

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 9 JANUARY 2023 FROM 19:00

- Present: Councillors Lisa Bird (Deputy Town Mayor), Wendy Bater, Pam Ghent, John Gurney, Peter Hollick (Chairman), Liz Jones (Town Mayor) and Gloria Martin
- In Attendance: Councillor Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive) and Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services)
- In Attendance remotely: Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager), Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager) and Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager)
- Apologies: Councillors Greg George, Gladys Sanders and Cameron Restall
- Public: Nil

1/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 31 October 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/23 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received

3/23 DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

Members received the report provided. The Chairman congratulated the team on attracting Street Food Heroes following the receipt of the NABMA award. It was noted that as the market develops it will be necessary not to compete with the existing street traders. Members noted the increased scale of the Twilight Markets.

Members had received several comments praising the new Christmas lights.

Members discussed the planned date for switching off the Christmas lights on twelfth night on Thursday 5 January. It was suggested that the date could be delayed to the 7 January in future years which is the date Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas.

The Head of Community Services confirmed that Coronation bunting will be put up in the square. The straw hats in Middle Row will last at least a year. Members were invited to forward feedback on possible colours to officers. There was a discussion about the proposed installation of straw hat street art. The Head of Community Services explained that much of the funding would come from the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) which is externally funded and had led to the heritage theme.

Councillor Jones expressed concerns about the installation of new street art at this time.

4/23 OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Members received the report provided which was summarised by the Youth and Community Manager. Members were pleased to note that relationships with the users had been contacted when cold weather had meant it was not possible to hold the Creasey Park Community Football Centre Lunch Club.

5/23 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Members received the report provided. The Chairman informed Members that he had been invited to attend the presentation of "Taking Charge of your Wellbeing" with the Mayor on 12 January. The Mayor updated Members that she had attended the Good the Bad and the Ugly final session at Ashton St Peter's along with several officers. The session was a great success.

6/23 HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)

Members received the report provided. The Chairman noted that the aim is for the book "They met at the crossroads" is hoped to be published and available for Bedford Day in November 2023.

Members noted that the workshops provided had been particularly successful. The Head of Community Services suggested that Members consider allocating funds to enable Town Council officers to arrange similar events in future years, after the HSHAZ scheme ends.

7/23 EVENTS

Members received the report provided. Members discussed the works to the performance area. The Head of Community Services updated Members that the contractor has advised that while there are lead in times, works can be ordered shortly which will enable work to be completed on time.

8/23 PRIORY HOUSE INFORMATION REPORT

Members received the report provided. Members requested details about the use of the new coffee machine and take up of the revised service for the next meeting.

Members felt that the current level of takings was better than may have been the case during the building period so far, which was due in part to the new areas that had been created.

The site manager now has the new boards which will be installed in a matter of days to advertise clearly that Priory House is still open.

Members noted the popularity of Priory House with dog users, who can take their pets into the shop area. The Cultural Services Manager confirmed that the Council will be advertising doggy afternoon teas again in the March edition of Talk of the Town and through the social media channels.

9/23 CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE

Members received the report provided.

10/23 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2023/24

Members received the report provided. Members highlighted that the proposed budget had been reduced following detailed work by officers and scrutiny by Members. Members thanked officers for their efforts throughout the budget process.

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

ii) that the Committee recommend the draft Community Services fees & charges as presented with no amendments or further recommendations, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

11/23 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride

Councillor Martin updated that there had not been a meeting since the last Committee meeting. The new manager is now in place and settling in to the role.

Dunstable Town Band

Councillor Martin updated that the last meeting of the Band Committee clashed with a Council meeting. No minutes have yet been provided.

Men in Sheds (MiS)

Councillor J Gurney informed members that the Christmas party was a success. The shed refurbishment had just started and was due to take six to eight weeks. Men in Sheds have raised additional funds to pay for a shutter for the front door to protect the new glass door, and also for a new back door. Subs have been increased from £5 to £10 per month and may increase further this year, due to the need to pay for energy for the shed.

The meeting closed at 20:30