

Dunstable Town Council
Grove House
76 High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1NF

Tel: 01582 513000

E-mail: info@dunstable.gov.uk

Website: www.dunstable.gov.uk



Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Notice of a Meeting of the **Community Services Committee**

Date: **Friday 21 February 2025**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Community Services Committee** will be held on **Monday 3 March 2025**, at **Grove House in the Council Chamber** 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 or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 28 February 2025.

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.

Please see the below QR code to access the full agenda:



Yours faithfully

Paul Hodson
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

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.

AGENDA

057/25 Apologies for Absence

058/25 Declarations of Interest

059/25 Public Question Time

060/25 To agree the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 6 January 2025 as an accurate record

Community Services Committee January - Minutes.pdf

061/25 Town Centre Services

Information Report Town Centre.pdf

062/25 Events

Decision Report - Events.pdf

063/25 Cultural Services Project UKSPF - Phase 2 Report

Cultural Service Project UKSPF - Phase 2 Report.pdf

064/25 Priory House

Priory House March 2025.pdf

065/25 Grove Corner and Community Engagement

Youth and Community March 2025.pdf

066/25 Older People's Services

Older People's Services March 2025 report.pdf

067/25 Reports from Outside Bodies

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee - Cllr Peter Hollick
Dunstable Town Band - Cllr Robert Blennerhassett
Men in Sheds - Cllr Richard Attwell

068/25 Date of the next meeting - Monday 2 June 2025 at 7.00 pm

To: All Members:

Peter Hollick (Council Member), Wendy Bater (Council Member), Kenson Gurney (Council Member), Matthew Brennan (Council Member), John Gurney (Council Member), Philip Crawley (Council Member), Liz Jones (Council Member), Johnson Tamara (Council Member), Gregory Alderman (Council Member), Louise O'Riordan (Council

Member), Trevor Adams (Council Member), Mark Davis (Council Member), Matthew Neall (Council Member), Michelle Henderson (Council Member), Nicholas Kotarski (Council Member), Richard Attwell (Council Member), Robert Blennerhassett (Council Member), Sally Kimondo (Council Members)

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 6 JANUARY 2025 FROM 7:00 PM

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Chair), Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick, Wendy Bater, Gregory Alderman, Robert Blennerhassett,

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Gina Thanky (Events Officer), Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager) and Jack Adams-Rimmer (Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer)

In Attendance: Councillors Nicholas Kotarski, Johnson Tamara and (Remotely) Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager)

Public: Nil

001/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors John Gurney, Matthew Neall, Trevor Adams and Mark Davis

002/25 - Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest.

003/25 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

004/25 - To agree the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 4 November 2024 as an accurate record

The minutes of the meetings of the Community Services Committee held on 4 November 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

005/25 - Action Tracker – to review progress of previously agreed actions

The Action Tracker was noted.

006/25 - Town Centre Services

The Town Centre Manager highlighted the key points of the report to members. Members were advised that the market held on 21 December 2024 had 24 stall holders attend not the 33 outlined withing the report, this was due to poor weather.

Councillor Jones passed along her gratitude to all officers involved in making the Christmas market season one of the best Dunstable has seen.

007/25 - Budget 25/26

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report to members. It has been proposed to remove two events out of those planned which include the Fortnight of Fun and Youth Festival.

Councillor Hollick asked about the Soap Box Derby event for the 40th Anniversary celebrations in regard to the feasibility/health and safety of the event. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised that a lot of work has been done and talks are currently being held with contractors and other Councils who have previously done an event like this to ensure that the Council are able to deliver this event confidently and safely.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: It was resolved to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to reduce the originally proposed Events and Community Engagement budgets by a total of £20,000, by removing the budgets for the Fortnight of Fun and Youth Festival.

008/25 - Priory House

The Cultural Services Manager summarised the report provided to members and highlighted key information.

The Cultural Services Manager advised that unfortunately due to the team being down a Duty Manager, on 11 and 18 January 2025, Priory House will be closed, this will stop any occurring of overtime when footfall and income is low in January.

Members passed along their sincere thanks to officers for all of their continued hard work and support through some challenging times experienced with Priory House at the moment.

009/25 - Events

The Events Officer summarised the key points in the report.

Members praised the Events officer for an amazing year of events and how well the Torchlight Procession was received by residents seeing its biggest crowd yet.

010/25 - Grove Corner and Community Engagement

Members noted the report provided which was summarised by the Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer.

The Christmas activity workshop held on Saturday 22 December 2024 saw 18 young

people attend.

For the February half term activities, as well as the private hire for the swimming pool at the Dunstable Centre on Monday 17 February, there will also be football and giant games on Thursday 20 February at Kingsbury Recreation Ground and on Friday 21 February there will be a movie afternoon at the Splashside Café.

