

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 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillors Sid Abbott (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Gloria Martin (Chairman), Gladys Sanders (Vice-Chairman), Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Gregory George, Pamela Ghent and John Gurney and Peter Hollick

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), James Slack (Head of Community Services), Kelley Hallam (Business Support Manager), Sandy Coyle (Community and Young People's Services Manager) and Sharon Long (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Cameron Restall and Lee Roberts

Public: Two

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 4 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

3 EVENTS AND MARKETING

The Head of Community Services presented an update report on the 2019/2020 events programme and also updated members on the usage of the Council's website and social media. It was noted that Facebook and Talk of the Town are the Council's most successful marketing routes.

Members also received the results from the events survey. It was noted that 99% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Town Council's events programme.

Councillor Jones recorded her thanks to staff for the organisation of the Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession event. She noted that the market stalls and shops had benefitted from the event given the numbers of people it has attracted.

It was noted that in future the events survey would be conducted in relation to each individual event rather than all events. This should mean an increase in the number of participants in the survey.

4 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 Committee were informed that Sorted had given three months' notice to quit. More will be reported on this at the next meeting but there is no financial implication.

A new group organised by Mind- BLMK "Minds Matter" will be starting on 13 January for 17 to 25-year olds, and a further group for hoarders is also planned.

5 OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICES

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.

Councillors discussed the popularity of the Good Companions Club and over 55s lunch club took place, and the benefits of these sessions to the community were noted by them. Councillors questioned officers if there was any opportunity for further over 55s lunch club sessions to be accommodated either at Creasey Park or at other venues. The Community and Young People's Services Manager explained that whilst officers were keen to try and put on other over 55s lunch club sessions, regrettably at the present time Creasey Park does not have the availability to be able to accommodate another group. Further, whilst officers have tried to find another suitable venue, they had not been successful in doing so. This was though a matter under regular review.

Those that attended the trip to the pantomime at Grove Theatre on 19 December enjoyed it.

The second Rock and a Roll event is being planned for 11 February 2020.

6 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.

There are six confirmed bookings for weddings in the Jacobean Room and several provisional bookings.

The Torchlight event saw an increase in trade in the Tea Rooms, which remained open to serve hot and cold beverages and festive cakes, and in the shop where there were good sales on glow products.

Councillor Jones commented that the staff all did a fantastic job over the busy Christmas period and that the event was very well attended and received by the community.

7 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.

There were 25 shops entered for the Christmas Window Competition.

The Christmas Magic event organised by the Town Centre Services Officer and the events team had been very popular and traders had reported a positive two days.

The Dunstable Joint Committee Shop Front Improvement Scheme had been extended and

has received 12 applications, of these, five had completed the works to their shop fronts.

8 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride:

No report

Dunstable Town Band:

No report

9 BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the Budget Proposals for 2020/21. He explained that this had not changed significantly since the draft Budget had been presented to Members and that the slight increase to the Community Services budget could still be accommodated within the anticipated one per cent increase in council tax the Council would be requesting in the 2020/21 Precept request.

Councillor Gurney suggested that it might help the public understand what was involved in putting on community events if an article explaining the steps, time and costs that went into to organising an event appeared in Talk of the Town.

Councillor Abbott said he would like to see the return of the Beer Festival. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive indicated he was willing to revisit this if a different model was available as experience to date indicated that an event run on the model the Council had previously used was not financially sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION: the Committee recommend the draft Community Services budget as presented with no amendments or further recommendations, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

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.

10 REVIEW OF YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES

Following a full discussion on the proposals to partially restructure the Community and Young People's Services team the following was approved:

RESOLVED: that all proposals as detailed in the covering report to the Community Services Committee be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.