

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Tuesday APRIL 2021 in Webex - VIRTUAL MEETING 10.00 AM - 12.00 PM

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MINUTES

9/21 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Neil Hanshaw, Rebecca Knighton, Rachel Mora-Bannon, Rosie Olle and Felicity Stout.

10/2 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 (attached)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

11/2 Matters Arising

Jon Wayte informed the committee that he had sent round the final version of the Health and Safety Policy this morning and explained that there was still some work to be done on appendix one. The committee agreed that Jon would circulate the appendix once it was finished.

Theresa Reid asked Joanne to confirm if the links from the Resilience Webinars had been made available and if she was available to view them. Nat Webster answered this and advised that all of the webinars had been recorded and been made available for staff to view for up to two weeks after it was streamed.

12/2 Draft OSH Annual Report for 2020

Jon Wayte introduced this item and informed the committee that the context of the Annual Report was largely dominated by Covid and the Authority's response such as home working, support available and the surveys run by HR. IOSH target is to get people trained which has been happening over the last three years, new courses will be being provided this year. Jon explained that due to the Authority's IOSH he was able to deliver training to other Authority's, he had managed to provide the training to the Yorkshire Dales before Covid. But he was looking into providing the training virtually through an online platform such as WebEx Training.

Jon also informed the committee that he hadn't done many visits through the year due to a large number of places being closed however he had visited the open places more than he would usually.

The number of accidents/incidents hadn't changed much since 2019 and there was a similar number of slips and trips. There was also one violent and one vehicle incident reported. The 'trend' shows accidents were down on the previous year but up over the course of five/six years, this is assumed to be down to better reporting of incidents and near misses. There seemed to be more accidents to visitors especially in cycle hire. Jon also informed the committee he was still providing services to Northumberland and the South Downs and attending their health and safety committees.

Jon has applied for rapid work place testing for the Authority and is looking into different routes in which this can be applied. Including the possibility of tests being run at Aldern House, Edale and once able staff being able to do the tests themselves at home.

It was agreed that Jon would take the report to Management Team and then Programmes and Resources Committee for approval.

The committee asked for clarity on the 'violent incident'. Jon explained that planners went to visit the site and they were met by staff that were working on the land. He explained it was physical violence however the planners were harassed and they were also followed by the workers once they left the premises in the cars. The incident had been followed up and dealt with and the Authority had sent a letter. The area was also updated on Earthlight to warn others for future visits.

13/2: General Covid Update

Each of the members of the committee were asked in turn to give an update on their team and how they were working currently.

Matt Freestone – Matt explained that not much had changed for them apart from how they are managing Aldern House. Not many staff are going into the other bases and so Martin is conducting weekly checks on the currently unoccupied sites. Matt said there is currently no issues with the people attending Aldern House and all are following the rules however he explained that they may need support in the future when more people start going into the office.

Sue Beswick – Explained she is working from home and that they are preparing to open the visitor centres on Monday, cycle hire opened last week. They will be sending the risk assessments to Jon this week ready for reopening. The kiosks have all reopened for takeaway. Sue said that Jon's support will be key. Sue did tell the committee they are having some issues with customers some not wanting to wear masks and other complaints because customers have received parking fines. Sue queried if it would be possible for the teams to have some complaint handling training.

Sue was informed by members of the committee that Rob had provided an online course for the volunteer rangers and it had also been offered to Lisa for the casual staff. Rangers have been told to walk away in difficult situations however this is harder in the visitor centres. Sue explained that had been lots of complaints at the Castleton Visitor centre due to carpark fines being issued by High Peak Borough Council. Jon and Sue agreed that complaints would be logged so they can keep an eye on where a lot of the complaints are coming from and to identify any training or support needed. Sue would also contact Rob about him providing a training course on conflict handling for the visitor centre staff.

Andy Farmer – The rangers are using some of the offices which has been covered by a risk assessment. They have had one issue but that has been resolved. Volunteers are out and about again and this is also covered by a risk assessment. They are currently meeting remotely but have completed a risk assessment on sharing cars. They will think about volunteer rangers being back in the offices from June.

Geoff Smith – Said he hasn't spoke to all the team recently but he is feeling comfortable being in the office. They are trying to get out and about more and had been out with the apprentices completing risk assessments and counting the Ash trees. They were using IPADS and separate equipment to do this. They are also having weekly one to ones with Anna still on a Monday although they hadn't had one this week due to the Bank Holiday.

Martin Hill – Emphasised what Matt was saying, Aldern House has been open since May for staff. Martin said that majority of the staff that come in are the same people and so they know the protocol now. He also informed them that inductions are still available but 99% of people coming into the office have already had an induction. He also informed the committee that not enough people are coming into the office to mean they have had to implement the zoning rules. Members of the committee were asking for confirmation about what would happen come June. Martin, Matt and Jon all agreed that there wasn't any guidance currently about returning to normal 'work' and that they hope come June more will be in place to help them understand the best way to approach 'normal working' and more staff in Aldern House.

