

2020 FGWE, CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 UPDATE

I am sure that the pandemic threat of Covid-19 has not by now, escaped anyone's attention. Trevor, Liz and myself have given considerable thought to the possible effect that both the virus and the recent flooding in the Hereford area may have on this year's Flying Gate Weekend. Here is the position as we see it at present:

Firstly.....Don't Panic Captain Mainwaring!

Secondly, we will continue to follow the advice of the Government's Chief Medical Officer, and we hope you all will too. We are all too aware that a number of regular Gaters fall into the "vulnerable" category, as does Trevor himself, so we will be making sure that we take that fully into consideration when making plans for this year's event.

I have been keeping in touch with The Three Counties Hotel and they have agreed that I don't need to confirm and pay for our booking until the end of May. They are also willing to discuss dates if we need to postpone our weekend. Hopefully things will be much clearer by May and we will be able to make the right decision at that time.

A number of you have already paid me for your hotel bookings and I still hold all of that money on your behalf. If you have booked and not paid yet, there is no need to do so until we have decided what is happening this year. In the meantime, please rest assured that any money already paid is safe in a FGWE account and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Should we be forced to cancel this year's weekend I will arrange to refund all monies already paid.

The floods of February and early March have also had a devastating effect on the whole of Hereford county and some of our coffee and lunch stops are struggling to open after sustaining significant water damage. It is possible that some may not be open by September, if at all. Some of the proposed routes also remain impassable for the present, but Liz and Trevor are monitoring the situation closely and we will keep you up to date over the ensuing weeks. We are also aware of the Government's latest advice issued last night (16th March) and that BC, AUK, VTTA and other organisations have cancelled all events for the time being, at least through April.

All of the above means that at some point we will have to make a decision whether to go ahead with the weekend as planned or cancel for 2020. We will not be making this decision until the end of May, which is 2 ½ months away as I write and as soon as we have done so we will let you all know.

If we are able to go ahead with the weekend of 4th to 6th September, it is unlikely that we will be able to keep to our regular timescales for sending out food choices for lunch stops etc. nice and early as in the past and everything may run late right up to the weekend. If this is the case we will have to rely heavily on all Gaters responding quickly to our email requests so we have a fighting chance of everything falling properly into place. We will keep you all informed as things progress over the next weeks and months.

If any Gaters have particular concerns or appropriate suggestions would you please send them to me direct at weekend@tjcycles.co.uk.

Finally, In the meantime stay well and keep active. Cycling UK suggests singing 'I want to ride my bicycle' as you wash your hands which sounds pretty good to me.

Arthur Knowler