

Council reports March 2021

Item 7.3 Interim Financial Regulations update – RFO

The current Financial Regulation states;

6.20 A Debit Card shall not be issued for use.

6.21 Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the RFO and Clerk and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. The maximum one-off payment shall be no more than £1,000 and a monthly maximum of no more than £4,999.

6.22 Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

On 9th November 2020 the Full Council approved the use of a Council debit card by the Clerk and RFO. This in effect amended our Financial Regulations which had hitherto proscribed the use of a debit card. It is important to note that the prohibition was not in the model regulations but had been an adaptation for Hawkhurst's regulations.

The Council's financial regulations are in the process of being updated and a paper will be presented to the Full Council in April or May. However, the Council are asked to approve the following change now.

To substitute:

6.20 A debit card shall not be issued for use.

with

6.20 A debit card can be issued for use by the clerk and RFO. It must only be used to pay for items approved by the Council, or that fall within the discretion provided to the Clerk for sums up to £1,000.

Item 7.4 Impact of easing COVID 19 restrictions on Council services and facilities – Cllr Fitzpatrick

The FAS Committee consider the easing of COVID 19 restrictions on Council services and facilities and this is summarised below;

The Government on the 22nd February 2021 launched the "Road Map" out of the COVID 19 restrictions for England. Please see link to government document;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963491/COVID-19_Response_-_Spring_2021.pdf

1. Four Test

At each step there are 4 tests that have to be considered by the Government, they are

- a) The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- b) Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- c) Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- d) Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new variants of Concern

Note Figure 8 The Four Tests, page 26 of the government document.

2. Four steps

Assuming these four tests are met at each step the draft re-opening of Council services and facilities was considered by the FAS Committee

3. Keeping people safe

As we all look forward to the return of a more normal lifestyle it is important that people maintain good habits of “hands, space and face”

Therefore, it is recommended that we continue with our cleaning regimes at the facilities and continue to promote good habits.

4. Hall Fees and charges

During the last year we were able to access Government grants for loss of income etc and we passed them on to community groups via reduced fees to support them through difficult times.

We will need to continue with enhanced COVID 19 cleaning between hires – this is an extra cost in terms of staff time, cleaning materials and PPE.

Therefore, FAS Committee consider adding in an additional cleaning charge of £10 per session for Hall hires and a number of options

- A session up to 3 hours would remain at the reduced fee of £15 plus VAT
- A session up to 3 hours would be the previously agreed £25 plus VAT

- A session up to three hours would £35 plus VAT to include the extra cleaning cost

The conclusion of the discussion was to return to the agreed amount £25 and review along with other fees and charges in summer 2021

5. Use of the Moor

The Council have previously agreed the following community events on the Moor

- Custom Car show – May date – seeking to move to 20th June
- Fun Fair – early June – date to be confirmed
- Village Fete (26th June 2021) to be confirmed
- Fun run (start and finish) – (27 June 2021)
- Makers@Moor – 11th September 2021
- Bonfire – 27th November 2021 (Moor and KGV)

We have had a request for street party on the Moor on the 26th June 2021 – the same date as the Village Fete, which has priority as an established user. If the Village Fete date moves, consider the street party.

Note the Circus planned for April has been cancelled this year.

Recommendation

Following the discussions, the Committee recommends to the Council

- Focus on keeping people safe by maintaining robust cleaning regime
- The fees should return to £25 per session and be reviewed along with other fees and charges in the summer
- The facilities and services should re-open as follows – subject to national guidance

Service / Facility	Activity	Date	Comment	
Step One pages 27 – 32 of government document				
Cemetery	Funerals – up to 30 people	8 th March 2021	Already advertised	
Parks /open space	Recreation or exercise outdoors with household or one other person	8 th March 2021	Already advertised	
MUGA / football pitches	Organised outdoor sport allowed	29 th March 2021	Contacted clubs / groups about restarting Taking new bookings	

Parks / open space	Rule of 6 or two households outdoors	29 th March 2021		
Step Two no earlier than 12th May 2021 pages 33 – 35 of government document				
Copt Hall / KGV sports pavilion	Community centres reopening	12 th April 2021	Contacted clubs / groups about restarting Taking new bookings	
The Moor	Community events	12 th April 2021	See below – aiming for June start	
KCC Library	Monday drop in session		Need to confirm with KCC	
Step Three no earlier than 17th may 2021 pages 36 – 38 of government document				
Copt Hall and KGV sports pavilion	Organised indoor sports	17 th May 2021	Contacted clubs / groups about restarting Taking new bookings	
Council / Committee meetings	Virtual – subject to legislation	17 th May 2021	1 st meeting AGM 17 th May 2021	Note Chairman's update
Step Four no earlier than 21st June 2021 pages 39 – 42 of government document Legal Restrictions dropped				
Parish office re-opened		21 st June 2021	Subject to review of national guidance	
Council / Committee meetings in public		21 st June 2021	Subject to numbers allowed into a public meeting?	

