

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF LIBRARY AND PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 6TH MARCH 2006

Present: Councillor Mrs C M Gresham (Deputy Town Mayor); Councillor M Tilley (Chairman); Councillor J Freeman (Vice-Chairman); Councillors R R Anklesaria, T C Colbourne, C E Meakins-Jell, M J P Mullany and T A W Stock

In Attendance: Mrs H Hupton, Ms M Alexander (Cultural and Regeneration Manager), Mr S Simpson (Promotions Officer), Mr J Sutton (The National Trust), Mrs R Lambert (Bedfordshire County Council) and Mr D Moore (Citizone Manager)

Apologies for Absence: Councillor A J Fairbairn (Town Mayor) and Councillor A E Green.

#### **68 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9th January 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **69 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members declared their interest in the items indicated:

Cllr Mrs C M Gresham	Personal Interest	Dunstable and District Flower Club
Cllr T A W Stock	Personal Interest	Dunstable Downs (Member of National Trust)
Cllr M Tilley	Personal Interest	Dunstable Arts Council

#### **70 DUNSTABLE DOWNS**

The Committee received a report of the National Trust Property Manager on matters relating to the management of the Downs.

##### **a) Countryside Centre**

Despite a quiet winter takings for the year as a whole were up by about £3,000. Annual visitors to the Centre, representing roughly 10% of the total number of site visitors were down by 1600.

##### **b) Chilterns Gateway Visitor Centre**

Work on the Centre was proceeding well. It was hoped that the 8 days of work lost due to freezing temperatures would be recouped later in the building programme, which currently had a completion date of August 2006. Work was now due to start on the timber supports for the wing roof and the setting out of the new road junction at the entrance to Chute farm, which would create a turning lane and a new T-junction. An evening visit to the construction site would be arranged for the Committee in the summer.

**c) Multi-user Route**

Bedfordshire County Council had completed Phase 1 of the Route linking the existing centre and the Gateway construction site, with the exception of the bend at the terminus of the earth pipe for the centre's ventilation system. The wind catcher section of the earth pipe to be located above ground had yet to be agreed by the planners.

Phase 1 had been funded by the Big Lottery and Sport England, who had also offered funding for Phase 2. The proposed route of Phase 2 had been agreed in principle and would now be the subject of a revised planning application. If approved it was anticipated that work would commence during Sept/Oct 2006 avoiding the busier summer months.

**d) Stock Grazing**

The Committee was appalled to note that grazing of Dunstable Downs had been severely hampered by dogs chasing and killing some of the grazing stock. Constant wardening of the site by two members of staff over one weekend had failed to prevent the attacks and the sheep had had to be removed after only two weeks. A total of eight animals had been killed.

**e) Scrub Clearance**

Flail mowing of areas of grassland previously cleared of scrub had recently taken place. This management regime had been adopted primarily in areas where there was no sheep grazing.

**71 DUNSTABLE LIBRARY**

The Library Manager reported on progress in relation to activities and promotions that had taken place in the Library since the last meeting of the Committee.

**a) Library Statistics**

	<b>Dec 05</b>	<b>Dec 04</b>
Borrowers	11779	11978
Requests	442	352
Turnstile figures	21008	19161
<b>Total Enquiries</b>	<b>1738</b>	<b>1385</b>
<b><u>ISSUES</u></b>		
Uncatalogued	8	4
Adult Fiction	9127	8735
Adult Non-Fiction	5337	4696
Adult Spoken Word	566	590
<b>Total</b>	<b>15038</b>	<b>14025</b>
Junior Fiction	5906	4110
Junior Non Fiction	1460	838
Junior Spoken Word	436	398
Junior Videos	100	123
Junior DVDs	162	191
<b>Total</b>	<b>8064</b>	<b>5657</b>

Compact discs	300	323
DVDs	223	174
Videos	100	236
<b>Total</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>733</b>
Jigsaws	98	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23844</b>	<b>20484</b>

**b) Exhibitions**

Exhibitions for January and February had included The Elisabeth Svendsen Trust for Children and Donkeys and The Bogtrotters local walking group.

**c) Library Promotion**

Recent promotions had included:

- A new leaflet promoting Bedfordshire Libraries' Reading Groups
- 'World Book Day' – 2nd March
- Various book displays.

**d) People's Network**

Dunstable Library had now been allocated 7 more public network computers bringing the current total to 23. Three pcs had been allocated to the adult library, 2 to the children's library and 2 to the new young adults section.

**e) Young Adults Area**

Great progress had been made in attracting teenagers to the Library with regular numbers of about 30 young people visiting after school and on Saturdays. The volume of noise from these groups had however resulted in several complaints from other members. To avoid alienating other clientele library staff were in the process of establishing a 'young adults' section. This was seen as a good opportunity for both staff and regular customers but one that could cause some friction. To assist in coping with potential problems a variety of courses had been introduced to help staff better understand and communicate with teenagers and young adults.

