

Dunstable Town Council
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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: **Friday 24 October 2025**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Community Services Committee** will be held on **Monday 3 November 2025**, at **Grove House, 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 intend to raise a question, it is helpful to let us know beforehand to give councillors a chance to prepare an informed answer. Please contact the Council via democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 31 October 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.

To: All Members:

John Gurney (Council Member), Liz Jones (Council Member), Wendy Bater (Council Member), Kenson Gurney (Council Member), Matthew Brennan (Council Member), Philip Crawley (Council Member), Matthew Neall (Council Member), Mark Davis (Council Member), Gregory Alderman (Council Member), Richard Attwell (Council Member), Johnson Tamara (Council Member), Nicholas Kotarski (Council Member), Louise O'Riordan (Council Member), Michelle Henderson (Council Member), Peter Hollick (Council Member), Trevor Adams (Council Member), Sally Kimondo (Council Member) and Robert Blennerhassett (Council Member)

AGENDA

228/25 Apologies for Absence

229/25 Declarations of Interest

230/25 Public Question Time

231/25 To agree the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 8 September 2025 as an accurate record

232/25 Action Tracker – to review progress of previously agreed actions

233/25 Town Centre Services

234/25 Budget Proposals for 2026/27

235/25 Priory House

236/25 Events

237/25 Grove Corner and Community Engagement

238/25 Older People's Services

239/25 Date of the next meeting - Monday 12 January 2026 at 7.00 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2025 FROM 7:00 PM

Present: Councillors Matthew Neall (Chair), Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Trevor Adams, Robert Blennerhassett, Gregory Alderman, Philip Crawley and Nicholas Kotarski

In Attendance: Councillors Peter Hollick and Matthew Brennan, Lisa Scheder (Corporate Services Manager & Responsible Finance Officer), Jackie Carrington (Democratic Services Manager), Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager) and Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager)

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk & Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Remotely) (Head of Community Services) and Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager)

Public: One

172/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Kenson Gurney (Vice-Chair), Mark Davis and Louise O'Riordan.

173/25 - Declarations of Interest

None

174/25 - Public Question Time

None

175/25 - To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2025 as an accurate record

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 2 June 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

176/25 - Town Centre Services

The Town Centre Manager summarised the report. A Member raised the possibility of the Christmas Lights being extended further along the High Street from the crossroads and it was noted that this was a good time to explore options because the

tender for the next five years was up for renewal. Officers undertook to include several possible extensions of the lights on the tender that is issued.

ACTION: Town Centre Manager

177/25 – Events

The report was presented by the Cultural Services Manager detailing the success of the Events programme so far this year.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to engage a professional compere to host Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession to maintain a professional appearance

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that the Town Council uses the remaining free use of Grove Theatre for the staff away day in October 2025

178/25 - Priory House

The Cultural Services Manager informed Members that the Gift Shop was due to reopen at the end of October. The shop would include hand washing facilities to enable staff to make use of a panini machine so that a small food service can be resumed.

179/25 - Older People's Services

The report on Older People's Services was delivered detailing the activities of the various services provided. Members noted that funding had been received from the Household Support Fund which would provide vouchers for all who access lunch clubs over the winter period, to go towards their food shopping during the week. The service would be closed between Christmas and New Year.

180/25 - Grove Corner and Community Engagement

The report on Grove Corner and Community Engagement was summarised by the Youth and Community Manager. Despite quieter Grove Corner sessions, the detached youth team had delivered additional youth hours, having 1,239 interactions with young people across Dunstable.

The report noted the need to consider the detached youth work beyond March 2026 when the current funding would end. Members made suggestions as to the options they would like to consider when setting the budget for the coming year, with officers clear that they should consider the costs for delivering a two night a week detached youth work service.

Officers confirmed that CBC funding is not guaranteed for the detached youth work post March 2026, and that their current commissioned service had had Dunstable removed from their contract in terms of delivery location. Officers encouraged

Members of both DTC and CBC to raise this within CBC as a concern and seek support for funding post March 2026.

School engagement work had included visits to schools prior to the summer holidays to promote all events and summer activities for both under and over 10s, which had resulted in new members.

Various events had been organised and presented at Bennett's Splashside Café and Community Hub. Officers had begun advertising a Friends of Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground Group.

