

Malmesbury Town Council

Report 2: To update on the operation and consider proposals on the future of the Covid 19 related Malmesbury Town Council and Heals Partnership in the context of the latest information available.

1. Situation:

1. The Malmesbury Town Council and Heals Partnership was agreed by Council in March 2020 to provide support to the local community in response to the COVID 19 emergency. Originally set to last until the end of June 2020 it was extended in June to run until the end of September 2020.

2. Malmesbury Town Council has contributed totalling £8,000 to directly support an increase an expansion of management resource to cope with increased demands for Heals services, to contribute to other increased costs being experienced by Heals and to support Heals as it organised in particular the ready meals delivery service and IT support.

3. A key part of the Partnership was the establishment of the Joint Management Team comprising the Mayor (who chaired the Team) and Town Clerk representing Malmesbury Town Council, and the Chair and General Manager of Heals, representing Heals. This team was joined by Sherry Tolson, who led the organisation of the Helpline based service. It met every day during the set-up phase and the peak of the lockdown. Other Councillors were directly involved in service provision, training and communication, notably Cllrs Power, Doody and D'Arcy. Support was also given by Margaret Lamb.

4. The Partnership has benefited from significant support from across the local business community. This includes the Co-Ops support for Sherry's involvement and service contributions from the Virtual Business Centre, Waitrose, Calcot Manor, the Co-Op, the Red Bull and Ateca IT.

5. The Partnership has delivered significant achievements. These include:

1. 100 volunteers registered and undertaking activities. The volunteers received weekly communications (shared with Councillors and Community Groups) and have each received a thank you.
2. A helpline operating seven days a week from late March to early September. Approaching 900 calls answered and progressed.
3. Services provided from within a robust framework of safeguarding, supervision of delivery and appropriate escalation.
4. Over 4,300 free ready meals delivered to those most in need across our community.
5. Hundreds of prescriptions delivered, including a managed prescription services for supported housing units in and near to Malmesbury.
6. Over 40 computers and broadband access supplied into the homes of children with no IT access.
7. A shopping service created with the Co-Op ensuring access to shopping supplies for residents not able to access online shopping services.
8. Regular co-ordination calls with community groups across Malmesbury and other service providers.
9. The reworking of the MTC website into a trusted COVID 19 communication hub.
10. The raising of over £20,000 for management by Heals through a Welfare Appeal.

6. The demand for the support provided by volunteers has reduced as lockdown ended and services have become available again. With schools also reopening from early September it has become possible to end the free meals service from the end of August and the helpline from 4th September.

7. The Partnership Joint Management Team Group have reviewed the current situation concluded that:

- (i) The current Partnership arrangement does not need to formally continue beyond the end of September.
- (ii) The Partnership arrangement has worked as intended and delivered significant benefits for our community.
- (iii) The demand for individual support from Heals as a consequence of the effects of COVID 19 is increasing and support should be given by Malmesbury Town Council where possible, for additional fund raising for Heals.
- (iv) If required by the progress of the COVID 19 emergency the Partnership should be re-introduced.

2. Proposal

Council is asked to agree the following proposals:

- (i) To note the above situation report.
- (ii) To support a Civic 'thank you' event at the Town Hall for volunteers and businesses who have supported the Partnership, when this is possible.
- (iii) That the Partnership is formally concluded, as previously agreed, with effect from the end of September.
- (iv) That the Partnership may be restarted if the progress of the COVID 19 emergency so warrants.
- (v) That Council will support further Heals COVID 19 fund raising through endorsement and publicity as appropriate.

3. Financial Implications

Holding a Civic 'thank you' event will be a cost contained within the Civic Events budget. Most likely the event will be held in 2021-22.

Campbell Ritchie

21st September 2020

Malmesbury Town Council

Report 3: To update on the operation of the Covid 19 related High Street Safety Scheme and associated matters introduced in June 2020 and to consider proposals for any developments, including parking arrangements at Station Yard, the Old Bell and Cross Hayes, in the context of the latest information available and the guidance and support being offered by Wiltshire Council and HM government.

