



EXTRA SEDGEFIELD

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Government guidance in relation to COVID-19 is now changing on a frequent basis. We urge all residents to follow the latest advice to continue to ensure your own safety and that of those around you, while supporting our local businesses and economy.

To keep up to date with council and local community news, follow us on Twitter at @SedgefieldTC or join our residents' database email group (your email address will not be shared with any other members) by contacting jane@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

We are pleased to report that our first virtual Monthly and Policy & Resources Committee meetings were a success! The meetings, which commenced at the earlier time of 6pm on Monday 13th July, were our first virtual meetings with members of the public in attendance and participating. A big thank you to those of you who were present, as this allowed us to test our virtual public participation procedure.

As usual, there will be no council committee meetings in August, so look out for details of September's meetings in the next edition of Sedgefield Extra. In line with central government advice, we anticipate that we will be holding virtual meetings for the foreseeable future.

SEDGEFIELD PARISH HALL

While most non-essential businesses were given the go ahead by central government to re-open on Saturday 4th July 2020, there are still many restrictions in place that greatly impact the normal operation of public-facing services, particularly community buildings and halls.

We are constantly monitoring advice from central government to ensure that the safety of the Parish Hall's users is paramount. After careful consideration of the building's layout and facilities, Parish Hall user group requirements and the guidance from central government, the decision has been made to keep the hall closed until at least 1st September 2020. If it has not already been sent out by the time this edition is published, we will shortly be issuing a questionnaire to all regular users, to identify which aspects of their bookings we can accommodate when the building re-opens.

We realise that the Parish Hall is a much loved, well-used community building and we will open safely when the time is right. The hall has now been professionally disinfected so that it is in a safe condition to enter when the facilities do re-open. As always, it is our priority to keep you updated as decisions are made, so look out for updates in future editions of the Extra and by email, Twitter and online.



COUNCIL OFFICE REFURB UPDATE

We have now prepared our refurbishment programme for the council offices. At the time of writing this article, the ceilings throughout the building have been plastered, updating the old textured style, and the windows and external doors are due to be replaced imminently. By the end of August, we hope to have a new partition wall built in the entrance area, with progress made with decoration and new flooring.

While the building receives this much needed update, the town council will operate fully with all office-based staff working remotely. Dog bags will continue to be sold from the side entrance of the Parish Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-11am while the office is closed. It would greatly help us if you could bring the correct change (60p per pack of 50 bags) and follow the procedures highlighted at the entrance.

COUNCIL EVENTS 2020

It is with regret that we have cancelled our Christmas coach trip this year. We hope to offer three trips next year: a spring trip to a garden centre, a summer day out and a Christmas shopping trip, but only if it is safe to do so. We will keep you updated and ensure that any future trips are promoted well in advance.

As reported previously, Councillor Leo McCormack will remain as Mayor of Sedgefield for the year 2020/21, but the Mayor's Quiz will not be going ahead this year and it's possible that other mayoral events will be cancelled or altered to have a broader community focus.

Our seasonal events towards the end of 2020 require further discussion as more information and guidance emerges. Please be assured that the town council is determined to resume organising the community events that we are involved in, as soon as it is safe to do so, for residents, our staff, and for volunteers. We will keep you updated through the Extra and our other communications channels.

CEDDSFELD HALL GROUNDS

DAMAGE TO GRASS

We have received reports with photographic evidence of an individual digging within Ceddesfeld Hall grounds while partaking in what is suspected to be metal detecting. We politely remind all residents that such activities on council-owned land are prohibited and are classed as criminal damage. If you wish to undertake such activity, but are unsure as to who owns the land, you must contact the town council in the first instance via town.clerk@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

COMMUNITY CHEST

Do you know of any local groups who may require additional funding to support their work? If so, Sedgefield Town Council's Community Chest fund may be able to help. The fund awards small donations of up to £100 to good causes, local groups and organisations. For eligibility criteria and details of how to apply please go to the Community Chest page on www.sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

PUBLIC LITTER BINS

As the town begins to re-open, please continue to be mindful of how you dispose of rubbish. There is a tremendous amount of work carried out all year-round by community groups, individuals and our own gardening staff to keep the town looking so welcoming and it's a shame to see their efforts impacted by litter. There are scheduled routes of litter bin emptying in place by Durham County Council and Sedgefield Town Council, but if you do come across a bin that is already full, please take your rubbish home.



POLITE REQUEST

As we're all making the most of getting out and about and enjoying our open spaces again, we would like to make a couple of polite requests:

If you are out walking your dog, please ensure it is under control at all times and that you pick up and safely dispose of your dog's mess.

Please refrain from feeding the ducks in the pond in Ceddesfeld Hall grounds. We have received lots of reports of bread and feed lying on the grass around the pond which can encourage rodent activity.