

David Ashlee **Town Clerk and Chief Executive**

Date: 26 November 2021

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of **Dunstable Town Council** which will be held on **Monday 6 December 2021** in the **Council Chamber, Grove House, Dunstable LU6 1NF commencing at 7.00pm.**

Those members of the public and press who wish to attend are invited to do so remotely using Microsoft Teams. Therefore, they are asked to notify their intention to attend by emailing ian.reed@dunstable.gov.uk by 5pm on Friday 3 December 2021.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. To move that the Chairman sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4 October 2021 (Minutes enclosed - Page 3)
3. Specific Declarations of Interest
4. Chairman's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities
(To be circulated separately)
5. Public Question Time
6. To answer questions under Standing Order 16
7. To receive reports of the undermentioned Committees:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
Community Services	1 November 2021	6
Grounds and Environmental Services	8 November 2021	11
Finance and General Purposes	15 November 2021	14
Dunstable Joint Committee	16 September 2021	16

Continued

8. Draft Budget Summary Report - 2022/23 (See page 22)
9. Nominations for representation on charities (See page 29)
10. Webcasting Report (See page 31)
11. Reports/updates by Members of Central Bedfordshire Council on matters of interest to the Town Council

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DA', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Ashlee
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY 4 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillor Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Councillor Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Councillors Sid Abbott, Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Matthew Brennan, Alan Corkhill, Peter Hollick, Greg George, Pam Ghent, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Gladys Sanders, Lee Roberts and Johnson Tamara with David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services - remotely), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services - remotely), David Brough (Senior Finance Manager – remotely), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager- remotely) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager).

Members of the public: Nil

Before the commencement of the meeting, John Hassall the Mayor's chaplain led the Council in prayer.

150 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Philip Crawley and Cameron Restall

151 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

152 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lee Roberts declared a pecuniary interest at minute 129 of the Community Services Committee minutes in relation to a property he rented being in the High Street Heritage Action Zone. He took no part in the debate nor the ensuing vote.

153 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor spoke in support of a report that had been circulated. She reminded the Council of the NHS and Frontline Workers Day held on 5 July. At the event the NHS flag and banner had been raised and a two-minute silence was held for all those that had died of Covid-19 in the past year. In addition, a garden party had been held with thirty representatives of the NHS and frontline workers attending. The Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis, had taken part in all the morning events. She had visited the Leading Ladies exhibition at Priory House. She had met representatives of Dunstable in Bloom and commented on the Physic Garden and the In Bloom Group had presented her with a medieval nosegay made from plants from the Garden. After the event Madam Mayor had sent Helen Nellis a selection of teas from Priory House.

Madam Mayor commented on the successful Civic Event held on 9 September. She also commented on the highly successful Around the World and Festival of Archaeology events held on 18 September. On the same day she had attended a County Girl Guiding event at

Whipsnade Zoo. The girl guides had been fundraising for food for the zoo animals during Covid.

154 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting

155 TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

156 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minute 129 - The Council Meeting was advised of a meeting of the HSHAZ Working Group held that morning. The meeting considered a number of grant applications from Middle Row retail unit owners for repairs and improvements to shop fronts. Members of the Working Group had approved the applications and recommended that the Council resolve their approval as agreed and set out below.

Minute 131 - The Chairman of the Committee took the opportunity to summarise the issues relating to minute 131 on the foreseeable future of the Dunstable Fireworks Display. During the ensuing discussion, Councillor John Gurney was accused of using foul and abusive language against another member of the Council. The Chairman was advised of the incident and Councillor John Gurney was asked to leave the meeting. Councillor Gurney left the meeting at 19.33. Councillors Lee Roberts and Kenson Gurney also left the meeting, returning at 19.34.

RESOLVED: i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 6 September 2021 be received.

ii) that subject to final approval from Historic England, three grants covering five individual properties on High Street South / Middle Row, totalling £590,585.80 be made to relevant owners of the properties as part of the Council's High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme .

157 GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Ground and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 September be received.

158 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 September 2021 be received.

ii) that the amended and updated Financial Regulations as submitted be approved

159 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Council meeting was invited to consider the consultation Central Bedfordshire Council was undertaking on car parking charges. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive went through individual survey questions and secured a majority consensus on all answers that were

AGENDA ITEM 3

largely in opposition to any increases in parking charges. Members also made various comments which would be captured in the Council's response including making the suggestion to Central Bedfordshire Council that the freehold to all town centre car parks should be devolved to the Town Council along with the management of the car parks. In addition, all members were encouraged to make individual responses to the car park charges survey.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive submits a response to the survey on behalf of the Council in line with the answers given and the comments made by Council members.

160 REPORTS / UPDATES BY MEMBERS OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor Tamara reinforced the importance of all Council members to make individual responses to Central Bedfordshire Council's consultation on car parking charges and Councillor Sanders reminded members of the current Central Bedfordshire Council consultation on the location of the town centre taxi rank.

The meeting closed at 20.10.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chairman), Sid Abbot, Wendy Bater, Greg George, and Gladys Sanders

In Attendance: Councillors Lisa Bird, Mark Cant with David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager, remotely), Annette Clynes (Town Centre Services Officer, remotely), Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager, remotely), Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager, remotely), Gina Thanky (Events Officer, remotely) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Pam Ghent and Cameron Restall

Public: Nil

161. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 6 September 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

162. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest

163. PRESENTATIONS

The Committee received presentations from the following bodies on the services they provide to the town of Dunstable.

- (i) Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) – Cliff Andrews (remotely)
- (ii) Town Guides – Kay Kempster (remotely)

After the presentations, members of the Committee had the opportunity to ask the presenters questions about their services and how they benefitted the residents of Dunstable.

The Chairman thanked the two representatives for their presentations

164. 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.

It was noted that Ashton Square Toilets had once again been entered in the national Loo of Year competition and for the second year had received a Platinum Award. The Ranger Service was praised for the high level of service provided.

Town Centre Vacancy Rate

It was noted that the vacancy rate count had been undertaken in July 2021. There were 28 vacant units; a vacancy rate of 11.07% was recorded compared with the previous count of 13.04%. Members requested that this achievement be promoted on the Council's social media pages.

