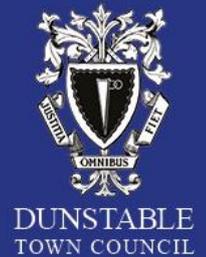


Dunstable Town Council
Grove House
76 High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1NF

Tel: 01582 513000
E-mail: info@dunstable.gov.uk
Website: www.dunstable.gov.uk



David Ashlee Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: 18 February 2021

Dear Councillors

Could you please note that a remote meeting of the Community Services Committee will be held on **Monday 1 March 2021** at **7.00 pm** using Microsoft Teams. Members of the public and press who wish to attend the remote meeting are welcome to do so and should notify their intention to attend by emailing Ian.Reed@dunstable.gov.uk by 26 February 2021. Instructions on how to join will then be sent out.

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Minutes of the meetings of the Community Services Committee held on 4 January 2021 (previously circulated).
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Grove Corner and Community Engagement – information report and decision on 2020/21 Service Level Agreement (see page 3).
6. Older People's Services – information report (see page 7).
7. Events and Marketing – information report and decision on electronic signage (see page 9).
8. Priory House – information report (see page 15).
9. Dunstable Town Centre Services – information report (see page 18).
10. High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) – information report (see page 21).

(Continued)

11. Reports from outside bodies:
South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee - Cllr Gloria Martin
Dunstable Town Band - Cllr Gloria Martin
Men in Sheds - Cllr John Gurney

Yours faithfully



David Ashlee
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

To: All Members of the Community Services Committee:
Peter Hollick (Town Mayor), Gloria Martin (Deputy Town Mayor and Chairman), Cameron Restall, (Vice-Chairman), Sid Abbott, Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Philip Crawley, Gregory George, Pamela Ghent, John Gurney, Lee Roberts, Gladys Sanders and other Members of the Council for information

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021

GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Purpose of Report:	For information and for decision on 2020/21 Service Level Agreement.
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1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That members determine issues regarding the schedule of grants paid to voluntary sector organisations through Service Level Agreements as set out at paragraph 7 below and make recommendations to The Finance and General Purposes Committee accordingly.

2. GROVE CORNER FIGURES

- 2.1 Grove Corner continues to remain shut in line with the current Government guidance. Officers have been working in partnership with Central Bedfordshire College and Weatherfield Academy to deliver weekly online provision to a cohort of students. Between 12 December to 12 February; Officers have engaged with 140 young people. Numbers are recorded through a head count.
- 2.2 Due to the national lockdown, Grove Corner youth sessions have been unable to resume. Officers continue to follow the National Youth Agency covid-19 guidance in line with the Government guidelines. Officers will facilitate a soft reopen once it is safe to do so and will build up to being fully functioning with all evening sessions. Young people who wish to attend will need to book prior to the session.
- 2.3 Grove Corner now has 581 Facebook 'Likes' and Grove Corner's Instagram now has 269 followers.

3. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 Officers continue to consult with young people about the upcoming gaming facilities and games. Due to the national lockdown, a new date to launch is currently unknown. Officers will be using some of the funding received by the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) run by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire to rebrand Grove Corner's marketing with new leaflets and sub logos for the various sessions which will run from the centre. These will be new uniformed logos for the gaming, drop-in sessions, and Pokémon club.
- 3.2 Officers continue to engage with young people from Central Bedfordshire College and have set up partnership provision with Weatherfield Academy to deliver digital provision. Officers run one-hour sessions to several classes a week. The content officers deliver is informal and includes consultation, games and discussions on

existing and emerging issues young people are currently facing due to the pandemic.

Officers have received feedback from tutors at both provisions that the sessions are beneficial and helping their students to reduce stresses and anxieties they are currently experiencing.

- 3.3 Officers continue to discuss the reopening of the youth sessions at Grove Corner through word of mouth, the dedicated young people's Facebook and Instagram pages and through Talk of the Town.
- 3.4 Officers are working in partnership with Groundwork to carry out detached youth work on a weekly basis.

4. DAY TIME HIRE

- 4.1 Throughout the latest lockdown, Grove Corner continued to facilitate one support group following Government guidelines and ensuring the relevant safety measures in place are adhered to.
- 4.2 The majority of other hirers that use Grove Corner decided due to the national lockdown to postpone their sessions until the Government guidelines change.
- 4.3 Minds2gether continue to run sessions every Friday 10.00 am to 1.00 pm at limited capacity. This group is a mental health support group. Due to the national lockdown, Minds2gether have not yet been able to begin a second session which was due to start in January.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 Officers continue to attend the COVID-19 Response meetings fortnightly which are facilitated by Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 5.2 Weekly befriending calls to vulnerable residents either shielding or isolated continue. Officers offer information, advice, and guidance to those who require it. Since the last report and latest national lockdown measures, officers have been unable to resume community engagement events, therefore befriending calls have continued. Officers have made 126 calls between 4 January and 12 February 2021.
- 5.3 Due to being unable to run a family fun activity workshop during February half term, officers created two online videos for families to create arts and crafts at home using resources they would already have in the house. These were both published on Facebook and Instagram.
- 5.4 Due to the current Government guidelines and with national lockdown, officers have concluded that the community engagement activities including family fun days, Love Parks Week and Summer Activities, will not be able to happen at the same scale this year.
- 5.5 Officers have begun to work on what could be delivered safely within Government guidelines and restricted measures. Officers are at this time unable to confirm events

and activities until Government guidance and risk assessments are issued.

