

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 7 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chairman) Cameron Restall (Vice-Chairman), Sid Abbot, Wendy Bater, Greg George, Pamela Ghent, John Gurney and Gladys Sanders

In Attendance: Councillor Lisa Bird, David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager, remotely), Lisa Vincent (Events and Marketing Manager, remotely), Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager, remotely) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: None received

Public: Two

79. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 1 March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

80. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

81. PRESENTATIONS

The Committee received presentations from representatives of Dunstable Town Band and Dunstable and District Historical Society.

The Committee welcomed the informative presentations.

82. GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Grove Corner

Further to the last Committee report Grove Corner had reopened to all youth provision. Officers had engaged with young people via virtual provision, detached youth work and 80 young people had attended Grove Corner sessions from 12 April to 14 May.

Youth Engagement

The new gaming suite at Grove Corner was very popular with young people. Officers continued to work with young people from Central Bedfordshire College and young people from the Pathways Group.

Community Engagement

Officers facilitated a family fun day on 3 June on Ashton Square. As part of the National Great British Spring Clean campaign in which it was noted a lot of local councils took part, officers had organised two litter picks. One was to be known as a community litter pick and the other would be designed to encourage young people to take part. In response to a

comment and a question from a Member that recorded his disappointment that Councillors had not been involved in the local campaign the Committee was assured all Members would be advised of the Community litter pick and they were very welcome to take part.

Further to discussion at the last meeting it was noted Officers had begun work on Love Parks Week (16 July - 20 July) and details of the planned Workshops in local parks and recreation areas was further noted. The Committee was also provided with details of planned workshops activities for the summer period. Following a comment from a Member the Committee was assured officers would look into the possibility of providing activities in all Wards.

Downside Community Centre

Ringcraft Boxing had formally occupied Downside Community Centre from 1 May. It was noted that all the community groups that had used the Downside Community Centre under previous management arrangements had been contacted to see if they could be accommodated.

It was agreed: That the officers be thanked for their report and they were also requested to provide more information about boxing at the Downside Community Centre on the Town Council website and services such as the modelling shop in the town centre be promoted to encourage take up by young persons.

83. OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICES

Further to the report to the last Committee meeting Members noted the services offered during the pandemic. Between 13 February and 6 May it was noted 772 telephone calls were made to members of the three lunch clubs, virtual video calls had been made to those lunch club members that had the facilities. It was reported that because of the most recent Covid-19 lockdown, no services were in operation. It was difficult to say when Lunch Clubs would be resumed.

In relation to the virtual Big Lunch, those taking part on 8 June would receive a packed lunch the day before, there would be live entertainment and the Town Mayor would give the virtual welcome speech. Members were once again very appreciative of the work being carried out by officers.

84. EVENTS AND MARKETING

The Committee considered the programme of events for 2021 that had been circulated with the agenda. It was reported the May events had been popular. It was also noted the marketing plan would be closely measured and possibly targeted to meet some criteria from Historic England for the HSHAZ scheme.

Further to the last meeting, it was reported a VMS mobile sign had been purchased. It was currently in use to promote the Middle-Row Markets, Ashton Square activities and Ashton Square Carpark.

85. PRIORY HOUSE

The Committee was reminded that the Priory House Manager had retired at the end of May and the Priory House Management Team led by the Head of Service would ensure operations continued as normal during the transition period. The Committee noted that the

Gift Shop had re-opened on 12 April. However, trading was slow due to weather conditions and the Tea Rooms were fair weather trading until 17 May. There were sixteen confirmed bookings for weddings in the Jacobean Room. It was noted the Tea Rooms income was down by 74%. The income for the Gift Shop was 69% down on income compared to the previous year.

86. DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

The Town Centre Services Officer updated the Committee on Town Centre Services including; vacancy rates, Middle Row Markets and partnership working.

Welcome Back Fund

An officer working group was looking how best to spend the £59,000 expected for the town. Welcome Back Wardens were to be employed to support the schemes; their roles would include litter picking, supporting the markets, events, public toilets and Priory House.

87. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FUNDING REVIEW

The Committee considered a report with recommendations from the Service Level Agreement Working Group. It was noted the recommendations would have financial implications for the Council, which would have to be addressed during budget setting for 2022/23. It was further noted that the review did not affect the issuing of 2021/22 Service Level Agreement grants.

Following a full discussion on the proposals the following was approved for submission to the Finance and General Purposes Committee;

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that it considers for the financial year 2022/2023 the following improvements in the way the Town Council funds Community organisations;

- (1) That an additional sum of up to £10,000 per year be created during the budget setting process for 2022/23
- (2) That, of the new budget , £9,000 be made available for formal Service Level Agreements and the remaining £1,000 be made available to support new and emerging voluntary groups

88. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING AND WINTER LIGHTS FESTIVAL TENDERS

The Committee considered a report on the findings following the receipt of tenders received for the Christmas lighting contract and the Winter Lights tender results. Following the seeking of clarifications from the contractor submitting the lowest tender, the Committee was recommended to accept the lowest tender submission.

For the Winter Light Festival the values ranged from £17,900 to £18,000 therefore the Committee received advice on the innovative and creative standard of the tenders as there was very little difference in the prices. The lowest price tender provided the most creative and innovative bid.

Following a full discussion on the proposals the following was approved;

RESOLVED: That the lowest tenders received for the Christmas Lighting tender and Winter Lights Festival be accepted as it was noted both tenders came within the allocated budgets.

89. HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)

The Committee was reminded that there were three strands to the HAHAZ scheme as follows;

- Physical interventions.
- Cultural Programme/Cultural Consortium
- Community engagement

The High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme Manager provided the Committee with a thorough summary of all the developments occurring under all the headings. In relation to the Board Membership of five Members of the Town Council only two attended regularly. It was stressed how important it was to retain committed Board Members. A Member requested that along with the tables in the report the property names/details be added. It was agreed this would be done.

90. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride:

Councillor Gloria Martin reported that the body was in good health financially

Dunstable Town Band:

No report

Men in Sheds (MiS)

Councillor John Gurney updated the Committee about the refurbishment of the Shed

91. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: To exclude the public and press in accordance with Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1961 S1.2 to allow discussion on matters affecting employees' remuneration and conditions of employment.

92. COMMUNITY SERVICES – RESTRUCTURE REPORT

The Committee considered a report that outlined in detail the proposed restructuring of the Community Services Department.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the following:

That the following posts be deleted from the Council's establishment:

- Priory House Manager (F/T)
- Events and Marketing Manager (P/T 30hrs)
- Events Assistant (P/T)

That the following posts be added to the Council's establishment:

- Cultural Services Manager (F/T)
- Events Officer (F/T)

AGENDA ITEM 7

- Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer (P/T 25hrs)
- Temporary High Street Heritage Action Zone Assistant (P/T 10hrs)

The meeting closed at 20.57

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