Town Centre

Twilight Christmas Markets will take place on Friday 10 December, Saturday 11 December, and Sunday 12 December with the market building on the success of last years with additional Christmas lights, stalls, a free Carousel ride for children and entertainers.

Middle Row Markets were being used to hold small family activities to promote HSHAZ community engagement.

Partnership Working

The shop front scheme has supported 21 shops and there was funding for one more shop. After the success of the Festival of Archaeology Officers continued to work closely with the Quadrant Shopping Centre and Central Bedfordshire Libraries

Welcome Back Fund

An update report was received. It was noted Welcome Back Wardens were working to support Middle Row markets up to Christmas 2021.

Christmas Lights

Orders had been placed for new Christmas lights in Ashton Square and Church Street. The Committee noted this was part of a scheme to add lights each year to the lighting scheme along High Street, West Street and Queensway. It was further noted that some of the lights were of a bespoke design and orders were having to be imported so they might not arrive to the end of the month. All other decorations had been fitted including the new tree decorations in Ashton Square and Church Street. The Ashton Square tree would arrive on 17 November with new lights and would be dressed ready for the Torchlight event on 26 November.

Members asked questions on the following:

- Location of planters in Ashton Square – the Committee was advised their siting had not affected the markets.
- Market rubbish collection and disposal.
- The potential life of the artificial grass bear and squirrel – It was reported they had a guarantee from the manufacturers to last for ten years.

165. OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES

The Good Companions Club continued to do well. The Committee received a report on its activities and noted that arrangements for Christmas were being worked on. At the request of the users the club times had been reviewed but they had decided to keep the existing hours of opening.

The Creasey Park Community Football Centre lunch club re-opened on 1 July with 21 members returning. From 8 September the lunch club would be held on a Wednesday. The Creasey Park Community Football Centre Lunch Club had an average of 24 users attending each week. Activities had been arranged in late summer and autumn. Plans for Christmas activities were well underway.

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The arrangements for Coffee mornings at Grove Corner were doing well. Creasey Park Community Football Centre had arranged a Rock and Roll event on 3 November with almost all tickets sold.

The Mayor expressed her wish to be invited to some or all of the Christmas activities being organised. It was confirmed this would be organised.

All the officers involved in the service were thanked for their work by the Committee.

166. GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Grove Corner

Further to the last Committee report Grove Corner had received 335 visits from young people between 17 May and 20 August. Pokémon had received 1,076 visits from young people in the same time period.

Youth Engagement

Junior Youth Group had received CPR training. The gaming suite was proving to be very popular.

School Engagement

Officers had been working in partnership with Ringcraft Boxing to deliver a project called Wellbeing Warriors.

Community Engagement

It was noted officers had organised two litter picks in the Beecroft and Downside area and more litter picking events would be held in other wards in Dunstable.

All officers involved in the services were thanked for their work by the Committee

167. PRIORY HOUSE

Customers had responded well to changes in Covid safety measures at Priory House. The staff felt safe in their working environment. A comment was made that the removal of screens around the till areas in the Tea Rooms and Gift Shop was a premature move because Covid - 19 levels were still high. Officers assured members that the ongoing Covid-19 situation was being carefully monitored.

Events

The Committee noted the introduction of a number of new workshop style events for Christmas both for adults and children. Members made comments on the cost and the range of the activities. It was confirmed that the Christmas events at Priory House would feature Father Christmas in 2023.

The Committee was provided with a comparison of Priory House takings as of 30 September 2021. Income was only 6% down against the first two quarters of 2019/2020. Additional income was due to sale of chutneys and jams and catering income from functions. It was also noted the income from the shop was 20% up against the first two quarters of 2019/2020. This was due to new stock ranges such as Frenchic Paint, more regular sales, and improved marketing.

168. EVENTS AND MARKETINGEvents Programme 2021 - Review

Further to the report made at the last Committee meeting (Minute 130 refers), the Committee received a report on the following events: Around the World, Priory Pictures, and Priory Proms in the Park.

Future Events – Planning and Development**Winter Lights Festival – from 24 November**

Members were given details about the launch of the Winter Light Festival which would be launched on Wednesday 24 November at 6pm. The lights installation would be in place from Wednesday 24 November to Friday 7 January 2022 and would be on every day from dusk until 11 pm.

Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession - 29 November

It was reported that nine schools were taking part. The Grove Theatre's pantomime cast from Aladdin would be attending the event and the BBB Group would be providing the lights show finale.

Planning and Development for 2022 Onwards

The Committee considered a table that set out the proposed dates and events for 2022. There was an extensive discussion on the events organised by the Town Council. The majority of the Committee was in favour of a review of events and welcomed the opportunity to look at what events both national and local that the Council would feature. It was noted that for planning and organisational reasons it was too late to significantly change the events for 2022. However, an opportunity to have a review of events for 2023 was welcomed.

- RESOLVED:**
- (i) That the events programme for 2022 as set out in the report be approved
 - (ii) That the Committee supports the setting up of a Working Group to review the events programme for 2023 with its first meeting to be held in January 2022. Its membership to be made up of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and Councillors Wendy Bater, Greg George, and Peter Hollick

169. 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 reported on key developments' occurring under all the headings. The Committee was advised that the grant applications discussed at the Council meeting on 4 October had been supported pending Historic England's approval. It was now reported that none of the applicants wished to take their applications any further. In relation to Priory House the project team approaches to the repair work and the delivery phase was focused on discussing the results of the investigations. On community engagement the Committee was advised that since May 2021 the Cultural Consortium had been working with Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC). Katherine Browne had now been appointed as a co-ordinator for BRCC as it was

the lead responsible body for the Consortium and held the Consortium's funds for the main bid.

170. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride:

Councillor Gloria Martin reported that the organisation was in good health financially. However, it was operationally under threat because its premises and hardstanding facilities at the Old Mill, Dunstable was in the ownership of the Sea Cadets. Dial - a - Ride had received notice to quit because the Cadets had plans for the site. Therefore, unless a suitable site for offices and bus parking could be found the charity could fold.

Dunstable Town Band:

No report

Men in Sheds (MiS)

No report.