Use of the Moor for community events – subject to national restrictions, weather, appropriate insurance and permissions

- Custom Car show –20th June 2021
- Fun Fair – first two weeks of June - date to be confirmed
- Village Fete - 26th June 2021 to be confirmed – If not a “Street Party” would like the date
- Hawkhurst 5k / 10k run (start and finish) – 27 June 2021
- Makers@The Moor - 11th September 2021
- Bonfire Society 27th November 2021 – (Moor and KGV)

Promote the above events locally, especially to neighbouring properties of the Moor

Item 7.5 S137 Community Grants

The SAP Committee on 15th February 2021 supported in principle the two applications,

1. Citizen Advice Tunbridge Wells District – their application is attached. In summary they work to support all residents with a range of advice. They are currently working with 118 people in Hawkhurst on 444 issues. They are seeking £300 grant aid.
2. Tunbridge Wells Counselling Service - their application is attached. In summary they work to support all residents with a range of needs. They are currently working with 11 cases in the Hawkhurst area. They have submitted copies of insurance, accounts and safeguarding policies. They are seeking £200 grant aid

Item 7.6 Fields in Trust Registration – Cllr Green

Following the meeting with Fields in Trust and subsequent discussions at the Community Centre Working Group we have liaised with the architect and the following plans are attached.

- Land to be de-registered from the existing KGV field, 4,313m²
- The Moor to be registered with Fields in Trust, 9,614m².

There will be a net increase of 5,301m² in land protected / registered to Fields in Trust.

The Moor is currently protected under Open Space legislation but research has shown that it is **not protected under** registered as Common Land, Village Green or Fields in Trust.

Therefore, it is proposed to Register the Moor as Fields in Trust, which adds a layer of protection to The Moor and allows the current programme of events on the Moor to continue.

It is therefore recommended to

- Deregister a portion of the KGV land as per plan attached
- set up a KGV Trust management committee meeting (the Parish Council are the sole trustees)
- set up a bank account for the KGV Trust
- contact the Charity Commission explaining what is proposed
- finalise details and complete the Fields in Trust Fields forms
- register the Moor as a Fields in Trust to add a layer of protection
- appoint a Solicitor to act on our behalf on this matter – see confidential report

Item 7.7 Copt Hall building survey scope – Cllr Fitzpatrick

The FAS Committee discussed the scope of the Copt Hall Building survey which expanded into other facilities and propose the following for both the Copt Hall and KGV sports pavilion;

- To undertake a condition survey, focus on Health and Safety items
- Advise on the durability of the existing structure
- Clarify urgent actions and medium term (five year) actions
- Undertake a review of M & E with recommendations for appropriate heating for the Copt Hall building

In addition

- A separate specialised asbestos survey to set up an asbestos register for The Copt hall, KGV sports pavilion, KGV Garages, Kino, Parish office and Cemetery shed plus allotment sheds

The FAS Committee are aware that this has not been budgeted for so request General Reserves are used and that where appropriate the two trusts (HCT and KGV) are asked to cover the net costs of the survey and any subsequent works required.

The Copt Hall to be opened after Building survey and necessary safety actions completed, if required, temporarily move activities to KGV where practical.

Item 7.9 Council Memberships of organisations

The Council has a number of Memberships which are traditional considered at an AGM – given the current uncertainty over an AGM the Council may wish to consider the following memberships;

- Kent Association of Councils - £1620 + VAT
- Action with Rural Communities in Kent - £105 +VAT
- Kent County Playing Field Associations - £100 +VAT
- Society of Local Council Clerks - £250 +VAT
- Transport Accessibility Group - na
- Campaign for the Protection of Rural England - £36 per year +VAT
- Weald of Kent Protection Society - £25 +VAT