1. Situation:

1. The current High Street Safety Scheme was agreed with Wiltshire Council and implemented ahead of the re-opening of High Street activities in mid June 2020.
2. The Highways work was paid for by Wiltshire Council with funds allocated by the Northern Area Board.
3. Malmesbury Town Council set a budget of £10,000 to be spent in support of the High Street safety measures and supporting local businesses.
4. The plans implemented by Wiltshire Council represented just part of the proposals put forward by Malmesbury Town Council. Excluded were parking proposals covering Cross Hayes, Station Yard and by the Old Bell.
5. The Safety Scheme, notably the widening of pavements to enable pedestrians to socially distance in accordance with government guidelines by removing on street parking has received some strong adverse comment on social media with concerns that it would adversely affect the economic performance of the High Street, but there has been very little direct correspondence with the Town Council and only one letter specifically making this case (and some associated points) from a resident. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor met with this resident and a second resident; this discussion is continuing.

Overall, the consensus view in the community appears to be that the Town Council has acted reasonably and proportionately in the plans it submitted to Wiltshire Council and in accepting the Phase 1 installation offered and implemented by Wiltshire Council.

6. No case has been made from any source which could lead to a reasonable conclusion the Safety Measures introduced in June are not in accordance with government guidelines. The latest public safety guidance received from Wiltshire Council maintains support for the measures that have been taken are in Appendix 1.

The latest edition of the government high street guidelines can be found in the document: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19/download-this-guidance>

7. The effect of the COVID 19 emergency has been challenging for local businesses, and, of course, some types of businesses have been affected more than others. Dialogue with local businesses has been maintained by the Malmesbury Town Team and Malmesbury Town Council High Street Task Force and directly by councillors. There is no obvious evidence which supports a view that in overall terms Malmesbury High Street is performing less well than other comparable high streets.
8. However, we are now at a point where the current safety installation is failing through the passage of time and a lack of maintenance by Wiltshire Council Highways. It is also clear that missing Phase 2 elements of our original proposals should be implemented as far as possible and as quickly as possible.

9. All efforts to engage in substantive discussion with Wiltshire Council over the last eight weeks have failed. On Friday 18th September the Mayor wrote a letter of Concern and a Request for a Next Steps Plan to the Leader and the Chief Executive of Wiltshire Council. Attachment 2. In parallel the Town Clerk is seeking action from relevant officers. All these efforts are being supported by our Wiltshire Councillor.
10. The aim of the discussions with Wiltshire Council is to bring a Phase 2 proposal to Council for consideration.

This would include an agreed plan, with allocated funding, for the replacement of the current installation with a more robust installation capable of being sustained for a minimum of 9 months, likely consisting of:

- a. Fit for purpose bollards
 - b. A number of suitable planters. (Planters are a recognised appearance improving and scheme softening development supported by Highways and Wiltshire Council and are recommended by Malmesbury Town Team).
 - c. More clearly marked loading bays. (This has been agreed in principle with Highways).
 - d. The introduction of 6 short time (20 or 30 minute) on street parking places in agreed safe spaces on the High Street. (These have been identified and agreed in principle with Highways).
 - e. The implementation of agreed additional free on street parking places in Station Yard and outside the Old Bell. (These have been identified and agreed in principle with Highways).
 - f. Parking charge arrangements in the Cross Hayes (principally the use of 'free' spaces in the run up to Christmas and the introduction of 20 to 30 free one hour parking spaces from January 2021, including costs and responsibilities for revenue maintenance).
 - g. A defined future maintenance plan, with clear responsibilities and agreed resourcing for each element.
11. This proposal would address most of the concerns with the current installation and be sustainable for months to come. In particular it would:
- a. Maintain the safety of pedestrians by maintaining their ability to socially distance in Malmesbury High Street.
 - b. Improve the appearance of the High Street.
 - c. Implement 6 pop in 20 minute parking spaces in the High Street – (outside George Vets, Hyams and Lloyds chemist). This would be a net increase net parking spaces by 18 in the High Street itself (6 x 20 minutes = 18 equivalent 1 hour spaces) and help meet quick convenience demand. (see attached plan).
 - d. Improve the marking up of the current loading/ unloading bays. (See attached plan).
 - e. Increase free 1 and 2 hour on street spaces in Malmesbury by @ 14; 10 at Station Yard and 4 by the Old Bell.
 - f. Enable the effective use – in consultation with retailers – of 430 'free spaces' in Cross Hayes before Christmas.
 - g. Allow Malmesbury Town Council to consider a proposal to implement 20 or 30 free one hour parking spaces in Cross Hayes from mid January for a temporary period. (Note: The aim would be to increase High Street footfall during the quieter months of the year when there is more reliance on local out of town visitors).