The meeting closed at 20.59

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

HELD ON MONDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Chairman), Mark Cant, Philip Crawley, Greg George (Vice-Chairman), Matt Brennan, Pam Ghent, Kenson Gurney and Johnson Tamara

Apologies: Councillors Alan Cornhill and Gladys Sanders

In Attendance: Councillor Peter Hollick with David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager), and James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager, remotely)

Public: None

171. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 September were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

172. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

173. PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 14 September, 5 and 26 October be received.

**174. CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND BENNETT'S SPLASH
PARK UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report that covered the performance of the Creasey Park Community Football Centre and Bennett's Splash Park. It was reported that, both ATPs were in high demand and block bookings from September had ensured high use for each month and higher purchase volume than expected. September's income was an improvement by 9% on 2019/20 and the first two weeks in October achieved an average improvement of 31%.

Operationally, the Brewers Hill Road additional car park was still being used as an NHS Covid Testing Centre and would be in place until the end of March 2022. The parking problems that would be caused by the lack of additional car parking spaces would be mitigated by Central Bedfordshire Council supplying marshals to assist in parking operations, and CPCFC users had access to the CBC Watling House car park adjacent to the Fire Station.

In relation to Bennett's Splash and the Splashside Café, it had been de-commissioned for the winter. The Splash Park budget forecast was for a year end deficit of £8,987. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked James Slack and his staff for their work since the lock down.

175. CEMETERY, ALLOTMENTS, RECREATION GROUNDS, TOWN CENTRE GARDENS AND RANGER SERVICE INFORMATION AND UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services presented a detailed information report covering all areas of the Council's grounds maintenance responsibilities.

a) Dunstable Cemetery

Members noted that 312 burials had taken place in the lawn section of the cemetery extension since February 2016. Members asked questions about the hedge trimming of Cemetery Lane, capacity issues for the existing cemetery and the future provision of a new site for a cemetery. Members were advised that land for future burial provision was currently being investigated. The Committee welcomed the news that the Cemetery had retained its Green Flag status for the fourth year.

b) Allotments

Members were advised that the waiting list continued to grow; there were 361 people on the waiting list; 228 were residents and 133 non-residents.

c) Recreation Grounds

It was reported that the grass cutting season had ended and some hedge cutting was still going ahead. The grounds staff regularly overmarked and prepared football pitches for play. Since the last report, there had been no acts of vandalism to play equipment. The Council had received provisional approval from the Woodland Trust for the planting of trees at Mentmore Recreation Ground. Officers had also received a positive response on the application submitted to CBC's Tree Grant Fund.

Members raised the following issues:

- An identified need to provide play equipment in play areas that addressed the play needs of toddler and very young children
- A problem with the maintenance of the safety surfaces at Frenches Avenue Play Area
- The need to encourage the creation of wildflower meadows and tree planting on verges
- The use of herbicides for weed control, noting that weeds on some sites are already treated with hot water and steam and suggesting that officers explore the possibility of reducing the use of herbicides further, ahead of any future ban, as part of the Environment and Sustainability working group initiatives.

d) Town Centre Area

The floral displays throughout the town had been removed following a good summer display. Members commented on the displays noting that they improved the look of the town. It was further noted that the Council was now maintaining town centre flowerbeds and large planters installed during Phase1 of the High Street improvement works. The Committee welcomed the news that the Council had retained its Green Flag status for both Priory and Grove House Gardens and Priory Gardens had also retained its Green Heritage status.

The thanks of the Committee were to be passed on to the grounds maintenance staff.

e) Dunstable in Bloom

It was reported that Dunstable in Bloom had entered 3 projects into the RHS Britain in Bloom Community Awards and the Incredible Edible project in Katherine Drive was assessed by the RHS judges to be 'Outstanding' in the Nourishing Your Community Award category. The projects at Weatherfield Academy and the sustainable planting in the High Street had received Certificates of Achievement. The Parks and Green Space Development Officer had been working with the In Bloom volunteers to refresh the planters and baskets provided to high street shops this summer with winter and flowering plants. Members also noted the work that the Council was supporting at the The Square Methodist Church to improve and relandscape the gardens.

f) Town Ranger Service

The Rangers continued to provide a reactive and responsive service across the town.

176. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Management Committee:
Members had no updates.

The meeting closed at 19 40

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors, Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Sid Abbott (Chairman), Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Matt Brennan, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney and Peter Hollick

In Attendance: Councillor Gloria Martin (remotely), David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), David Brough (Senior Finance Manager, remotely), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager, remotely), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services, remotely for item 4) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors ,Mark Cant, Cameron Restall and Gloria Martin (Mayor)

Public Attendance: One

177. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 September were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

178. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

179. ADOPTION OF PLAY AREA AT THE GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT, LONDON ROAD

The Committee considered a report on a request received from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and Abbey Developments for the Town Council to formally adopt the play area at The Gateway housing development. The Committee was advised the area was known as a local area for play and it was a small area of open space specifically designed and laid out for younger children's play.

It was a 400m² play area located at the junction of Fossett Grove and Montgomery Grove. It was also noted CBC had confirmed that the Section 106 maintenance contribution payment would be £92,517. A discussion took place about the request to adopt the play area. It was noted that if the Council chose to adopt the play space the Council would ensure repairs had been undertaken before adoption...It was considered that the commuted sum was sufficient in value to maintain the play area for about 20 years including a full replacement of all equipment after 10 to 15 years. It was further noted that the Corporate Plan 2020-23 included several corporate priorities which would support the adoption of the play area.

RESOLVED: That the play area at The Gateway development be adopted subject to the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services in liaison with the Chairman of Grounds and Environmental Services satisfactorily negotiating the completion of the remedial works required before and land transfer takes place.

180. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the financial monitoring report for the period ending 30 September 2021. The Committee also noted details of the Council's earmarked reserves as of 31 October 2021.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive made members aware of the current financial position the Council was in. The Committee was advised that the Council was in a much better position than had been reported to recent meetings. It was noted with satisfaction that notwithstanding approved commitments from the General Reserve the actual revenue budget was forecast to be underspent by £31,227 at the end of the financial year. This was primarily a result of improved trading at Creasey Park Community Football Centre and savings accrued as a result of staff vacancies.

The Committee also considered the external auditors (Mazars) opinion on the completed AGAR for the financial year 2020/2021 and were pleased to note that no material comments had been made and that the Council's end of year accounting had been completed successfully.

RESOLVED: That the above reports be noted.

181. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 2022

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report and sought approval for arrangements to secure a venue for the Annual Council meeting to be held on 16 May 2021.

