water contribution necessary |
| 1040 | Farmers Market Income | 115 | 1250 | -100 | FM not held in March or April, smaller market in May |
| 1060 | Sponsorship - Stony in Bloom (SIB) | 0 | 1700 | -1700 | SiB have not sought Sponsorship from businesses this year due to Covid-19 |
| 1066 | Big Lunch Income | 0 | 500 | -500 | Big Lunch cancelled |
| 1067 | Apple Day Income | 0 | 500 | -500 | SSTC have made the difficult to decision to cancel this event. |
| Total Income across all budget lines | | 173682 | 296998 | -3185 | Estimated reduction in income |

Expenditure: It is estimated that there will be a **REDUCTION** in expenditure of c£20K. Resulting in a net expenditure reduction of c£19K. This is indirectly/directly due to Coronavirus, with the exception of the estimated overspend on Toilets Maintenance (due to NDR) and the slight estimated underspend on salaries (subject to national salary increases).

Table 2: Summary of the impact on the expenditure budgets

| Expenditure Budgets affected by Covid-19 | | Actual Year to date | Current Annual Budget | Estimated YE Forecast due to Covid-19 | Comments |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 4000 | Salaries | 17502 | 81697 | -4973 | Salary budget included additional hours for TC and new member of Staff (recruitment delayed by 4 months due to Covid-19) but did not include additional SCP backdated (now included the YE forecast). |
| 4001 | Employers NI etc | 5315 | 17000 | 4262 | Amend budget, overall forecast underspend of £711 over 4000 and 4001 |
| 4025 | Room Hire | 20 | 250 | -100 | Meetings held via teleconferencing, conservative estimate as awaiting Govt guidance regarding meetings Sept onwards. |
| 4045 | Training | 0 | 1500 | -800 | Many training courses cancelled due to Covid-19 |
| 4150 | Newsletter/ Publishing | 0 | 7300 | -1600 | Estimate as Summer TC 2 sided AR only and not delivered to each household. Format undergoing review. |
| 4160 | Elected Members Allowances | 2124 | 5841 | -1062 | no elections due to Covid-19 and replacing co-opted member with co-opted member not eligible for EMA |
| 4200 | Toilets Maintenance | 5187 | 18000 | 2708 | <i>Due to new contract and continuing to be charged Business Rate</i> |
| 4251 | Litter Bins | 98 | 700 | 1000 | Estimate due to additional rubbish indirectly due to Covid-19 restrictions with greater numbers of people using recreation facilities due to furlough, no school, vast reduction in foreign holidays |
| 4266 | Crafting for Change | 0 | 1700 | -1700 | unlikely to go ahead this year due to Covid-19 (many of the participants are in vulnerable groups) and impending closure of building due to redevelopment. Possibility once restrictions lifted of paying for it to be run in an alternative location |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---|
| 4401 | Junior Youth Club YH | 0 | 6800 | -2267 | YHC hopeful of restarting in Sept 20 |
| 4402 | Senior Youth Club | 0 | 4400 | -1467 | YHC hopeful of restarting in Sept 20 |
| 4406 | Big Lunch | 0 | 1500 | -1500 | Big Lunch cancelled |
| 4415 | Floral Features | 425 | 8400 | -6800 | FF20 Summer reduced scheme due to Covid-19. Winter scheme possibly still the same. |
| 4416 | SIB - Sponsorship Costs | 0 | 30 | -30 | No sponsorship due to Covid-19 |
| 4419 | Apple Day | 0 | 1500 | -1500 | SSTC have made the difficult to decision to cancel this event. |
| 4428 | Play Sessions | 0 | 6427 | -3000 | Estimate, still not sure any summer sessions going ahead as MKC not allowing use of their land for events. Possibility of using Parks Trust land is being investigated. |
| 4450 | Grants | 725 | 7100 | -1,000 | Estimate dependent on organisations being able to run events. |
| 4460 | Civic Initiatives | (5,000) | 10412 | -3000 | WGTC not currently doing training on Foamstream or Streetsweeper due to Covid-19 |
| Total Overhead across all budget lines | | 41677 | 310249 | -22829 | Estimated underspend on Expenditure Budget |
| | | | | -19644 | Net underspend |

General Reserve: As you can see from Table 3, the General Reserve will benefit from an uplift, estimate to be £6394 as opposed to the reduction of £13,250 that was budgeted for.

Table 3: Summary of the impact on the General Reserve

| | |
|--|----------------|
| General Reserve as at YE2020 | 78,087 |
| Use of Reserves (as per budget) | -13,250 |
| Estimated Net underspend | 19644 |
| Estimated YE Reserves | 84,481 |
| Estimated Increase to the General Reserve | £6394 |

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Following the introduction of new legislation (the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the Town Council is holding all meetings virtually using software that enables members of the press and public to attend. Details of any meetings are posted on the website.

TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

The Town Council Offices were closed to members of the public from 20th March 2020 in accordance with Government guidance, this has not changed. The Government guidance continues to be that Staff should continue to work from home if possible and the building remains closed. Staff continue to work from home with full access to Council e-mails and communication. This decision was taken as a precautionary measure to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 (the Coronavirus), particularly to those more vulnerable in our society. Should you wish to contact the Town Council, please do so by email or telephone. We do hope that you understand the reasons behind these temporary measures. If you urgently need to see a member of the Council staff in person, please put a request in writing. Your request will be considered in the light of the current Government guidance.

TOWN COUNCIL PROJECTS

Refurbishment of 5-7 Church Street: This is continuing. The specification is almost ready and the tender is due to be sent out on Friday 24th July. Companies will have four weeks to submit their quotes and the work is scheduled to start in September (subject to costs). The building will be closed until February 2021. Please look out for updates on the website and social media.

Refurbishment of the Public Conveniences (Silver Street): We are delighted that this is going ahead despite the current situation. The experienced contractors, Healthmatic have fully risk-assessed the project and aim to start the work on site, 28th July 2020. Although the toilets will need to be closed, it is hoped there will be a Portaloo nearby for public use. Healthmatic have agreed to provide a sanitiser unit on the outside of the newly refurbished toilets for users to sanitise their hands prior to entering. They will also be providing pavement markings to ensure users can socially distance if queuing.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Town Council will continue to communicate with the community via social media. The Town Council website, email and by telephone. In general, the Town Council will be following Government guidelines on limiting social contact and in trying to prevent a second wave (or local outbreak) of the virus. All measures above are therefore subject to change as deemed necessary.

The Town Council will help to share, where possible, information necessary or helpful to the community. Please see our dedicated Coronavirus pages <http://www.stonystratford.gov.uk/community/coronavirus-information-and-support>.

**All at Stony Stratford Town Council thank you for your
patience and support during this time.**

Walk your rubbish home

Key workers are facing risks and pressure due to Covid-19. If public bins are full then please walk your rubbish home.



Support our key workers.

Please help them by taking your rubbish home with you.

