

Silverton & Exe Valley Seniors

JUNE/JULY 2020 Newsletter and a personal message to members from the Club Secretary



Dear Member

I hope that you are well and have avoided getting Coronavirus. Much has changed since I wrote to you on the 15th April. There has been some easing of the COVID-19 regulations, but many restrictions remain with new rules added recently. Most of us are now free to leave our homes for either work (if unable to work from home), exercise or to meet friends outside (groups of up to 6 people in England), a number of schools are opening and some non-contact sports are being allowed. The Government however still encourages members of the public to “stay at home” as much as possible and visits away from home from one or more nights are not permitted. Non-food shops are to be allowed to open shortly but pubs and cafes are currently closed other than for “take-away” food and drink. Underscoring all these categories is the Government’s social distancing rule (2M) which precludes the Club’s activities taking place.

We do not know how long the 2M distancing rule is likely to remain in force. In many European countries the 2M measurement is being reduced to 1M and there is speculation that this may follow here (however the Government has threatened a return to lockdown if the “R” infection rate rises). The latest Government directive is that all people must wear a face mask in if hospitals or on public transport.

It is against this background that the Committee has deliberated when it might be possible to resume Club activities. Whether or not the social distancing rule be 2M or 1M, either measurement would render any coach outings unviable (perhaps only 26 persons on a 53 seat coach) and then there are other issues such as whether members – some of whom are still shielded – would wish to go on an outing (with or without a face mask), when venues are likely to reopen and not least, whether resorts such as Port Isaac or Boscastle would welcome visitors. (I have checked with Port Isaac TIC who told me visitors will be welcome but not at the present time). Another programming constraint is the need for a 6-8 weeks lead-in time to publicise and take bookings for an event using the Club’s monthly newsletter and e-mail (not everyone is electronically connected however). Given that August will be the next newsletter, the first possible outing might be in October (Monmouth & the Brecon Beacon Mountain Railway) although the railway is currently closed with no indication when it will reopen. Given these ongoing uncertainties the Committee and I felt that it made no sense to continue to accept bookings for such future events which may not be able to take place.

Given the above considerations, it has been decided to cancel all remaining outings for the Summer (leaving open at this time a final decision on outings planned for OCT, NOV and DEC if restrictions are eased sufficiently) and to refund all member payments for bookings for the remainder of the year (refunds already having been previously made for bookings between JAN-JUN). If therefore you have previously made a booking for any outing between July and December, you will find a refund cheque attached to this letter.

Should there be a further easing of restrictions later in the year which would enable outings in the OCT-DEC period to take place, they will be reinstated (subject to demand) and advertised by means of newsletter, e-mails and in the village magazines. As regards individual outing viability a decision would need to be taken about a month before each departure which means that an early booking response from members would be essential.

In the event of the entire 2020 outings programme being cancelled (or substantially cancelled) it ought to be possible to re-run the programme next year if Government restrictions are sufficiently eased. In this situation, whereas I had previously indicated my intention to “stand-down” at the AGM in FEB, because of the exceptional prevailing coronavirus circumstances I would be prepared to continue as Secretary for a further year to administer the 2021 programme. This would be subject to two members stepping up to replace two of the Committee who have indicated they wish to stand down and importantly the Club having a Treasurer/Book-keeper (Anita Bayley has kindly indicated that she might be willing to continue for a further year) and the continuing support of the team who help the Club in various ways.

Mention so far has been about the 2020 outings programme but of course there are other Club activities such as fortnightly whist, theatre trips and monthly coffee mornings which many members enjoy but which have not been able to take place since March. As the coffee mornings and whist activities do not require a 6-8 weeks lead-in time they can be recommenced as and when Government restrictions pertaining to Group gatherings and social distancing are eased. It is unlikely however that there will be any other theatre trips this year and indeed the production of Kipps – the new half a Sixpence musical at the Princess Theatre Torquay has already been cancelled whilst notification has been received from the Queens Theatre Barnstaple that all productions have been cancelled until the end of November,

The decision to cancel events outlined in this letter is very disappointing both for me - having spent many hours putting the 2020 programme together – and for all of you to enjoy, but I hope that you will understand that given the travel and distance measuring restrictions there is little or no alternative. Blakes are keen to start operating again but Janet Blake tells me that their coaches which are also used for their holidays, are all in the yard and have not moved other than for maintenance purposes. I hope that next time I communicate with you there may be some news about better times in the future to relate. Meanwhile the Committee and I remain positive about the future and look forward to when it may be possible to resume Club activities and enjoy each other’s company again.

In view of the curtailment of the outings programme and other activities the Committee proposes that 2020 membership subscriptions will be carried forward to next year.

Keep safe and well

Best wishes

Martin

12th June 2020