RESOLVED: That a suitable venue be secured by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with the Mayor subject to the hire of the venue does not exceed £700.

182. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CAB Management Committee – no update.

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association (DITA) – Councillor Hollick reported that DITA was looking to host representatives from twinned towns attending Dunstable from 2 to 5 June 2022 to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Councillor Hollick reported that there was a meeting of DITA the next day to discuss the visit. The Mayor reported she had not been invited to the meeting. Councillor Hollick advised the meeting he had suggested to DITA that the Mayor be invited.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – A report was made covering the work of trustees and fundraising. Volunteers had been treated to a day out to thank for them for their work over the past 18 months. A new Treasurer had been appointed. Councillor Jones reported that the charity was clearly moving back towards normal operations.

Ashton Alms-houses Charity – a meeting was arranged for 9 December.

The meeting closed at 19.31

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD AT WATLING HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE
ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Present: Central Bedfordshire Councillors: Cllr Hegley, Cllr John Chatterley
Cllr Eugene Ghent, Cllr Johnson Tamara, Cllr Nigel Young

Dunstable Town Councilors: Cllr Peter Hollick, Cllr Sid Abbot, Cllr Liz Jones

In Attendance: Cllr G Sanders (Central Bedfordshire Council)

Central Bedfordshire Council Officers; P Coker, S Sherwood,
S Hughes, S Caldbeck
Dunstable Town Council Officers; B Wisbey

Outside Body Representatives; A Sparrow, H Garrod,
S Warboys

Apologies: Cllr Lisa Bird, Cllr Gloria Martin, Officer C Gurr

Members of the public: There were no Members of the public in attendance

SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hegley's husband has a street traders licence.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Members of the public in attendance and no questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair mentioned that the Committee Members continued to observe Covid social distancing restrictions during meeting. The Chair drew the Committee's attention to the parking charge increases in the Central Bedfordshire Council report as this will be a focus of Sarah's presentation, and Becky from Dunstable Town Council will be explaining a

funding request from the Methodist Church for a landscaping scheme, which has recently been agreed.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 JULY 2021

The Minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

PLACE DELIVERY

A presentation on Dunstable Health Hub, High Street Works and Dunstable Projects was received by Patricia Coker - Head of Partnerships and Performance & Sam Caldbeck, Place Programme Manager - Central Bedfordshire Council

The presentation is attached to the minutes as Appendix A for detail.

Health Hub

- A presentation was given by Patricia Coker which included a progress report, what is next for the hub and Community engagement. These slides are published alongside the Minutes as Appendix A.

Members asked for clarification on the following:

- Would possible material cost increases and delays effect the delivery of the project? It was noted that it the contract price was guaranteed. There had been a few delays with materials, but more in the delivery rather than the supply.
- Would the Wilmot Dixon young people's work initiatives be open to locals and could this be tracked, and data reported back? It was stated that this project will be tracked as people are recruited and also as they progress through the project. The data for this initiative will be a regular update to the Committee as the project moves forward.
- It was asked if naming the development will be opened up to people outside Central Bedfordshire Council. At present the Council is working with local historians to investigate a name. It was stated that the local History Society would like to be involved.
- It was stated that discussions between the CCG and Dunstable based GP's were ongoing. At present, Priory Gardens are the Primary GP signed up to the hub, but there will be a wide range of other services that can still be accessed from the hub to all residents of Dunstable regardless of which GP they are registered with.

High Street Improvement Scheme

A presentation was given by Sam Caldbeck. The slides are published alongside the minutes as Appendix B.

Members asked for clarification on the following:

- There was no mention of electric charging points at the taxi ranks in the report. It was noted that the Team had been working along side colleagues on the sustainability plan about this issue. The progress will be shared with Cllr Young.

Welcome back Fund

A presentation was given by Sam Caldbeck. The slides are published alongside the minutes as Appendix B.

There were not items of clarification.

Estates Regeneration Fund

A presentation was given by Sam Caldbeck. The slides are published alongside the minutes as Appendix B.

Members asked for clarification on the following:

- It was asked if Vernon Place was still viable. It was reported that the current position is being worked on by the Assets Team, the position will be reported at the next Committee.
- The Committee are happy that the Regeneration Fund will be utilised for projects quickly.

Benchmarking Studies

It was noted the CBC had launched a benchmarking study to look at pre and post Covid Highstreet changes, including shop footfall and use of the carparks. There will soon be an online shopper survey and a business survey will follow.

There were not items of clarification.

Flood works and Funding

A presentation was given by Sam Caldbeck. The slides are published alongside the minutes as Appendix C.

Members asked for clarification on the following:

- The funding for these projects associated with various phases of the works was discussed. The new total budget was requested along with sources of the funding.
- Progress of the rain gardens and the location of the benches were discussed. It was noted that Councillors could speak to the site manager to discuss the location and direction of the seating.
- It was asked if there will there be any further investigation into flooding that is outside of the Town Centre? Sam will report back to Cllr Tamara on any further projects around the Ward.

Community Asset grant scheme

A update was given by Sarah Hughes. The Bidding round 3 had closed and was over bid by £200k. There were 27 bids received in total and 12 projects were approved. Two of the approved projects were within Dunstable and the details of these are contained within the Central Bedfordshire Council report.

Members asked for clarification on the following:

- Rules of the bidding process were discussed as some of the requests did not have Ward Member sponsorship. It was noted that the Community Asset Grant Scheme can be applied for independently and Ward Member comments will be sort for these applications separately. It was noted that the Committee felt that these applications should obtain Ward Member sponsorship going forward. Sarah will speak to Cllr Stock to review the guidelines.

REPORTS FROM CO-OPTED OUTSIDE BODIES

Members noted the following reports:

A report alongside photos were submitted by Ann Sparrow on Dunstable in Bloom.

- It was noted that the winter displays have been discussed and all businesses in the High Street would like a display.
- It was noted there is a possible sponsor for the winter display, this would be adding to the existing baskets and tubs and also adding more. Ann noted that there was no sponsor for next year and she is likely to put in a request for funding from the Committee which would be welcomed.
- It was reported the Dunstable in Bloom were awarded the high Sheriffs Award for services in the community. This has been copied and given to each Member of the In Bloom Committee. Thanks were given to Cllr Hollick and Cllr Abbot for the nomination.

