



Wilton Town Council

Covid-19

Report of the Town Clerk



The Council Offices
Kingsbury Square
Wilton SP2 0BA



01722 742093



[Email the clerk](#)



[Wilton TC Website](#)

Legal context

Wilton Town Council has powers to consider these matters in accordance with its General Power of Competence as set out in The Localism Act 2011, qualified by SI 2012/965 - Town Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.

The purpose of this report

This report recommends actions to be considered by Wilton Town Council in response to the current Covid-19 epidemic.

18 March, 2020

1. Introduction

1.1. Everyone will be aware of the global covid-19 pandemic. The Council's response is guided by advice it receives from Public Health England (PHE) and other official government bodies. This advice is available online and updated daily during the epidemic:

- [Coronavirus – UK Government Response](#)
- [General information to the public](#)
- [Guidance for non-clinical settings – Employers and Businesses](#)
- [NHS Overview, symptoms and advice](#)
- [Government Action Plan](#)
- [Government Advice for Self-Isolation at home](#)
- [WHO – Getting Workplace ready](#)

1.2. In addition, the Council receives advice from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), again this is available online:

- <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

1.3. This report draws on the advice received and sets out the urgent actions required by the Council.

2. A proportionate, policy-led approach

2.1. The Council's risk management documents refer to the possibility of disruption to Council business caused by the outbreak of a 'High Consequence Infectious Disease' (HCID). However, the Council has no policy in place to deal with the current Covid-19 outbreak. [The clerk has now drafted a HCID Policy](#), for urgent adoption by the Council. Once adopted, the clerk is recommending that it is put into immediate effect.

2.2. The main areas of concern for Wilton Town council in the light of the current Covid-19 epidemic are:

- Remaining effective in times of emergency
- Health and safety of councillors, contractors, staff, volunteers and members of public
- Protecting the wellbeing of residents.

2.3. The HCID Policy deals with the Council's need to continue to operate effectively during the outbreak – it deals with staffing issues, meetings, decision making, finances and communication. There are however a number of other issues that require decisions:

3. Facilities

The Council operates parks, play areas, adult gym, tennis courts, the pavilion, cemetery and public conveniences. In addition it is responsible for street furniture – benches, shelters, map-dispensers, etc. The following schedule sets out the Council's recommended approach

Facility/Asset	Advice	Recommendation
Sports Pavilion	PHE are recommending that public gatherings are avoided.	Close to the public with immediate effect
Cemetery	PHE are recommending that public gatherings are avoided.	Close the chapel but allow burials to continue, unless advised by PHE.
Public conveniences	No specific advice	Subject to agreement with the contractors, remain open with Coronavirus warning signs.
Open Spaces, tennis courts, playgrounds and gym.	No specific advice	Remain open with Coronavirus warning signs.
Street furniture	No specific advice	Coronavirus warning signs erected.

4. Events

In the light of advice from PHE relating to public gatherings, it is considered that all events currently planned or promoted by the Council over the next 3 months are cancelled or postponed. These are:

Event	Advice	Recommendation
PLantFEST (11th - 16th May)	PHE are recommending that public gatherings are avoided.	Postpone
Wilton Wildlife Volunteers (on-going)	PHE are recommending that public gatherings are avoided.	Postpone group activities.
Great British Litter Pick – Wilton Wombles (20th March – 13th April)	Wiltshire Council recommending postponement.	Postpone
VE Day Celebrations (8th May)	No specific advice	Cancel events but continue to decorate the town with bunting/ flags
Carnival (4th July)	No specific advice	Keep under review.
Mayor Making (5th May)	No specific advice	See below.

5. Mayor Making

Each year Wilton Town Council holds a special meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. This is a well-attended social occasion with up to 50 people present. As all public meetings are to be cancelled, this event will need to be postponed until the epidemic has passed. Under normal protocols, the existing Mayor and Deputy Mayor will continue in office until the new Mayor is elected at the first meeting of the Council following resumption of public meetings.

6. Communications and Public Information

While the Council has no formal role or expertise in public health matters, it is well placed to distribute information to local residents and to keep people informed. Therefore, it seems sensible that the Council should pass on and sign-post information provided by those statutory agencies responsible for leading the response to the epidemic.

7. Supporting volunteers

- 7.1. Wilton Town Council supports the work of local voluntary groups, charities and volunteers in their efforts to support the community through the epidemic. The Council will maintain close communication with the groups concerned and seek to respond to requests for help. This cannot include assuming responsibility for the work of the volunteers. By the nature of the roles undertaken, Wilton Town Council would be required to seek advice from the statutory agencies, liaise with health providers, ensure all volunteers had valid DBS checks and carry out very detailed risk assessments for each activity. It would also assume a duty of care to each volunteers and become responsible for providing personal protective equipment and sanitation products and liable for all health and safety issues.
- 7.2. In view of this, the Council will encourage Wiltonians to get to know their neighbours and be aware of anyone in their street who may need help. Making contact with somebody near-by is the best source of support. In addition, the Council stands ready to deploy its resources as may be directed by the public agencies leading the response.
- 7.3. Notwithstanding the limited direct role the Council can play in public health matters, it is willing to offer resources and support and it is **recommended** that £10,000 is set aside in reserves to respond to requests for help endorsed by one or more of the statutory or voluntary agencies leading the community response.