

Full Council- Old Town Library

1. Introduction

Following Government Public Health Guidance our Old Town Library was closed to public access at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The library although managed by the Parish Council has some links through its integrated library management system (ILMS) to the borough council library service for stock control/rotation, reservations and fines so with this in mind any proposed opening of the service through a “click and collect” system would need to be in conjunction with the borough council library service. The initial target date for a limited service would be on the 20th July 2020.

The building although owned by Swindon Borough Council (SBC) is leased to the HQ Theatres Group (HQTG) and the parish council hold a sublease through that group for the library space. Building compliance is not included within our lease and remains with the primary lease holder and Swindon Borough Council, therefore, one of the issues is that the current compliance is out of date due in no small part to the building being effectively mothballed. This is still being debated by both HQTG and SBC as there will be a cost associated with certification.

This report considers the options around the safe opening, use and cleaning of the library to keep both staff and public safe at all times through controlled/remote public access and as such this report gives a series of options to be considered.

2. Report Details

- 2.1** The Library to initially re-open offering a reduced service, this is due to the size and layout of the Library. This will mean the general public will not be allowed to enter the Library for the time being therefore reducing any possible spread of the virus. This will be re-assessed as and when circumstance change. Staff will mainly be lone working apart from one day a week for a cross-over/handover. Staff will follow social distancing rules when working together and will also introduce a cleaning regime for surfaces, door handles etc. This will be supplemented by professional cleaners carrying out weekly cleaning.

2.2 Services Available

- Click and Collect – order books via phone or email and then collect.
- Grab and Go – orders to be made up by Library staff.
- Personal Shopper – books to be selected by Library staff.

2.3 Procedures

- Adults can request books via email/phone and pick up from outside of Reception by using the doorbell.
- Volunteers may be available to make deliveries subject to confirmation by SSPC Insurers.
- Volunteers to make collections from outside or in a designated area within the Library Reception area.
- Volunteers to be supplied with hand sanitizer.
- Books to be returned and placed in a secured drop off area.
- Returns will be quarantined for 4 days in crates dated with the return date and safe to shelve date.
- Quarantined books will be stacked (with Arts Centre permission) in the back room.
- Fines will be paid via the phone.

2.4 Building Adjustment and compliance

- Library to be cleaned prior to reopening by the Librarian.
- Signs made to advise customers of 2m social distancing outside the door.
- Wall mounted hand sanitizers will be placed at the entrance/exit of the Library for staff and volunteers.
- Cleaning of equipment regime to be introduced as per the Risk Assessment.
- To seek guidance from HQTG on compliance and the dates when this can be achieved.

2.5 To be Purchased

- 4 crates to store books (ideally with wheels).
- Wall mounted sanitizers.
- 2m distancing floor tape.
- Surface wipes.
- Gloves.
- Card reader.
- Toilet roll and toilet cleaner.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1** To continue to monitor the current pandemic and local infection rates.
- 3.2** To review and update the Risk Assessment, Safe System of Work and Management Plan in line with any guidance changes.
- 3.3** To seek clarity from HQTG and SBC on building compliance timings for safe access to the building.
- 3.4** To commence a limited “Click and Collect, Grab and Go and Personal Shopper” service following the above guidelines, safe systems of work and the risk assessment with a proposed start date 20th July 2020 (Subject to agreement with HQTG over compliance and cleaning).