

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
21 April 2020**

EO /2020

8<sup>th</sup> of April 2020

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM – 9 HALL HIRE/ INCOME UPDATE

AIM

1. To provide the Council with an update on the properties that it routinely opens / hires out and the impact the Coronavirus emergency has had on their operation.

BACKGROUND

2. The outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic has made it necessary to take a number of unprecedented measures to eliminate the potential spread of the disease in Community Halls and other buildings owned by the Town Council. These measures include preventative actions and measures listed below:

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

3. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 we made the decision to Close our three Hall's until further notice. This affected most of our regular users and one off bookings, as we have cancelled until the first week of June and we will review the situation in May. Prior to this decision being made a number of classes had already stopped of their own free will, these included Weight Watchers, Line Dance and more began to do so as the risk became more apparent.
4. From the 19<sup>th</sup> of March I made contact with all users that still had bookings by phone and email and made them aware of our immediate intention to close all Halls. Everyone was contacted within 48hours of this being agreed.
5. Feedback on the whole was very positive and did not come as a surprise to most. Some of our regular Dance classes were saddened by the news as this was their livelihood and so financially they were expecting to struggle.
6. One-off bookings also took the news well and most applicants were happy to reschedule to a date beyond September or into 2021. We only had two one-off bookings to cancel and they were given a full refund, one was a naming ceremony at the Castle Hall and another was a 1st birthday party.
7. All regular users were charged a reduced rate in March and were only charged up until the 19<sup>th</sup> if they used the Hall.
8. All wedding bookings between May and August were contacted and couples were invited to discuss their options for cancelling, postponing or complete refund. Couples booked between May and June, were cancelled in line with government guidelines by both us and the Shropshire Council Registrars. All were content to postpone to later dates. Weddings beyond June may still go ahead and we will continue to monitor the situation. So far we have only refunded one £100 deposit for

a wedding in August. Specific details can be found on the Z drive in the Covid-19 folder.

9. I continue to work with our Financial Administrator on refunds and I have put together a list of all customers due a refund or credit note. All cheques were written ready for sign on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2020.
10. It might be worth considering what we could do to help once the Halls are allowed to open and encourage long standing users to book again quickly despite having had little or no income for a couple of months. There might be some merit in allowing previous regular users a discounted rate to allow them time to build up their numbers.
11. It should be noted that the Bridgnorth Community Hall (Low Town) is a separate entity and will make its own decisions. However, as the Town Council is the Sole Trustee of the Charity it was felt useful and convenient to combine the fortunes of the 2 halls in to one report.

### SUMMARY

12. Our two profit making properties are losing an income between £2,000 and £3,000 per month in total.

### OPTIONS

NIL

### RECOMMENDATION

13. It is recommended that members of the Council begin to consider the potential of offering a reduced rate for our regular hall users once we re-open.

Emily Overton  
Property and Grounds Admin