

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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

ON MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Pat Staples (Chairman), Lisa Bird, John Chatterley, Eugene Ghent, Anne Kennedy, Claire Meakins and Patricia Russell

In Attendance: Councillors Sid Abbott, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, Ann Sparrow and Andy Whayman; David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Sandy Coyle (Community and Young Peoples Services Manager), Kelley Hallam (Office Administrator) and Lisa Vincent (Events and Marketing Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Terry Colbourne

Public: Six

183 DUNSTABLE MARKET

Four Dunstable market traders attended the meeting to ask the Chairman if they could be present when the Dunstable Market item on the agenda was being discussed. It was explained that this item was on Part 2 of the agenda because it was of a confidential nature and so their request was denied by the Chairman. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive explained to the meeting the reasons as to why the Market report was in Part 2 of the agenda. The Market traders were given the opportunity to speak and give their views to the Committee and asked a number of questions which it was agreed would be responded to in writing by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. They then left the meeting.

Action: Town Clerk and Chief Executive

184 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 4 September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

185 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Interest	Agenda Item
Councillor Lisa Bird	Pecuniary interest – Dunstable Market	5 & Part 2, Item 1
Councillor Pat Staples	Pecuniary interest – Dunstable Market	5 & Part 2, Item 1

186 EVENTS AND MARKETING

The Events and Marketing Officer presented an update report on past events and the planning of future 2017 events and updated members on the Council's website and social media usage.

The Fireworks event had gone very well and without incident with an estimated 15,000 people attending.

Members were informed that the planning for the Christmas Carol and Torchlight Procession was complete and confirmation had been received from 10 schools that they would be attending with approximately 300 children.

The Events Officer had received feedback from Members that the position of the stage should be moved nearer to the tree and asked the Committee if they were in agreement. Members gave their views but all agreed that that the Councillors did not need to be on a stage at all and would be happy to mingle with the crowd.

RESOLVED: that the Councillors would not require the stage to be set up at the Christmas Carol and Torchlight Procession

Members received the final costs of this year's Beer and Cider Festival and were asked to decide if they wished for it to be included in the 2018 Events Programme. Members noted the details given regarding staffing and infrastructure costs and were reminded that to hold the Beer Festival would be likely to attract a subsidy of £5,000 but could end up being as much as £15,000.

Members expressed their disappointment at losing this event but felt that all options had been tried and exhausted.

RESOLVED: that the Beer and Cider Festival be removed from the events programme.

187 DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

The Head of Community Services updated the Committee on the Market and Ashton Square Toilets including the market trader figures for September and October 2017 which included casual traders, permanent traders and themed and craft market trader figures.

Members noted the income and expenditure figures.

188 PRIORY HOUSE

The Head of Community Services presented a report on recent operations and activities at Priory House, including trading account figures and Priory House maintenance.

Members were given a snapshot of one week's National Express bookings as requested. It included the number of bookings, time taken to make the bookings and costs for supplying this service. The previous commission rate of 10%, taking account of all costs, would have yielded £44.48 income but the new commission rate of 5% on the same basis led to a deficit of £6.26. Members all agreed that this was an important service and discussed whether an additional booking fee should be charged so as not to have to subsidise the service.

RESOLVED: that the service continues to be subsidised and the commission income target be reduced.

189 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community and Young People's Services Manager reported on recent attendance figures and activities at Grove Corner and reported on recent community engagement activities.

Central Bedfordshire College and their Pathway Group were planning to visit Grove Corner to introduce their students who have additional needs, to the staff to help build up their confidence to attend senior sessions if they wished.

133 children and 68 adults attended a Halloween themed family fun activity at Creasey Park Community Football Centre. A booking system may be used in future to control the number of attendees.

Men in Sheds now had 25 members who could not all be accommodated at one time in the current facility and so the number of sessions would be increased.

The Town Mayor had been to visit Men in Sheds and informed the Committee that at some point in the future they may need to look into how their facilities could be improved.

A number of residents had approached the Town Council with a wish to turn an area of land at Bunhill Close, owned by the Town Council, into a community growing project and family open space. To ascertain the wider views of the local community a consultation event was held in which 47 people attended. Members noted the results of the consultation which were inconclusive. There had been a lot of support for the project but also a lot of requests to turn it into car parking.

190 OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICE

The Community and Young People's Services Manager reported on attendances, activities and outings for the Good Companions Club and the Creasey Park Community Football Centre Over 55s Lunch Club.

The groups had benefited from visits from both Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue and Bedfordshire Police to advise on fire safety and crime prevention.

191 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride:

Councillor Hollick gave a comprehensive update on operations at South Beds Dial-a-Ride.

Dunstable Town Band:

Councillor Sparrow reported that the Town Band had spent the grant received from DTC on new music and their subscriptions covered the rest of their expenses. They were having difficulty recruiting new members.

192 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

193 DUNSTABLE MARKET

Having already declared a pecuniary interest, Councillor Staples vacated the Chair and Councillor Martin assumed the role of Chairman while the report on Dunstable Market was considered. Both Councillors Staples and Bird remained in attendance at the meeting to listen to the discussion but both made it clear that they would not take part in any vote.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a detailed report that addressed ongoing operational difficulties in providing services to traders on Dunstable Market.

Members discussed at length the available options that might remedy the operational issues but were unable to agree any resolutions. Instead the Committee agreed the following;

- RESOLVED:**
- i) that decision making regarding the operational difficulties outlined in the covering report be deferred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

 - ii) that a consultation meeting be held with all regular General Market traders regarding the Council's future management/provision of the General Market in Dunstable. The following members were nominated to carry out the consultation meeting with the support of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and other officers; Councillors Andy Whayman (later substituted with the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Martin); Councillor Eugene Ghent; Councillor Patricia Russell.