Officers ran a family fun Christmas workshop on Monday 23 December. 64 children attended this event with lots of positive feedback gained especially on this event being free before Christmas.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised that both sources of funding for the Detached Youth Work end in March 2026. There is no current plan to fund this work after however there will be a discussion later on in the year to provide ample time for a decision to be made.

Members recognised the continued hard work and support for young people across Dunstable and thanked all officers for the value they bring to the Town.

011/25 - Older People's Services

The Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer summarised the report provided to members.

Members passed along thanks to all involved in providing these services to the older residents within the community.

Councillor Tamara joined via Teams at 7:39 pm.

012/25 - Reports from Outside Bodies

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

Councillor Hollick provided an update to members, at the most recent meeting, South Beds Dial-a-ride are still providing the bus route services which is really positive for those residents who are not able to take advantage of the buses. Members were advised that there has been no current update from Central Bedfordshire Council on the land at Watling House where the buses are currently placed on its future for Dial-a-Ride.

Dunstable Town Band - Cllr Robert Blennerhassett

Councillor Blennerhassett advised that there is currently no update to provide.

Men in Sheds - Cllr Richard Attwell

No update

013/25 - Date of the next meeting - Monday 3 March 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 7:43 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 MARCH 2025

TOWN CENTRE

Purpose of report: For information only
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1. MIDDLE ROW MARKETS

1.1. Bookings are now open for Middle Row Markets 2025. So far, they are going well, with regular traders securing dates through to November. Twilight bookings will begin in June 2025.

1.2. Market bookings to date:

29 March	22 booked
12 April	16 booked
19 April	16 booked
10 May	6 booked

1.3. Event markets are booked for the 29 March – Mother's Day, 12 April – Antiques and Collectables and 19 April – Easter Market.

2. ASHTON SQUARE TOILETS

2.1. There was a positive result for the Rangers and the Town Centre team from Loo of the Year Awards 2025. The team secured a Platinum Award, Period Dignity, Washroom Technician, Roll of Honour, and Premier League Award for 2025.

2.2. Positive social media and an interview with Three Counties Radio has promoted Ashton Square Toilets and the awards.

3. TOWN CENTRE

3.1. The Town Centre Manager, along with the Events Office visited local businesses to engage and explore sponsorship opportunities. Additionally, the Town Centre Manager has attended several networking events to promote Dunstable Town Council and Middle Row Markets especially the sponsorship for all young traders to have a free stall on the 5 July 2025.

3.2. The first Street Food Heroes of 2025 starts on The Square on Thursday 20 March from 4 pm to 9 pm, which will be supported by the Town Centre Assistant and will

include the cleaning and shutting of the Ashton Square toilets. Street Food Heroes will continue the third Thursday of each month from March to September

- 3.3. France at Home will host a French market from Friday 21 March 21 to Sunday 23 March, operating daily from 9 am to 6 pm. Citroën cars will showcase its cars on Friday 21 March, and Saturday 22 March. Dunstable Town Council will be supporting the event with free facepainting and arts and crafts on Saturday 22 March. Officers will support the event with opening and cleaning of Ashton Square toilets each day.
- 3.4. Middle Row Markets will return on Saturday 29 March for a Mother's Day event on The Square and Middle Row. Stall bookings are positive at this stage. Entertainment booked will include free face painting, Imajica Theatre, performing three 30-minute interactive spring shows featuring singing, dancing, and sensory props. Free flowers and cards will be available for children and young people to give to "mum."
- 3.5. Annual footfall survey is due to take place on Friday 7 March and Saturday 8 March. Dunstable Town Council footfall data has been collected since 2010.
- 3.6. Saturday 12 April will see the first Antiques and collectables Market. Officers are working alongside a group of traders who would like to join Middle Row on this first venture.
- 3.7. Easter activities will include free face painting and a bunny hunt for the Easter Market taking place on Saturday 19 April.
- 3.8. Bunting has been ordered for The Square using the same designs created for Dunstable Town Council's 40th Birthday street banners. These should be installed by March.

4. VACANCY RATES

- 4.1. The vacancy rates to the end of January 2025 are provided below. The count will be undertaken again at the start of April 2025.
- 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 %
253	31 vacant	12.25%	13.04% count end of Oct 24.

- 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 %
210	27 vacant	12.86%	13.33% count end of Oct 24.

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

No. Units	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant Units	Previous %
43	4 vacant	9.30%	11.62% count end of Oct 24

- 4.7. Units in Grove Park area and Asda.

