



## **MEDIA RELEASE:**

### **COVID-19**

**Date of Release: May 7, 2020**

## **MAYOR STRUTHERS CALLS FOR VISITORS AND COMMUNITY TO REMAIN DILIGENT DURING COVID-19**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 7, 2020**

Mayor Doug Struthers is appealing to visitors to the Village of Merrickville-Wolford asking them to remember to practice physical distancing and not to gather in groups of more than five (5) people when visiting our historic commercial centre in Merrickville. This is to ensure that visitors stay in compliance with all Emergency Orders implemented by the Province.

“We are tremendously thankful for people’s interest in visiting, shopping and dining Merrickville, especially as restrictions on retail businesses are gradually eased, and we are counting on their critical support to help our local businesses recover from the extensive impact of the pandemic”, said Mayor Struthers. “However, we are also very concerned about protecting people’s safety and ensuring that we do not contribute to the spread of this terrible virus.”

Mayor Struthers noted that the municipality has not heard of there being a single confirmed case of the virus within the community and he commended the entire community for their tremendous diligence and commitment in achieving this outstanding result. “I would like to remind everyone that the Provincial Emergency Orders are still in effect and we do not want to undo the community’s hard work. Public safety and well-being must remain absolutely paramount”, stated the Mayor, “and we are counting on the continued cooperation and support from all visitors to Merrickville to assist us in maintaining this positive outcome”.

Mayor Struthers also reiterated messaging from the Province of Ontario that people travel only when its truly necessary and asked that people comply with the guidelines published by the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit.

Part of Merrickville’s charm is its narrow 19<sup>th</sup> century streetscapes, beautiful stone architecture and storefronts with doors and windows immediately adjacent to the sidewalks. While this creates a wonderful, welcoming and historic atmosphere in which people can enjoy window shopping and dining, it also leaves little room for pedestrians to stay two (2) metres apart from each other, especially as businesses begin to re-open in accordance with gradual easement of the Emergency Orders.

In the last couple of weeks, the Village has seen a sudden increase in the number of visitors on warm weekends when the sun is shining. With its beautiful heritage buildings, locks and attractive setting on

the Rideau Canal, Merrickville is a very popular destination for regional day trippers and tourists, especially those seeking to escape their homes as the warmer weather approaches.

The Village's Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) quickly activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) on March 13<sup>th</sup>, immediately upon the World Health Organization (WHO) indicating that the world is facing a pandemic. "If there were ever a time that prevention is the best cure, the COVID-19 pandemic is the time", said Village CAO Doug Robertson who is also the Chair of the MECG.

The MECG continues to closely monitor the evolution of this unprecedented situation and asks for the on-going cooperation of all businesses, residents and visitors in the community to help preserve public safety as the pandemic evolves. "Ultimately, it is only through the combined contribution and dedication of the public that we can minimize the loss of life and support our businesses as they recover from the economic impact of the pandemic", he stated.

The Village encourages visitors to experience Merrickville-Wolford, the Jewel of the Rideau and Canada's Prettiest Village, while respecting the Provincial Emergency Orders and advice from public health officials.

**For further information, please contact:**

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