Mark Anderson – Not much to report mostly just himself working. Campsites will be reopening on Monday and so they will be doing some training with the casual staff.

Nat Webster – Had been doing a lot of the wellbeing work including writing a report. Been difficult trying to keep up to date with what is open and the furlough of staff. Been working closely with finance. Some staff from the Learning and Development team will be going onto furlough due to not doing much work with schools at the moment. All of the visitor centre staff and majority of campsite staff will be returning from furlough through April. They are still finding different ways to do things. Nat also asked the committee if they had any concerns to please flag them.

14/2: Workplace testing for asymptomatic staff not working at home

Jon Wayte introduced this item he explained to the committee that he had been debating if it would be worthwhile applying for workplace to testing for the Authority. He had talks with DEFRA and decided to register, waiting for the order of tests to arrive. Tests will start at Aldern House and there will be a room booked for them to be done in, testing will also possibly start at Edale. Once the tests arrive he will send out information about it. Advised that staff that are going out to work get tested once a week.

The committee asked if staff would be paid if they are having to travel to get tested. Jon explained that all testing is voluntary but would look into it. It hasn't been fully discussed by the Management Team yet.

There were concerns from some of the committee regarding paying staff to be tested and which budget this would come out of. Staff that don't work in Bakewell and would have to travel could also mean travel claims being put in. Hoping for a more flexible way of doing the tests and that ideally home testing would be the best option. It was agreed that they would discuss the testing at the easing of lockdown meeting on the 15th April.

Nat and Jon agreed that more information about testing would be provided in the well being emails being sent by HR. Jon informed the committee that he had already promoted the community testing. It was also discussed that it could cause conflict between staff if some refuse the testing and other's don't want to work with those who haven't been tested.

There was also concern raised about how the tests would need to be stored and disposed of. Jon informed the committee that he isn't certain on how the tests would need to be stored but that they don't need to be kept cool – in a fridge for example. He also doesn't believe it will need to be clinical waste unless above a certain amount every day but he will check this.

15/2: Risk Assessments

Theresa informed the committee that this is Neil Hanshaws item but he isn't in the meeting today so Andy Farmer and Jon Wayte would take them through the item.

Andy informed the committee that Neil has been reviewing risk assessments and that he is taking the lead on the Health and Safety aspect for this. The main risk assessment to be discussed today was that of changing wheels on the new pool cars and how to deal with it. It was explained that the new pool cars and ranger vehicles have all the correct equipment within them. The risk assessment has been re-written and has a method statement included on how to change the wheels.

It was mentioned that people should only change the tyres if they feel confident enough to do so. The risk assessment was included in the report pack for members of the committee to look at. It was explained that the risk assessment would cover both views and give instructions for those confident to change the tyre but also what staff should do if they are not confident to change the tyre.

They are looking at giving training especially to the rangers who often find themselves lone working in remote places and Neil would provide this training. All vehicles need to be included in the risk assessment.

It was agreed that the instructions would be kept in all cars so that staff can make the decision themselves if to change the tyre or not.

16/2: Health & Wellbeing Report

Nat Webster took the committee through this item. Nat explained that it would be a brief update over the last couple of months and the report included key metrics, sickness and absence. Nat explained that HR had contacted all 40 members of staff that had put disagree or strongly disagree on the statements 'I rate my mental health as good' and 'I have enough communication with my line manager'. This was done to see if HR could offer any support.

The tea breaks that they have been running will continue after Easter and a schedule will be sent out in due course so staff have enough notice. The Ultimate Resilience webinars have now finished and they are not planning on organizing any more as they had covered all but one topic that they offer. The feedback from staff that had attended the webinars had been positive.

Nat also asked the committee to let HR know of any feedback themselves or the team may have on things they would like more information on as this can be done through the well-being emails. Moving forward they are starting to think more about the future and have a draft action plan in place.

The committee wanted to know if there were any trends when the staff were contacted regarding mental health and manager contact. Nat explained that there were no obvious trends and that the manager contact can be quite subjective. Some staff may be happy talking to their line manager once a week whereas this may not be enough for some.

The surveys have shown that the Authority are doing a good job and staff are feeling overwhelmed but are happy with the support from their managers and HR.

ACTION: GIVE FEEDBACK TO NAT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY.

17/2 Safety Officers Report and safety legislation update

Jon Wayte went through this item he explained that the covid regulations are important and they are looking at what the next step will be. The update comes out every Monday and Jon is reading this every week to keep up to date.

18/2 Safety Representative's/Staff Committee reports

Theresa asked Joanne and Mark for there feedback for this item.

Joanne Cooper explained that she didn't have a report but she was concerned about what will happen when people have to return into the office. Joanne explained that she doesn't think all staff will be happy with the options and it could cause some conflict. Joanne suggested that Unison and Staff Committee are bought into the discussions and that more regular meetings may be helpful. Mark agreed that there were no specific issues.

Theresa informed the committee that Heads of Service were currently looking at service levels and the needs of staff and the organization would impact on return to office and home working.

19/2 Service Reports

No service reports were identified.

20/2 Any other business

There wasn't any other business identified.