- 5.6 Officers are hoping to facilitate activities and events to be delivered either virtually or to operate low scale workshops. Those attending will need to book onto these in advance.
- 5.7 Officers are hoping to be able to run small scale activities for Love Parks Week in July. However, officers are unable to confirm a scheduled activity plan until Government guidance is issued.
- 5.8 Officers are planning to be able to run small scale workshops and family fun events during the summer holidays as part of the August summer activities programme. These events will require those attending to book prior to the event. Officers are also exploring the possibility of virtual workshops as a contingency plan or as part of the wider programme.

6. DOWNSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE

- 6.1 Seventh Day Adventist terminated their licence on 31 January 2021.
- 6.2 Officers have been working with Conroy Boxing who have undertaken an informal agreement to access the centre to store their possessions and begin to tidy and clean the centre until Government guidance change and they are able to officially open. Conroy boxing will then sign and operate under their agreed licence and pay rent.
- 6.3 All community groups who previously used the centre under the Seventh Day Adventists management of the centre have now been contacted and are in touch with Conroy Boxing to see if they can be accommodated.

7. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS 2020/21

- 7.1 Members will be aware that the Council annually funds the following voluntary sector bodies through Service level Agreements:
 - Community Action Bedfordshire (£500)
 - Dunstable Town Guides (£800)
 - Priory Church (£1,000)
 - Dunstable and District History Society (£200)
 - Dunstable Town Band (£1,000)
- 7.2 Officers last month met with Community Action Bedfordshire (CAB) and Bedfordshire Rural Community Council (BRCC). The two organisations are merging, taking effect from April 2021. This will mean that should members wish to continue to fund a sign posting and support service for the community and voluntary sector the Service Level Agreement will require amendments as there will be a change of control from CAB to BRCC. The level and type of service will remain the same, the agreement will however, be through a different organisation - BRCC.
- 7.3 To date, Dunstable Town Guides and Priory Church have not received their SLA payments for 2020/21. This is due to the fact that both organisations have not had

their AGM for the year, nor have they forwarded accounts or public liability insurance details to the Council. COVID-19 has also meant that neither organisation has been able to fulfil the SLA regarding service delivery. Members are asked to consider this and whether they wish to still pay the SLA monies despite the above points not being met. Any recommendations from this committee will be referenced up to Finance and General Purposes.

8. AUTHORS

8.1 Gill Peck – Youth and Community Manager
Email – gill.peck@dunstable.gov.uk

Jack Adams-Rimmer – Neighbourhood Development Officer
Email – jack.adams-rimmer@dunstable.gov.uk

Joanne Hough – Community Services Assistant
Email – joanne.Hough@dunstable.gov.uk

Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services
Email – becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021
OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICES

Purpose of report: For information only.

1. TELEPHONE CALLS

- 1.1 Officers have continued to call members of the three lunch clubs twice per week during the pandemic and have made 528 telephone calls between 4 January to 12 February.
- 1.2 Officers have continued to provide support for members of the lunch clubs, and have signposted members to additional services or made referrals when further support has been required.
- 1.3 Officers continue to receive feedback from both members and their families that this support has been beneficial; allowing members to continue to feel connected, to have a safe space to share how they are feeling and to remove some of the loneliness some are experiencing.

2. VIRTUAL SERVICES

- 2.1 Officers continue to deliver fortnightly video calls via WhatsApp for members who have this facility. Members are enjoying these calls and being able to see one another. Officers plan sessions to deliver during these video calls in advance which encourages discussion, for members to reminisce and to have a chance to share about their weeks.

3. COFFEE MORNINGS

- 3.1 Due to the national lockdown, it is unknown when coffee mornings will currently be able to resume.

4. LUNCH CLUBS

- 4.1 Lunch clubs have been unable to reopen due to the current Government guidelines. Due to it being unknown when restrictions will be lifted officers are hoping to be able to slowly reopen lunch clubs once safe to do so, and in line with guidance and associated risk assessments.

5. BIG LUNCH

- 5.1 Due to the current Government guidelines and with national lockdown, officers have concluded that the Big Lunch will be unable to take place face-to-face this year.

- 5.2 Officers are exploring options to be able to run some form of the Big Lunch. After running some consultation with those who gave permission to be contacted about the Big Lunch 2021, the team are exploring the idea of running a virtual Big Lunch.

6. AUTHORS

- 6.1 Elaine McGarrigle, Older People's Services Officer
Email – Elaine.mcgarrigle@dunstable.gov.uk
- 6.2 Gill Peck, Youth and Community Manager
Email – gill.peck@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021****EVENTS AND MARKETING**

Purpose of Report: For information on 2021 events programme and to agree spend from the 2020/21 underspend or general reserve to part fund an electronic sign to help promote and market DTC events, as agreed in the Corporate Plan.