The Community Lottery had 32 good causes and 134 players to date. Another marketing push for both good causes and players would take place in September and Members were encouraged to promote this.

181/25 - Service Level Agreement

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that organisations who already have a Service Level Agreement with the Council may be invited to reapply at the end of their four-year agreement to have the SLA extended for the same or similar project providing the project is continuing and still adds value to the town.

182/25 - Corporate Plan Update

Members noted the progress made on the Corporate Plan actions and Key Performance Indicators relevant to the Committee.

183/25 - Date of the next meeting - Monday 3 November 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

CS	176/25	08/09/2025	Christmas Lights	Members raised the possibility of the Christmas Lights being extended further along the High Street from the crossroads. It was noted that this was a good time to explore options as the tender for the next five years was up for renewal.	Town Centre Manager & Head of Community Services		Not Stared
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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025

TOWN CENTRE

Purpose of report: For information

1. MIDDLE ROW MARKETS

- 1.1. Bookings for Twilight are going well. Dates for 2026 are being looked at and will be confirmed in December 2025. Footfall has been low at the last few markets. However, with Boyes due to open at the end of October it is hoped that there be an increase in footfall in the area.

- 1.2. Market bookings to date:

25 Oct	34 booked
8 Nov	21 booked
15 Nov	26 booked
11 Dec	32 booked
12 Dec	35 booked
13 Dec	46 booked

- 1.3. Event markets have maintained consistent footfall and stall bookings. Officers have scheduled 24 Middle Row Markets for the year, with an average of around 26 stalls per market so far.

2. ASHTON SQUARE TOILETS

- 2.1. Replacement taps have been installed in the ladies' toilets. Officers will open and maintain the facilities during the Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession and Twilight events in December as well as for the Remembrance Parade in November.
- 2.2. Dunstable Town Council has applied for Loo of the Year Awards 2025/26. Award notifications are due at the end of October. Last year the team secured a Platinum Award, Period Dignity, Washroom Technician, Roll of Honour, and Premier League Award for 2025.

3. TOWN CENTRE

- 3.1. Market events were held in September, including Heritage Open Day and United Charities Day. The Halloween Market, the first time this market has been hosted, was well received by both the public and traders interested in booking stalls; a

verbal update will be provided following the event. The three Twilight evening events are the next major market attractions. Stall bookings look positive, with Saturday currently the most popular date. Officers anticipate accommodating up to 53 traders on Friday, 12 December, and Saturday, 13 December. Thursday, 11 December, will feature fewer traders due to space requirements for Street Food Heroes. The Community Stage is now fully booked, with a waiting list available. Free face painting, a free children's ride, and Santa's Grotto will all be available on each of the three evenings. Officers are preparing small goodie bags for each child who visits Santa. Last year, they made 800 bags and hope to do the same this year.

- 3.2. Street Food Heroes had its last street food event on Thursday 18 September. However, Street Food Heroes will join the Twilight event on Thursday 11 December alongside Middle Row Markets, Community stage, Santa and children's rides. Dates for Street Food Hero's for 2026 are not yet confirmed; Officers will work alongside Street Food Heroes in 2026 to continue its success
- 3.3. The Christmas Window competition will take place on Tuesday 2 December, judged by the Town Mayor. The public vote on Facebook will extend to Saturday 6 December and all winners will be announced on Monday 8 December.
- 3.4. As part of the extended Torchlight experience on Friday 28 November, Santa has been offered to local businesses on a first-come, first-served basis to help promote their shops. Seven shops have expressed interest and have each been allocated a free 30-minute time slot to take promotional photos and videos to launch their Christmas shopping campaigns. Officers will accompany Santa during the town walk; The walk will begin at Priory House and finish at Octave.
- 3.5. Officers have been working with a company called Pulse to try and arrange the installation of electronic advertising (commercial/community) signs which include bleed packs, defibs, wifi and charging points in the town centre, as agreed through the Dunstable Joint Committee. Unfortunately, the preapplication planning advice has been very negative and at this stage unless senior member and officer support is secured for the project this cannot proceed.

4. VACANCY RATES

- 4.1. The vacancy rates to the end of October 2025 are provided below. The count will be undertaken again at the start of January 2026.
- 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	29 vacant	11.46%	12.25% count end of July 25.

- 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	25 vacant	11.90%	12.85% count end of July 25.