No. Units	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant Units	Previous %
6	0 vacant	0%	0% count end of Oct 24

5. TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN

- 5.1. Year two of the business plan has been embedded into the town centre service plan for officers to follow and implement.
- 5.2. Officers will focus on business engagement with promotional stalls in Middle Row Market to increase each market to an average of 30 stalls each market.
- 5.3. Officers have engaged with visiting markets to enhance the variety of markets held each year. They will promote and support these markets to boost bookings and connect with new market operators

6. UKSPF

- 6.1. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the community artwork for the festoons along Middle Row has been cancelled. The Town Centre Manager is now working on an installation in collaboration with Lamps and Tubes, using the UKSPF funding budget and will still be installed before the end of March 2025.
- 6.2. Vinyl wraps have been installed on the electric boxes along Middle Row and The Square using heritage artwork from local artists.
- 6.3. The order has been placed for the installation of the final two sculptures; work is taking place on the trail design and the plaques. The Town Centre Manager will support the launch and promotion of the trail when completed.
- 6.4. Three living Pillars have been installed by Grove House, High Street North. These are the first-ever living columns in Central Bedfordshire and the first to be installed by a town council. The living Pillars support the town's commitment to sustainability and biodiversity. Each column is planted with a variety of vegetation that will attract and provide a habitat for local insects, such as bees and butterflies, fostering a healthier, more vibrant ecosystem within the urban landscape.

7. AUTHOR

Annette Clynes – Town Centre Manager
Annette.clynes@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 MARCH 2025

EVENTS

Purpose of report: To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to allocate £1,000 from the 2025/26 civic hospitality budget for street parties to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1. To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to allocate £1,000 from the 2025/26 civic hospitality budget to pay for ten street parties to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day within Dunstable as proposed in section 4.

2. FUTURE EVENTS – PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1. St George's Day

The St George's Day celebrations will take place in Priory Gardens on Saturday 26 April 2025 between 11 am and 4 pm. Activities this year include:

- St George Gameshow
- Fighting Knights Display
- Knights School
- Tiny T's Theatre: Tremendous Tails Dragon Training
- Teaching Talons, Animal Encounter
- Punch and Judy
- Arts and crafts
- Dunstable Town Band
- Letchworth Morris Men
- Falconry Display
- Dragon Town Trail
- Meet St George
- Stilt Walkers
- Climbing Wall

The event will be promoted via leaflets and posters, Facebook, DTC website, Talk of the Town, and the DTC noticeboards.

2.2. Around The World

Around the World – 17 May, 10.30 am to 4.30 pm, is currently in the early stages of development. Activities confirmed for this event are:

- Imajica Theatre: Around the World theatre show
- African drumming workshops and storytelling
- Teaching Talons Animal Experience
- Dr Digby Rocks School of Archaeology
- Shizen-No Judo Club
- Irish Dancing
- Baila Peru: Peruvian Dance performances, poetry, music and workshops
- Sohan Kailey: Bhangra and Bollywood dancing and workshops and Indian storytelling and music show
- Herrings Green Activity Farm – Alpacas
- Sensory space with music-based workshops of places, animals and sounds from all around the world suitable for SEND

The Events Officer is currently inviting local community groups to participate in the event, to showcase their talent.

2.3. **Dunstable Live**

To link in with Dunstable Town Council's 40th Anniversary the theme for Dunstable Live – 28 June, 3 pm to 8 pm – is 'Live Aid' as it will also be the 40th anniversary of the Live concert in 2025. The line-up of the event is as follows:

2.00 pm to 3.00 pm: The U2 Experience

3.30 pm to 4.30 pm: Andy Crosbie is Rocketman (Elton John Tribute)

5.00 pm to 6.00 pm: Billy West as Freddie Mercury

6.30 pm to 8.00 pm: The Bowie Experience (David Bowie Tribute)

2.4. **Sunday Concerts**

This year the schedule for the Sunday Concerts will feature different genres of music on stage alongside brass bands. The table below shows the confirmed line-up to date.

Sunday 29 June	12 noon	Jazz Town
Sunday 29 June	2.30 pm	Dunstable Salvation Army Band
Sunday 27 July	12 noon	Last of the Summer Ukuleles
Sunday 27 July	2.30 pm	Dunstable Town Band
Sunday 17 August	12 noon	TBC
Sunday 17 August	2.30 pm	TBC

Alongside the Dunstable Salvation Army Band and Dunstable Town Band, Jazz Town and Last of the Summer Ukuleles have been booked. Jazz Town are a multi-instrumental combo that explores and plays a large range of jazz styles accompanied by singers. The Last of the Summer Ukuleles have been invited back following last year's performance, where technical difficulties with the PA system left their set unamplified and rather quiet. The band are players from Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard and surrounding areas who perform tunes from the 1950s to modern day raising funds for their chosen charity this year- Hospice at Home Volunteers.

An advert has been promoted on Facebook periodically and will further be placed in the April edition of the Talk of the Town to invite groups to apply for the remaining available slots. These may include musical groups and societies from community-led groups/bands, youth brass groups, school/college ensembles, military bands and choirs. Charities will once again be invited to apply for the tea and coffee concession.

