

## **MTC TH&F Committee 5.8.20**

### **Report No 2 (Item 6&7) Scope of use for Cloister Gardens within Covid 19 Guidelines**

#### **1. Purpose of the report**

The purpose of this report is to offer a contextual advisory resource for the Committee on the guidance and matters it needs to take account of when using or allowing others to use the Cloister Gardens, or its Open spaces, taking account of government guidelines in respect of Covid 19.

#### **2. Possible use of the Cloister Gardens and Open Spaces**

The possibility of using Cloister Gardens for wider uses than it has been used to date has been explored and considered within the Cloister Gardens Working Group; which will inform the Committee's consideration of item 6. Ideas such as using it for a picnic site, live performances, or an extension of the Abbey Café have been presented as possible uses to assist the social and economic need of the town.

Additionally, the Council has had numerous enquiries from exercises 'businesses' looking to hire a site where they can run 'keep fit' classes; forced to look wider by the Covid 19 restrictions and guidelines on sport venues.

#### **3. Government Guidelines**

**The current relevant government guidelines give rise to the following considerations when deciding on the possible use of Cloister Gardens taking account of the Government guidelines on Covid 19.**

#### **4. People should socially distance in public places<sup>i</sup>**

#### **5. Mass gatherings / size of crowd<sup>ii</sup>**

It is against the law for gatherings of more than 30 people to take place in private homes (including gardens and other outdoor spaces). Businesses and venues following COVID-19 Secure guidelines can host larger groups. This is also the case for events in public outdoor spaces that are organised by businesses, charitable or political organisations, and public bodies, provided they take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of transmission, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidance and including completion of a risk assessment. Any other gathering in an outdoor space must not be any larger than 30 people.<sup>iii</sup> The Council's role in supporting Public Health - Local authorities should avoid issuing licences (permissions) for events that could lead to larger gatherings forming and provide advice to businesses on how to manage events of this type. If appropriate, the government has powers under Schedule 22 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to close venues hosting large gatherings or prohibit certain events (or types of event) from taking place.

#### **6. Singing and airborne transmission**

When members of the public are attending performances, organisers should ensure that steps are taken to avoid audiences needing to unduly raise their voices to each

other. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting, including if played at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult, for example during performance intervals. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission - particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission. Steps to prevent other close contact activities - such as communal dancing in audiences. This is important to mitigate the risks of droplets and aerosol transmission.

## **7. Outdoor events and Event Planning<sup>iv</sup>**

Organisers of outdoor performances should consider:

- a. The guidance on delivering outdoor events, particularly where such performances are not typical to their operations.
- b. Ingress and egress management, car parking, public transport, hand washing facilities and areas such as arenas, stages or concessions points where crowding could take place. Requirements for permanent structures will differ from green field sites.
- c. Consulting with the relevant authorities and seeking specialist advice to best evaluate impact, developing mitigating strategies and coordinating relevant external agencies if required.
- d. Managing family groups who may wish to remain closer than the required social distance but who, in doing so, may encourage others to cluster in a similar manner. Communication is key to this.
- e. Where items are offered for customer use, so for example a picnic blanket or seating, this should be done only where they can be collected from an appropriate distance and with hygiene measures in place (for example, through the availability of hand sanitiser). Such items should be thoroughly cleaned before being offered for re-use.
- f. Planning car parking to allow sufficient spacing for the social distancing of occupants. This will be particularly important at events where attendees may gather around their vehicles during an event or make frequent visits to their vehicles to collect chairs, coats, drinks etc.
- g. People with symptoms of COVID-19, or who have been advised to self-isolate following contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19, should be asked not to attend.
- h. The expected interactions among participants occurring during the event and implementing sufficient controls to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- i. Discouraging or avoiding activities or features that are likely to encourage audience behaviours increasing transmission risk, such as crowding, clustering, communal dancing and physical contact outside of household groups or support bubbles.

## **8. Hospitality guidance<sup>v</sup>**

## **9. Test and trace and guidance issued for Performing Arts (and events).<sup>vi</sup>**

## **10. Risk assessment**

The Councils Health and safety policy in respect of both staff, and the public<sup>vii</sup>

## 11. Financial implications

- a. There is the opportunity to generate income through hire of the space. In order to do this the Committee will need to agree a set of hire charges on an hourly rate; the current hire schedule only allows for day or half day events.
- b. Staffing costs could be incurred in respect of event management, litter collection, and enhanced grass cutting will possibly need to be factored in to any agreed usage.

## 12. Sport and exercise guidelines<sup>viii</sup>

## 13. Liabilities, and Insurance

- a. The plethora of Government guidance can apply to one activity. It would be advisable to only proceed in allowing those activities where there is sufficient clarity and Committee confidence that the relevant guidance can be adhered to.
- b. Equally it would be advisable to ensure clear demarcation of responsibilities when allowing or supporting either events or singular activities.
- c. Whoever the event or activity is attributed to should provide evidence of appropriate Public Liability, a Covid 19 specific Risk Assessment, and Event Plan or Session Plan; with direct references to the relevant Government guidance. The event plan should be able to demonstrate how the organiser will be able to ensure the activity is Covid safe (as well as generally safe), and how the integrity of the stated activity will be ensured.

Richard Spencer- Williams    Town Clerk

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july#visiting-public-places>

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

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts#arts-2-1>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-phased-return-of-outdoor-sport-and-recreation>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance#businesses-and-venues-already-permitted-to-reopen>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts#shops-1-3>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-phased-return-of-outdoor-sport-and-recreation>