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DUNSTABLE  
TOWN COUNCIL

**Paul Hodson** Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: 20 October 2023

Dear Councillors

A meeting of the Community Services Committee will be held on **Monday 30 October 2023** in the **Council Chamber** at **Grove House, High Street North, Dunstable** at **7.00 pm**. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: [livestream](#). Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. If you would like to ask a question, please contact the Council via [democratic@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@dunstable.gov.uk) or 01582 513000 by 4pm on Friday 27 October 2023.

*This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council 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 or training purposes.*

*If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.*

Paul Hodson  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

## AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To agree the minutes of the meeting of 4 September 2023 as a true record (previously circulated see page 3)

*Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.*

4. Updates on Service Level Agreements. To receive verbal updates from:
  - 4.1. Town Guides – Kay Kempster
  - 4.2. BRCC – Cliff Andrews
  - 4.3. Town Band – Becky Williams
  - 4.4. Dunstable Food Bank – Jemma Watkeys (Operations Manager) and Stuart Douglas (Chairman)
5. Town Centre Services - information report (see page 7)
6. Older People's Services - information report (see page 11)
7. Grove Corner and Community Engagement – information and decision report (see page 13)
8. Events - information and decision report (see page 16)
9. Priory House - information report (see page 19)
10. High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) - information report (see page 22)
11. Priory House second floor use - decision report (see page 25)
12. UK Shared Prosperity Fund - decision report (see page 28)
13. Community Services Budget 2024-25 (Report to follow)
14. Reports from Outside Bodies:
  - South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee – Cllr John Gurney
  - Dunstable Town Band – Cllr Robert Blennerhassett
  - Men in Sheds – Cllr Richard Attwell
15. Date of the next meeting – Monday 8 January 2024 at 7.00 pm.

To: All Members of the Community Services Committee:  
Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O'Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), John Gurney (Chairman), Robert Blennerhassett (Vice-Chairman), Trevor Adams, Gregory Alderman, Wendy Bater, Alex Butler, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick, Nick Kotarski, Matthew Neall and other Members of the Council for information.

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

HELD ON MONDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2023 FROM 19:00

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), John Gurney (Chair), Robert Blennerhasset (Vice-Chair), Trevor Adams, Gregory Alderman, Wendy Bater, Peter Hollick, Nicholas Kotarski and Matthew Neall.

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager), Gina Thank Thanky (Events Officer), Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

In Attendance: Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager) and Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager) (Remotely)

Apologies: Councillor Alex Butler, Councillor Kenson Gurney

Public: Nil

#### **165/23      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

#### **166/23      MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 22 May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **167/23      UPDATES ON SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS**

##### **Hospice at Home: Maureen Kerr**

Maureen Kerr outlined the work of Hospice at Home and their use of the Council's funding.

Councillor Liz Jones declared interest being a Trustee for Hospice at Home

Hospice at Home offer a service to referrals from doctors who suffer from a range of life limiting illnesses. Most referrals are cancer patients. They have currently 41 referrals 28 of which are Dunstable based.

Hospice at Home currently have 25 volunteers, 23 of which are over 60 years of age. The funds provided have enabled them to increase their volunteer staff and service providers.

##### **Citizens Advice: John Kane (Vice Chair)**

Mr Kane expressed that with the funding they are provided, Citizens Advice have been able to offer their services for an extended period on Thursdays. They are now currently open until 6.30 pm which is a 2-hour extension on their original opening time.

Since the closure of Watling House, Citizens Advice have experienced an increase in calls and workload by 30%, this includes the assistance to people who are applying for PIP.

Citizens Advice now also offer a social prescribing service in which doctors refer people to receive support.

### **Dunstable and District Local History Society: John Buckledee**

Cllr Hollick declared an interest as a member of the history society.

Cllr John Gurney declared an interest due to attending the Society's meetings.

Mr Buckledee updated Members on the work of Dunstable and District Local History Society. The extensive project to publish the Council's cemetery database online is nearing completion. The Dunstable and District Local History Society currently have 120 members. They have launched a new historical trail with QR code links of Dunstable.

### **168/23 TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

Members received the report provided. The Town Centre Manager summarised the key elements of the report to members. Pub Watch and Shop Watch are continuing their partnership with meetings to follow. For the Twilight Market Cllr Hollick expressed interest in approaching schools for entertainment which will bring along parents etc. to support all areas. The Town Centre Manager advised that over the summer, schools did not participate as much however this is something that will be explored.

Cllr Alderman suggested circulating the sponsorship of the Christmas tree to the public to invite donations. Councillor Jones advised that she will liaise with her contacts.

### **169/23 OLDER PEOPLES' SERVICES**

Members received the report provided. The Youth and Community Manager summarised the key elements of the report to members. Cllr Adams asked what costs would be needed to continue the Happy and Active Together project after April. The Youth and Community Manager advised that grants would continue to be applied for. The actual costs would be provided closer to the time and if the grants are unsuccessful, attendees would need to contribute to the cost.

### **170/23 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Members received the report provided. The Youth and Community Manager summarised the key elements of the report to members. The Youth and Community Manager expressed that meetings with schools will now be commencing. This will enable them to find out where they can help the youth community and where they may need to be to engage further. Cllr Jones congratulated the team on a fantastic summer. 1,845 children took part in all community events over the summer.

Cllr Adams expressed interest in a follow up with the schools for feedback on how these events may have had a positive impact on the achievements of the students involved.

### **171/23 EVENTS**

Members received the report provided. The Events Officer summarised the key elements

of the report to members.

**RESOLVED:**

To agree the following events programme for 2025/26:

<b>Event and venue</b>	<b>Date 2025</b>
St George's Day (Priory Gardens)	Saturday 26 April 11.00 am to 4.00 pm
Around the World (PG)	Saturday 24 May 10.30 am 4.30 pm
Dunstable Classic Motor Rally (PG)	Saturday 7 June 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Dunstable Live (Grove House Gardens)	Saturday 21 June 3 pm to 8 pm
Sunday Band Concerts (GHG)	Sunday 29 June, 27 July & 17 August 12.00 noon & 2.30 pm
Priory Pictures (PG)	Saturday 5 July From 12.00 noon
Party in the Park (GHG)	Saturday 19 July 12.00 noon to 8.00 pm
Priory Pictures (PG)	Saturday 9 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

**RESOLVED:** to give Autism Bedfordshire the use of one of the Town Council's free uses of Grove Theatre for their AGM.

**RESOLVED:** that officers should explore opportunities to diversify the band concert programme and to agree to the changes for the 2024 events programme.