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That members recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the allocation of up to £20,000 to be identified from 2020/21 anticipated corporate revenue savings for the part funding of electronic signage as detailed at paragraph 6 of this report. Members should note that the purchase of an electronic notice board is an objective contained in the Corporate Plan (objective 41).

2. 2021 EVENTS PROGRAMME

- 2.1 Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions it is deemed that the standard events schedule will not be possible this year.
- 2.2 The Events and Marketing Manager has been working hard to look at what could be delivered this year based on restrictions and guidelines put in place last summer around organising events.
- 2.3 Instead of large events, there will be a variety of bookable small workshops, attractions and low-key entertainment taking place in Ashton Square and The Square on Market days, and in Grove House and Priory Gardens.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 is a table of possible attractions linked to the HSHAZ scheme and community engagement, plus themed national celebrations. The list of possible type entertainment/activities is a guide to what officers are looking at organising, however, this will be dependent on the easing of current COVID-19 restrictions.
- 2.5 At present officers are not in a position to book or confirm any activities, and this will remain until guidelines, regulations and risk assessments are carried out to ensure all our activities are Covid-19 safe.

3. MARKETING

- 3.1 The marketing plan for any activities will be closely measured and possibly targeted to meet some of the criteria from Heritage England for the HSHAZ scheme. Promoting and advertising any event or activity this summer will be managed carefully and mindful of the impact it could have in relation to crowd control, risk assessments and adhering to the guidelines/regulations.

4. HSHAZ MATCH FUNDING

- 4.1 Members are reminded that Dunstable Town Council has committed a significant amount of the community services budget to match funding for the HSHAZ scheme.
- 4.2 In year 2 (2021/22) £44,500 of the events budget has been committed as match funding, and therefore must be spent on events and activities that achieve the community engagement strand of the programme.

5. FIREWORKS EVENT

- 5.1 Due to the new ATP Pitch at Creasey Park Community Football Centre, it is no longer viable to continue with the fireworks display at this site. This is due to the requirement from CBC to cover the pitch to protect it from fallout from the fireworks and damaging the new carpet.
- 5.2 The new pitch is exactly where the fireworks were previously fired from, and this has taken away a substantial amount of space for the crowd, and means we can no longer hold the 15,000 people who have previously attended.
- 5.3 Officers have obtained quotes to cover the pitch in suitable flooring. The quotes have varied between £40,000 to £60,000.
- 5.4 Officers have looked into other parks and grounds around Dunstable and unfortunately due to either lack of parking, egress, and ingress routes and limited hard standing, no other sites are suitable.
- 5.5 It should also be noted that due to the Covid-19 restrictions there is currently no guarantee that a fireworks event the size and scale that we have previously seen would be allowed anyway. This, and the fact that the Council were not allowed to host a fireworks event last year, brings a natural end to the event and provides an opportunity to look to see what kind of different event could be achieved with the budget available.
- 5.6 The Events and Marketing Manager is currently looking at ways to create a new winter lighting event in Grove House Gardens, using the £18,000 budget allocated for Fireworks in accordance with a Corporate Plan objective. After receiving feedback on the back of the twilight market, it is felt the community and local businesses would like and support a new festive event. Such an event could serve as a town centre attraction and generate increased footfall. It would also compliment the existing Christmas lighting scheme. It is hoped that tenders will be obtained for this at the same time as the Christmas lighting, ideally in April 2021.

6. ELECTRONIC SIGNAGE

- 6.1 Dunstable Town Council has included in its current Corporate Plan an aspiration to purchase a mobile electronic sign, with the purpose of promoting and marketing events across the town.
- 6.2 An opportunity has presented itself whereby CBC councillors have offered to part fund such a sign, with funding up to £6,000 available, although this money would have to be spent by the end of March 2021.

- 6.3 Officers have been researching possible options that are available from the traditional VMS (Variable Message Signs), to more high-tech LED screens, and have obtained some quotes for both types.
- 6.4 At the time of writing officers are still engaging with a number of companies, and a final decision is yet to be made regarding which style of sign to purchase as a number of factors need to be taken into consideration including; content management systems, power supply, storage, and towing.
- 6.5 Officers are also currently liaising with colleagues in CBC planning to confirm that the option chosen is acceptable and will not require planning consent.
- 6.6 Officers at this point are recommending the Committee agree to recommending to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the commitment of up to £20,000 for the purchase of a mobile electronic sign as described above. It should also be noted that from initial research it appears that there could also be an annual revenue expenditure for servicing and maintenance – this would be covered by the corporate marketing and events budget.

