

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON MONDAY 22 MAY 2023 FROM 19:00**

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), John Gurney (Chair), Robert Blennerhassett (Vice-Chair), Wendy Bater, Nicholas Kotarski, Kenson Gurney, Gregory Alderman, Matthew Neall, Trevor Adams and Peter Hollick.

In Attendance: Councillor Richard Atwell, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager), Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager), Gina Thank Thanky (Events Officer) and Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager).

In Attendance: Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager),  
(Remotely)

Apologies: Councillor Alex Butler

Public: Nil

#### **118/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

#### **119/23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 6 March 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **120/23 TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

The Town Centre Manager updated that on 13 May there were 24 stalls, an increase from 21 last year. On 10 June last year there were 18 stalls, with 20 already booked this year. There were 10 – 15 on each market when they began four years ago. Regarding the sanitary dispenser at Ashton Square toilets; the contractor attends monthly to maintain the machine, as per the contractor’s recommendations. They forecast that misuse will quickly slow down with time. The Town Centre Manager does have a spare box if refills are required.

Street Food Heroes took place on Thursday a14 May. The weather was poor to begin but the event picked up after 19:00. The Middle Row Market took place on Saturday 20 May. This included a 3D artwork being produced by the Cultural Consortium with Urban Canvas. The Town Centre Manager confirmed that the barriers will stay in place for a week or two.

The numbers involved with Shopwatch haven’t increased. However, a new Facebook page has been set up, and a new QR code introduced, which it is hoped will increase take up.

The Town Centre Manager attended Pubwatch and hopes to increase engagement with

pubs in the coming months.

The street dressing – with union flags and straw hats – has received some excellent social media coverage. It is hoped that the hats will last at least until the end of the year.

Quotes are being sought for additional tubes for Christmas lights along Court Drive.

### **121/23      OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

Members received the report provided which was summarised by the Youth and Community Manager. The Council are going to work with a Polish staff member to seek to increase the engagement of Polish residents with the lunch club.

### **122/23      GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Members received the report provided.

The Youth and Community Manager explained that the attendance figures for Grove Corner were similar to those from last year. The Pokémon sessions had increased from 215 to 364 attendees.

The Youth and Community Manager responded to a query by explaining that the vaping discussion described had occurred spontaneously during a session, and so while no evaluation had taken place, the session had been well received.

It was confirmed that Play Streets was a CBC event. Town Council officers had provided support and suggestions and were awaiting an update from CBC on any future plans.

### **123/23      HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)**

Members received the report provided. The HSHAZ Manager updated Members that the works were currently forecast to last until December 2023. Councillor Hollick updated Members that he was one of eight authors collating a book about people who have come to Dunstable as part of the work of the Cultural Consortium.

The HSHAZ Manager informed Members that number 4 High Street South had changed owners following the beginning of the programme. Despite early engagement and several detailed surveys being carried out using programme funding, the current owners were not able to meet the repair costs identified following the surveys, particularly given the requirements of work on a listed building in a conservation area. Historic England had explored the option of the building being taken on by a local charity, with the support of Central Bedfordshire Council. As yet it has not been possible to progress this.

### **124/23      EVENTS**

Members received the report provided. The Events Manager summarised the report. Members were updated that a site meeting had been earlier in the day to review works to the performance area, and work would be completed early in June. Officers confirmed that

if there is a beacon lighting as part of the marking of the anniversary of D-Day the Council had pencilled in a suitable budget; officers will consider how D-Day might be marked within the Events report for the next meeting.

The Events Manager explained that in January bands are invited to apply for one of the slots available. Members suggested that officers consider whether other types of band are invited to take part in the future. It was noted that attendance has reduced since Covid, and efforts are currently focussed on increasing attendees at the core offer.

**RESOLVED:** To approve the events programme for 2024/25:

<b>Event and venue</b>	<b>Date 2024</b>
St George's Day (PG)	Saturday 20 April 11.00 am to 4.00 pm
Priory Picture (PG)	Saturday 25 May From 12 noon
Dunstable Classic Motor Rally (PG)	Saturday 8 June 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Dunstable Live (GHG)	Saturday 22 June 3 pm to 8 pm
Sunday Band Concerts (GHG)	Sunday 30 June, 21 July & 18 August 12.00 noon & 2.30 pm
Party in the Park (GHG)	Saturday 13 July 12.00 noon to 8.00 pm
Around the World (PG)	Saturday 3 August 10.30 am 4.30 pm
Priory Pictures (PG)	Saturday 10 August From 12.00 noon
Priory Proms in the Park (PG)	Date and Times TBC from BBC
Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession (TS)	Friday 29 November From 7.00 pm

**125/23      PRIORY HOUSE INFORMATION REPORT**

Members received the report provided. Members noted that Priory House Tearooms does offer takeaway afternoon teas, and these were to be promoted again. Members noted that the works to the Undercroft may mean reduced income during the year.

**126/23      SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

The Head of Community Services presented the report. The Head of Community Services agreed to circulate the criteria for funding to Members.

**RESOLVED:** For the Council to end the Service Level Agreement for Sorted Counselling Services effective from 1 April 2023, rather than continue for the remaining three years of the SLA.

**127/23      REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee – Cllr John Gurney  
No update as yet

Dunstable Town Band – Cllr Robert Blennerhasset  
No update as yet

Men in Sheds – Cllr Richard Atwell

Councillor Atwell updated Members that he had visited the shed. The Shed was formally reopened by the Mayor, Councillor Jones on 12 May, supported Andrew Selous MP.

**The meeting closed at 20:21**