**172/23      HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)**

Members received the report provided. The HSHAZ Programme Manager summarised the key elements of the report to members.

**173/23      PRIORY HOUSE**

Members received the report provided. The Cultural Services Manager summarised the key elements of the report to members. The Jacobean room is out of use due to the works to Priory House. It was advised that due to the works on Priory house there may be an impact on sales over the Christmas period however other measures are being taken to increase income where possible.

**174/23      PETER NEWTON PAVILLION**

Members received the report provided. The Peter Newton Pavilion is leased by the Town Council to the Bedfordshire Football Association. The building was built in 2011 and an annual report is provided to update on the FA's compliance with the lease conditions.

Members were advised that the duration of the lease is for 75 years from 1994. Bedfordshire FA have not made more than £25,000 in profit from the Peter Newton Pavilion in the last year and so no funds will be passed to the Town Council.

**175/23      REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee – Cllr John Gurney

Cllr Gurney advised there was no report at present due to not being able to attend their AGM meeting as this clashed with the CBC DMC meeting, which took priority. A report will follow.

Dunstable Town Band – Cllr Robert Blennerhasset

No update currently.

Men in Sheds – Cllr Richard Attwell

In the absence of Councillor Attwell, Councillor John Gurney informed Members that the group had held an open evening for families.

**176/23      EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND THE PUBLIC**

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

**177/23      NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND GRANT – PRIORY HOUSE**

**RESOLVED** - to accept a National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant should the application be successful.

**The meeting closed at 20:55pm**

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023****DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	For information.
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**1. MIDDLE ROW MARKETS**

- 1.1 Middle Row Market stall bookings are increasing after a slow summer. Saturday 9 September had 34 stalls, which was part of Open Heritage Day. High temperatures on the day lead to low footfall in the afternoon. Numbers are increasing for Twilight Markets with around 25 booked on each date so far. Dates have been confirmed for 2024 which will take place on the second and third Saturday of the month from March to December.
- 1.2 July 2024 will see a special Youth Market on Saturday 6 July which will support traders 16 to 30 years of age with a special £10 stall plus insurance support from National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA). No market will take place on the 13 July due to large events in the area, but regular traders can also support the Youth Market with guidance and support by having a stall on the day.

14 Oct	21 booked
21 Oct	36 booked
11 Nov	16 booked so far
18 Nov	28 booked so far

**2. ASHTON SQUARE TOILETS**

- 2.1 Ashton Square toilets have again been entered into Loo of the Year for 2023. The toilets have now been judged and are waiting on results, awards are issued in October.

**3. TOWN CENTRE****Events on The Square**

- 3.1 The last Street Food Heroes of the year took place on 21 September in The Square. The events have been a great success with families, individuals and groups enjoying the atmosphere. The Town Centre Manager has booked 2024 dates with Street Food Heroes which will take place on the second Thursday of the month, March to September. Two Saturday Street Food Heroes will take place on the 17 August and the 21 December as part of a joint event with Middle Row Markets.
- 3.2 The Vegan market returns on 18 November 2023, which has a good following. This will be advertised in Talk of the Town, Facebook and Christmas Events. This is a new date for the Vegan market and will join Middle Row Markets as a joint venture for the first time. Dates for 2024 have been booked. Saturday 30 March and Saturday 23 November will be standalone markets as part of the extra markets within The Square for 2024.

- 3.3 The Middle Row Market event on 21 October will benefit from Dunstable Culture Consortium and HSHAZ funding for a 1940s Day. Free activities from HSHAZ include traditional games in The Square and photos of traders. This is part of a larger project to take pictures of our independents and look at high streets as they are now. All traders will receive a copy of the photo that has been taken. Dunstable Culture Consortium have funded eight stalls with free 1940s activities which include dance lessons and children's activities. This event boosted the stall bookings with 36 stalls on the day. This is the last joint event of the year from The Culture Consortium as they will also come to the end of their funding. HSHAZ will be joining the Markets in March 2024 for a final goodbye event with doodle art community activity
- 3.4 The Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession event on Friday 24 November has seven food and drink stalls booked for the evening. Stalls will be located by Farm Foods and along Middle Row. All traders will be providing their own stalls on the evening. Ashton Square toilets will be open on the evening supported by the Town Centre Manager.
- 3.5 The Middle Row Twilight Market on Friday 8 December, Saturday 9 December and Sunday 10 December is still open for bookings. The Town Centre Manager has booked new activities for the event. This year we will bring a stage into the Square with live entertainment on all three days with local community groups performing plus a Santa's grotto and a children's carousel. There are still a few slots available for local groups or performers to join the event. Facebook posts and Octave Music shop have helped engage with groups that will be joining the event.
- 3.6 The official opening of the community artwork along the alley way took place on Wednesday 20 September. Three local schools, the Culture Consortium and the artists that took part came to the opening. The event was well attended with over 40 invited to see the art and enjoy refreshments.
- 3.7 It should be noted that a number of these activities have been funded by the HSHAZ which has been a total of £14,245, and this funding will be not available for next year's markets. These additional activities and events have had a positive impact on the market, which has in turn attracted more traders and shoppers alike. Members may wish to consider the future funding for market related activities, to enable this growth to continue and to be built upon as part of the budget setting process.

### **Partnership Working**

- 3.8 Shop Watch continues to take place every six weeks. The next meeting is the week of the 13 November - attendance is still low. A Facebook page has now been set up with only key partners as admins for the group. The hope is that this will stimulate some discussions and support shops that are unable to attend the meetings, The Town Centre Manager has given all the shops in the area Shop Watch information to join the group as part of a news update for all the businesses in the town. Pub Watch, which has restarted after a two year break, will help with engagement for those businesses open during the evenings. Meetings have not been regular but the Town Centre Manager will attend. The next Pub Watch has been confirmed as Tuesday 7 November.
- 3.9 The Town Centre Manager is working alongside The Quadrant Shopping Centre with events this year. Wednesday 5 April saw a joint Easter event that was well attended. Roar into Archaeology on the 22 July which was the largest event. Pumpkin Party, supported by HSHAZ, Town Centre Services and Grove Corner will take place on the 25 October in The



Quadrant. The event will feature a Halloween show, spooky golf, face painting, pumpkin, and autumn food demonstrations as well as arts and crafts.