2.5. **Priory Pictures**

For this year's Priory Pictures – 5 July – film licenses have been chosen and secured for the *Back to the Future* trilogy as the original film's release date coincides with the 40th anniversary of the Town Council. The line-up for the event is as follows:

12 noon: Adapted Screening – Back to the Future (PG)
 2.30 pm: Back to the Future (PG)
 5.00 pm: Back to the Future Part II (12)
 7.30 pm: Back to the Future Part III (PG)

The event will also have an outdoor bar and food concessions. The adapted screening will benefit from:

- Lower sound volume
- Subtitles
- Hearing Loop
- Designated smoking area
- Minibus drop-off point
- Enclosed quiet/safe space available
- Accessible toilets

2.6. **Party in the Park**

Taking place on 19 July 12 noon until 8 pm, plans are in the early stages of development for this event. Confirmed so far are local performers, the Kidzone area and the funfair. The Events Officer is currently contacting local groups to increase community involvement in the event.

The UKSPF funded power units have now been installed in Grove House Gardens and will be available for use at the events reducing the need for generators. There will however be occasions when generators are still required although their use will be very much reduced.

2.7. **Dunstable's Soapbox Derby**

Plans for the Soapbox Derby 9 August from 11 am, are progressing well. In January, officers, alongside contractors, attended a demonstration day where a bespoke 4ft ramp was constructed to test a kart on the 100m track. Promotion of the event has been launched on the town council's Facebook page and website. An advert is also planned to go into the April edition of Talk of The Town. There has been a very positive response for the new event so far.

As team registrations entries close on Monday 2 June, the number of teams entering the race will not be known until after the date. Invitations will be sent to local schools,

businesses, and charities, encouraging them to enter a team on the day. The event will also feature a giant screen broadcasting the race, along with films, live entertainment, stalls, on-site bar and catering. The Events Officer is currently seeking sponsors for the Soapbox Derby, which has its own dedicated sponsorship package that can be found on the Soapbox Derby webpage, alongside the registration pack.

3. CLASSIC MOTOR RALLY

- 3.1 In December 2024, members suggested considering the introduction of an entrance fee for exhibitors of the Motor Rally with proceeds raised going towards the replacement of the pergola and refurbishment of Priory House. A survey was conducted via Survey Monkey and sent to the Motor Rally Mailchimp database. The survey included two questions:

Q1: If Dunstable Town Council were to charge an admittance fee between £5 - £8 per car to attend the Motor Rally, would you still attend and be willing to pay the fee?

Q2: If you put no for your answer, please state why?

To date, 60% of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay an admission fee, while 40% stated they would not. Listed below are some of the answers collected from those surveyed stating why they stated 'no:'

- *"It's a good event because it's free, why should we have to pay to display our vehicles, we are the show people come to see them and without us you wouldn't have a show but charge us you have to charge the people coming to the show as well."*

- *"A lot of much larger shows charge to show your car mainly for charity. Your show's relatively small and the amount collected less expenses would not cover the bad feeling created."*

- *"Because if we did not bring our cars to the event you would not have one. It costs us all a lot of money to run our classics and maintain them without being charged to display at show."*

- *"Far too much and if you did not have classic cars you would not have a show!"*

- 3.2 Over the years, the event has grown in popularity. Both exhibitor and visitor numbers have increased significantly. In 2023, the number of entrants for the motor rally was 190, rising to 250 in 2024. Based on the 2024 entry figures of 250 exhibitors, and considering the results of the survey, if 40% of the entrants were lost due to introduction of an entrance fee, it would result in approximately only 150 exhibitors attending, losing 100 cars in attendance. This would only generate an income of between £750 - £1,200.

- 3.3 Public feedback suggests that the success of the Motor Rally is largely due to the number of exhibitors attending the event. Visitor numbers for the event has also grown significantly from year to year, with an estimated 5,000 visitors attending in 2024. This growth is partly due to the free children's activities, attractions, stallholders, caterers, as well as the event coinciding on the same day as Middle Row Markets and the Dunstable Truck Convoy.

- 3.4 The survey feedback demonstrates that introducing an entrance fee for the cars would be detrimental to an event that is highly regarded by the community, engages the whole town, support the local businesses, and most importantly is enjoyed by both visitors and exhibitors, all for free. Moreover, the potential income generated would not outweigh the negative sentiment and ‘bad feeling,’ that could result from asking exhibitors, who already volunteer over seven hours of their time, to pay to participate in the event. It should be noted that volunteers at our other events, e.g. dance groups, performers do not have to pay to be part of our events so to charge the volunteer car owners to attend would be contrary to how we work with individuals and groups who make the town council’s community events the success that they are. *Members’ views are requested.*

4. VE DAY CELEBRATIONS 2025

4.1. Street Party Grant

This year marks the 80th anniversary of VE Day. There will be national celebrations across the Country to commemorate this significant anniversary. It is expected that the Town Council will acknowledge this day.