7. AUTHOR

- 7.1 Lisa Stephens - Events and Marketing Manager
lisa.vincent@dunstable.gov.uk
- 7.2 Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services
Becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk

Suggestive Dates	Possible Venue	Possible type of activity/attraction	Notes
May	Priory Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooden Sculpture (HSHAZ) • Themed storytelling teepees (HSHAZ) • Trail (HSHAZ)3 • Walkabout re-enactors (Henry VIII/Henry I/Eleanor of Castile) • Roman Britain show and tell, talks, demonstration and activities eg. Cartographer, weaving and dyeing (HSHAZ) • Community groups ie. Dunstable Local History Society, Dunstable Town Guides workshops. 	<p>Local and Community History Month (May 1 – May 30)</p> <p>National Share A Story Month (May 1 – May 30)</p> <p>Nationwide awareness month celebrating the local community and storytelling.</p>
June	Ashton Square Priory Gardens Grove Gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooden Sculpture (HSHAZ) • Heritage Historical Gardener (HSHAZ) • Planetarium – A range of subjects are available eg. Dynamic Earth, Climate Change, Galaxies • The Green Man storytelling • Animal encounter • Walkabout/living statues and entertainers • The Workhouse – recycled materials arts and crafts • Nature Trail • Community Groups ie. Dunstable In Bloom, Men in Sheds workshops. 	<p>World Environment Day (June 5)</p> <p>World Environment Day (WED) is an international day of environmental awareness and action. This year's theme is <i>Biodiversity</i>.</p>
Saturday 19 June	Ashton Square Priory Gardens The Quadrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roaming New Orleans Jazz Band • Tribal Drums and Pipes • Soul/Motown Band • Balkan, Roma, Gypsy band • Flamenco • Mariachi • Brass band • Dhol Drummers and more • Historic Music workshop (HSHAZ) 	<p>World Music Day (June 21)</p> <p>World Music Day is celebrated in over 120 countries the event encourages people to listen and participate in World music outside in public spaces, neighbourhoods or parks.</p>
July	Ashton Square Priory Gardens Grove Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooden Sculpture (HSHAZ) • Trail (HSHAZ) • The Workhouse childrens art class (HSHAZ) • Large scale chalk artist (Ashton Square) option for children to participate • Storytelling • Arts and Crafts 	<p>Children's Art Week (June 29 – July 18)</p> <p>Children's Art Week takes place over a 3 week period. During this time schools, galleries, museums and</p>

Events and Marketing Appendix 1

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puppetry workshop • Stilt walkers/living statues/mime • Messy hands and feet painting • Building a high street (HSHAZ) 	<p>community groups are encouraged to plan and provide activities and opportunities for children and families to participate with artists and educators. Each week has a theme ie. <i>The Natural World, Connecting Across Generations, literature and creative writing.</i></p>
July	Priory Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooden Sculpture (HSHAZ) • Coinage (HSHAZ) • Look what we found! (HSHAZ) • Archaeology Sandpit digs (HSHAZ) • Historical storyteller (HSHAZ) • Flint knapping (HSHAZ) • Dinosaur exhibition • Planetarium – A range of subjects are available eg. Paleontology, History, Geology, Geography • Music and children’s entertainment • Community groups ie. Dunstable Local History Society, Dunstable Town Guides • NHS and Front Line Workers Day 	<p>Festival of British Archaeology (July 17 – August 1)</p> <p>Organised by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) spanning a 2 week period the festival is the biggest celebration of archaeology in the UK. This year the theme is <i>“Exploring Local Places”</i> aimed at encouraging people to explore the local area and the stories of the people and community who lived there.</p>
Saturday 14 August	Priory Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1940s singer • Big band/swing music • Punch and Judy • Crazy Golf • WW2 cinema/Bunker • Army assault course and WW2 children’s activities • Re-enactors (Winston Churchill/King George VI) • WW2 military officer stilt walker, balloon modelling and magic show • HSHAZ stall 	<p>VJ Day (August 15)</p> <p>Victory in Japan, celebration to mark the end of WW2. A community day to commemorate the combined 76th anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day.</p>
September	Priory Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance and music workshops eg. African drumming, didgeridoo • Calligraphy, drawing, arts and craft • Children’s activities eg. archery, climbing wall 	<p>Festival of Learning – Have a Go Month (September 1 – September 29)</p>

Events and Marketing Appendix 1

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSHAZ 'have a go' workshops• History Society, Town Guides, Men in Sheds, Physic Garden, Beaders- Involving community groups for adults to 'Have A Go'• Grove Corner Gaming Suit	The month long Festival, encouraging people to 'have a go' and try something different, celebrating in new learning and skills.
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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021

PRIORY HOUSE

Purpose of Report: For Information only.

1. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 1.1 There has been an attempt at entry to the Tea Rooms, which was unsuccessful and necessary repairs to the French Door have been made.
- 1.2 The Gift Shop will be decorated prior to reopening, as this is already overdue on the maintenance schedule, and whilst it is closed it is the best opportunity.
- 1.3 New monitoring equipment funded by Historic England has been fitted to the stonework in the Undercroft. This will require staff to collate information on a monthly basis.

2. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE AND RETAIL OUTLET

- 2.1 The Gift Shop has been closed but preparations are underway to ensure that it is reopened at the earliest opportunity, restocked and with some special offers.
- 2.2 Facebook advertising will continue to be used, as it is proving to be an effective way to promote the Gift Shop.
- 2.3 A Mail Chimp email will be sent to the customer database detailing opening and offers as soon as information is available.

3. THE JACOBAN ROOM

- 3.1 There are 16 confirmed weddings (with Registrar) for 2021. Nine of these weddings were rearranged from 2020 after being postponed.
- 3.2 Priory House is now registered with Hitched, the UK's biggest wedding website. Currently, Priory House is the only wedding venue in Dunstable that is listed. There has been several enquiries through the website all of which have been responded to. Only a small percentage of these were actually viable for Priory House.
- 3.3 Table 1 below shows Jacobean Room bookings per month from April 2019. The lockdown and Tier 2 restrictions have had a dramatic impact on our bookings.