- 3.10 The Town Centre Manager has been working with ASA Business Consulting on a business plan for Middle Row Market and the Town Centre. A new three-year plan is being devised for the development of the town centre and market service. The business plan also looks at the market being a starting point for new retail business in the town, with support from the Town Centre Manager and partners to move into vacant units within the town after initially successfully trading on the market. The Town Centre Manager has also been to local Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce meetings to meet and engage with local business and help support new business by introductions to the Chamber of Commerce.

#### 4. TOWN CENTRE VACANCY RATES

- 4.1 The vacancy rates to the end of October 2023 are provided below. The count will be undertaken again at the start of January 2024.
- 4.2 The town centre area used for the survey includes properties in High Street North up to Regent Street, High Street South to Friars Walk (excluding Thames Industrial Estate), Church Street up to and including Aldi and West Street up to the Police Station/St Mary's Gate.
- 4.3 Eleanor's Cross, Ashton Square, Albion Street, The Quadrant and Grove Park (including Asda) have been included but rates can be calculated with or without these properties.
- 4.4 These figures have been shared with Central Bedfordshire Council officers:

No. Units	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant Units	Previous %
<b>253</b>	<b>38 vacant</b>	<b>15.01%</b>	12.25% count end of July 23.

- 4.5 The following figures relate to the High Street (including Grove Park, Albion Street, Eleanor's Cross and Ashton Square but excluding the Quadrant Shopping Centre.

No. Units	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant Units	Previous %
<b>210</b>	<b>33 vacant</b>	<b>15.70%</b>	13.80% count end of July 23.

- 4.6 The following figures relate to the Quadrant Shopping Centre only.

No. Units	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant Units	Previous %
<b>43</b>	<b>5 vacant</b>	<b>11.62%</b>	4.65% count from July 23

- 4.7 Units in Grove Park area and Asda.

No. Units	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant Units	Previous %
<b>6</b>	<b>1 vacant</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	16.6% count from July 23

## 5. STREET DRESSING AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

- 5.1 The community art installation which was match funded by the HSHAZ is now in its first winter which is installed in Middle Row. The creation of colorful straw hats celebrates the unique and historic trade in Dunstable. Members of the public engaged in the process through the painting of the hats to bring a unique and stimulating installation to Middle Row. The Hats will hopefully last the winter but will need to be removed next year with hopes of a new art installation in its place.
- 5.2 Officers are keen to continue street dressing this area and the main high street due to the positive impact the last two installations have had. However, once again external funding has made this possible and therefore Members will need to consider this during the budget setting process.
- 5.3 The main high street union flags have now been removed and kept in storage until they are next needed. New Dunstable branded lamp post banners are being designed currently with the intention to install these when the Christmas lights are taken down.
- 5.4 The last of the Christmas High Street lights are due to go up by the end of October. The trees at Nags Head are unable to have the new tree lights due to the position of the newest benches on the high street which make access impossible.
- 5.5 The main Christmas tree in The Square has been ordered. Dunstable Rotary Club has sponsored the tree. The tree is due the second week in November and will then be decorated by Lamps and Tubes.
- 5.6 The main lighting display will be switched on 17 November 2023 and will stay on until 7 January 2024. The main scheme lights will be on from 15.30 until 23.30.

## 6. AUTHOR

- 6.1 Annette Clynes - Town Centre Manager  
Email - [Annette.clynes@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:Annette.clynes@dunstable.gov.uk)

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023**  
**OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

<b>Purpose of report:</b> For information
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**1. GOOD COMPANIONS CLUB**

- 1.1 The Good Companions Club currently has 19 members; there is space for 24 members in total. Officers have been advertising spaces through word of mouth, on the Council's website, community notice boards and have advertised spaces available directly with health professionals through GP surgeries and medical centres, including the new Grove Hub.
- 1.2 Officers took the group to Go Bowling in October, after the successful visit the group had last month. This was well received and again, all who attended verbally fed back how much they had enjoyed the trip.
- 1.3 Good Companions Club have had various speakers attend since the last report, including a food historian, who visited the group as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone community engagement.
- 1.4 Officers facilitated the Good, bad, Ugly project with the group, looking at what members liked and didn't like about Dunstable and where they would like to see change. The group created a video presentation, with various questions to different businesses and stakeholders within the town. The Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk and Chief Executive attended the final session to answer questions.
- 1.5 Officers have funding from Central Bedfordshire Council as part of the hardship fund and for several weeks members will be provided with a free, additional hot meal they will be able to heat up at home. This will take place in the New Year.

**2. CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE LUNCH CLUB**

- 2.1 Creasey Park Community Football Centre Lunch Club for the over 55s continues to be popular, with a waiting list. Officers continue to keep in touch with those on the waiting list.
- 2.2 CPCFC lunch club will be having a Halloween party on 1 November.
- 2.3 Officers are currently working on Christmas plans for the group including a Christmas party, trip to the pantomime and a Christmas meal out.
- 2.4 Officers have funding from Central Bedfordshire Council as part of the hardship fund and will be providing members with a supermarket voucher. Officers have carried out consultation to ensure members get vouchers for where they shop.

### **3. COFFEE MORNINGS**

- 3.1 Coffee mornings were held:  
12 September at St Mary's Church, 10.00 am to 12.00 noon – attended by 30 people.  
10 October at the Splash side Cafe, 10.00 am to 12.00 noon – attended by 15 people.
- 3.2 Officers have two more coffee mornings planned for the rest of the year, which councillors are very welcome to attend:  
14 November at Beecroft Community Centre, 10.00 am to 12.00 noon  
12 December at Furness Avenue, 10.00 am to 12.00 noon

### **4. ROCK AND ROLL**

- 4.1 Rock and Roll on Tuesday 19 September was enjoyed by all who attended.
- 4.2 The Council has released tickets for the next Rock and Roll, taking place on 5 December. The theme is Winter Wonderland. All tickets were sold within a few days and there is currently a small waiting list.

