

Councillor David Draper Leisure

Parks update

The Government announced that playgrounds and outdoor fitness equipment could re-open from Saturday 4 July. We have not yet opened ours in Mole Valley. There is an inherent risk in that it is simply not possible to implement a cleaning regime for surfaces and therefore we want to carefully consider our plans for opening playgrounds, what the risks are, how they can be mitigated (and what cannot be mitigated) and what our expectations are from users. When a decision has been made about when play facilities will be re-opened, this will be communicated to Members.

The Parks team have been reviewing the draft management plans for its principle sites. Particular attention is being paid to the upcoming management required such as hay cuts, both in terms of frequency of cutting (with biodiversity in mind) and achieving best value. Last year saw a more collaborative approach working with local farmers, who would harvest hay for their own use thus reducing the burden on the Parks budget, and the team are hoping to develop this more for this year.

Tree management has continued despite the current restrictions with a consultant assisting the inspection of high risk trees. The team has also noted a marked increase in the presence of Oak Processionary Moth in the north of the district. It is hoped that as the moth becomes more established potential predators such as birds will begin to predate the caterpillars and a natural balance occur.

Leisure Centres

The Centres have been closed since lockdown and there is still no date for them to re-open as yet. That said, the officer team have been working with both operators on their plans for reopening safely.

Arts Alive

This year the team are looking to launch a different style Arts Alive festival 'Arts E-Live' which will aim to make as many events available online rather than as live events. The current pandemic has necessitated an innovative approach but we were determined not to miss a year of the hugely popular eclectic arts spectacle which in 2020 will be in its 24th year. It will unfortunately not be possible to host the popular launch and finale events, however we would like to assure Members and our communities that Arts Alive 2020 is going ahead, one way or another!

Dorking Halls

The Halls closed on 17 March and re-opened on 4 July as a cinema only venue in accordance with the latest government guidance. All events up to and including 31 August have had to be cancelled or postponed, with most live shows rescheduled to new dates in the autumn or next year. As of 30 June, live shows are still not permitted under the coronavirus regulations.

Whilst closed, the technical team brought forward a wide range of scheduled maintenance and technical works. In anticipation of a July re-opening date, this has included the installation of a range of safety measures to re-open Dorking Halls as a covid-secure venue. This has included a thorough deep clean in preparation for re-opening.

All front of house staff not involved in rescheduling events and contacting customers to process refunds/rebook were reassigned to form part of the team contacting vulnerable residents. Members of the technical team also supported the set-up of the NHS Seacole Centre at Headley Court.

A successful on-line music competition has been run during lockdown to support local artists and maintain positive community engagement. People are often prepared to travel to see particular live shows, and the competition resulted in greater awareness of Dorking Halls as a live events venue in Sussex, Kent and London through local and national media coverage.

To recognise the contribution made by key workers, Dorking Halls was lit up in the colours of the rainbow on the 10th week of #clapfourcarers. Dorking Halls' cafe was lit up in rainbow colours every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in June to support Pride Month.