The Committee thanked Dunstable in Bloom for their continued great work for the Town.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL – UPDATE ON SERVICES

A report was presented by Becky Wisbey, Dunstable Town Council

Becky Wisbey asked for questions on the highlights of the report.

- It was noted that the use of the Welcome Back fund has been welcomed by Members.
- Thanks was given to the Town Council for all their projects in the Town.
- It was asked how far the Christmas lights would stretch, and if there were plans for anything in the North of the Highstreet? It was noted that a review was undertaken by the Town Council and the current tender makes no allowances for extending the scheme as there was no requests made at the time of tender.

- Becky noted there had been a funding request for £2k from the Methodist Church for landscaping works which has been agreed by Dunstable Town Council and the Chair of Dunstable Joint Committee, the funds will be allocated from the available budget. There will also be funding from Dunstable Town Council as part of the HSAZ due to its prominent position in the heart of the Town. The Church will also be applying for extra funding from the Central Bedfordshire council Ward Member grant scheme. The works should take place in October, with a view to reporting back the completion by the next meeting in December. The Committee agreed it was happy to endorse the funding.

Members noted the content of the report.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL – UPDATE ON SERVICES

A report was given by Sarah Hughes, Central Bedfordshire Council

Sarah Hughes presented highlights of the report.

- An update was given on the Car Parking consultation. It was noted that the response figures would be circulated to Members. Ideas and suggestions would be appreciated as part of the consultation.
- It was stated that the quadrant has recently changed its parking pricing model, which is considerably cheaper than the Council car parking. There was concern that the Council car parks appear expensive by comparison.
- It was noted that there is ongoing work on a Parking Management Strategy and members were disappointed the parking charge increases is not part of this wider consideration, and is premature in isolation of the rest of the work.
- The Committee and Ward Members wish to make a representation about their concerns, having worked with Highways previously on ideas for parking within the Town, they wish for the outcomes from these discussions to be considered.
- It was noted that the businesses in the Town are not happy with these increases as it could detrimentally affect their business.
- Members requested that paper copies of the consultation are made available to them to give out at Councillor surgeries. Members were also concerned that the 14 page document was too much and there were reported difficulties in filling in the online form. It was noted that a lot of the form was informative and not the part that needed to be filled out. However, the consultation has started and so the opportunity to review the format has been lost
- There is an interim Parking Management Strategy being worked on by the Executive, which included parking price reviews in conjunction with parking provisions in small villages and leisure centres etc. in creating extra revenue.
- Members agreed that there is a lack of a comprehensive approach to look at actual parking revenue and the relevant business case. It was noted that at last Sustainable Communities Scrutiny meeting that there were no financial losses incurred from parking charges, due to staff vacancies, classed as efficiencies in the department. Sarah will look into why this consultation is not coming to Scrutiny before the end of the consultation where the committee can also feed their views into the consultation process.

- Members would like to submit comment alongside Dunstable Town Council to oppose the price increase and agreed to refer the Parking Charges to the Sustainable Communities Committee and in turn consider the Parking Management Strategy.
- There was an update on the Bus Service improvement Plan which has gone through the Scrutiny Committee and is out for a non-statutory consultation. Members were asked to contribute to this.
- An update was given on the business grants which have been received.

Members noted the content of the report.

COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Members noted the content of the work plan

- It was noted that the Agenda should go out to all Dunstable Town Councillors and Ward members in order to raise the profile of the Committee with Councillors.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the date of the next meeting on **2nd December 2021 at 19.00**, which would take place in Committee Room 1, Watling House, Dunstable for Committee Members only and virtually for all other attendees.

Dates of the 2022 meetings are below:

Thursday 10 March 2022

Thursday 9 June 2022

Thursday 8 September 2022

Thursday 1 December 2022

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.10

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 6 DECEMBER 2021****DRAFT BUDGET SUMMARY 2022/23**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to present to members a draft, revenue budget summary for the Council for 2022/23 and for members to consider the council tax strategy they would like to adopt in order to determine a balanced budget at the Council meeting planned for 7 February 2022.
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1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the Council consider the draft revenue budget summary enclosed with this report and agree the council tax strategy for adopting a balanced budget at the meeting of the Council on 7 February 2022.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council's finances have changed considerably over recent years as the Council has grown and developed new services and taken on additional responsibilities. It is perhaps worth reflecting that over the past ten years the Council's gross expenditure budget has increased by over 40%. This increase has been mainly driven by increased income generated from trading activities and expansion of the services the Council offers.
- 2.2 During this phase of growth, the Council has had to identify year on year cost efficiency savings whilst maintaining a focus on 'growing the core business' resulting in continued added value to the Dunstable council taxpayer.

An illustration of the last 8 year's council tax and precept rises is shown below:

Year	Band D Council Tax Charge (£)	Precept (£)
2014/15	171.78 (0.8% increase)	1,984,627
2015/16	171.78 (0% increases)	2,024,084
2016/17	175.21 (1.96% increase)	2,117,238
2017/18	175.21 (0% increase)	2,178,736
2018/19	175.21 (0% increase)	2,219,034
2019/20	179.32 (2.35% increase)	2,297,506
2020/21	£181.11 (1% increase)	2,369,323
2021/22	£182.02 (0.5% increase)	2,393,969

- 2.3 It is also worth noting that the majority of properties in Dunstable are not band D. The highest number falling within Band C and as a result, most households in Dunstable pay less than the Band D charge shown above.
- 2.4 The draft budget summary for 2022/23 is submitted as an appendix to this report.