### **5. HAPPY AND ACTIVE TOGETHER**

- 5.1 Officers will be promoting spaces for Happy and Active Together, a new project running from January to March every Tuesday from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm at Dunstable Community Halls.
- 5.2 This project is open to those aged 55+ who do not currently access any of the provisions the Town Council offers for the older community.
- 5.3 Officers were successful in securing funding of £2,500 for this project. Therefore, if the project is successful, officers will look for further funding, and will explore costings to continue to run the project, should funding not be available. However, at this stage, an accurate figure is not available of what this project would cost to run without funding.

### **6. AUTHORS**

- 6.1 Elaine McGarrigle, Older People's Services Officer  
Email – [Elaine.mcgarrigle@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.mcgarrigle@dunstable.gov.uk)

Gill Peck, Youth and Community Manager  
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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023**

**GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	For information and for members to agree to the submission of a funding application to the National Lottery's Million Hours funding for youth work.
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**1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1. It is recommended that the Council applies to the National Lottery's Million Hours Fund for £100,000 to be spent on youth work over two years, and that the Council accepts a grant if awarded.

**2. GROVE CORNER FIGURES**

- 2.1. Grove Corner received 357 visits from young people between 16 August 2023 and 13 October 2023.
- 2.2. From 18 Aug 2022 to 7 October 2022, Grove Corner received 227 visits from young people.
- 2.3. Pokémon sessions received 134 visits from young people between 12 September 2023 and 10 October 2023.
- 2.4. From 6 September 2022 to 11 October 2022, Pokémon received 182 visits from young people.
- 2.5. Grove Corner now has over 1,200 Facebook followers and Grove Corner's Instagram has 435 followers.

**3. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

- 3.1. Officers were successful in recruiting to a ten-hour post per week to support in running the Grove Corner sessions throughout each week.
- 3.2. Officers are supporting a young person taking part in Duke of Edinburgh to complete their volunteer hours by becoming a Young Volunteer at Dunstable Town Council. The young person will support with volunteering at the Pokémon Junior sessions.
- 3.3. Officers continue to promote Grove Corner sessions through word of mouth, through professional contacts within the town, Talk of the Town, social media, visiting schools, the community noticeboards and West Street shop window.

**4. DETACHED YOUTH WORK**

- 4.1. The CBC funded officers have been focusing their work at Priory House Gardens, Downside Recreation Ground, and the performance area in Grove Garden.
- 4.2. Between 5 August and 28 September 2023, officers have engaged with 161 young people. Figures continue to be recorded by headcount.
- 4.3. Officers will be planning youth led activities once a month on a weekend, to provide provision for young people and will also explore putting on specific activities during the holidays, for example, a gaming bus or disco bus or boxing sessions.
- 4.4. Officers are working together with different professionals to work with the young people who currently spend time around the performance area (Grove Gardens) each evening. Officers have attended a Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group meeting, to discuss joint up working, and will work in partnership with the Police and CBC community safety to work alongside the young people who spend time at the bandstand.
- 4.5. Officers will continue to do some work in Priory House Gardens due to the need they have currently identified within this area. The team have also begun to do some detached sessions at Kingsbury Recreation Ground to engage with young people using the MUGA. Officers will continue to engage with partners across the town, to carry out consultation and to identify needs within the town, and areas to focus on.

**5. SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1. Officers worked with Ashton St Peter's to do a litter pick around Dunstable Cemetery. The school has asked to borrow litter picking equipment going forward, to continue running litter picks with the children in the school.
- 5.2. Officers attending Central Bedfordshire College to promote Grove Corner to their students at the fresher's fair in September.

**6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1. Officers continue to work with residents at the Old Palace Lodge each week to run a football project. This is attended regularly by up to 15 people.
- 6.2. Officers are currently delivering Fit and Active Together, in partnership with Dunstable Children's Centre. Currently 10 people are attending weekly, to take part in physical exercise, followed by a session around wellbeing, delivered by different providers each week. Central Bedfordshire Council had agreed to expand the criteria of this funding and allow it to be opened to all residents with Dunstable, aged 16+.
- 6.3. Officers took part in the official opening of the art installation in the alleyway of Middle Row. Students from the various schools who had taken part, attended.
- 6.4. Officers will be visiting Christchurch on Thursday 19 October to speak about the work the town council does, including the High Street Heritage Action Zone. Officers will be running an activity as part of this workshop.

- 6.5. Officers have worked in partnership with Bedfordshire Police, as part of their community engagement days at the performance area. Officers are also currently working with the police, to work with them to attend youth and community sessions they DTC facilitates.

## **7. MILLION HOURS FUNDING**

- 7.1. It is recommended that Members agree for the Council to apply to the National Lottery for million hours.
- 7.2. This funding is for organisations to give extra support to young people in areas where they may be at risk of anti-social behaviour by paying for extra hours of youth work for additional activities that give these young people more places to go and positive things to do.
- 7.3. This funding is specific to Dunstable East. It is proposed to apply for £100,000 to expand on the detached and outreach youth work delivery. Funding must be spent between April 2024 and 31 March 2026.
- 7.4. If successful, officers would like to deliver two additional nights of detached or outreach youth work per week, as well as explore cope for extending this offer during the holidays. Officers would plan to work with other service providers within Dunstable East, to expand the youth offer within the town.
- 7.5. Applications have to be submitted by the 24 November 2023 and therefore there is not another opportunity for officers to share the detail of the funding bid. It is requested that members agreed to submit an application based on the requirements of the fund and the needs identified by the existing team.
- 7.6. If successful, there would be a change to the establishment. This would depend on the level of funding but could include additional hours for existing part time staff or the employment of a full time qualified youth worker. All employment changes would be temporary for up to 2 years.
- 7.7. No match funding is required; however, it should be noted that the funding is expected to be spent directly on youth workers and therefore it is likely to be necessary to allocate up to £10,000 for project costs e.g. hire of sports coaches, venues, running costs of skate jams etc.
- 7.8. The full implications of receiving the funding would be brought to a future committee should the application be successful.