To further assist in this initiative it was agreed to ask the Youth and Community Manager to liaise with the Library Manager regarding the current issues of concern relating to young people both in and around the Library.

**f) Family History**

A series of family history sessions had been run to tie in with the BBC's family history programme 'who do you think you are?' Groups had learnt how to begin their family tree using birth, marriage and death web sites and census web sites from Bedfordshire Libraries' Virtual Library. A visit from the family history section of Dunstable's U3A would also be taking place at the beginning of March.

**72 CITIZONE**

The Citizone Manager reported on the current operation of this service. Customer levels remained fairly stable. A relationship had been formed with Bedfordshire Police and Trading Standards, working towards the establishment of Dunstable as a 'No Cold Calling Zone'.

Citizone would also be piloting a scheme to provide telephone or e-mail progress updates for all customers reporting Highways problems to the County Contact Centre. The Citizone service was currently employing 6 staff working a combined total of 55 hours per week. Whilst customer satisfaction was high it was acknowledged that Citizone needed to provide more services to attract increased custom to enable it to reduce its cost per transaction. Members were reminded that the original purpose of Citizone had been both to support the joining up of council services through a single point of enquiry and to assist people to use the internet as a medium for enquiries, being more cost effective than face to face contact.

## 73 PROMOTIONS

### a) Lunchtime Recitals: Tuesdays 10th January - 11th April 2006 – The Council Chamber – Grove House

Audience attendance figures for the winter programme had been on the increase since the Christmas break and the first six recitals of the New Year had had an average attendance of 25, with a total attendance of 152. It was noted that the Autumn programme would commence in October.

### b) Dunstable Town Band Launch Concert: Friday 31st March 2006 – The Methodist Church, The Square

The launch concert would start at 7.30pm with doors opening at 6.45pm. Tickets for this event could be purchased from either Dunstable Town Council Offices or from the Tourist Information Centre, Priory House. Tickets prices were £5.00 (Adults) and £2.00 (children 14 and under and concessions).

### c) Town Centre Easter Entertainment: Saturday 15th April 2006 – Priory Gardens and Town Centre Areas

The programme of entertainment was agreed as follows:

DATE	VENUE	TIME	PERFORMER
Saturday 15.4.06	Ashton Square and the market area	11.00am -1.00pm	Taro the Jester
Saturday 15.4.06	Quadrant Shopping Centre	11.00am – 3.00pm	Face Painting
Saturday 15.4.06	Priory Gardens	1.00pm 2.00pm 3.00pm	Mr Topples Punch and Judy Show
Saturday 15.4.06	Quadrant Shopping Centre	1.00pm – 3.00pm	Taro the Jester
Saturday 15.4.06	Priory Gardens	2.00pm – 3.00pm	Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday 15.4.06	Priory Gardens	1.00pm – 2.00pm	Easter Bunny Race (provisional)

### d) St George's Day Entertainment: Saturday 22nd April 2005 – Priory House and Town Centre Areas

Dunstable would be visited by Sir Lupin of Pipwithers, carried around the town on the heads of his long suffering and quietly muttering peasants as he searches for his lost horse Shergar in order to engage in combat with the dragon.

In Priory House medieval storyteller Kay Rouse would be entertaining children with tales about dragons and mythical beasts, including 'The story of Saint George and the Dragon' and 'The story of the Dragon and Ghent'. Stories would be every half hour between 10.00am and 4.00pm in the Undercroft.

e) **Dunstable Carnival: Monday 1st May 2006 – Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground, Bull Pond Lane – 12 noon – 5pm**

Arrangements for this annual event were well underway, with stall and sideshow forms already being returned to the office. Main arena entertainment on the day would feature 'Gunsmoke Wild West Display Team', returning after their performance was dampened due to bad weather conditions in 2004. This would be supplemented by the 'Rockwood Display Team'. On site activities would be broadly the same as in previous years with novelty sideshows and a fun fair, as well as the usual charity and commercial stalls. The procession this year would be themed '21st Century Blockbusters'. Publicity was currently being produced and the Carnival would once again make front-page news on the next edition of the Talk of the Town.

f) **Sunday Afternoon Band Concerts: Sundays 4th June - 20th August 2006 – Performance Area, Grove House Gardens**

The programme for this year's series of concerts would be as follows:

4th June	Dunstable Town Band
11th June	Salvation Army Band
18th June	Toddington Band
25th June	Queensbury School Band
2nd July	South Beds Concert Band
9th July	Manshead School Band
16th July	Ashton Middle School Band
23rd July	Vine Street Six
30th July	Bedford Town Concert Brass
6th August	Watford Band
13th August	5 Star Swing band
20th August	Hemel Hempstead Band

