

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 4 MARCH 2024 FROM 7:21 pm

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

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

In Attendance: Councillor Peter Hollick and Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager) (Remotely)

Apologies: Councillors Trevor Adams, Kenson Gurney and Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager)

Public: Nil

57/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor 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.

Councillor Kotarski declared an interest in U3A due to knowing the chair of the organisation.

Councillor John Gurney declared an interest in item 11 of the agenda due to donating money from his ward councillor grant to the organisation detailed.

58/24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 8 January 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

59/24 ACTION TRACKER

The Head of Community Services advised Members that the Town Council had been successful in its bid for the million hours funding grant with more details soon to follow.

The Town Council was still awaiting formal confirmation of the capital and cultural fund awards from the UKSPF via Central Bedfordshire Council.

60/24 TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

The Head of Community Services summarised the report provided to members. This year

more dates have been added to the Middle Row Markets which include March 9 and 16; this allows the Town Council to maximize support for the High Street Heritage Action Zone one last time and also makes the most of the early Mother's Day. There are now 31 stalls booked for the March 9 Market.

The Town Centre Manager is working on diversifying the local markets of Dunstable alongside the National Market Traders Federation with an upcoming Youth Market on July 9, 2024.

Councillor Kotarski asked a question about vandalism to the Ashton Square toilets. It was advised that fortunately there have not been any further spells of vandalism / disruption.

61/24 OLDER PEOPLES' SERVICES

Members noted the report provided which was summarised by the Youth and Community Manager.

62/24 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Youth and Community Manager summarised the report previously circulated to members.

The Youth and Community Manager advised that due to the Town Council being awarded the million hours funding grant, from April 1 there will now be an extra 3 nights of detached youth work facilitated within Dunstable East alongside the 2 existing nights in the rest of the town.

Councillor Kotarski expressed interest in visiting youth work being held and asked for the youth team to contact Councillors when things are being held in their specific ward. It was advised to members that the Grove Corner's social media is the best place to keep up to date with all arrangements due to the fluidity of the detached youth workers and the possibility of change in locations etc.

ACTION: Youth and Community Manager

The 16-18 year old sessions have now been expanded to cover the ages of 13-18 year olds due to a slight drop in attendance figures for the evening sessions. This will hopefully bring the numbers up and get as many people as possible involved in the youth evenings on offer.

Following some antisocial behaviour at the leisure centre, The Youth team had hoped that their gaming bus would help to alleviate this behaviour. Unfortunately, the bus was not allowed to park outside the centre due to parking restrictions outside the leisure centre, the figures were not as high as hoped due to the last minute change of location.

63/24 EVENTS

The Events Officer summarised the key points in the report. The Events Officer updated members that for the Sunday band concerts, two of the 4 spaces to date have been filled by BT Vocal Ensemble and the Shambles Brass Band.

Councillor Jones said that she had attended a Rock of Ages event recently with Councillor Kotarski. The group are a rock band with an adult choir, and it was mentioned they would

be a great fit for the band stand in the summer. Councillor Jones will pass along the details to the Events Officer to explore this for the 2024 year.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the remaining free use of Grove Theatre be used by Dunstable Town Council as an end of UKSPF end of project event and that Dunstable Town Council turn down request from the U3A organisation.

Councillor Jones asked that Central Bedfordshire Councillors look into assisting the U3A in helping with their request for a free use of Grove Theatre.

64/24 PRIORY HOUSE

Members received the report provided. The Cultural Services Manager updated members on the key points of the report.

The Head of Community Services provided members with an update from the structural engineers working at Priory House with some photos, detailing some of the further challenges identified within the building.

65/24 HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)

The HSHAZ Programme Manager summarised the key elements of the report to members. This will be the HSHAZ Programme Manager's last report to members as we are coming to the end of the HSHAZ Programme.

Members thanked The HSHAZ Programme Manager on all of her hard work during the last 4 years in post and for all she and the team have achieved.

66/24 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The Head of Community Services summarised key points of the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the four year Service Level Agreement with Sorted Counselling Services for £600 be approved.

67/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

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

Councillor Hollick advised members that South Beds Dial-a-Ride have been awarded a 5 year contract with Central Bedfordshire Council, being the organisation's biggest contract to date, which will start from 2 June 2024.

Dunstable Town Band – Councillor Robert Blennerhassett

No Update.

Men in Sheds – Councillor Richard Attwell

Councillor John Gurney advised members that he has spoken with Councillor Attwell and has asked he contacts the Chair of Men in Sheds to get a report for the next committee.

The meeting closed at 9:11 pm