## **AUTHORS**

Gill Peck – Youth and Community Manager  
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Jack Adams-Rimmer – Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer  
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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023**

**EVENTS**

**Purpose of report:** For information and to agree the proposed free use of Grove Theatre in 2024.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1. It is recommended that the Council allocates one of the free uses of Grove Theatre in 2024 to the Dunstable Musical Theatre Company.

**2. PAST EVENTS**

- 2.1. Priory Proms in the Park
- 2.2. Proms in the Park took place on Saturday 9 September, the event was very well attended with an estimate of over 1,500 people. Positive feedback has been received on Facebook and through Survey Monkey. The live performances from Dunstable Town Band and Joe and Kirsty Corrigan were well received as was the lightshow on the church and the fireworks finale.

**3. FUTURE EVENTS - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**3.1. Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession**

- 3.2. Planning for the Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession is going well. A letter was sent out to schools in September inviting them to attend the event. To date, 10 schools have agreed to attend, with a total of 285 children confirmed to take part in this year's event.
- 3.3. The road closure will be in place and businesses and residents affected by this will be written to in advance.
- 3.4. Grove Theatre's Christmas pantomime cast from Jack in the Beanstalk have confirmed they will be attending the event however, at the time of writing it is not yet known which cast members will be involved. BBB Group will be providing the light show finale. As in previous years, there will also be food and drink stalls down Middle Row alongside Priory House, who will be opening late serving a festive menu.

**4. EVENTS SURVEY**

- 4.1. This year, a number of event specific surveys were once again undertaken online via Survey Monkey, Facebook and through surveys taken on the day via a QR



code displayed on posters. To date, 476 responses have been collected with one remaining event still to go for the year.

4.2. Below are the results from a couple of key questions from the survey:

**a) How satisfied are you with Dunstable Town Council's events programme?**

<b>2023 (476 responses collected)</b>	<b>2022 (434 responses collected)</b>
63% Very satisfied	56% Very Satisfied
32% Satisfied	35% Satisfied
1% Dissatisfied	2% Dissatisfied

**b) How would you rate Dunstable Town Council's events?**

<b>2023 (476 responses collected)</b>	<b>2022 (434 responses collected)</b>
59% Extremely Good	47% Extremely Good
27% Very Good	31% Very Good
10% Good	15% Good
2% Neither good nor bad	4% Neither good nor bad

**c) How likely are you to recommend Dunstable Events to a friend?**

<b>2023 (476 responses collected)</b>	<b>2022 (434 responses collected)</b>
59% Extremely Likely	57% Extremely Likely
27% Very likely	25% Very likely
10% Likely	13% Likely
1% Not Likely	2% Not Likely

4.3. The results received so far have been very positive; overall, compared to last year's surveys there has been a positive increase on views regarding this year's events programme. The full year's questionnaire results will be available for the January Committee.

4.4. For next year's Dunstable Live the theme is being planned around 'Soul and Motown.' This was the most popular theme of music suggested through this year's survey results. A Facebook poll will be created to allow the public to vote on what tribute acts they would like see perform, which will then determine the line-up of the event.

## **5. FREE USE OF GROVE THEATRE**

5.1. Dunstable has two free uses a year of Grove Theatre which it offers to the community and voluntary sector and promotes through social media pages and the Council's website. Both uses for 2023 have been allocated and the Council is now receiving requests for the 2024 uses.

5.2. Most recently the Council were approached once again by Dunstable Musical Theatre Company, who are seeking a venue for a performance of Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat in summer 2024. This would be performed in collaboration with Dunstable Stagecoach, Luton Stagecoach, some children from some local schools and Priory Church Choir, approximately 40 to 50 children.

5.3. Their application also advised that most of the orchestra either live or work in Dunstable, as do a significant number of their backstage crew.

- 5.4. The constitution of the Dunstable Musical Theatre Company states that they are to provide entertainment to the People of Dunstable. Whilst the organisation did receive a free use last year, it should be recognised that they are the only performing arts community group in Dunstable, and who's free use benefits both their members (many of whom are from Dunstable), and Dunstable residents attending the performance.
- 5.5. This opportunity to use a professional facility for its intended purposes is likely to inspire many of the young people taking part, with a sense of pride and connection with their town. With the possibility of aspiring them to consider performing arts or stage management as a career. Members are asked to approve this request for a 'free' use of Grove Theatre in 2024.

**6. AUTHORS**

Gina Thanky – Events Officer  
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Becky Wisbey - Head of Community Service  
[becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk)

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023**

**PRIORY HOUSE**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b> For Information
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**1. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 1.1 The recruitment for more permanent contracted Priory House Assistants is still ongoing, due to availability and requirements of the people applying for the role; the 16 hours contracted post is not suitable for most applicants. The majority of applicants would prefer a zero hours based contract to suit their needs. However, recruitment will be ongoing to try and fill the contracted positions.
- 1.2 Priory Gardens has been attracting school children after school to play football and hang out with friends. These can be in groups of over 20 children which can at times be disruptive to our customers through noise and general behaviour, although largely this is not anti-social. The Priory House team have been working with the Grove Corner outreach team who have been attending Priory House to start building positive relationships with the school children and work with them to reduce the negative impact they sometimes have on our customers at Priory house. Work will continue and it is anticipated now the nights a drawing in, the children will not spend as much time hanging outside of Priory House.
- 1.3 Unfortunately, multiple staff sickness has at times disrupted the operations at Priory House on occasion, however officers have worked very hard to keep the service as unaffected as possible.

**2. SHOP**

- 2.1 The shop is doing well with the new Christmas range now on sale which is proving popular.
- 2.2 Officers have also attracted a new showcase shelving business to the gift shop for the festive season, which will sell home crafted Christmas wreaths and decorations.

**3. THE JACOBAN ROOM**

- 3.1 The last wedding of the year took place on the 5 October. Due to the works on the third floor the Jacobean Room will be out of use until the third-floor works are complete, which is anticipated to be in March 2024.

**4. EVENTS**

- 4.1 The Christmas workshops are selling well; the charm bracelet workshop sold out and another date has been added. The Christmas pudding nights are also nearly sold out as well.

4.2 Priory House will be supporting the Twilight Market with a stall across all three days selling hot drinks and festive food. The tea rooms will also be open late for the Twilight Markets and for the Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession.

