

Meeting to discuss post-COVID-19 recovery of Battle Civil Parish.

Wednesday 10th June 2020 at 11.00

Present:

Rother District Councillors - Vikki Cook, Kevin Dixon

English Heritage - Natasha Williams

Battle & District Chamber of Commerce - Uta Acuna

Battle Town Councillors and Town Clerk - Hazel Sharman, Margaret Kiloh, Glenna Favell, Carol Harris

Huw Merriman MP

East Sussex District Councillor - Kathryn Field sent apologies

Aim - to explore the likely impact of the pandemic on Battle, e.g. the economy, jobs, health, service provision, leisure, travel, tourism etc. and to consider ways to accelerate Battle's recovery.

We considered:

- 1 Current effects of COVID-19 on our residents/services/businesses (positive and negative)
- 2 Possible effects of COVID-19 in the future (positive and negative)
- 3 What we can do to help residents and businesses to address negative effects?
- 4 What we can do to build on any positive effects

Current effects of COVID-19 on our residents/services/businesses

There are a significant number of residents who work for BA or at London Gatwick Airport and **HM** reported that he is working to support them. He also noted the local heroes.

RDC has responded by setting up community groups and has been liaising with **BTC**. Officers are working from home.

There has been a good response regarding the information leaflets delivered by Battle volunteers. They have also delivered food and prescriptions. **BTC** set up an account with Jempsons - **BTC** pay and **BTC** bill residents for their goods. Vandalism and theft has increased, which is not unusual as criminals move to target businesses and public property.

The **Chamber of Commerce** held their AGM only four days before lockdown, so communications are only just getting going and haven't heard from businesses. Shops are reopening on Monday 15th June.

English Heritage is opening sites again with entry by timed ticket, although indoor spaces will remain closed.

There has been a noticeable drop in pollution.

Possible effects of COVID-19 in the future

The most significant were considered to be:

- poverty
- delayed hospital appointments
- job losses
- schools

There is regeneration funding.

What we can do to help residents and businesses to address negative effects

BTC will provide a hub for businesses to get help and support, such as risk assessments, and also to advertise which businesses are opening. It will provide links to other useful sites e.g. Chamber of Commerce.

Investment is needed in broadband for parity of communication throughout the area.

Battle needs tourism, so events are needed to attract people and advertisements that Battle is open for people to come back to.

Ask people to walk on the left to give confidence to returning shoppers.

What we can do to build on any positive effects

We need to sustain the drop in traffic. Keep footpaths safe and clear.

Promote Battle in the eco-tourism sector e.g. wildlife

Continue to support people's health and wellbeing.

We mustn't lose 'our volunteers' - those not returning to work could be employed as regenerators.

Close the High Street at weekends 11.00-15.00 for pedestrians to shop safely and enable traders to have stalls outside.

Sub-group to meet to discuss actions that can be taken now e.g. banners, street markets, cafés on the Green, VJ Day event to open Battle etc.