In addition to the usual Sunday Band Concerts, three additional concerts were being staged in Priory Gardens to enhance visits to the Heritage Centre and Gardens, on the following Saturdays:

27th May	Brosely Brass Band
24th June	Bradwell Silver Band
15th July	M&M Jazz

g) **Charity Croquet Competition: Saturday 15th July 2006 – Priory Gardens**

This event was being organised with the technical assistance of Mrs Ronnie Richardson and Mr Don Brennan who would adjudicate on the day and would be running an eliminatory competition prior to the event for teams wishing to progress to the grand final on the 15th, there being space for 10 teams of 2 competitors. In addition to the croquet competition there would be a jazz band playing in the gardens and strawberries, cream and champagne would be available from The Rose Garden Tea Rooms, as well as afternoon tea. The event would take place from 10am to 4pm.

**h) Kite Making Workshop: Kite Festival - Sunday 30th July 2006 – Dunstable Downs**

As in previous years, Town Council Summer Activities staff would be in attendance at this event to assist in the design and construction of the kites. Based on previous years, equipment for the making of up to 300 kites would need to be purchased.

**i) Dunstable Folk and Dance Festival: Saturday 26th August – Sunday 27th August 2006 – Priory Gardens and Grove House Gardens**

Arrangements for the Folk and Dance Festival were well underway. The main concert on Saturday night would begin at 6.00pm with the opening act EnQ due to appear at approximately 6.15pm. Chas and Dave would headline the Saturday event at approximately 9.15pm. Sunday would see an afternoon concert in Grove House Gardens and further details on the line up would be brought to this Committee as soon as confirmed. In addition to the music in Grove House Gardens, Priory Gardens would host a traditional Folk Concert from 2.00pm to 4.30pm, on Saturday 26th August. Promotions staff were currently booking on site refreshments and activities to enhance the event and Rick Christian had one again been secured as host. Once the full programme was confirmed, publicity would be distributed throughout the town with further advertising in the local press, Talk of the Town and The Unicorn Folk Magazine. The Tourist Information Centre staff would also be promoting the weekend through the Tourist Information Centre network and Priory House would be offering an accommodation booking service for anyone wishing to come from further a field, for this and any other of the events. Furthermore, the Town Council's newly revamped website continued to promote events and updates as they became available.

**j) Repair to the Carved Wooden Eagle in Grove House Gardens**

The Committee considered options for the repair of the eagle damaged during 2005. It was agreed to arrange for its repair in situ and then immediately remove it and put it into storage. Once Grove House Gardens were re landscaped it would be located to a more secure position.

**k) Charity Collections**

Various requests to display charity boxes and sell items such as badges for charities had been received at Priory House. The Committee considered that such a practice would not be appropriate for this location and authorised officers to respond to any further requests accordingly.

**l) Touring Theatre**

Members noted that Bedfordshire County Council was no longer engaging Arena to perform touring theatre in local schools. As this Committee's decision to cease arranging touring theatre itself had in part been based upon the fact that Arena were then providing the same production in local schools it was agreed to review this decision when considering programmes for future years.

**74 PRIORY HOUSE**

**a) General Update**

The Committee received the general progress report of the Cultural Services Officer and noted that the works to the first floor exhibition were due to be completed during the next month. Trade in the café had been good with most tables full during the lunchtime core

hours. Having identified the need for better signage outside the building, officers were now awaiting design proofs for submission to the District Council's Conservation Officer.

**b) Tourist Information Centre**

The progress report of the Tourist Information Centre Supervisor was received. New developments included the forthcoming trial of the sale of National Express Tickets. Staff would soon be undergoing the recommended Tourist Board training which would enable the centre to become fully networked.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on retail sales. Whilst profit to date was slightly below target it was anticipated that with trading experience, adjustments to prices and stock would bring profit margins back in line with the original budget. Updated information would accordingly be reported to future meetings.

**c) Education**

The report of the Heritage Education Officer was received. Members were pleased to note encouraging attendances at events with regular numbers of between 25 and 30 people at the weekly Heritage Talks.

**75 APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE 2006/2007**

The Committee received full details of 7 applications for financial assistance from groups/organisations that fell within this Committee's terms of reference.

**RESOLVED:** i) that the following grants be approved:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Grant</u> £
Dunstable Ladies Choir	Sheet music and stationery	130.00
Dunstable Arts Council	Arts Diary, exhibitions, administration and awards	1,000.00
Priory Choirs	Boys singing week, girls tuition	300.00
Dunstable Concert Music Society	Software upgrade, music notation, stationery	150.00
Dunstable and District Flower Club	Subsidised fees	100.00
Dunstable Priory Church Flower Guild	Flowers, greenery, florists accessories	250.00

ii) that the application of Team Spirit Parish Magazine be not granted

iii) that the Committee gives further consideration to the introduction of a criteria for assessing applications in future years.