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Sue Saunders
Town Clerk
Stourport Town Council
01562 732750
27th April 2019

Dear Sue

Re: Stourport Forward Financial Support

On behalf of members of the Board I would like to thank you for all the help and support that we receive from Stourport Town Council, which has been an essential part of continuing the work of Stourport Forward as a not for profit business dedicated to the heritage led regeneration of Stourport.

As you are aware, under the present financial constraints, Wyre Forest District Council is unable to financially support Stourport Forward in the forthcoming financial year. I would like to bring you up to date on what funding has helped us to achieve this year.

During 2020-21, Stourport Forward has continued to run with reduced Manager hours to ensure that the organisation remains financially viable. The post is funded in the short term for 8 hours per week. Our part-time administrator, Nikki Beeston, was furloughed for much of the year and website administration is now carried out by Noble Digital. Income this year has been hit hard by the Covid 19 Pandemic, as our directors decided to give the Windlass a rent holiday for most of this financial year. We have been sustainable, thanks to receiving the annual grant provided by Stourport Town Council as well as a small Government Grant.

Ken Harrison retired as Chairman and has been succeeded by David Willetts. This year our directors have been joined by Nick Jethwa, and Tony Harvey continues to support us on grant applications. Pauline Annis remains as a Special Advisor on historical matters.

Despite our on-going reduced staffing levels, we were able to test Covid safe versions of a few of our core activities during 2021 including leading Guided Walks, supported by a new audio system, and running working boat Bramble in between lockdowns, as a focus for the Stourport on Severn feature in Great Canal Journeys (More 4, March 2021). Our fantastic volunteer team have contributed where they can, during periods of lower restrictions.

*Stourport Forward is the trading style of Stourport Forward Limited.
Registered company number 5237850.*

During 2020 and 2021, we have continued to work on grant funding applications and hope to be successful in bringing forward some new initiatives in town very soon.

We were able to use Government funding to re-develop the Stourport Town website <http://stourporttown.co.uk/> , have included free business listings for local businesses, and have developed a new space to be able to advertise local events as they re-open. It is our plan to link social media advertising to the website and use the site to promote new style Covid safe events, as the town gradually re-opens. At Christmas 2020 we were able to make a short film, promoting the Christmas Lights.

In 2020-21 we worked with the Canal & River Trust, which has enabled us to be flexible in our free offer to schools, developing new virtual resources and presentations. Our site continues to hold the prestigious 'Learning Outside the Classroom Award' for our work at Stourport on Severn. We are planning to re-start school visits in September and hope to pilot a few Guided Walk visits before the summer holidays. We also hope to re-open the Heritage Rooms later this year, and have acquired new artefacts for display.

We fully appreciate in these tough economic times that Stourport Town Council has many projects drawing on limited funding and we do hope that we will be able to work with the council as a key partner in the future. We will continue to work within our means to deliver excellent value for money. As you know, the Council has provided around £3,000 funding annually and it was hoped that more funds would be available, as we merged with the Town Centre Forum.

Yours sincerely
Eliza Botham
Development Manager and Company Secretary
Stourport Forward