## 5. PRIORY HOUSE TEA ROOMS

5.1 The Catering Manager has been working hard to create a delicious Christmas themed Afternoon Tea menu which is also adapted for vegan, vegetarian, gluten and dairy free options.

5.2 There will also be a festive Christmas menu available everyday in the tea rooms launching at the end of November.

5.3 To try and encourage more customers to try and purchase the loose-leaf tea range, officers are promoting 'Tea of the week' which is picked by staff each week, this has seen more customers try different flavours of tea and seen an increase in sales.

## 6. FINANCE

6.1 Priory House gift shop takings comparison ex VAT for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 22/23 - 23/24

### Priory House Shop taking comparison EX VAT

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Variation 2022/2023 to 2023/2024</b>
<b>April</b>	£1,014.90	£1,871.88	£856.98
<b>May</b>	£1,931.76	£2,013.57	£81.81
<b>June</b>	£2,042.24	£1,402.17	-£640.08
<b>Total 1st qtr</b>	<b>£4,988.91</b>	<b>£5,287.62</b>	<b>£298.71</b>
<b>July</b>	£1,192.48	£1,098.91	-£93.57
<b>August</b>	£1,132.00	£1,282.86	£150.85
<b>September</b>	£1,043.91	£1,815.69	£771.78
<b>Total 2nd qtr</b>	<b>£3,368.39</b>	<b>£4,197.46</b>	<b>£829.07</b>
<b>TOTAL TO DATE</b>	<b>£8,357.29</b>	<b>£9,485.07</b>	<b>£1,127.78</b>

6.2 Members will see that the gift shop has improved on last year's income in the first two quarters. Officers feel it is a combination of the seating in the shop, Frenchic paint and the takeaway drinks service which have led to this increase.

### 6.3 Priory House Tea Rooms taking comparison EX VAT

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Variation 2022/2023 to 2023/2024</b>
<b>April</b>	£11,244.39	£9,647.09	-£1,597.30
<b>May</b>	£15,262.54	£10,612.85	-£4,649.69
<b>June</b>	£11,808.67	£11,802.63	-£6.04
<b>Total 1st qtr</b>	<b>£38,315.60</b>	<b>£32,062.57</b>	<b>-£6,253.03</b>
<b>July</b>	£13,121.44	£11,188.56	-£1,932.88
<b>August</b>	£17,096.42	£14,213.21	-£2,883.21
<b>September</b>	£10,821.19	£10,670.90	-£150.29
<b>Total 2nd qtr</b>	<b>£41,039.05</b>	<b>£36,072.67</b>	<b>-£4,966.38</b>
<b>TOTAL TO DATE</b>	<b>£79,354.65</b>	<b>£68,135.24</b>	<b>-£11,219.41</b>

6.4 Members will see that the tearooms, as expected, is lower in income in the first two quarters compared to last year; the summer was noticeably quiet. However, the loss in income is not as high as that anticipated in light of the ongoing works and officers continue to explore ways of increasing income.

## 7. AUTHOR

7.1 Lisa Stephens, Cultural Services Manager – [lisa.stephens@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.stephens@dunstable.gov.uk)

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023****HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b> For information only
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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The HSHAZ ends in March 2024, and it is anticipated that 2024 will largely be finalising projects and associated financial reporting along with overarching HSHAZ reporting and evaluation. The HSHAZ Programme comprises three complimentary strands (physical interventions, cultural programme/cultural consortium, and community engagement). The physical interventions strand comprises of Priory House and privately owned properties.

**2. KEY DEVELOPMENTS/SUMMARY**

- 2.1. Since the committee meeting on 4 September 2023 no new applications have been received and no new grant offers have been issued. The 21-23 High Street South (Moore's) project has continued to progress which means that it could still be completed before the end of the programme.

**3. PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS****High Street South/Middle Row and Church Street projects**

- 3.1. Updates since 4 September 2023:

- **Number 21-23 High Street South (Moore's):** The Building Regulations application has been lodged and is pending feedback from Central Bedfordshire Council. The tender period closed on 29 September and a tender opening meeting was held on 2 October 2023. Six tenders were received, and Conception Architects have reviewed the tenders. Conception Architects prepared a tender comparison of all six tenders based on costs, following which they undertook an exercise on competency which included virtual meetings with the three contractors who came within the grant budget. This informed their recommendation on which contractor should be awarded the tender. The tender will shortly be awarded formally.

**Priory House**

- 3.2. Messenger BCR (lead contractor) are working with Cliveden Conservation to undertake the refurbishment work. The thirteenth monthly site meeting with The Morton Partnership, Messenger BCR, Cliveden Conservation, HE, and other parties was held on 26 September 2023. The next is scheduled for 31 October 2023.
- 3.3. The work to date has included undertaking more detailed investigation work to inform the repairs. This work identified where the approach to the repairs and methodologies needed to be further developed to address items such as difficulties

removing concrete used during previous repairs. The work has included repair works to Bays 1 and 4 of the Undercroft and there is ongoing repair work to the façade.

- 3.4. DTC have been successful in securing additional grant funding for the Priory House project comprising a second Heritage At Risk grant from Historic England (HAR 2) and a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) grant. There was a NLHF start up meeting on 26 September and the project monitor reporting to the NHLF attended Priory House for a site visit on 17 October. Permission to start has been granted and this means that work can continue without mothballing.
- 3.5. It should be noted that the costs that have been prepared to date still have some uncertainty because the flood alleviation work is yet to be fully scoped.
- 3.6. Officers are sharing photos taken by members of the project team on the Town Council's website at [www.dunstable.gov.uk/dunstable-hshaz/prioryhousegallery/](http://www.dunstable.gov.uk/dunstable-hshaz/prioryhousegallery/) and on social media.

