

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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

ON MONDAY 3 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Gloria Martin (Chairman), Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Gregory George, Pamela Ghent, John Gurney, Peter Hollick, Cameron Restall and Lee Roberts

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Kelley Hallam (Office Administrator), Sandy Coyle (Community and Young People's Services Manager) and Helen Walker-Sygrove (Priory House Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Sid Abbott (Town Mayor) and Gladys Sanders (Vice-Chairman)

Public: Two

87 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 11 March 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

88 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Interest	Agenda Item
Councillor Lee Roberts	Non-Pecuniary Interest	Item 8
Councillor Liz Jones	Non-Pecuniary interest	Item 9

89 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.

The daytime hire of Grove Corner had again increased. Sight Concern, NOAH Community Café, Minds2gether and Yawn Life were all currently using the centre.

Groundwork, who had been commissioned to undertake the Town Council's youth provision for 12 months, were planning on using the Splashside Café from 18 June to hold a drop-in session, utilising both the café and the green space for activities. They would also be attending Town Council events over the summer to engage with young people and promote the new youth provision.

Members were informed that the community groups that the Town Council supported would be invited to Committee meetings to give new members an overview of what they do.

90 REVIEW OF DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES

The Head of Community Services presented a comprehensive report that requested Members to establish a review group to look at the Town Council's youth services and to bring recommendations back to a future Community Services Committee.

The Town Council had been delivering youth services from Grove Corner for over 15 years. The format had remained the same throughout; three nights a week, free drop in 13 to 19 year olds, 7.00 pm to 9.30 pm. Whilst there had always been fluctuations in attendance, since September 2017, numbers had steadily dropped despite the Senior Youth Officer who was in post at the time, carrying out outreach and visiting schools.

With the Senior Community and Young People's Services Officer position now vacant and the impending retirement of the Senior Community and Young People's Services Manager it was recommended that the Committee form a review group along with representatives from Groundwork and DTC staff to review the whole service provision.

The Committee were asked to pass any ideas they may have to officers before the review meetings began.

RESOLVED: that Councillors Bird, Ghent, Gurney, Hollick, Martin and Restall form the review group along with Groundwork representatives and DTC Officers to bring recommendations back to this Committee in September.

91 EVENTS AND MARKETING

The Head of Community Services presented an update report on the 2019/2020 events programme. She also updated members on the usage of the Council's website and social media.

The St George's event had been cancelled due to high winds. It was the first time in 10 years that an event had been cancelled due to weather. The decision had not been taken lightly but the risk was too high to run the event safely.

Around the World had been very successful with over 2,000 people attending and positive feedback received from the public.

The Committee were informed that since 1 January the Dunstable Town Council website had had 56,421 page views. Facebook was the most popular way to engage with the public with the Facebook page now having over 6,000 likes with last month's post reach up by 44% to 66,158 and engagement increasing by 184% to 40,941.

The first edition of Poised would be delivered from 7 June. The new magazine was aimed at encouraging people from outside villages/towns to shop in Dunstable and use the facilities. In total 20,650 copies would be delivered.

Members were informed that Houghton Regis Town Council had requested one of the Council's free uses of the Grove Theatre for their Christmas event. The Town Council's uses were usually offered to Dunstable community groups but as yet had not had any other requests. Members discussed the request and it was put to the vote.

RESOLVED: that the Houghton Regis Town Council's request for the use of one of the Town Council's free uses of the Grove Theatre be declined.

92 **PRIORY HOUSE**

The Priory House Manager presented a report on recent operations and activities at Priory House, including trading account figures and Priory House maintenance.

Showcase shelving had been fully booked for April and May and already had bookings for the coming months. It was noted that there had been several new traders recently.

The Classic Motor Rally would take place on 8 June. There were currently 210 applicants across all categories.

A new initiative, Tea and Tots, aimed at parents/carers with young babies that launched in March had been well attended initially but had now waned a little.

Members noted that the Income and Expenditure report as at the end of the financial year showed a positive variance.

Members congratulated all the Priory House staff for their hard work in making it a very successful year.

93 **DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

The Head of Community Services updated the Committee on Town Centre Services including Ashton Square Toilets and the themed and craft market trader figures.

Two Porters had recently been recruited to work twice a month at the themed/craft markets.

Officers had still not received any dates for when the works to the Ashton Square toilets would begin.

Free events had been organised throughout the summer by the Town Centre Services Officer. These included The Invisible Art Trail, Football on the Square, Seaside Day and the lottery funded event, Weird and Wonderful which would be a two-day event.

The Town Council in partnership with CBC and The Joint Committee had set up a Shop Front Improvement Scheme. Independent retailers could apply for up to £500 match funding towards the cost of improving their shop fronts. As yet no-one had applied even though the Town Centre Services Officer had hand delivered leaflets to all shops.

A Shop Watch Scheme had been newly formed for retailers of Dunstable with the purpose of sharing intelligence for the common purpose of reducing retail crime. This was in partnership with Bedfordshire Police, Central Bedfordshire Council and Dunstable Town Council.

The Town Centre Services Officer had been working closely with CBC's Planning Enforcement Team looking at units which were falling into disrepair. Warning letters had been sent to several landlords/owners and section 215 notices had been issued where necessary.

94 **PETER NEWTON PAVILION – BEDFORDSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

Members received the annual report on the running and management of the Peter Newton Pavilion by the Bedfordshire Football Association.

95 **REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride:
No report.

Dunstable Town Band:
No report.