

Roundabout Nov 2020

District Councillors Report

New Town Centre Support Initiative and New Funding

Although Huntingdonshire's market towns are faring well in the Covid circumstances; lockdown effectively shut our high streets overnight and led to internet shopping growing further, putting our local retailers under even greater pressure.

New Thinking: Faced with these enormous challenges HDC are presented with an opportunity to lead a values-led period of renewal to make our town centres fit for the future and deliver lasting change and a new poll has been set up.

New Poll: This revealed that only 9 per cent of people want life to return to 'normal' after the pandemic is over. People have noticed significant changes during the lockdown, and many have decided that a better way of doing things is possible – and how we use our town centres must be part of this. We are seeing that people are appreciating spending less money, valuing the local environment more and sharing a stronger sense of community.

New Funding: Huntingdonshire District Council has therefore already submitted a £12 million Future High Streets Fund plan to the Government to transform St Neots, and we are now embarking on similar bold plans to prepare Huntingdonshire's other market towns for a post-Covid future in which they can not only survive but thrive.

New Results

Conservative Council Leader, Ryan Fuller who has been leading these new initiatives, recently announced:

"I am pleased to be able to report that the Combined Authority Board has agreed HDC's £300k funding request to develop St Neots Future High Streets Fund style plans for St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey. Once we have developed these plans and have detailed projects to pursue, we can utilise CPCA funds, HDC's CIL and other external funds to deliver multi-million-pound transformation schemes in our towns.

A new consensus

HDC will be initiating the debate and the conversations that will be needed with our communities as process goes forward.

New Local COVID 19 Funding

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has revised its existing Community Chest Grant Scheme criteria, with a focus on recovery for new applications.

The revised criteria include being open for applications with immediate effect, no closing date for applications (until all funding has been allocated) and applications that demonstrate how

the project aims to address one or more of the issues identified in the Huntingdonshire Recovery Report. All key information and revisions can be found on the HDC [website](#).

The criteria for the remaining funds of the HDC COVID-19 Community Chest Grant has been revised to enable the district's recovery and adapt to a new normal."

To date, 35 applications have been considered over 9 rounds and more than £23,000 has been awarded. Therefore, with funding remaining to be allocated, revised criteria have been issued to enable more community groups and organisations to help people.

If you are a local community organisation or project set up in response to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic you can view the [eligibility criteria](#) and complete an [online application form](#). Responses will normally be issued within 7 days.

Hamish Masson District Councillor