- 4.2. For previous national celebrations, Dunstable Town Council had allocated £1,000 to allow communities to apply for a £100 grant to help organise and hold a street party. The £100 grant is used to pay for food and decorations etc. and it was highly successful in 2020. At the time of writing Officers are still awaiting confirmation that CBC will allow free road closures for the street parties as in previous years. A verbal update will be given at committee.
- 4.3. It is recommended to allocate £1,000 from the 2025/26 civic hospitality budget, which was increased by £5,000 for the 22/23 budget to cover national celebrations, of which £4,000 is to be allocated for the Beacon Lighting at Dunstable Downs (8 May 2025) and £1,000 to pay for ten street parties within Dunstable.

5. SPONSORSHIP

- 5.1. The Events Officer has been working on sponsorship for this year’s Events Programme. The following events have now been sponsored by Penrose Estate Agents in Dunstable:

- Dunstable Live
- Party in the Park
- Christmas Tree and Torchlight Procession
- Ashton Square Christmas Tree

As part of these sponsorship, the team at Penrose will also be supplying an additional children’s activity at Dunstable Live and Party in the Park, with the fee taken from the activity to go towards the Mayor’s Charity.

- 5.2. The Events Officer will continue seeking sponsors for the remaining 25/26 Events programme. An events sponsorship package has been promoted on the website, on Facebook and will also be advertised in the April edition of Talk of The Town.

6. UKSPF CULTURAL PROJECT

- 6.1. On Saturday 15 February Grove Theatre along with officers from Dunstable Town Council, NGYT and BBB group held an 'Open door/meet the manager' event which invited members of the performing arts community to attend with the aim of growing relationships and bringing about a better and more knowledgeable understanding of how the Grove Theatre operates and how community groups and Grove theatre can work together in a more positive and community driven way. A verbal update will be given at committee.

The Community Arts day is taking place on Sunday 9 March at The Grove Theatre. This will include a range of creatives across arts forms, who will provide performance opportunities, arts sales platforms, workshop skills development and business marketing. Members are encouraged to attend this event.

NGYT and BBB are in Phase two of the project and working towards phase 3, the final phase.

A full report on the project is in appendix 1 shows the extent of the impact this project has had within the sector to date with so many positive outcomes.

7. APPENDICIES

- 7.1. Cultural Services Cultural Project UKSPF.

8. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS - none

9. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 9.1. The financial impact for the street party grants is included within the agreed revenue budget for Civic Hospitality.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – none

11. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATONS

- 11.1. The street parties align to the Corporate Plan Priority to preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS – none

13. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS – none

14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – none

15. AUTHOR(S)

Gina Thanky - Events Officer
Gina.thanky@dunstable.gov.uk

Phase 2 Report

CONTEXT -

Phase two would comprise development and delivery of a programme to include workshops and 1:1 mentoring support, and the opportunity to pilot new works at town council run events.

Using the audit data/findings develop a needs responsive programme of 1to1 mentoring/ workshops. In many cases we assume we will have the skill set and experience to lead these sessions however we will of course utilise our own wider arts industry contacts, council contacts and propose use of the additional budget to provide specialists within identified areas of need - EG. BSL performance art would require BSL lead.

Collaborative planning time with the Town Council events team to look at the existing programme, remit and event intentions and outcomes; This will enable us to align artists with the most suitable and accessible platforms.

Mentoring time with new artists to support the development of their ideas and help shape their vision without taking away their ownership. (enabling)

Ongoing meetings and support

Our planned 1-2-1 meetings and get-togethers have been incredibly successful. We are currently working with a number of artists and groups to support their needs.

Key headlines include - Currently mentoring and supporting KLDance and The Fashion Breakdown to help develop their offer in schools, specifically focusing on strategic planning to engage pupils and meet the needs of school development plans and curricular focus

Akshay, the amazing pianist who we asked to perform at the Twilight Market is now in contact with Central Bedfordshire Music Service and Luton Music Service where he will be delivering piano lessons in schools.

Working with The PAD on a funding application to help fund their upcoming performance on the main stage at the world renowned Move It Dance Exhibition. This would be a huge opportunity to put Dunstable's Leading Dance Training Establishment on the map.

Sophie (an aspiring young producer from Dunstable) has had a series of 1to1 Specialist mentoring sessions with local professional producer Sam Edmunds and Sophie is now shadowing NGYT on their upcoming theatre and dance double bill this July; again extending the legacy of the project.

The Lime Stones band, Akshay (musician/composer) and Jan (visual artist) met at one of the get togethers and co-created the 'soon to be in planning' 'Dunstable Live Lounge'. Our



Events Lead, Darren Woodhouse, has now started to look at the capacity and logistics to deliver these events with long term planning also considered to ensure further legacy opportunities beyond project completion.

Plans for needs responsive workshops (Get Togethers)

The Get Togethers have been really well received across the town.