3. **REVENUE BUDGET SETTING PROCESS AND EXPLANATION OF DETAIL**

- 3.1 Every year the Council's Management Team hold a full day's budget setting exercise that results in the preparation of the initial draft budget. This year the budget-setting day was held in early October in order to prepare a draft budget for consideration at this Council meeting and included all service managers as well as the senior management team.
- 3.2 Having to do this inevitably means that whilst a full outturn of financial figures from 2020/21 is available only a half-year outturn is available for 2021/22 and this was greatly affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. As a result, there is always an element of 'educated forecasting' that is required to establish budget proposals for the following year and therefore budget setting is never an exact science. **The draft forecast summary submitted in the appendices has been based on a normal year with no impact from Covid-19. A contingency of up to £50,000 (to be funded from the General Reserve) has been included to help address the likely loss of income expected at Priory House due to the planned major refurbishment work.**
- 3.3 In addition to the normal exercise undertaken by the Senior Management Team, all Council Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen were invited to a briefing meeting held on 23 November to go through the draft budget proposals in detail.
- 3.4 Every line of the revenue budget is challenged in this process and as this Council relies more and more on revenue gained from non-council tax sources; i.e. income gained from various services, this challenge focuses not only on expenditure efficiency but also on achieving greater levels of trading income. The proposed draft gross budget illustrates that this Council relies on approximately one third of its income from sources other than the council tax (an unusual and impressive statistic for any level of local government).
- 3.5 Members will note that many of the changes illustrated at appendix 1 reflect a fine tuning exercise in budget savings and growth and many of the main increases to the revenue budget are for reasons beyond direct control such as staff cost increases, waste costs, H&S issues and member requests, etc.
- 3.6 Significant budget growth and savings are highlighted below.

Growth

- **Staffing costs - £90,811** - This figure is made up of increases to the Council's wage bill as a result of incremental pay increases where applicable; 1% on the overall Council pension costs; 4.2% increase on wages that attract the Living Wage Foundation living wage, 1.25% increase on National Insurance costs, a 2.5% cost of living pay rise allowance, a more accurate reflection of overtime and additional hours costs plus the 1.75% pay award currently planned for 2021/22.
- **Investment income - £7,000** – Due to current low interest rates

- **Jubilee Celebrations - £5,000** - £1,000 allocated for Jubilee street party grants as per members wishes and £4,000 provisionally identified for a beacon lighting event on the Dunstable Downs (*members to determine if they want to fund this*)
- **CPCFC CBC contribution - £15,000** – As part of the new contract arrangements and after their £1.2million investment at CPCFC, CBC will be withdrawing their normal £15,000 p/a contribution to the site management.
- **Additional community grant aid provision - £10,000** – This has been allocated at member's request

Savings

- **Additional income from tax base increase - £12,013** – This is determined on the existing Dunstable Town Council tax charge
- **Grove House rent income – 31,050** – Both ground floor office units have now been let
- **Covid and pay award contingencies - £37,502** – This money was identified in last years budget but will not be needed in 2022/23
- **CPCFC 2nd ATP income - £22,500** – This new income will be achieved through the successful operation of the 2nd ATP.
- **CPCFC bar and catering - £8,000** – This income is additional secondary spend that is anticipated as a result of greater use of the 2nd ATP
- **Grounds CBC contract income - £5,000** – This additional income has been negotiated as a result of additional responsibilities due to the High Street improvement works

- 3.7 In summary the table shown at appendix 1 shows identified budget growth items totalling **£196,340** and identified revenue savings of **£158,345** giving an overall projected deficit figure of **£37,995**. The Dunstable tax base has increased from 13,152 to 13,218 (an increase of 66) securing additional income through the council tax charge of £12,013 assuming the Band D council tax charge remains at £182.02. Appendix 1 illustrates that in order to fund the projected budget deficit of £37,995, the Council will need to agree a small increase in the Band D council tax charge of £2.91 (1.6%). This will achieve additional income of £38,464 which will address the projected revenue deficit.
- 3.8 However, the above calculations are predicated on a potential 2.5% cost of living pay award for 2022/23 but at this moment in time there is no indication of what a pay award might look like. As a result, included at the end of the budget summary at appendix 1 is a schedule of how much the Band D council tax will have to increase if the Council budgets for a 2.5%, 3.5%, 4%, 4.5% and 5% pay award. Members will note that the range of council tax increase goes from £2.91 to £5.64 per annum.
- 3.8 Also included at appendix 1 is the identification of an 'up to' £50,000 contingency for anticipated loss of income at Priory House due to the planned refurbishment. It is proposed that this be identified from the General Reserve. Members should note that at this stage the £50,000 is only an estimate as officers still do not have a fully defined programme of works for the Priory House refurbishment.
- 3.9 Members should further note that the proposed budget is only draft at this stage and there may be forthcoming unforeseen budget pressures between now and February when the final Council revenue budget is agreed for 2022/23.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 At the time of preparing this report, the cost of living pay award had still not been determined for 2021/22. At the moment negotiations are stuck at a 1.75% pay increase and this has been reflected in next years revenue budget projections. Any increase on this figure will clearly have a knock-on effect to what is being proposed for next year.
- 4.2 The contingency figure proposed for addressing the anticipated loss of income at Priory House is recommended to be funded through use of the General Reserve. Members also have the option of funding this contingency through the council tax charge but to do this would require a greater increase to the proposed Band D council tax charge of approximately another £3.78.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposed draft budget continues to support the Council's Corporate Priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-23.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposed draft budget makes a revenue contribution to the Council's approach to managing health and safety requirements.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE, EQUALITIES AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8. APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix 1 –Summary of growth and savings proposed for the 2022/23 revenue budget

9. AUTHOR

- 9.1 David Ashlee – Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Email: David.ashlee@dusntable.gov.uk

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET 2022/23**

SAVINGS	GROWTH
Corporate Costs	
Additional income from tax base increase – 12,013 2022/23 tax base has increased from 13,152 to 13,218 = 66 x £182.02 = £12,013	Overall increase in staffing costs - £90,811 <i>(made up from 1.25% increase in NI costs, 1% increase in pension contributions, 2.5% pay award, 4.2% Living Wage Foundation increase, individual staff increments where applicable, plus the 1.75% increase planned for the 2021/22 pay award and a more accurate reflection of overtime and additional hours costs)</i>
SUB-TOTAL - £12,013	SUB-TOTAL - £90,811
Town Clerk and Chief Executives Office	
Central Services – postage - 500	Corporate Management – DBS checks - 100
Central Services / stationery - 500	Corporate Management / recruitment – 500
Grove House / rate – 2,500	Corporate Management / Internal audit - 250
Grove House / rent income – 31,050	Corporate Management / bank interest - 7,000
Corporate Management / uniform costs – 1,000	Corporate Management / central marketing – ToTT - 500
Corporate Management / Bank charges – 2,500	Democratic Management, Jubilee – 5,000
Corporate Management / salary contingency – 10,500	Grove House / building maintenance contracts - 220
Corporate Management / Covid contingency – 27,002	
Capital and projects / GH loan – 1,083	
SUB-TOTAL - £76,635	SUB-TOTAL - £13,570
Creasey Park Community Football Centre	
CPCFC football / ATP income – 22,500	CPCFC football / cleaning – 1,000
CPCFC bar and catering / lettings income – 2,000	CPCFC football / waste – 500
CPCFC bar and catering / bar and catering income – 8,000	CPCFC football / grass pitch income – 3,000
CPCFC bar and catering / marketing – 1,500	CPCFC football / CBC contribution – 15,000
	CPCFC bar and catering / cleaning – 1,000
	CPCFC bar and catering / waste - 500
	CPCFC bar and catering / licences - 400
	CPCFC bar and catering / maintenance contracts – 2,000
	CPCFC bar and catering / stock – 3,200
SUB-TOTAL – £34,000	SUB-TOTAL - £26,600