- 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%	6.97% count end of July 25

- 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 April 25

Three units have not been included in this vacancy count, as they were closed by Trading Standards due to illegal trading, one of which has since reopened.

5. TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN

- 5.1. Officers have been working on the second and third years of the business plan. Progress has been challenging due to the recruitment and training of a new Town Centre Assistant, followed by the post becoming vacant after only a few months. Despite these challenges, several achievements have been made. Bites *on* The Square now regularly hosts four traders. Middle Row Markets held three markets per month in July, August, and October, and will host four in December. In addition, three visiting markets joined the overall market offer this year. Middle Row Markets hosted 24 markets in total, 16 of which were event markets. The Young Traders Market provided seventeen young people with the opportunity to trade for free and to join Middle Row Market at five other events throughout the year for £10 per pitch.

6. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SCHEME

- 6.1 The town centre Christmas tree has been ordered and will be delivered to The Square between the 10 and 14 of November. Tree lighting will be in place the week after the tree has been delivered
- 6.2 The lighting contract with Lamps and Tubes is due to finish at Christmas 2025. Dunstable Town Council will therefore need to invite tenders for a new five-year contract.

- 6.3 **Dunstable Christmas Lighting Scheme 2026–2030** The tender covers the period 2026 to 2030 (inclusive). Companies have been invited to tender for the provision of the Dunstable Christmas Lighting Scheme for the five-year period. If Lamps and Tubes are unsuccessful in securing the new contract, the existing decorations will need to be removed from their location by the end of March 2026 to the new storage location.
- 6.4 The Council will aim to invite tenders by the end of September 2025, with a contractor appointed by the beginning of March 2026. Tenders must be submitted and opened by the end of December 2025, ready for consideration at the January 2026 committee meeting.

7. AUTHOR

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

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025
BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27

Purpose of Report: For members to consider and comment on highlight budget proposals for Community Services for 2026/27 and make recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee accordingly.

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 For members to consider and comment on draft budget proposals and fees and charges for the Community Services' service area for 2026/27, as well as indicative budget changes for the following three years, and make recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee accordingly.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. A budget for 2026/27 has been drafted and is included below. This year each committee is being given two opportunities to review the budget; for Communities this will be on 3 November 2025 and 12 January 2026. This will enable members to review proposed changes in the first meeting, to enable officers to prepare a full budget for the second meeting.
- 2.2. In drafting the budget, officers have had to make assumptions about the salary increase being forecast for 2026/27. Staff contracts specify that pay will increase by the amount set by the national agreement each year. For 2026/27 this has been estimated at 4%. When the 4-year budget was produced to Council, at 2025/26 budget setting, the percentage increase was estimated at 3% year on year. However, based on national RPI known, this would be a risk on the Councils finances and therefore 4% has been proposed, in line with the nationally predicted percentage. For Communities and Grounds and Environmental Services Committees this is for information only; the decision on salary increases will be recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee to Full Council. It would not be helpful for other committees to debate this as well.
- 2.3. For other inflationary increases, these were set at 3% when the four-year budget was agreed in February 2025, and the budget now being prepared for 2026/27 has kept increases to 3%. This may put some pressure on services, but will help to keep budget increases down.
- 2.4. It is not yet possible to be precise about the impact of the proposed budget on the precept and individual Council Taxpayers because the Council Tax Base has not yet been provided by Central Bedfordshire Council. This will be available for the next budget round. We have therefore had to make assumptions at this stage that it will stay the same as the current year at 13,335.

- 2.5. As Members approved a 4-year budget in February 2025, the growth items below include those figures and are noted.