12. The alternatives to this Phase 2 are to:

(i) Option 1: Repair and maintain the current installation without any other parking changes, except the organisation of 'free spaces' in the run up to Christmas,

(ii) Option 2: Repair and maintain the current installation and implement some or all parking changes, including the organisation of 'free spaces' in the run up to Christmas.

(iii) Option 3: Remove the current installation and return to pre-COVID 19 arrangements.

Option 3 would not meet current public health guidance. The appropriateness of Options 1 and 2 can only be decided after discussion with Wiltshire Council.

Malmesbury Town Council could reasonably accept Phase 2 and any Option which includes, as a minimum, a repair and maintenance programme for the current arrangement, accepting that any option that is not as outlined in Phase 2 would not deliver all the possible benefits/ mitigations that Phase 2 would deliver.

13. Costs for Malmesbury Town Council

It is not possible to finalise the estimates of the costs of Phase 2 that Malmesbury Town Council could reasonably be expected to contribute until discussions have been held with Wiltshire Council. Our current estimates are:

- a. Materials and maintenance for planters installed in the High Street. This is expected to be in the range of £400 to £800 per month. (Wiltshire Council have already agreed a capital cost contribution of up to £2,500. This should be sufficient for the numbers likely to be required. The planters would become the property of Malmesbury Town Council. An element of this cost – circa £2,000 - has already been agreed by Community and Town Promotion Committee - from its Projects budget.
- b. Subject to negotiation, the revenue lost by Wiltshire Council by the offer of 20/30 one hour free spaces in Cross Hayes and the cost of making equipment changes. This is estimated to be approx. £2,000 per month for the duration of implementation and one off implementation costs of £1,500. Any such changes would take a minimum of 14 weeks to implement.

All other costs, including Temporary Traffic orders, replacement of the current bollards with more suitable bollards, the capital cost of planters, and maintenance, should be the responsibility of Wiltshire Council or central government.

14. Quickly establishing an acceptable and agreed way forward is now critical. This cannot be done without the active engagement and support of Wiltshire Council. We are already in the retail run up to Christmas and there is a gap in information and communication with our community. The failed state of the current installation is not sustainable will not maintain public confidence in the public safety measures that have been taken.

2. Proposal:

1. To note this report and the current situation with the High Street Safety Scheme.
2. To support the efforts to engage with Wiltshire Council to enable the implementation of an effective updating of the current arrangements.

3. To endorse, in principal, the Phase 2 proposals being made to Wiltshire Council and that discussions should be concluded by the end of September on which elements of Phase 2 or the Options, as outlined, may be returned to Malmesbury Town Council for agreement.
4. To recognise that elements of Phase 2, if implemented, would incur additional costs for Malmesbury Town Council and agree work should be undertaken so that these additional costs can be forecast in the context of our current budget forecasts and plans taking into account revenue improvements from Town Hall bookings and rent received, and other criteria.
5. To support the timely communication of the efforts we are making to maintain an appropriate High Street Safety Scheme, including the latest public health advice, and consultation on key points with retailers and residents, notably on the allocation of 'free' parking spaces in the run up to Christmas and the operation of loading arrangements going forward.
6. To continue to support the communication and promotion of the benefits of 'shopping local' by Malmesbury Town Team.

