01/07/2020

**Royston Zoom Town Talk**

Present:

* Cllr Tony Hunter (NHDC)
* Cllr Ruth Brown (NHDC)
* Cllr Jean Green(NHDC)
* Cllr Gerald Morris (NHDC)
* Cllr Bill Davidson (NHDC)
* Cllr Steve Jarvis (NHDC & Herts County Councillor)
* Cllr Fiona Hill (Herts County Councillor)
* Hilary Dineen (NHDC Member, Committee & Scrutiny Manager)
* Ashley Hawkins (NHDC Community Engagement Officer for Baldock & Royston)
* **MOA = Member of Audience**

Apologies:

* Cllr Carol Stanier (NHDC)

Cllr Hunter welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Prior to taking questions from the floor, the Chair introduced fellow Councillors and officers to the members of public who were in attendance. 4 members of the public attended the zoom Royston Town Talk.

**Questions raised this time.**

**MOA –** Rather than raise a question, the first MOA to address the Town Talk was the manager of a new Care Home in Melbourn called Melbourn Springs. Melbourn Springs is part of the Barchester Health Care group and is a 75 bedroom care home. The Care Home is Covid 19 free and currently houses 2 residents from Royston, with 2 more joining soon.

**Councillor Gerald Morris** asked if the Care Home had enough PPE for staff and guests as this has been a problem identified in other areas. The Care Home Manager confirmed that they had access to plenty of PPE and this was readily available from the Barchester Health Care Group who own Melbourn Springs.

**MOA –**A question was asked about why the playground equipment in North Hertfordshire was not opening on the 4th July as is the case for equipment in South Cambridgeshire.

**Councillor Steve Jarvis** responded to the question by stating that NHDC were waiting for further guidance from central government and colleagues in Environmental Health regarding the cleaning of play equipment as it is currently unclear if it is feasible to clean on a daily basis. There were also concerns raised about opening certain parks and not others which would lead to large numbers descending on those that had opened. **Councillor Steve Jarvis** said he was hopeful for the parks to re-open within a week.

**MOA - A question was asked about the Recycling Centres in North Herts and why some items could not currently be recycled?**

**Councillor Steve Jarvis / Fiona Hill** said that the Royston site was now open. There were issues to be considered prior to reopening with regards to social distancing and traffic management. Initially the items that could be accepted were very specific such as essential waste but this is being reviewed on a regular basis. \* Safe Staffing levels also have to be taken into account.

\*Since the Town Talk meeting, there has been an update on the service at the Royston Recycling Centre. The centre is now accepting all items.

**Councillor Ruth Brown raised a question about why the outdoor pools were not opening on 4th July?**

**Councillor Steve Jarvis** said that NHDC was waiting on a steer from Central government but confirmed that the swimming pools would not be re-opening on 4th July. **Councillor Ruth Brown** said she could understand not opening indoor pools but thought that outdoor should be open. As the opening of the outdoor pools has been delayed, **Councillor Ruth Brown** suggested that the pools should stay open until the end of September and not only until 10th September. **Councillor Steve Jarvis** and **Councillor Jean Green** stressed that the key thing was to protect residents and to avoid the spread of Coronavirus. The issue of cleaning changings room on a regular basis was also identified as a reason why swimming pools had not yet opened.

**MOA was very happy that the Library Service will be back up and running shortly and that you can ring or email in your book order and can then collect from outside the libraries. Councillor Fiona Hill** explained to the MOA that libraries are not yet open as the handling and browsing of books would increase the risk of spreading the Covid-19 virus. **MOA** said It was confusing that book shops were allowed to open but not libraries but it was explained that people in book shops don’t tend to handle the books prior to purchasing.

**Councillor Jean Green asked why the Lights in Priory Memorial Gardens are always on.**

**Councillor Tony Hunter** explained that the lights have been in the park since the 60s/70s and it is unclear where the supply comes from. The Community Engagement Officer for Royston was asked to look into the with officers at NHDC. \*\*

\*\* Since the Town Talk meeting, there has been an update on the Lights in Priory Memorial Gardens. Officers have investigated and it has been determined that the daytime sensors on top of the columns are faulty and covered with debris from nearby trees. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, lighting engineers are only currently dealing with emergencies and essential works, so these works have not yet been scheduled in.

**Councillor Jean Green thanked the Council for its swift action in quickly moving the Travellers off the land by Serby Avenue. The travellers had arrived overnight on the Thursday but were removed swiftly on the Friday. Councillor Tony Hunter** asked if the height barrier at the entrance to the Heath to stop travellers from entering was likely to be replaced. The Community Engagement Officer for Royston was asked to investigate this with the Conservators of Royston.