2.6. Growth items over £1,000:

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Description	Previously included in 4-year budget	+ / - (if required)	Total	Reason / Notes
300	4001	Salaries	-361,700	-14,002	-375,702	Increase due to inflation (4%)
209	4065	Older People's Lunchclub – catering	-11,000	-2,837	-13,837	
303	4001	Salaries (Detached)	0 (fully funded)	-31,000	-31,000	Detached staffing – service delivery 3 nights per week
303	4038	Repairs and Maintenance – Downside Community Service	0	-1,000	-1,000	No previous budget – responsibility for repairs and maintenance
303	4067	Community Engagement – Projects (Big Lunch)	-8,100	-2,025	-10,125	Fully from saving on Older People's service's Hall Hire to expand Big Lunch
303	1001	INCOME - Splash Park – Lettings / Facility Hire	4,635	-1,135	3,500	Income generation achievable
115	1032	INCOME – Splash Park – Catering Sales	57,165	-12,165	45,000	Partially offset on saving for catering expenses and stock savings (£7,338) – income generation achievable
115	4066	Splash Park – Entertainment / Activities	0	-1,200	-1,200	Fully offset with income generation on entertainment / activities
401	4511	Events Programme - St George's Day	-4,997	-1,500	-6,497	Niche market for acts/entertainment, price increases / restricted on event upgrade
401	4527	Events Programme – Soapbox	0	-20,000	-20,000	Partially offset by events and priory pictures savings (£18,000) – known costs for infrastructure discounted for initial year
405	4001	Town Centre Services – Salaries	-75,264	-1,462	-76,726	Increase due to inflation (4%)
310	4740	NEW – Community Lottery Reserve	0	-1,750	-1,750	Fully offset from income generated through lottery
310	4733	Priory House Building Maintenance Reserve	-50,000	-67,872	-117,872	Calculated based on full year operational budget for known and future requirements

2.7. Savings over £1,000:

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Description	Previously included in 4-year budget	+ / - (if required)	Total Saving	Reasons
209	1007	INCOME - Older People's Service – Fees	14,000	2,000	16,000	Additional numbers due to change in location for over 55's lunchclub
209	4065	Older People's Service – Hall Hire	-5,525	2,025	-3,500	Known quotation savings - moved in full to Big Lunch as 'growth' to expand event
209	4313	Older People's Service – Transport	-7,725	2,725	-5,000	Known quotation saving
303	1013	INCOME – Community Lottery	0	2,500	2,500	Fully offset expenditure = £750 licences required / £1,750 new reserve
303	4069	Community Engagement – Detached Activities	-10,000	6,000	-4,000	Reduced based on service running 3 nights per week
115	1004	Splash Park – Activities	0	1,800	1,800	Income generation - partially offsetting growth (£1,200) for entertainment / activities
115	4060	Splash Park – Catering Stock	-22,660	6,660	-16,000	Achievable requirement against income - Partially offset by income 'growth' expenditure (£7,338 - £6,660 stock + £678 catering expenses)
401	4524	Events Programme – Priory Pictures	-14,990	8,000	-6,990	Partially offsetting new Soapbox event 'growth'
401	4525	Events Programme – Events	-20,000	10,000	-10,000	Partially offsetting new Soapbox event 'growth'

2.8. Community Services draft budget:

**COMMUNITY
SERVICES****STAFF COSTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
300	4000	Salaries - Funded	-81,722	-81,722		-81,722			
300	4001	Salaries	-351,165	-375,702	-361,700	-14,002			
300	1071	INC - Rev Grant Rec'd	81,722	81,722		81,722			
			-351,165	-375,702	-361,700	-14,002	0	0	0

**OLDER PEOPLE'S
DAY CARE
SERVICE**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
209	1004	INC - Activities	1,640	2,520	1,640	880	2,520	2,520	2,520
209	1006	INC - CBC Contribution/Grant	9,156	9,656	9,156	500	9,656	9,656	9,656
		INC - Fees O P Day Care							
209	1007	Serv	14,000	16,000	14,000	2,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
209	4001	Salaries	-28,064	-29,314	-28,906	-408	-30,193	-31,099	-32,032
209	4036	Maintenance Contracts	0	-100		-100	-100	-100	-100
209	4064	Hall Hire	-5,525	-3,500	-5,525	2,025	-3,605	-3,713	-3,825
209	4065	Lunchclub Catering	-11,000	-13,837	-11,000	-2,837	-14,252	-14,680	-15,120
209	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-4,200	-4,200	-4,200	0	-4,200	-4,200	-4,200
209	4313	OPHLP - Transport	-7,500	-5,000	-7,725	2,725	-5,150	-5,305	-5,464
			-31,493	-27,775	-32,560	4,785	-29,325	-30,921	-32,564