Artists have shared ideas and also expressed their needs which have informed the planning and programming of our upcoming events within Phase 3

Notably creatives have shared the need to understand community bookings at the Grove and also to consider its use beyond the main auditorium -

OUR RESPONSE - To factor in conversations/questions and answers at the upcoming 'Grove Theatre' Open Door event, which the Calling Dunstable Team have programmed and will be co-hosting following meetings with Paul Ruff.

Programming of a multi-space event on March 9th to demonstrate to the Grove programming team and wider community the potential of the building as an arts venue beyond a main stage auditorium.

We have not had huge demand from vast numbers of creatives in any one area and as such have not yet created workshops as an extension of the get togethers. We have however provided 1to1 mentoring sessions to meet individual artist needs in certain areas such as business development, funding and school based outreach.

One area that has recently emerged is online sales of visual art/sculpture. And this is something we are currently looking into and offering at the Grove Event in March.

We have made the decision to include skill development workshops at the upcoming March 9th event and will select art forms based on the creative areas of interest and further feedback which we will seek from our creative community and the Feb 15th event. So far (but in no way conclusive) we are looking at workshops in Dance, Singing, Online art sales strategies, Anime drawing and guitar.

Further thoughts expressed by Dunstable's Creative community include -

- A rehearsal/workshop space for creatives in Dunstable
- Craft fairs for artists to display visual arts
- Grove affordability must be considered
- More opportunities for people to learn and develop skills in technical theatre production.
- A community arts showcase as an annual thing
- Regular meetings in a setting with specific professional input
- Dunstable to take part in the Big Draw in October
- Cafe's exhibiting work
- What is the long term plan for Calling Dunstable?

Key point of note

Many visual artists have expressed often feeling excluded from creative programming and as such there is a call for DCC to look at commissioning artists for town wide visual art

opportunities. We will be looking further into enlisting restaurants and cafes as potential gallery spaces to address the need for a community exhibition space.

Collaborative planning with events to programme Calling Dunstable

A list of upcoming creative events beyond project completion has been created that seeks to give a range of opportunities to Dunstable's newly formed and existing network of artists/creatives. These slots will range from free scratch opportunities all the way through to paid platforms. We are hugely delighted to announce Akshay as our first Calling Dunstable Artist to be offered a performance slot at Party in the Park, which will be a paid gig for him by Dunstable Town Council.

Darren Woodhouse met with Dunstable's event teams and positive conversations were held around the power of collaboration and joined up marketing to support programming and events delivery.

Phase 3 Planning, production and beyond

The Calling Dunstable Team are soon to be launching the programme for the March 9th Community Arts day at The Grove Theatre. We are delighted to be platforming a range of creatives across arts forms, providing performance opportunities, arts sales platforms, workshop skills development and business marketing. We are also hugely proud to have curated an event that responds directly to the ideas and needs of Dunstable's creative community outlined above.

Furthermore we hope the launch of our Dunstable Live Lounge Event, programming of Calling Dunstable Artists at events beyond March and busking opportunities (another developing idea being explored) will help extend the legacy of our project.

We kindly extend an invitation to our event on March 9th at the Grove Theatre and hope to see you there!

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 MARCH 2025

PRIORY HOUSE

Purpose of report: For information only
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1. OPERATIONS

- 1.1. The Duty Manager is back from sick leave which means normal operations and opening times will resume from 1 March.
- 1.2. The gift shop is currently planned to close for roof repairs from Monday 31 March for an estimated 12 weeks.
- 1.3. Officers are currently putting plans in place for Teatime Tale tickets, Frenchic, Books, honey, and bags of tea to still be available to buy through a click and collect service from Grove House on set days of the week.
- 1.4. Once all operational plans are in place for the click and collect service this will be advertised on social media, Talk of the Town and website.
- 1.5. Staff will still have access to the kitchen space; therefore, it will still be possible for there to be a Priory House stall at the St George's Day, Around The World, and Dunstable Classic Motor Rally events.

2. PRIORY HOUSE REFURBISHMENT

- 2.1. Works continue at Priory House with the planning permission for the bund and railings having been submitted, wall painting conservation taking place and works to stabilise the internal southeast corner still taking place. However, issues with changes to the required approach for obtaining Listed Building Consent from CBC significantly risk impacting on the programme timescales and therefore costs.
- 2.2. The tender for the exhibition area has gone live on the website and contract finder, and there has been considerable interest. Most have stated that the budget is very tight and therefore it is likely that the Town Council will need to submit a further funding application to the lottery specifically for the exhibition area. This smaller grant would see a 12 week decision period. Any bid will likely be submitted in partnership with the successful provider.

