



VIRUS LOCKDOWN HALTS TOWN CENTRE FLOWER PROGRAMME

A major facelift planned for Minehead town centre has had to be put on hold for a year.

Minehead BID and Minehead Town Council officials say it will be impossible to get the scheme underway while coronavirus restrictions are in place.

In January plans were announced for installing an additional 65 hanging baskets and 4 flower towers in the town centre, following positive comments about last summer's floral displays.

And traders were also given details of a £25,000 investment which was to follow for The Avenue, involving more plantings and bunting.

Now the entire programme of hanging baskets and bunting is being postponed for 12 months.

Minehead BID – the company set up in 2018 with the support of more than 240 local traders to raise the town's profile as a resort and organise regular entertainment events – has already had to postpone the April eat:Festival until August and cancel the May Day celebrations, and the town's second Steampunk Festival, scheduled for May 2 and 3.

Minehead Town Council has, likewise, regretfully had to cancel the planned weekend of events to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day due to take place in early May.

And, said Minehead Town Councillor and BID Director Terry Venner, there had been no option but to freeze the town centre improvement plans as well.

“One of the major problems was that our plant supplier in Bristol has had to suspend trading while the emergency lasts,” he said.

“But quite apart from that we have no idea when social distancing precautions will be lifted enabling contractors to get back to normal working – and without knowing that it simply wasn’t possible to reschedule the work with any degree of certainty.”

Minehead’s Mayor Councillor Sandra Slade said she realised traders and local families alike would be saddened by the delay.

“We had such positive reactions to the way the town centre looked last year thanks to the work the Town Council and BID put in and we really felt we had made an appreciable difference to the attractiveness of Minehead as a shopping and holiday destination,” she said.

“We were all ready to build on the momentum and enthusiasm that had been generated but clearly with so many restrictions on so many aspects of everyday life it is really out of the question to even think about any large-scale project of this kind at the moment.

“The only consolations to take from this are that firstly we aren’t by a long way the only town to have summer entertainment and decorations shelved and, secondly, that the funding for the flower displays and bunting will remain in place so that by next year we may well be in a position to come back with something even bigger and better.

“Either way we are determined that what we achieve in Minehead in 2021 will go a long way towards making up for the disappointment of 2020.”

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For more information, please contact Andrew Hopkins, Minehead BID Manager on 07703 668928 or Bryan Howe, Minehead Town Council Acting Clerk or 01643 707213