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To All Town and Parish Clerks

**Councillor Tony Jefferson
Leader of the Council**

Dear Clerk

COVID-19 Funding

The Government has recently distributed a second tranche of funding to local authorities, making a total of £3.2bn distributed. You may have seen a letter from the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government dated 30 April, 2020 in which he advises *'...I encourage principal authorities to discuss this funding with Parish Councils where parishes are performing Covid-related services.'* However, in a video conference with the District Councils Network this afternoon it turns out that what was really meant was that this applied to only those Councils in financial distress. Far be it from me to point out that Parish Councils have no restrictions on the precept they can raise so why should any be in "financial distress."

In the light of this suggestion I would like to share the financial impact of Covid-19 on Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC). The total estimated cost of the emergency to SDC is over £8m, in terms of additional expenditure but, more significantly, lost income. To date the Government funding for the Council has been £1.34m, leaving a shortfall of approximately £7m.

I sincerely hope that further Government financial assistance will be made available to the Council but there is no certainty over this and the Minister's advice is; *'This is both a local and a national challenge and it is vital that we work together to use available resources as wisely as possible. This might include redeploying staff or bringing in volunteers, **or prudent use of financial reserves**, recognising that there are many calls on these at this time.'*

As a result the Council has insufficient funds to meet its own requirements and cannot consider providing grants from the £1.34m received. Furthermore, the Council is currently reviewing reserves and current projects and will, potentially, have to review service delivery in the future.

In the meantime, your Council or hall management organisation may be entitled to a grant from the *Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund*. Premises used as a cinema, music venue, for the provision of sport and leisure to the public or as a meeting place for the public, could qualify for a grant. If you have a village hall or leisure facility that falls into any of these categories please use this link to apply: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/online-forms/business-rates-grant-form.cfm>

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Jefferson', with a horizontal line underneath.

Councillor Tony Jefferson
Leader of the Council

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