2019/20		2020/21	
<i>April</i>	6	<i>April</i>	CLOSED
<i>May</i>	7	<i>May</i>	CLOSED
<i>June</i>	10	<i>June</i>	2
<i>July</i>	7	<i>July</i>	1
<i>August</i>	5	<i>August</i>	3
<i>September</i>	6	<i>September</i>	4
<i>October</i>	7	<i>October</i>	2
<i>November</i>	8	<i>November</i>	CLOSED

<i>December</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>January</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>January</i>	<i>CLOSED</i>
<i>February</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>CLOSED</i>
<i>March</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>No bookings to Date</i>
TOTAL	101		13

4. EVENTS

- 4.1 Staff are working to create some small in-house events which can be put in place dependant on tier levels, and which can be expanded should the ability to do so arise.

5. PRIORY HOUSE TEA ROOMS

- 5.1 Staff are putting plans in place for reopening as soon as it allowed. In order to create some Covid recovery strategies, the Catering Manager is looking at various income generating opportunities.

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 Priory House Profiled Income and Expenditure Report as at 31 January 2021

Priory House Tea Rooms taking comparison EX VAT

Date	2019/2020	2020/2021	Variation 2020/2021	% Difference
TOTAL FOR 1ST QUARTER	£32,136.29	£0.00	-£32,136.29	100
TOTAL FOR 2ND QUARTER	£34,524.88	£21,143.47	-£13,381.41	39
TOTAL FOR 3RD QUARTER	£33,031.07	£11,008.95	-£22,022.12	67
JANUARY	£10,377.29	£0.00	-£10,377.29	100

Year to date £110,069.53 £32,152.42 -£77,917.11 71%

- 6.2 Income is dated up to 31 January. Priory House Tea Rooms is 71% down on income compared to the previous year.

6.3 Priory House Gift Shop takings sales comparison EX VAT

	2019/20	2020/2021	Variation 2020/2021	% Difference
TOTAL FOR 1ST QTR	£1,769.41	£144.51	-£1,624.89	92
TOTAL FOR 2ND QTR	£2,596.50	£1,416.79	-£1,179.71	45
TOTAL FOR 2ND QTR	£3,316.45	£1,345.23	-£1,971.22	59
JANUARY	£690.44	£0.00	-£690.44	100

**Year to
date** **£8,372.79** **£2,906.53** **-£5,466.26** **65%**

6.4 Income is dated up to 31 January. Unfortunately, income in the Gift Shop has been adversely affected by the lockdowns and the impact of Tier 2 restrictions in the Tea Rooms. The income is currently 65% down on last year.

6.5 It should be noted however, that the negative variation has improved on the figures last reported back in November. This is due to the fact that Priory House furloughed full-time a large number of staff during the second and third lockdowns, as well as part-time furloughing the rest of the team during this time. This yielded a saving on the salary budget of over £7,500. Part-time furloughing has continued throughout December. January saw nearly all staff full time furloughed with February seeing part-time furloughing of all of the Priory House Management team whilst the rest of the team remain on full-time furlough.

7. AUTHORS

7.1 Helen Walker-Sygrove, Priory House Manager
Email - helen.sygrove@dunstable.gov.uk

7.2 Jackie Carrington, Priory House Duty Manager
Email - jackie.carrington@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021****DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

Purpose of Report:	For information only.
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1. MARKETS**1.1 Middle Row Markets**

Middle Row Markets have been advertised with a start date of the 13 March. Due to the current situation, it is not yet confirmed when the Markets will re-start. Bookings for all the markets are continuing with the numbers below as pre booked stalls.

13 March	19 pre booked
20 March	18 pre booked
10 April	15 pre booked
17 April	18 pre booked

2. ASHTON SQUARE TOILETS

2.1 Ashton Square toilets remain open during the current lock down. The Town Rangers have reported minimum use of the toilets.

3. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

3.1 Lamps and Tubes, the Town Councils lighting contractor have confirmed that the main High Street and town centre decorations are coming to the end of their life.

3.2 The Christmas Lighting Working Group met on 8 February to discuss options for the new town centre Christmas lighting scheme. There was agreement on an overarching strategy to light up the trees (especially in Church Street and Ashton Square) and natural areas in the town and not artificial structures. The idea was to move away from individual lights on columns and use festoons and lighting to enhance trees and areas in the town's gardens and High Street.

3.3 Christmas Lighting Working Group discussed the tender process for the 2021 Christmas lighting scheme. The Tender is currently being written, and will be ready to be sent out in March. It is likely that the Council will look for the new contractor to deliver the Christmas lighting scheme for up to 5 years.

