Didcot Town Council



Dear Didcot Resident,

As I write this, we have just entered the second national lockdown. Whatever your views are, and I know there are differing opinions, we must protect those at risk and stay safe.

I must thank all the residents of Didcot for the way the community came together during the original lockdown and since then, for rising to the challenge to support those in need and vulnerable. It was wonderful to see community groups, charities, businesses, residents, volunteers and people of all ages doing whatever they could to help. We had people running errands, shopping for strangers, making masks, checking up on neighbours, as well as takeaways and restaurants giving away free hot food. Didcot is a close-knit community, but I believe these last few months it got even closer and I am convinced the spirit created will continue in the second lockdown.

I believe it is important that during these challenging times, the council keeps you updated on what is happening. Therefore, Didcot Town Council will be regularly updating information on social media and its website: **www.didcot.gov.uk** Please do check regularly to keep up to date. As Leader of the Council, I shall be communicating monthly and providing an update on what the council is doing and responding to any questions received. I am keen for a two-way communication, so please do email me on **mkhan@didcot.gov.uk**

**Didcot Town Council and Civic Hall**

Civic Hall

The Civic Hall is now closed and will reopen on the 2nd December 2020, providing the lockdown has not been extended. This is due to our duty of care to our council staff, users of Civic Hall and residents. The decision to close will undoubtably have a financial impact, but it is the right decision as the health and safety of all is paramount.

I would also like to take this opportunity to categorically deny any stories or rumours you may have read in the press or on social media about the Civic Hall being up for sale. I can give you 100% reassurance we are not selling or will never sell the Civic Hall whilst I am Leader or part of the ruling group on the council. The Civic Hall is a great asset and needed in the community and it shall stay that way! Please do not believe everything that you read on social media – any questions then just contact me.

Council Services

Although the Civic Hall will be closed, the council services will still be open. The staff will be working from home but available on email, social media and phone. This worked very well last time and there was no drop in the level or quality of service. However, if there are any delays in responses, I hope you will understand.

Council and committee meetings will continue virtually. If you are interested in attending or seeing the agenda, then please check the website. Remember all council and committee meetings are open to the public. I welcome residents attending so they get a better understanding of how the council works and what we do as councillors.

The Outdoor Services Team will also be working and fully functioning during the lockdown too. Our parks and playgrounds will remain open so please get some fresh air and exercise. All we ask is that you adhere to social distancing and take anti-bacterial wipes in the play areas.

**Business Support**

I know that many local businesses are suffering due to the restrictions and, for some, forced closures. The success of the local economy is linked to the great businesses in Didcot. To see what support is offered, please check [svbs.co.uk](http://www.svbs.co.uk/) for the latest help available for businesses.

Where possible please give your custom to a local business or shop; they need it and would appreciate your help. Many are doing contact-less deliveries too.

**Didcot Town Council £5k Essential Food Grant**

Leading up to and during half term there was a campaign for free school meals - again this got Didcot community into action and hot food was provided. As a council, we needed to act. I secured and got ringfenced £5k to help those in need to have access to essential food now and during the Christmas holiday.

If you are a charity or organisation that needs funds to help get food to those in need, then please get in touch with the council so your application can be reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at their meeting on 23rd November 2020.

During this lockdown, please adhere to government guidelines and social distancing rules. If you need help, then please do get in touch with the Didcot Town Council or the Community Hub on **01235 422600** or email [**communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk**](mailto:communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk)

Stay safe.



**Cllr Mocky Khan**

Leader of Didcot Town Council

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