3. Financial implications

1. If planters are introduced this may lead to a cost of £400 to £800 a month for as long as they are required. The planters would become an asset for Malmesbury Town Council and may be deployed elsewhere in future. A substantial part of this cost in the current financial year may be met by an allocation identified by the Community and Town Promotions Committee from their current budget.
2. The cost of implementing one hour's free parking for 20 to 30 spaces in Cross Hayes in January to April 2021 may be up to £10,000.
3. In relation to current forecasts for 2020-21, it is likely that the loss of income from Town Hall closures and loss of rental income will be less than forecast as reopening progresses faster than expected. This has to be fully assessed but it is likely this would offset the additional costs of supporting the maintenance of public safety by enabling essential social distancing in the High Street and increasing the opportunity for the best possible business performance during the continuing pandemic.

Campbell Ritchie

21st September 2020

Attachment 1: Public Health Advice

From: Public Health <PublicHealth@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 04 September 2020 15:12

To: Blackburn, Kate <Kate.Blackburn@wiltshire.gov.uk>; Richard Spencer-Williams <richard.spencer-williams@malmesbury.gov.uk>; Thomas, Dave <Dave.Thomas@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Cc: Public Health <PublicHealth@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Malmesbury Town Council -Covid 19 and High Street adjustments

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your e-mail.

I currently represent Public Health on the councils Safe Spaces - Active Travel Steering Group and have been party to similar discussions across Wiltshire.

Public Health fully support the social distancing schemes that have been set up across Wiltshire as they have provided an opportunity for residents and visitors to be as safe as possible.

Although guidance now encourages the wearing of face mask within shops, the guidance does not stretch to the pavements and therefore we are still relying on social distancing measures to minimise the risk to one another.

It is important to remember that we are still in the midst of a pandemic, which relies on a number of measures to manage and minimise the risk to the public, one of these is the social distancing schemes around the 'pedestrianizing of our high streets' introduced into our communities. Now that the public are returning to work and children to school, the maintaining of these schemes takes on an added importance to ensure that social distancing can be easily maintained on Wiltshire's highstreets.

I hope this helps the council however if you wish to discuss it, feel free to come back to me.

Best Wishes

Richard

From: Blackburn, Kate

Sent: 04 September 2020 11:15

To: Richard Spencer-Williams <richard.spencer-williams@malmesbury.gov.uk>

Cc: Public Health <PublicHealth@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Malmesbury Town Council -Covid 19 and High Street adjustments

Hello Richard,

Nice to hear from you, we can offer a PH perspective for you on this.

I have copied in the PH info hub who will have a look at your query and get in touch with you.

Very best wishes

Kate

From: Richard Spencer-Williams <richard.spencer-williams@malmesbury.gov.uk>

Sent: 04 September 2020 11:12

To: Blackburn, Kate <Kate.Blackburn@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Subject: Malmesbury Town Council -Covid 19 and High Street adjustments

Hello Kate,

Your name was forwarded to me by Ollie Phipps; although we have met historically and briefly when I was in the employment of WC Communities Team - Youth (2018).

In Malmesbury we have put into place (in partnership with WC) some social distancing measures in our High Street. This has meant trading free high street parking for space for pedestrians. It was implemented at the height of lockdown, and at the time was clearly needed to reassure and enable flow. Now things have moved on , and such things as face mask are more the norm/ requirement, we are keen to ascertain if such measures are needed in the same way.

The implementation of the High Street measures has been controversial and split the community. If it is to remain it will need further considerable investment of time, energy and money from both ourselves, and Wiltshire Council. It will also mean more consultation and engagement work with our community and the retailers. The outcome if we proceed to keep the arrangements would be an enhanced up set up with planters etc (as opposed to simple bollards etc).

If we are to proceed we need to review the set up, and revisit the basic premise for the pedestrianizing the High Street, and be able to articulate the justifications for our the Council's decision.

So why I am emailing you is to ask if you can offer a Public Health perspective on this matter which can help inform the deliberation? If this is not your remit can you signpost me to someone who can offer their expert opinion from a PH perspective please?

