

10 August 2020

Update on public events in Guildford

All large events planned for 2020 on Council-owned land will be postponed or cancelled as the safety of our residents, visitors and staff remains our top priority.

The decision follows recommendations from Surrey's Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG), part of Surrey's Local Resilience Forum, the government-initiated body with representatives from all public services, from local authorities to health, fire and police.

Government guidance also currently states that large scale 'mass gatherings' are not to take place, and since the new guidance on 31 July 'test' or 'pilot' events are included in this.

We are working with Guildford Shakespeare Company this August on a small-scale event to help us learn how public events can best be managed in response to Coronavirus (Covid-19). This will help us support important events such as Remembrance Sunday and other community events in 2021.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Caroline Reeves explains: "The Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak has brought unimaginable changes for all of us and will continue to impact our lives for months and years to come. I am proud of how our borough has responded and supported each other throughout this most challenging time. Your community spirit has been inspiring and our officers' dedication and hard work in keeping our essential services running is to be applauded.

"We understand how disappointing this news will be, not only to our residents who were looking forward to getting back to normal and enjoying their social lives but to our fantastic charities and voluntary organisations. Many of them rely heavily on events for their income and we know this will be a huge blow to them.

"We recognise and support the vital contribution many of these events bring to our communities, both for leisure and positive benefits on our health and wellbeing but also the contribution they make to our local charities who in turn are doing such great work to help our residents."

She continues: "However, we must prioritise the safety of our residents and there is too great a risk in holding events while trying to maintain social distancing. Less people will be able to attend, which means in most situations that the event will also not be financially viable. Additional strain may also be put on emergency services who are already doing all they can to respond to the outbreak. We will keep our decision under review and when it is safe to have events again we will let you know and look forward to welcoming you back.

"A key part of the Council's Recovery Plan will be continuing to work with and help our voluntary and charity sectors in giving vital support to our community, and I hope we can get creative and think of ways we can get through this together."

She adds: “One option would be to join the Guildford Community Lottery which we set up in 2018 as a simple and effective way for local good causes to raise money every week. As a good cause you sign up for free, with no admin fees or any other charges, and encourage your supporters to buy a lottery ticket at £1 per ticket. They can do this easily online, and for every ticket sold you receive 50p. Each ticket has a 1-in-50 chance of winning every week, with a top prize of £25,000. Marketing support is available and extra incentives are also regularly added.

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