3. FINANCIAL

Priory House Shop taking comparison EX VAT

	2023/24	2024/25	Variation 2023/24 to 2024/25
April	£1,871.88	£1,759.75	-£112.12
May	£2,013.57	£2,426.56	£412.99
June	£1,402.17	£2,667.56	£1,265.39
TOTAL 1st Quarter	£5,287.62	£6,853.87	£1,566.25
July	£1,098.91	£1,596.00	£497.09
August	£1,282.86	£2,146.28	£863.42
September	£1,856.44	£2,098.07	£241.63
TOTAL 2nd Quarter	£4,238.21	£5,840.35	£1,602.14
October	£1,370.77	£1,375.27	£4.50
November	£1,125.78	£1,603.30	£477.52
December	£3,512.37	£2,566.04	-£946.32
TOTAL 3rd Quarter	£6,008.92	£5,544.61	-£464.31
January	£1,146.58	£1,234.43	£87.85
TOTAL TO DATE	£16,681.32	£19,473.25	£2,791.93

- 3.1. Christmas sales in the shop were lower compared to last Christmas, this was mostly due to loss of footfall with closing the kitchen and not being able to offer as many Afternoon Teas as in previous years.
- 3.2. Officers are very pleased with the overall income for the shop which is standing at a £2,791 increase compared to last year, with two months remaining.

4. AUTHOR(S)

Lisa Stephens- Cultural Services Manager.
 Lisa.stephens@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 MARCH 2025

GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Purpose of report: For information only
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1. GROVE CORNER FIGURES

- 1.1. Grove Corner received 315 visits from young people between 11 December 2024 and 07 February 2025. Grove Corner was closed on Friday 13 December due to officers being at the Twilight market.

Grove Corner received 354 visits from young people between 18 December 2023 and 9 February 2024.

- 1.2. Pokémon has received 163 visits from young people between 17 December 2024 and 04 February 2025.

Pokémon received 122 visits from young people between 9 January 2024 and 06 February 2024.

- 1.3. Grove Corner's Facebook page currently has 1,411 followers and the Instagram page has 487 followers.

2. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- 2.1. The 16 to 18 year old session at Grove Corner has become more popular as word of mouth has spread and current young people have invited friends to come along. The young people who attend have begun to form new friendships and have voiced that they are appreciative of youth workers providing a safe space for them.

- 2.2. An officer from Bedfordshire Police tries to attend Grove Corner every few weeks to build relationships with the young people who attend and remove some barriers that the police and young people can experience. The Community Safety Team at Central Bedfordshire Council also attend sessions on an ad hoc basis.

- 2.3. Officers continue to work with The Dunstable Centre to provide sessions for young people to attend, initially for free, before a £2 charge per session will come into place in a few weeks. A small fee will be charged to get the commitment from young people for the project. Currently on a Monday from 5.45 pm to 6.45 pm there is football and basketball, on a Wednesday from 6 pm to 7 pm there is cycling, and Fridays from 7 pm to 8 pm there is boxing. Officers are working with young people to engage well in the space, and to help them to use the space in a positive way.

- 2.4. Grove Corner is currently provided free of charge, each Tuesday from 10 am to 11 am for five young people from Chiltern Academy to attend. Officers were approached by the school, to see if they could bring their young people to the centre. The group will be coming weekly until Easter, with the hope it provides them an opportunity to experience activities available for them in the community, as part of a larger piece of work the school is doing.
- 2.5. Officers have booked to take a group of eight young people aged 16 to 18 who attend Grove Corner to Milton Keynes in April. They will support the young people to learn how to use public transport, getting the bus to Milton Keynes, attending a Locked In Room experience and having lunch, before returning back to Dunstable. The aim of this project is to increase confidence and encourage more independence for the group who will be attending.

3. DETACHED YOUTH WORK

- 3.1. Between 11 December 2024 and 7 February 2025, officers have delivered 14 detached activities and engagement sessions across Dunstable, excluding Dunstable East. The areas covered include Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground, Brewers Hill Recreation Ground, Ashton Square, Eleanor's Cross and The Quadrant.
- 3.2. Since 11 December 2024 and 7 February 2025, officers continue to deliver nine hours per week detached youth work in Dunstable East. They continue to visit the following locations: The Dunstable Centre, Kingsbury Recreation Ground, White Lion Retail Park, Peter Newton Recreation Ground, Grove Skate Park, and Ridgeway Avenue.
- 3.3. Between 9 December 2024 and 7 February 2025, officers have engaged with 363 young people by headcount. 144 of these young people have been in Dunstable East and the remaining 219 have been in the rest of the town.
- 3.4. The youth cafe at the Bennetts Café has become increasingly popular, with young people visiting straight after school.
- 3.5. Officers continue to deliver weekend provision for young people throughout the town, and continue to explore with young people their needs, wants and desires for sessions. As the weather warms, officers will be present where possible at wider town council events to provide detached youth work.
- 3.6. Officers will be delivering activities over February half term. This includes, a swim party, a movie afternoon, bowling and a games and sports session. A verbal update will be provided at committee.
- 3.7. Officers are also currently in the process of starting the youth business awards. A group of young people will be visiting local businesses, who have already been approached, to judge the business on customer service, value for money, friendliness towards young people and overall experience. The detached team will be facilitating this project and the business who scores the highest will receive a certificate.

4. SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. Officers will be running a litter pick on Thursday 20 March, with The Vale Academy and on Thursday 27 March with Beecroft Academy.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. Officers are currently working with the groups who hire Grove Corner to help them to become more carbon aware. This competition has been well received by the groups, and the winning group will receive one week's free hall hire.
- 5.2. Officers are in the early stages of planning for summer activities. There will be five activities throughout the summer, at various locations within the town. More information will be provided once the activity programme has been finalised.
- 5.3. Officers met with Ringcraft Boxing regarding the Service Level Agreement. Ringcraft have informed officers they do not wish to apply for an SLA, although they are still interested in a lease.

6. BENNETT'S SPLASH, CAFÉ AND COMMUNITY HUB.

- 6.1. Since Monday 17 February Bennett's Splash and the community hub now sits within the Community Services Department, with the café manager reporting to the Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer. This provides the service with wider team support and access to expertise in the delivery of community services within a community development framework and approach.
- 6.2. There has been an increase in enquires for bookings, with social media and word of mouth also having a positive effect.
- 6.3. Officers are working on the 25/26 service place ensuring that it is well integrated into the community engagement team's work and looking for further opportunities for collaborative working.

7. COMMUNITY LOTTERY

- 7.1. Officers have been liaising with Gatherwell now that the Council has committed to delivering a community lottery. The intellectual property has been shared to enable Gatherwell to develop the website.
- 7.2. Officers are aiming to have the license for the lottery submitted by the end of February and are looking at launching the lottery at the Annual Council Meeting (19 May 2025) as part of the Council's 40th anniversary.
- 7.3. Working with the project plan and guidance from Gatherwell the Marketing and Communications Officer is pulling together press releases and the wider community engagement team are pulling together a list of good causes who might like to sign up to the lottery.

8. AUTHOR(S)

Gill Peck, Youth and Community Manager
Email – gill.peck@dunstable.gov.uk

Jack Adams-Rimmer, Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer
Email – jack.adams-rimmer@dunstable.gov.uk

Becky Wisbey, Head of Community Services
Email – becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MONDAY 3 MARCH 2025
OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Purpose of report: For information only
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1. GOOD COMPANIONS CLUB

- 1.1. The Good Companions Club currently has 24 members. Officers continue to promote the club and continue to get a steady flow of calls expressing interest.
- 1.2. Since the last report, Good Companions Club have been bowling, taken part in a games morning, played music bingo, had visits from The History Society, Healthwatch, the Deputy Mayor, Beds Fire and an outing to Tring Garden Centre.
- 1.3. Officers have planned for the group to have an Easter Party and take part in many different activities. Officers are also currently liaising with Beecroft Academy, Weatherfield Academy and Central Bedfordshire College to arrange for students to visit the group.

2. CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE LUNCH CLUB

- 2.1. Creasey Park Community Football Centre Lunch Club continues to have on average 30 people attend each week.
- 2.2. CPCFC lunch club has received visits from Beds Fire and Healthwatch. The group went to the Halfway House and bowling. They also enjoyed in-house games of scattergories, bingo and a quiz.
- 2.3. The group are looking forward to Weatherfield Academy attending lunch club in March, and officers have planned an Easter party for the group.
- 2.4. Beds FA have confirmed that they are no longer able to provide catering for lunch club. Officers have spoken to members of the lunch club to understand their positions in terms of increasing fees. Officers are currently exploring options, including a meeting with Priory View to explore moving the venue for lunch club. Beds FA have offered to provide the venue free of charge, if the club is to resume there. A verbal update on progress to date on finding a solution will be provided at committee.

3. OVER 55S BREAKFAST CLUB

- 3.1. Officers have begun to deliver an over 55s breakfast club at Bennett's Café. Those who attend the project have become members of the project and for the first few weeks, if people turn up, they will be able to become members. However, due to the

capacity being at 18, officers have decided to operate this club on a membership basis. The aim of the project is to bring people together over breakfast and to have different agencies and organisations attend each week to provide either a short talk or information.

3.2. Currently the project has 13 people booked on.

3.3. The project costs £5 each week, which covers food and hire costs.

4. ROCK AND ROLL

4.1. Officers facilitated Rock and Roll on Tuesday 11 February. 70 people attended this event, and music was provided by Care Entertainment.

4.2. Due to the popularity of this event, it will be run four times per year, instead of the current three. The next event will be in June.

5. BIG LUNCH

5.1. Officers have begun to plan for the Big Lunch, which will be taking place on 15 July. Tickets for this event will be released in April, once it has been advertised in Talk of The Town. Tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis and will not be issued in advance of the date advertised.

6. AUTHOR(S)

Gill Peck, Youth and Community Manager
Email – gill.peck@dunstable.gov.uk

Elaine McGarrigle, Older People's Services Officer
Email – elaine.mcgarrigle@dunstable.gov.uk