

Message from Mayor Rob Keffer:  
COVID-19 update – August 7, 2020

It has been five months since I first sat down with staff to seriously consider how the Coronavirus might affect Town of BWG programs and services. At the time, we were discussing whether or not to go ahead with March break camps! We truly had no idea how much our lives were about to change, or that just days later we would be closing our facilities completely.

Now with just two active cases of COVID-19 in our community but the ever-present threat of future outbreaks, we are taking careful steps towards reopening our recreational facilities.

At Council's meeting this past Tuesday, we approved a plan to reopen the Leisure Centre one area at a time, starting with ice rinks. Rinks will open in mid-September to support the needs of our youth hockey teams and skating clubs.

Once we feel it is safe to do so, the next area to open will be the fitness centre, and later we will look at opening the pool and gymnasium for select activities. We take your safety very seriously and appreciate your patience while we ensure we get it right. We will communicate more details on dates and protocols for using the spaces when they become available.

We will decide in the early fall whether popular events such as Pumpkin Fest and the Santa Claus Parade can go ahead and in what format. Meanwhile, staff continue to find new ways to offer some of your favourite activities – outdoor fitness classes and “Camp in a Backpack” have been very popular, and plans are in the works for drive-in movie screenings at the end of summer. You'll find more information on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Virtual Carrot Fest is on now – go to [www.carrotfest.ca](http://www.carrotfest.ca) to check out the online vendor market, and visit our Facebook and Instagram pages next weekend for online busker performances. Carrot Fest merchandise – including t-shirts and water bottles – is available for purchase online or at Sweet B's at 4 Holland St. W, with proceeds going to the Helping Hand Food Bank. On Saturday, August 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the Holland Marsh Growers' Association will be in the Leisure Centre parking lot handing out free bags of locally grown carrots and collecting food bank donations.

This may not be the summer we hoped for, but with creativity, optimism and kindness, it is still a great time to call BWG home.

Best,  
Rob Keffer