#### **4. CULTURAL PROGRAMME/CULTURAL CONSORTIUM**

- 4.1. Dunstable Cultural Consortium (DCC) have been posting all their project news on their Facebook page [www.facebook.com/DunstableCulturalConsortium](http://www.facebook.com/DunstableCulturalConsortium) since January 2022. Accordingly, follow this page @DunstableCulturalConsortium for DCC's updates. It is understood that DCC's 1940s day held at the 21 October market is their last engagement event and that their funding associated with the HSHAZ will end at the end of February 2024. The Consortium's Programme Board is looking for ways to continue the Consortium's work after the end of the programme.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1. The Council continues to use the HSHAZ webpages on the Town Centre section of the Council's website, along with the Facebook page and Instagram account to promote the programme and engage with the community. The Facebook Page now has 963 followers (936 followers in September 2023). The Instagram account has 250 followers (245 followers in September 2023). There are also four Facebook Groups associated with the HSHAZ Facebook Page - two of which relate to past projects and two of which are ongoing: Carving a Journey Through Dunstable [www.facebook.com/groups/169746391702106](http://www.facebook.com/groups/169746391702106) and Priory House Conservation and Restoration [www.facebook.com/groups/320591406397190](http://www.facebook.com/groups/320591406397190).

##### *Events*

- 5.2. Summer 2023 was the key time for HSHAZ community engagement. As the HSHAZ ends in March 2024 there will not be any further opportunities for HSHAZ engagement via DTC's events as Torchlight is not suitable for HSHAZ activities. It is hoped that it will be possible to undertake some final community engagement including an art project at the markets in March 2024.

*Middle Row Markets and Town Centre Events*

- 5.3. There was a formal opening on 20 September for the community art in the alleyway (between High Street South and Middle Row) produced as part of the HSHAZ and DCC's projects. The art produced as part of the HSHAZ included an intergenerational piece which was overseen by the Grove Corner team as part of their HSHAZ intergenerational project. Additional pieces will be added before the HSHAZ ends including one inspired by the "Green Goddess" Bedfordshire truck and Dunstable's history, which was coloured in by children at the 10 June market and at summer activities hosted by Grove Corner.
- 5.4. A photography project was carried out in September and October by Paulia Bera of Positive Pictures. This was inspired by some of the historic images of shopkeepers stood outside their buildings. Paulina took photographs of shops in the HSHAZ area, independent businesses in The Quadrant and at the 21 October market.
- 5.5. There were HSHAZ activities at the 9 September market when we celebrated Heritage Open Days [www.heritageopendays.org.uk/about](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/about) and the HSHAZ. We were joined by Myal Pyper, Hysterical History, Swords of Penda/ Children of Loki, The Vicus, Event Production Live and Dunstable Cultural Consortium.
- 5.6. There were HSHAZ activities at the 21 October market and we were joined by Event Production Live who hosted traditional games. DCC hosted 7 stalls as part of their last engagement event, a 1940s day.
- 5.7. There were HSHAZ activities at Pumpkin Party at The Quadrant Shopping Centre on 25 October. We were joined by Monica Askay, Cook and Food Historian <https://monica-askay.co.uk/>.

*Workshops*

- 5.8. Monica Askay, Cook and Food Historian delivered workshops for the Good Companions Lunch Club on Monday 16 October and for the Creasey Park Community Football Centre Lunch Club on Wednesday 18 October. There was a community session after the Lunch Club at Creasey Park Community Football Centre.
- 5.9. The Grove Corner and HSHAZ team went and talked to the Christchurch Group on 19 October.

**6. AUTHOR**

- 6.1 Michelle Collings - High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme Manager  
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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023****PRIORY HOUSE SECOND-FLOOR USAGE**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	For Members to consider the future usage of the second-floor post completion of repair works.
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**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 For Members to approve the use of the second floor of Priory House (post repair works) for the sole purpose of Priory House operations and cease letting out of this space.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 When Dunstable Town Council was awarded the Lottery funding for the 2003/04 works to Priory House it came with a number of strict conditions. These conditions are in place for 75 years and require the Council to seek permission from the Lottery before changes of use could be made.
- 2.2 In September 2013 Theobalds Coaches left Priory House making one half of the attic space (second floor) vacant. This space was marketed for a number of months, but no interest was shown and in the end it was decided to start using the space for Town Council purposes going forward.
- 2.3 In December 2021 T&R Storage left Priory House making the second half of the attic space (second floor) vacant as well. With the impending works due to Priory House and the need to empty the basement storage, and to locate the registrar in the first-floor office it was agreed to temporarily move Priory House staff into the second floor office for the duration of the works and then to review arrangements once the house was fully functioning.
- 2.4 At no point did officers feel that this 'change of use' from renting to Town Council usage constituted a need to inform the Lottery as the building was still being used for what the grant intended it for. This need only became apparent in 2023 when discussions resumed with the Lottery over the 2004 works and the need for additional funding.

**3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 Dunstable Town Council owns and manages Priory House Heritage Centre, which has benefited from Lottery funding which has a number of conditions attached to it.
- 3.2 The Town Council has never knowingly not adhered to these conditions, but recently with the second Lottery award it became apparent that there were some 'loose ends' which needed formally tying up. For this reason, the Lottery have made it a condition of the most recent award that the Council formally requests to use the whole building by the Town Council and not as the first grant stated whereby the top/second floor was to be rented out commercially.

- 3.3 A lot has changed in the last 20 years since the first grant was award. Businesses no longer need town centre locations, Covid has seen many smaller businesses operating online or from people's homes and as a result what was previously a prime business/commercial space for a small business is no longer the case.
- 3.4 Priory House as a service has grown considerably as well since it was first opened by the Town Council. The Town Council now runs the tea rooms, the gift shop is no longer a shared space with tourist information. Priory House is also a licensed wedding venue running a significant number of functions and activities each year. This additional work and the growth of the business means that the service requires more space to function effectively.
- 3.5 During this time the Town Council also took on the market charter, and with the market area located at the South end of town and operating on Saturdays it made absolute sense for the Town Centre Manager to have desk space at Priory House.
- 3.6 This development now means that the idea of renting out one or both of the second-floor offices is untenable if Priory House is continue to grow and deliver the services which it has now become expected to.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Prior to the two rooms becoming vacant they did provide a rental income for Priory House. When both spaces were rented out Priory House brought in £10,469 of rental income, however this reduced when Theobalds left. In 2021/22 Priory House's rental income was £5,181. Managers at Priory House believe that by being able to use this space they will be able to secure a proportion of this income through increased sales and hires. It would enable to House to function more efficiently e.g. order greater number of stock items for shop and tea rooms thus benefiting from economy of scale, as well as providing autonomy to the overall building management which provides a number of benefits to both the building and its team.
- 4.2 Lastly, if the Council agree to retaining the second floor for Council use then if this is not agreed formally it could risk not just the 2004 Heritage Lottery grant but also the most recent National Lottery Heritage Fund grant.