- 3.4 The main Christmas tree in The Square has had a business come forward with interest in sponsorship. If the sponsorship took place this could see another £800 being available for Christmas lighting.
- 3.5 It was agreed at the working group, that picket fences should be sourced from Men in Sheds for Priory Gardens Christmas tree and Ashton Square Christmas tree.
- 3.6 The Christmas Lighting Working Group would also like to see the arch ways to both Grove House Gardens and Priory Gardens lit as well as planters in both areas. It was also agreed that the tree at the rear of Grove House should be lit again, but in blue and white. The main tree in Ashton Square and Priory House should be multi-coloured.
- 3.7 The Events and Marketing Manager is currently looking at ways to create a new winter lights event in Grove House Gardens, using the £18,000 budget allocated for Fireworks. After receiving feedback on the back of the Twilight Market, it is felt the community and local businesses would support a new festive event. Such an event could serve as a town centre attraction and generate increased footfall. It would also complement the existing Christmas lighting scheme. It is hoped that tenders will be obtained for this at the same time as the Christmas lighting, as there would be a benefit logistically and possibly financial if the same company was used for both.

4. TOWN CENTRE

4.1 Events on the Square

The Town Centre Services Officer has started planning Ashton Square Day for August 2021. Smaller events are also being looked into, in conjunction with the markets. This will be undertaken through working with the events team and the HSHAZ scheme to provide community engagement on The Square. It is anticipated that these will be small family events to promote history and culture of Dunstable.

4.2 Partnership Working

The New Crown has been awarded money as part of the Shop Front scheme. A total of 15 shops have now benefited from the scheme.

4.3 The Town Centre Services Officer has maintained contact with the town centres shops with weekly visits to those essential shops that are open. Attending the Pride of Dunstable Zoom meetings each month has also provided a regular contact for those businesses that are not able to open currently.

4.4 The Town Centre Services Officer has also started a HSHAZ businesses forum. The objectives are to establish a forum whereby the businesses in the HSHAZ area have direct engagement with each other and with the HSHAZ programme through the Town Centre Services Officer. The hope is that this will increase participation in HSHAZ activities and overall ownership of what takes places. There is also the objective to encourage this group to continue beyond the lifetime of the programme.

- 4.5 A meeting took place with Samuel Caldbeck from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to look at the People and Places Bench Marking report, completed in March 2020. The Town Centre Services Officer and the Head of Community Services summarised their thoughts on the report and how Central Bedfordshire Council could support delivery on the key findings. One suggestion was the gathering of other market towns in Bedfordshire to produce a monthly evening food market that would rotate around the others towns. This would be centralised and coordinated by Central Bedfordshire Council and Market/Town Centre Managers. Town Centre Wi-Fi and information points was also discussed as part of the meeting. Concerns were raised about pavements and parking. The new pavements, planters and curbs have not deterred the evening parking on the High street. These concerns are being taken back for further discussions internally at CBC

5. TOWN CENTRE VACANCY RATES

- 5.1 Town Centre vacancy rates will be reported as soon as the national lockdown restrictions have eased.

6. AUTHOR

- 6.1 Annette Clynes - Town Centre Services Officer
Email - Annette.clynes@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 1 MARCH 2021****HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)****Purpose of Report:** For information only.**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Members are aware that the Historic England (HE) High Streets Heritage Action Zone Programme: Programme Delivery Guidance sets out three complimentary strands to the HSHAZ scheme:

- **Physical Interventions**
- **Cultural Programme/ Cultural Consortium**
- **Community engagement**

Updates in respect of these three strands are detailed below.

2. KEY DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 There have continued to be regular virtual meetings with several key individuals at HE and other parties involved with the HSHAZ. At present, some of the regular meetings include the following:

- *Programme Board Meetings (held quarterly)* - these meetings have been requested by Historic England and involve representatives from all parties involved in all strands of the HSHAZ programme (including the Consortium and lead professionals). The second Programme Board meeting is scheduled for 8 March 2021.
- *Catch up Meetings (held c.weekly/fortnightly)* – these meetings have been requested by HE and officers have been meeting with Joe Warburton (HE HSHAZ Project Officer) and Dr Caroline Skinner (HE HSHAZ Project Manager/ Lead for Dunstable) since later October 2020. These meetings provide the opportunity to run through any queries and discuss specific approaches.
- *Eastern Region HSHAZ Project Manager Meetings (held monthly)* - There are now five HSHAZ Programme Managers in post in the eastern region (including Bedford, North Walsham, Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth and Dunstable), and these meetings provide an opportunity for HE to meet with all and share information and offer mutual support.
- *Priory House Project Team Meetings (held c. six weekly)* - These meetings are arranged by Sarah Tattersall at the Morton Partnership. They involve members of the Morton Partnership and the project team working with them, HE and CBC. The third Priory House project team meeting was held on 25 January 2021 and the

fourth is scheduled for 1 March 2021. These meetings are currently focusing on the investigations underway to inform the repair works.

- *Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Partnership Meetings (held c. six weekly)* – These meetings involve colleagues from CBC including the Conservation Officer, Archaeological Officer and officers in planning and regeneration. The fourth meeting was held on 5 February 2021 and the fifth meeting is scheduled for 5 March 2021. These meetings are largely focused on the physical interventions strand of the HSHAZ programme.
- *Working Group Meetings (held quarterly)* – These meetings are held in advance of the Community Services Meetings and officers meet with Councillors Hollick, Martin, Abbott, Bater and Corkhill to discuss the HSHAZ in more detail. The fourth meeting is scheduled for 26 February 2021.