SAVINGS	GROWTH
Grounds and Environmental Services	
Allotments / rent income - 600	Allotments / Water Charges – 1,000
Cemetery / burial fees – 2,500	Cemetery / cleaning – 1,500
Cemetery / memorial fees – 2,500	Cemetery / repairs and maintenance – 1,000
	Cemetery Green Flag - 350
Town centre gardens / skate park – 600	Recreation grounds / cleaning – 5,000
Town centre gardens – CBC contract income – 5,000	Recreation grounds / income from Downside Community Centre – 4,800
Town Ranger / repairs and maintenance - 600	Recreation grounds / income from external contracts – 4,800
Capital and projects / Luton Rd loan – 1,245	Town centre gardens / cleaning – 500
	Town centre gardens / CCTV contract – 1,100
	Town centre gardens / equipment & tools – 2,000
	Town centre gardens / bedding plants – 1,000
	Town Ranger / depot alarm - 600
	Capital and projects / tree reserve – 5,000
	Capital and projects / fencing etc – 4,000
	Capital and projects / cemetery extension loan - 415
SUB-TOTAL - £13,045	SUB-TOTAL - £33,065
Community Services**	
Community engagement / Downside community Centre income – 7,000	Community engagement / grants to voluntary organisations – 10,000
Grove Corner room hire – 2,500	Grove Corner / telephones – 350
Priory House / events – 2,500	Grove Corner equipment – 200
Priory House / hire income – 1,000	Events programme / motor rally – 2,500
Priory House / shop sales income – 1,100	Priory House / rates - 950
Town Centre services / stall income – 5,750	Priory House / Office rents – 5,181
Capital and projects / PH contribution to reserve – 1,778	Priory House / service charge – 1,950
Capital and projects / PH loan – 1,024	Priory House / train ticket commission – 1,000
	Priory House / third party sales commission – 1,500
	Town centre services / portering – 5,663
	Capital and projects / Downside sink fund – 3,000
SUB-TOTAL - £22,652	SUB-TOTAL - £32,294
TOTAL - £158,345	TOTAL - £196,340
OVERALL DEFICIT OF £37,995	

NB

****** A further £50,000 will be added to the Priory House expenditure budget as a contingency for loss of income during the planned refurbishment work. The £50,000, if needed, will be funded from the General Reserve.

- 2021/22 Band D council tax = £182.02
- 2021/22 tax base = 13,152
- **2022/23 tax base – 13,218 (increase of 66) = additional £12,013 of council tax income.**
- **1.6% on council tax = £2.91 (£184.93) x 13,218 = £38,464 which covers the deficit with a 2.5% pay award**
- **2.2% on council tax = £4.00 (£186.02) x 13,218 = £52,872 which covers the deficit with a 3.5% pay award**
- **2.48% on council tax = £4.52 (£186.53) x 13,218 = £59,745 which covers the deficit with a 4% pay award**
- **2.8% on council tax = £5.10 (£187.12) x 13,218 = £67,412 which covers the deficit with a 4.5% pay award**
- **3.1% on council tax = £5.64 (£187.66) x 13,218 = £74,550 which covers the deficit with a 5% pay award**

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

6 DECEMBER 2021

NOMINATIONS FOR REPRESENTATION ON CHARITIES

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is for the Council to nominate representatives for Dunstable charities given below in paragraph 2
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1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the Council nominates representatives to serve on Dunstable charity committees as set out in paragraph 2 below.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Every year, at the Annual Council Meeting, nominations are made by the Council for Council representatives on various charities and outside organisations as shown on the schedule given at appendix 1.
- 2.2 Members will note that following this years Annual Council Meeting there are still outstanding nominations for the following charities:
- Ashton Schools Foundation x 2 nominations (*both existing nominees, i.e., Cllrs Martin and Hollick are happy to remain as Council representatives*)
 - Lockington and Marshe Charity x 2 nominations
- 2.3 This report requests that members resolve four nominations for the vacant positions given above.
- 2.4 All representatives will serve a term that will expire at the next elections in May 2023

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None

4. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendation given above accords with the Council Corporate Priority of 'Continuing to Represent Residents and Businesses of Dunstable on Key Strategic Issues Facing the Town '.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7. LEGAL AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Nominated members need to be mindful of their responsibilities on the charity they are nominated to as they could be volunteering to become trustees of the charity or directors of charitable companies.

8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 - Schedule of nominated members on outside organisations

9. AUTHOR

9.1 David Ashlee – Town Clerk and Chief Executive
E-mail: david.ashlee@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

MONDAY 6 DECEMBER 2021

WEBCASTING PROTOCOL

Purpose of report: The purpose of this report is for members to consider and adopt a webcasting protocol, a draft of which is appended to this report.

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the Council consider for adoption the draft webcasting protocol submitted at appendix 1 of this report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Webcasting has been introduced in many councils to demonstrate openness and transparency. The Town Council is committed to community and public engagement and the broadcasting of its democratic processes will enable both residents and organisations to connect with it more easily. Webcasting is a process that allows anyone to view democratic processes online either through live transmission or watching later after the event.
- 2.2 The Governments Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 provide the press and public with rights to film or use any type of social media to report any public meetings. Although Councils are not required to webcast meetings it maybe beneficial for the Council to have one complete true record of meetings.

