

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 8 JANUARY 2024 FROM 7 pm

- Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Mayor) John Gurney (Chair), Wendy Bater, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick, Nicholas Kotarski and Matthew Neall.
- In Attendance: Gina Thanky (Events Officer), Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager) and Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive)
- In Attendance: Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager), Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager) and Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services)
(Remotely)
- Apologies: Councillors Trevor Adams, Gregory Alderman, and Robert Blennerhasset (Vice-Chair)
- Public: Nil

1/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil.

2/24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 30 October 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3/24 ACTION TRACKER

Members received and noted the Action Tracker provided.

4/24 TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

The Town Centre Manager summarised the report provided. Cllr Jones congratulated the team on their hard work at the Twilight Markets, particularly in taking down the market on Saturday and putting it up again on Sunday due to high winds.

5/24 OLDER PEOPLES’ SERVICES

Members noted the report provided which was summarised by The Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

6/24 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Members received the report provided.

The Council had applied for UKSPF cultural funding to support performing arts based organisations to provide them with capacity development.

7/24 EVENTS

Members received the report provided. The Events Officer summarised the key points in the report. The Events Officer updated members that the Facebook poll for Dunstable Live tribute act recommendations closed in one week, giving the poll a full month active for suggestions.

Cllr Jones congratulated the Events Officer for the turn out for the Torchlight procession which was the biggest turn out yet.

Members were advised that the new High Street banners will be going up once the Christmas lights come down.

8/24 PRIORY HOUSE

Members received the report provided. The Cultural Services Manager updated members on the key points of the report. The Cultural Services Manager advised that the Splashside Cafe pop up will continue to be used for a variety of different events in the coming months due to the success last year.

The Cultural Services Manager mentioned that unfortunately the remaining weddings booked for the rest of summer have had to be cancelled due to the ongoing works within the Jacobean Room.

Cllr Jones thanked all the team for their flexibility and adaptation to change since the closure of Priory House.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised members that the wall paintings within Priory House will safely be removed by the same company which installed them into the building.

9/24 HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)

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

The HSHAZ Programme Manager advised members of a further update since writing the report for 21-23 High-Street South (Moore's) Conception Architects had confirmed that they have now submitted the application for the discharge of conditions and that the owner has paid the necessary fee and this has been received. This would hopefully be validated in the coming week.

10/24 BUDGET 2024/25

Members received the report provided. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised key points of the report. Members were encouraged to ask questions or make recommendations to officers for referral to the Finance and General Purposed Committee.

There was a discussion about the possible impact of the Priory House investigations. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised members that the forecast budget included a budget for promoting the future re-opening and relaunch of Priory House.

RECOMMENDATION: That the draft budget proposals and fees and charges for the Community Services Department for 2024/25 as well as indicative budget changes for the following three years be recommended for approval to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

11/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee – Cllr Peter Hollick

Cllr Jones declared an interest in South Beds Dial-a-Ride due to the organisation being one of her charities this year and her spouse being employed by them.

Cllr Hollick declared an interest in South Beds Dial-a-Ride being the Town Council's representative.

Cllr Hollick provided a verbal update to members.

Dunstable Town Band – Cllr Robert Blennerhassett

No Update.

Men in Sheds – Cllr Richard Attwell

Cllr John Gurney on behalf of Cllr Attwell advised members that the sales from their Christmas market had been successful.

The meeting closed at 19:57pm