2.2 It is anticipated that the above outlined meetings will continue for the duration of the HSHAZ or until that element is completed in respect of the Priory House project team meetings. These meetings are key to decision making progress and informing forward planning.

2.3 The Lead Professional (Conservation Accredited Architect) for the High Street South/Middle Row projects was chosen in December 2020. Since the Community Services Committee meeting in January 2021 the lead contact from Conception Architects/Anarchitecture Ltd - <https://anarchitecturestudio.com/#eluid7cb9cc0d>) has been introduced to some of the private property owners by email. However, at present there have been no discussions between the property owners and Conception Architects.

3. PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

3.1 HE's requirements in respect of grant funds for private property owners and the basis on which private property owners may apply for funding is still being fully established at present. To date officers have only had discussions regarding the HSHAZ with a limited number of property owners due to the likely scope of cost of any works. The HSHAZ Programme Manger made initial contact with a number of private property owners in August 2020 including the owners/representatives of Numbers 4, 18, 20, 22 and 21-23 High Street South. The ownership of Number 4 High Street South changed hands at the end of January 2021. At present whilst none of these owners have committed to working with the HSHAZ, they have not declined to work with the HSHAZ and remain interested. A final call for engagement in the scheme will be made this month when letters will be sent to all four property owners. Owners will be given to the 10 March to present an expression of interest. After this date, they may still ask to directly benefit from the scheme, but this will be very much dependent on the availability of funding.

3.2 HE require that discussions are now extended to include all property owners within the HSHAZ area. In respect of this a letter is currently being drafted to be approved by HE that can be sent out to all property owners within the HSHAZ area to advise them that their property is located within the HSHAZ boundary and is eligible for grant support.

Priory House

- 3.3 Following the building familiarisation day a number of key members of the team have returned in mid-October 2020, November 2020, early December 2020 and February 2021. The Morton Partnership and the project team working under them have been undertaking initial investigations, which informed the first draft of the Construction Impact Study issued to officers on 14 December 2020. Investigations are ongoing and the Construction Impact Study will be updated following further investigations and discussions between the project team, HE and officers. Investigations which have recently been undertaken, include: the heating specialists undertaking a site visit and the installation of dowel monitoring to better investigate the damp and environmental factors.

Number 4 High Street South (Pizza Roma)

- 3.4 During the period between early November 2020 and January 2021 quotes were being obtained for a number of surveys that are required including an asbestos survey, full structural survey and a Level 4 Historic Building Record to inform what might be required and feasible going forward. Alongside this, the property changed ownership on the 29 January 2021. Initial contact was made with the new owners on 1 February 2021 and there has been contact by telephone and email since that date. It is understood that the new owners had been made aware of the HSHAZ prior to purchasing the property. Officers are currently trying to arrange an initial meeting by Microsoft Teams with the new owners.

Number 18 High Street South (Chilly and Spice)

- 3.5 The Town Clerk and Chief Executive undertook an initial site visit in mid-January 2021 and took photographs that have been shared with HE and CBC for comment to facilitate discussions regarding grant eligible works. The owner's representative has been introduced to the conservation accredited architect by email and is currently considering how they would like to proceed.

Numbers 21-23 High Street South (Moore's)

- 3.6 The position remains the same as previously reported and HSHAZ funding cannot be provided based on the existing planning permission and approved plans. HE require that any shopfronts are based on scholarly research and a previous façade. (This does not have to be from a particular period in the past). The owner is still considering the implications of this requirement and how they would like to proceed. The owner has been introduced to the conservation accredited architect by email. It is possible that they will continue with their approved scheme rather than working with the HSHAZ programme.

Numbers 20 and 22 High Street South (Celebrations and Coffee Pod)

- 3.7 Following an initial meeting held with the owner of 20 and 22 High Street South they have been considering the scope of works they would like to carry out to the two properties. The owner had previously indicated that it would be useful for them to have discussion with the conservation accredited architect, and so has been introduced by email and is currently considering how they would like to proceed.

Methodist Church

- 3.8 Since the HSHAZ has been promoted via Facebook officers have been approached by the Methodist Church regarding possible works. An initial Teams meeting was held with members of the Methodist Church in mid-January 2021. Since that time HE have advised that works to the inside of the Church would not be grant eligible. The Methodist Church have been advised of this update. However, up to £3,000 of the Town Council's match funding for the HSHAZ will be used by the Methodist Church to improve the exterior of the Church on the Ashton Square side, working with In Bloom to tidy up and improve this aspect.

4. CULTURAL PROGRAMME/ CULTURAL CONSORTIUM

- 4.1 The Cultural Programme/Cultural Consortium is being led by the Dunstable Cultural Consortium, hereafter "the Consortium." As previously reported the Consortium will have a separate grant and opportunities to bid for funding to carry out activities and events. HE will also be developing a range of commissions on a national basis.