NB I have liaised with Highways also.

Regards Richard

Richard Spencer-Williams – Town Clerk

Attachment 2: Letter to Wiltshire Council 18/09/2020

Chief Executive, Wiltshire Council

Leader of Wiltshire Council

Dear Phillip/ Terence

Malmesbury High Street Public Safety measures – Letter of Concern and request for Next Steps Plan

This email is an Urgent Request for the development of a Next Steps Plan with Wiltshire Council on the Malmesbury High Street Public Safety measures.

We have summarised below the current situation and the agenda we propose for the development of the Next Steps Plan. Please do contact us if you need any further information.

As this is an immediate matter of public health and safety, I would appreciate confirmation of receipt of this communication and a reply with arrangements for us to progress this matter to the conclusion of an agreed Next Steps Plan by return.

1. Current Situation:

1. Malmesbury's central retail and hospitality area is characterised by narrow pavements and small independent shops. To meet government guidelines in response to the COVID 19 emergency, as supported by Wiltshire Council and in accordance with Public Health Wiltshire guidance, pavement widening has been implemented in the Upper High Street and Oxford High Street by removing 28 on street car parking spaces.
2. The original installation, in particular the bollards used to delineate the widened pedestrian space, **is at end of life and requires a significant amount of immediate and then continuing repair**. There is currently no joined up or effective maintenance plan. **It is now, itself, a significant Health and Safety hazard**. This is agreed by Wiltshire Council Highways.
3. Operationally the changes in the High Street have worked well. The inclusion of loading bays and additional disabled bays from the outset has been very effective.
4. Whilst the changes are still strongly opposed by some in the community the introduction of the current social distancing measures has maintained effective overall support. Without taking action on the current situation, however, this support is at risk.
5. As far as can be gauged, the overall economic performance of retailers and hospitality businesses in Malmesbury seems to be at least as strong as those in comparable towns. As with 3. above: If we do not take action on the current situation this level of performance is at risk.
6. Based on all current information the requirement to support social distancing in Malmesbury High Street by maintaining widened pavements in will be required for months to come.
7. Malmesbury Town Council has a second stage plan for the maintenance of social distancing in the High Street it wishes to see implemented. We have communicated this plan over the last 8 weeks to officers. It is dependent on Wiltshire Council for a response to the current serious health and safety issues. To date we have not been able to have a discussion at a level that can agree a joint plan.

2. Proposal:

It is therefore essential – **in the circumstances of serious immediate health and safety issues** – we reach an agreement of a joint Next Steps Plan. Given our relative implementation and management responsibilities this must be led by an empowered senior officer from Wiltshire Council with decision making authority with input from functional heads or empowered representatives.

The proposed agenda for the development of the Next Steps plan is:

1. An immediate and then scheduled maintenance of current installation. The extent of this is dependent on the outcome of 2. Below. NB: If no replacement plan is to be implemented 1. becomes the default which must be implemented with no further delay.

2. An agreed plan, with allocated funding, for the replacement of the current installation with a more robust installation capable of being sustained for a minimum of 9 months, likely consisting of:

- h. Fit for purpose bollards
- i. A number of suitable planters
- j. More clearly marked loading bays
- k. The introduction of 6 short time (20 or 30 minute) on street parking places in agreed safe spaces on the High Street. (These have been identified with Highways).
- l. The implementation of agreed additional free on street parking places in Station Yard and outside the Old Bell.
- m. Parking charge arrangements in the Cross Hayes (principally the use of 'free' spaces in the run up to Christmas and the introduction of 20 to 30 free one hour parking spaces from January 2021, including costs and responsibilities for revenue maintenance).
- n. A defined future maintenance plan, with clear responsibilities and agreed resourcing for each element.

Attachment

Attachment 3

High Street Safety Plan – Phase 2

The current plan is attached. Phase 2 would include 6 short term (20 minute) parking spaces marked in blue on the right-hand side of the High Street facing the Market Cross. The loading bays marked green on the left-hand side of the High Street facing the Market Cross would be marked more conspicuously. Planters would replace some of the fixed cones. The remaining bollards would be replaced by more robust bollards.