3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The streaming and recording of Council and Committee meetings will ensure all electors/residents have an opportunity to access meetings and other proceedings of the Council and ensure there was a complete record of meetings for the public record.
- 3.2 In accordance with the 'Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014' all meetings of the Council can be recorded.
- 3.3 This is in addition to the rights of press and public who are also able to record, film and broadcast meetings. The Council itself can photograph, film, record or broadcast meetings and can use or dispose of such material in accordance with its retention and disposal policies. Where a Council proposes to record all its own meetings it will be bound by its own policies. The Council can resolve how long such recordings will be kept and how members of the public can obtain copies. The Town Council will include the availability of such recordings within its 'Publication Scheme'. However, it should be noted that the minutes of Council meetings remain the statutory and legally binding, formal record of Council decisions.

4. PROPOSED APPROACH

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council broadcast meetings of the Full Council, Community Services Committee, Grounds and Environmental Services Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 4.2 Approval is sought for a new protocol which will allow external participants in the meeting to be able to access sufficient information about the webcasting process, empower the Chairman of a meeting that is being webcast to suspend the process and in specific circumstances ensure the Council complies with its own constitutional and wider statutory requirements
- 4.3 At appendix 1 to this report is the Councils' proposed protocol for the webcasting of Council meetings. It has been modelled on the protocol used by Central Bedfordshire Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications related to the adoption of the proposed protocol.

6. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendations detailed within this report are in accordance with the Councils Corporate Plan objective of '*Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council*'.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report would ensure the promotion of efficient and effective meetings and ensures the public can follow and participate where appropriate either at the meeting or via streaming.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None

10. AUTHORS

- 10.1 Ian Reed – Democratic Services Manager
ian.reed@dunstable.gov.uk

Dunstable Town Council protocol for webcasting, recording and use of social media in council meetings.

Webcasting

The Council will transmit live on the internet ('webcasting'), and record for subsequent transmission its three main committee meetings and full Council meetings. It will not routinely webcast sub-committee's or working groups of the Council. Fixed cameras are located within the Council Chamber at Grove House which will be used for this purpose.

This Protocol has been agreed to assist the conduct of webcast meetings and to ensure that in doing so the Council is compliant with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Accordingly, the following will apply to all meetings to be webcast by the Council.

Main Provisions

1. The Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to terminate or suspend the webcast if continuing to webcast would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting.

This may include, but is not restricted to:

- (i) during the management of public disturbance
- (ii) when the proceedings of the meeting were suspended for any reason
- (iii) during consideration of exempt matters when the public and press had been excluded from the meeting.

2. No exempt or confidential agenda items shall be webcast.

3. Any elected Member who is concerned about any webcast should raise their concerns with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

Agenda front sheets and signage at meetings

On the front of each agenda for meetings that will be webcast, there will be the following notice:

Webcasting Notice

This meeting may be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast online at <https://www.dunstable.gov.uk/council-meetings/>. At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting will be filmed. The footage will be on the website for six months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the Council. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to be filmed. By entering the Chamber you are also consenting to be filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you have any queries regarding webcasting of meetings, please contact: ian.reed@dunstable.gov.uk

Conduct of meetings

At the start of each meeting to be filmed by the Council, the following announcement will be made by the Chairman:

I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live on the internet and will be capable of repeated viewing.

If you are seated in the Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence, you are deemed to consent to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you address the Committee your contribution will be recorded and broadcast unless this is during a period when the meeting is in private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.

As the Chairman of the meeting, I can, at my discretion, terminate or suspend filming, if in my opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting or if I consider that continued filming might infringe the rights of any individual or breach any statutory provision.

Cessation of webcasting for private sessions

No part of any meeting will be webcast after Members have resolved to exclude the press and public because there is likely to be disclosure of exempt or confidential information. The Democratic Services Manager will check that filming and/or recording of the meeting has ceased and will confirm this to the Chairman of the meeting before any discussion of exempt or confidential matters is commenced.

Storage and retention of webcasts

Webcast meetings will be recorded and broadcast on the internet. All archived webcasts will then be available to view for a period of six months. Meetings will be recorded onto DVD, which will be stored in accordance with records management procedures.

Archived webcasts shall only be removed from the website if the Town Clerk and Chief Executive considers that it is necessary because all or part of the content of the webcast is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information. It is anticipated, however, that meetings will be conducted lawfully and that the need to exercise this power will occur only on an exceptional basis.

Council Members will be notified by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive if such action is taken.

Copyright notice

All footage from our webcasts is the copyright of Dunstable Town Council. The people featured in our webcasts have agreed to appear ONLY on the Council's official webcast site. You are not permitted to download any footage nor upload it (whether in part or in full) to another website without the written permission of Dunstable Town Council and those featured in the webcast. Also, video sharing websites (e.g. Youtube, Google Video) state under their terms and conditions that you must be the copyright

owner and have the permission of all those involved in order to upload videos to their sites.

You can, however, share a link to the official webcast video.

Other filming or recording of meetings by the public or press

The press and public are entitled to film, photograph, audio-record any public meetings of the Council in line with the Council's Standing Orders.

Those undertaking these activities must not act in a disruptive manner; this could result in expulsion from the meeting. Essentially, this could be any action or activity which disrupts the conduct of the meeting. Examples can include:

- moving to areas outside the areas designated for the public/press without the consent of the Chairman
- excessive noise in recording or setting up or re-setting equipment during the debate/discussion
- intrusive lighting and use of photography and
- asking people to repeat statements for the purposes of recording.

Oral commentary during the meeting is not permitted as this would be disruptive.

No recording is permitted and no recording equipment, other than the Council's own equipment, may be left in the room where a private meeting will be held or where, confidential or exempt items are being discussed. Recording will be suspended if a resolution is passed to exclude the public or if the Chairman suspends the meeting due to disorderly conduct.

Reporting using social media at meetings

Anyone attending one of the Council's meetings is welcome to report on the proceedings by making use of social media (e.g. to tweet or blog), provided that this does not disturb the business of the meeting. There is no need to secure permission before using social media. To support this, the Council has wifi available for those visiting the building.

Council Members attending any of the Council's meetings may use social media except when an exempt matter is under consideration. Members are reminded that they must take account of all information presented before making a decision, and should actively listen and be courteous to others. Again, using social media should not disturb the business of the meeting.

Any concerns about a Member using social media should be raised with the Chairman before or after the meeting.