Dunstable Cultural Consortium

- 4.2 As previously reported the Consortium's Pilot Activity Grant application for £9,940 was successful. The Consortium are working on the Pilot Activity projects. This comprises two projects - **Project 1** Augustinian Dunstable and **Project 2** Queen Eleanor of Castile. The former comprises a new display for Priory House exhibition area. The latter comprises a feasibility study for a statue of Queen Eleanor.
- 4.3 The Consortium submitted a bid to the main Activity Grant on 11 December 2020. The sifting process was due to take place in later January 2021, but has been delayed and it currently understood that the Consortium are still waiting for feedback from HE.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 Since late September 2020 the Council have been using the HSHAZ webpages on the Town Centre section of DTC's website www.dunstable.gov.uk/town-centre/dunstable-high-street-heritage-action-zone-hshaz/, a Facebook page @DunstableHSHAZ and Instagram www.instagram.com/hazdunstable/ to promote the programme and engage with the community. There has been little scope for face-to-face engagement since late September 2020 due to the Covid-19 restrictions including lockdown 2, Tier 4 restrictions and the current lockdown. A number of the recent Facebook posts have created higher levels of engagement with over 440 people voting in a poll asking "*What's more important to you? – Preserving old buildings or Filling vacant buildings*" with a reach of nearly 5,500.

The Facebook Page now has 120 likes and 144 followers, and since January has had a reach of 7,651 people. The Instagram account has 85 followers.

- 5.2 Once the current lockdown is lifted it is hoped that it will be possible to build on the initial face-to-face engagement undertaken at the Christmas Market. In the meantime several Facebook posts in January and February 2021 have invited the community to get involved with the HSHAZ either by commenting on specific posts

or through more active involvement. This has included inviting people to get in contact if they would like to steer the community engagement element of the programme. The Town Centre Services Officer has also started a HSHAZ business forum as detailed in the Town Centre Services report.

Community events programme

- 5.3 A Community Engagement Plan for the HSHAZ was required in line with guidance provided by HE. Officers in the Community Services Team inputted into the Community Engagement Plan in later 2020 by preparing individual project plans for each possible proposed project. These include standalone projects and overarching projects such as larger events that will include a number of individual HSHAZ related projects. A total of 34 individual project plans were prepared as listed in Appendix 1 and were included in the Community Engagement Plan.
- 5.4 The Community Engagement Plan was submitted to HE on 1 February 2021 for comment and approval. It is hope that HE will provide feedback on the plan during March 2021. Possible community events related to the HSHAZ will be planned on an annual basis. However, the feasibility and timing of any live events will be dependent on Covid-19 restrictions.

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Possible Community Engagement Projects

7. AUTHOR

- 7.1 Michelle Collings- High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme Manager
E-mail michelle.collings@dunstable.gov.uk

ⁱ In late 2019 the Consortium comprised Priory Church of St Peter, Medieval Dunstable, Middle Row traders representative – The owner of the Workhouse has agreed to represent Middle Row traders on the Consortium, Promoting Dunstable, Dunstable Town Guides, Dunstable Education Group, Friends of Priory House and Gardens and Grove Theatre.

Possible HSHAZ community engagement projects.

The following proposed projects are not an exhaustive list and there are other activities under consideration.

Any mention of Cultural Programme/Events or similar in the below does not mean the Consortium/Cultural Programme. Dunstable Town Council's community engagement programme will also focus on wider cultural activities.

Standalone HSHAZ Projects

- Project E (i) Social Media and Online Engagement
- Project E (ii) Art Attack Day
- Project E (iii) The Good, the Bad, the Ugly – Young People's Project
- Project E (iv) The Good, the Bad, the Ugly- Community Focus Group
- Project E (v) HSHAZ Town Team/ Business Group
- Project E (vi) Intergenerational Project
- Project E (vii) Escape Room/ Outdoor Challenge
- Project E (viii) Geophysical Survey and Earthworks Survey of Scheduled Monument of Dunstable Priory/ Priory Gardens
- Project E (ix) Community Dig/ Test Pitting

Overarching Projects such as larger events (that will include a number of individual HSHAZ projects)

- Project E (x) Family Fun
- Project E (xi) Love Parks Week –Priory Gardens
- Project E (xii) St Georges Day
- Project E (xiii) History /Culture Event
- Project E (xiv) Dunstable Live
- Project E (xv) Party in the Park
- Project E (xvi) Priory Pictures
- Project E (xvii) Celebration of Dunstable
- Project E (xviii) Ashton Square Day

Individual HSHAZ Projects (that will sit within wider overarching projects)

- Project E (xix) Wooden Sculptures
- Project E (xx) Flint Knapping Demonstrations and Workshops
- Project E (xxi) Characters of Dunstable Past and Present (animation)
- Project E (xxii) Look What We Found!
- Project E (xxiii) History in Action – Theatre, Dance, Song
- Project E (xxiv) Re-enacting the Past
- Project E (xxv) Storytelling
- Project E (xxvi) Coinage
- Project E (xxvii) Food, The High Street and Living Memory
- Project E (xxviii) Food through the Ages
- Project E (xxix) Tudor Food
- Project E (xxx) Heritage Plants and Seeds
- Project E (xxxi) Sandpit digs and activities
- Project E (xxxii) Justice in Motion
- Project E (xxxiii) History Parade
- Project E (xxxiv) Timeline