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Friday 29 May

Weekly Update from the Leader and Chief Executive
Warwick District Council

Dear Friends

Back to the Future

As new Government guidance gradually eases the lockdown further, we have moved our own recovery strategy on a pace, keenly focused on our local economy; our local community and of course re-setting our Council services. Underpinned by the need to respond positively to an even more challenging Climate Change emergency, we recognise that simply returning to life as we knew it before Covid 19 would mean missing step-change opportunities.

Our Recovery Strategy will take us 'Back to the Future'; we are using the lessons of this experience to continue our work making Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit and carbon neutral by 2030.

Economic Recovery

This week we received the welcome news of major funding to support our plans to host the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games in Royal Leamington Spa. £1.8 million has been awarded by the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, for a series of improvement projects to transform Leamington Spa railway station and the Victoria Park lawn bowls venue ready for summer 2022.

In total, working with partners this grant unlocks a £3.6m investment in pedestrian and cycling routes. The forecourt at the railway station will be transformed to prioritise greener travel, linking bus, taxi, cycle and rail to give a lasting legacy and address chronic problems, such as air pollution. Victoria Park's bowls facilities will be upgraded even further, including improved access to support people with disabilities, meaning Leamington will have world-class lawn bowls facilities to host international competitions for the Games and on an ongoing basis. The Games itself is estimated to bring £26m to our hard-pressed local businesses.

This burst of spring sunshine also welcomed the return of our market operators, CJs Events which reported a very successful soft relaunch of the weekly market with a limited number of stalls; cash only trading; social distancing and special queuing measures. Thanks to public patience the new, temporary set-up worked well and we hope this now paves the way for the successful reopening of the next round of local businesses.

The Media Room – Warwick District Council
T. 01926 456069 | M. 07920 535163| E. media@warwickdc.gov.uk
Warwick District Council, Riverside House, Milverton Hill,
Royal Leamington Spa, CV32 5HZ. www.warwickdc.gov.uk

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Working collaboratively with the Town Councils, BID Leamington and the Chambers of Trade we will shortly be providing clear information for the public about what to expect when they venture back out to the town centres.

Climate Emergency

Despite having to put on hold the council tax referendum for our Climate Action Fund, the initiatives and projects associated with the overall Climate Emergency Action Plan remain a fundamental priority. We are actively seeking to build on current opportunities for less frequent travel, cleaner air and increased remote working for the council, our employees and buildings, but also leading and supporting this essential programme of change across the wider district.

To head up this critical work, we have appointed a new Programme Director for Climate Change, Dave Barber who brings a wealth of experience in this field and a personal passion to shape the climate change agenda in our new world.

YouTube Success

The Council has so far broadcast six Council/Committee meetings live via Youtube and seen our subscribers increase to just under 100, one of whom amusingly even commented that they were going to "cancel their Netflix account"!

Yes, we are talking small numbers here, but it's yet another way to communicate effectively, not only broadcasting our committee meetings, but also sharing important news and helpful information. You too can subscribe here to watch any of our committee meetings, or other information videos.

We plan to keep sending out our weekly messages but increasingly we will focus on recovery and we will strive to keep you updated on things that are or will be happening in our District. We appreciate all of the feedback we get so please keep letting us know what you think.

Keep smiling and stay safe.

Andrew Day
Leader, Warwick District Council

Chris Elliott
Chief Executive, Warwick District Council

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