#### **5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The proposed decision would enable the Council to fulfil its corporate plan objective of continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council.

#### **6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The use of the second floor now enables kitchen stock to no longer be stored in the basement where there is a steep set of stairs posing a health and safety risk relating to manual handling. Currently the kitchen store is on the first floor and when the works are completed this will be accessible via the lift, which reduces the risk considerably.

**7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Whilst there are no direct human resource implications, the indirect consequences should not go unrecognised. The change in staffing structure at Priory House meant that the old office no longer has enough capacity for the whole management team plus the Town Centre Manager. The benefits for team and cross department working was evident in the six months that they worked together in this space. It would be a step back for the team if they had to return to sharing workspace and limiting their access to IT etc.

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 As part of the 2003 Heritage Lottery Grant a number of conditions and agreements were put in place. One of these was that permission should be sought should the use of the building be changed. Whilst the use of the second floor has not changed - it is still being used as office space – the Lottery require formal notice of the loss of income to ensure that the conditions of the 2003 grant are adhered to. If Members chose not to formally take this decision but continue to not rent the space out, then legally the Lottery could request back funding.

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None

**11. APPENDICES**

- 11.1 None.

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 Priory House, Community Services Committee 6 September 2021.

**13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 Having complete control of the building does enable the Council to manage the building as efficiently and effectively as possible. This is no more evident by the fact that should the offices have been let out this past year the Council would be faced with a considerable bill for rehousing the tenants of the second floor whilst repairs were carried out. It is therefore recommended to Members that the Council formally agrees to use the second floor of Priory House for its own purposes, to include office and storage space.

**14. AUTHOR**

- 14.1 Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services  
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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023**  
**UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	For members to agree to apply to Central Bedfordshire Council for UKSP funding and to delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Chair of Community Services and the Town Mayor on the contents of this application.
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**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1. For members to agree to apply to Central Bedfordshire Council for UKSP funding, and to delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Chair of Community Services and the Town Mayor on the contents of the application.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The UKSPF was launched nationally in April 2022.
- 2.2. Since then, CBC has been working on an investment plan which has now been approved. Now that the plan has been approved, CBC have announced the funding opportunities for the Town and Parish sector. This includes capital funding of £90,000 for town centre initiatives and £29,000 for cultural activities for Dunstable. Other Towns in receipt of £90,000 are Leighton Buzzard, Houghton Regis, Biggleswade and Flitwick. With some parts of Houghton Regis, Biggleswade and Flitwick also being able access rural levelling up funding and Leighton Buzzard has been allocated further funding for a feasibility study for the library theatre site.
- 2.3. CBC have asked for applications to be completed by the end of November 2023, with delivery between April 2024 to March 2025.
- 2.4. Officers recently met with CBC officers from the Place Directorate to discuss the process and the wider context of the UKSPF with the additional activities that will be taking place alongside the work of the town councils which include business support and development and environmental sustainability initiatives.

**3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1. Whilst the UKSPF is a levelling up initiative it is important to recognise that Dunstable town centre faces far greater issues than the other towns in receipt of funding and therefore £90,000 will not in any way address these. However, it is important to still apply for this funding and take a positive view that whilst it will not address the vacancy levels and the loss of key anchor stores, it could at least inject some positivity into the town centre.
- 3.2. At the moment ideas being considered for funding are linked to suggestions raised as part of the corporate planning process, although unfortunately time does not allow us to complete this process before submitting the application. These suggestions include power points in town centre gardens, refill water points in the

town centre, solar powered USB charging point benches across the town centre and the capital costs of establishing a pop-up shop. It is not yet clear whether a venue for a pop-up shop would be available; officers are urgently investigating options and will include this option if possible in the time available.

- 3.3. For the cultural funding, officers are looking at how this could support the cultural consortium, the wider voluntary and community sector of arts based groups and the town centre events programme. While it might be tempting to apply to use all the funding to fill the gaps left by HSHAZ funding in 2024, this would only provide a one year delay to the reduction, so officers are focussing on options to gain longer term benefit from this money. This may involve supporting local groups to develop capacity and participate more in the Council's ongoing programme of events and activities.
- 3.4. Once again timescales for submission of the funding application are tight and will not allow for a further formal discussion at Council. It is therefore recommended that the committee make any comments or suggestions for consideration, and then delegates authority to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, to agree the detail of bids, in liaison with the Chairs of Community Services and Grounds and Environmental Services and the Town Mayor.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. This grant funding does not require any match funding. There might be some small revenue costs that the Council would have to consider for the ongoing maintenance of some capital items, but these would be met within existing budgets.

#### **5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. Funding from the UKSPF would enable the Council to fulfil one of its corporate plan priorities; *to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre.*

#### **6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. Any Health and Safety implications of individual projects would be assessed and managed within the Council's health and safety policy.

#### **7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. None, all elements of the bid will be delivered by the current staffing structure.

#### **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None, although the Town Council will have to abide by the conditions of the grant which will be known once in receipt of the funding.

#### **9. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. The UKSPF is very focused on environmentally friendly solutions and improvements, and therefore this will be considered when putting forward ideas for the bid. The introduction of water bottle refill stations would encourage the use of water bottles and reduce the use of single use plastic in the town.

#### **10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. None directly although it is important to recognise that this funding is part of the wider levelling up agenda, which looks to remove inequalities.

**11. APPENDICES**

- 11.1. None

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1. None

**13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1. It is important that Dunstable Town Council takes up the opportunity of funding presented to them by Central Bedfordshire Council. Whilst it is noted that this level of funding will not overcome the difficulties currently faced by our town centre, it is vital that the Town Council seize every opportunity positively. To that end it is recommended that the Town Council does apply to the UKSPF and considers all capital funding ideas, delegating the final decision on the application to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive alongside the Chair of Community Services and the Mayor.

**14. AUTHOR**

- 14.1 Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services  
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