Malmesbury Town
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Malmesbury Town Council

Report 4: To receive a report on the activity of the Malmesbury Town Team and Malmesbury Town Council Task Group related to the promotion of Malmesbury High Street and local businesses in response to the impact of Covid 19.

1. Situation:

1. Since the onset of the COVID 19 emergency Malmesbury Town Team and Malmesbury Town Council have been working in partnership on the development and implementation of support for retailers and local businesses. As businesses have been able to re-open this developed into a Task Group which has met as required, including on four occasions with a Wiltshire Council Economic Development Officer.

These activities have been reported at previous Council meetings.

2. Since the previous meeting the Task Group, including Cllrs Grant, Ritchie and Smith, has

1. Met to discuss the best approaches to support the High Street and with Wiltshire Council Economic Development Officers.
2. Continued to meet with and collect feedback from retailers and other local businesses.
3. Continued to collect a mix of trading information and relate this to national trends
4. Implemented a high profile shop local campaign – see summary Appendix 1
5. Designed and distributed shop local leaflets to every house in Malmesbury (distribution was undertaken by the Jackdaw magazine team). This also included information on events over the summer

3. In addition, in associated activity:

(a) Malmesbury Town Council has

- Placed 4 picnic benches in Cloister Gardens
- Continued the TIC refit

(b) Malmesbury Town Team has

- Provided and supported a test version of 'Explore Malmesbury' to enable Carnival to run successful virtual versions of its Open Gardens and Scarecrow Trails during August. Based on this the Flying Monks Arts Trail will be launched virtually on 'Explore Malmesbury' in September. Cllr Steve D'Arcy has also been active in these endeavours.

4. Future actions by the Town Team in relation to the COVID 19 emergency will be determined by the outcome of discussions on the High Street Safety Plan. Practically we are seeing Malmesbury Town Team co-ordinate and deliver marketing initiatives and Malmesbury Town Council manage the High Street Safety Plan work and associated communications with retailers and local businesses. It is expected that the current Partnership work will continue in this direction.

5. Proposals

1. To note the significant work undertaken by the Malmesbury Town Team and Malmesbury Town Council partnership/ task force over the past months in support of the High Street and local businesses
2. To note the progress of the current shop local campaign being implemented by the Town Team.

3. To note the work undertaken by the Town Team to support important local events and activities taking place virtually which would otherwise have been cancelled.
4. To note that the future work of the Town Team in partnership with Malmesbury Town Council will be influenced by the future direction of the High Street Safety Plan. The next steps for the successful partnership working between the Town Team and Malmesbury Town Council and the appropriate delineation of responsibilities and actions will need to be reviewed accordingly.

Campbell Ritchie

21st September 2020

Appendix 1



Campaign briefs & photography. Shopkeepers (mainly focused on gift card members), plus product, location and group retailers shots. Edited & provided in digital format.

Campaign Taglines created:

Feel good, shop local, spend local

Give the gift card, keep it local

Staycation

Concept Designs created, shared, amended and finalised

Final Creative elements & artwork created & managed to completion for social media platforms, social storyboards, graphic panel on towers, banners, billboard in Cross Hayes, Jackdaw flyer, gift card flyers for retailers and posters

Press Releases x 3 (next one expected 17 September to include National Press)

Social Media campaigns including new major Instagram campaign – search @malmesburylife to view - to include use of stories and Malmesbury hashtags connecting DM conversations & posts to retailer conversations & posts

Discover Malmesbury and Malmesbury Gift Card website content amended

Print production:

5 tower panels

A5 double sided Jackdaw Flyer x 5000

A5 Retailer Flyer x 500

50 x A4 poster

10 x A3 poster

3 x outdoor banners

Billboard sign

Town Signage – on new planned flags

Malmesbury Gift Card – two more signed up, La Campagna & Jackdaws Café **Updated 16/9/20**



Further update on MGC sales, Social insights, Retailers group and GWW liaison being prepared for MTT meeting on 21 September.