COMMUNITY
SERVICESCOMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
303	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	7,000	7,000	7,000	0	7,000	7,000	7,000
303	1004	INC - Activities	2,200	2,200	2,200	0	2,200	2,200	2,200
303	4001	Salaries (Detached)		-31,000		-31,000	-31,930	-32,888	-33,875
303	1013	INC - Community Lottery		2,500		2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
303	4068	EXP - including licence costs		-750		-750	-750	-750	-750
303	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-300	-300	-300	0	-300	-300	-300
303	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	0	-1,000	0	-1,000	-1,030	-1,061	-1,093
303	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,000	-1,030	-1,000	-30	-1,061	-1,093	-1,126
303	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-8,507	-8,500	-8,507	7	-8,500	-8,500	-8,500
303	4067	Community Projects	-8,100	-10,125	-8,100	-2,025	-10,125	-10,125	-10,125
303	4069	ACTIVITIES- DETACHED	-10,000	-4,000	-10,000	6,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000
303	4321	Service Level Agreements	-13,500	-13,500	-13,500	0	-13,500	-13,500	-13,500
			-32,207	-58,505	-32,207	-26,298	-59,496	-60,517	-61,568

GROVE CORNER

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
304	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	11,000	11,330	11,330	0	11,670	12,020	12,381
304	1032	INC - Bar & Catering Sales	750	0	750	-750			
304	4001	Salaries	-9,549	-9,941	-9,835	-106	-10,239	-10,546	-10,863
304	4002	Wages	-4,000	-4,060	-4,120	60	-4,182	-4,307	-4,436
304	4011	Rates	-2,510	-2,560	-2,585	25	-2,611	-2,663	-2,717
304	4012	Water	-1,200	-1,236	-1,200	-36	-1,273	-1,311	-1,351
304	4014	Electricity	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	0	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500
304	4015	Gas	-3,125	-3,125	-3,125	0	-3,125	-3,125	-3,125
304	4016	Cleaning	-618	-637	-637	0	-656	-676	-696
304	4027	Licences	-500	-700	-500	-200	-500	-500	-500
304	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-400	-250	-400	150	-400	-400	-400
304	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-2,987	-3,487	-3,077	-410	-3,592	-3,699	-3,810
304	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-1,428	-1,470	-1,470	0	-1,514	-1,560	-1,606
304	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-978	-1,008	-1,008	0	-1,038	-1,069	-1,101
304	4060	Bar & Catering Stock	-750	0	-750	750			
304	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	0	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000
			-20,795	-21,644	-21,127	-517	-21,960	-22,337	-22,725

**COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

**BENNETT MEMORIAL
RECREATION
GROUND - SPLASH
PARK**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
115	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	4,500	3,500	4,635	-1,135	3,605	3,713	3,825
115	1004	INC - Activities	0	1,800		1,800	1,854	1,910	1,967
115	1032	INC - Bar & Catering Sales	55,500	45,000	57,165	-12,165	46,350	47,741	49,173
115	1092	INC - Concessions	5,000	5,500	5,150	350	5,500	5,500	5,500
115	4001	Salaries	-44,412	-46,531	-45,744	-787	-47,927	-49,365	-50,846
115	4002	Wages	-37,874	-38,745	-39,010	265	-39,907	-41,105	-42,338
115	4011	Rates	-2,670	-2,620	-2,750	130	-2,672	-2,726	-2,780
115	4012	Water	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250	0	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250
115	4014	Electricity	-6,300	-6,300	-6,300	0	-6,300	-6,300	-6,300
115	4016	Cleaning	-2,575	-2,652	-2,652	0	-2,732	-2,814	-2,898
115	4017	Waste Disposal	-3,000	-3,090	-3,090	0	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
115	4027	Licences	-220	-420	0	-420	-433	-446	-459
115	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-300	-300	-300	0	-300	-300	-300
115	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-8,652	-8,912	-8,912	0	-9,179	-9,455	-9,738
115	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-1,500	-1,545	-1,545	0	-1,591	-1,639	-1,688
115	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,000	-1,030	-1,030	0	-1,061	-1,093	-1,126
115	4059	Kitchen/Catering Expenses	-2,600	-2,000	-2,678	678	-2,060	-2,122	-2,185
115	4060	Bar & Catering Stock	-22,000	-16,000	-22,660	6,660	-16,480	-16,974	-17,484
115	4066	Entertainment/Activities	0	-1,200	0	-1,200	-1,236	-1,273	-1,311
			-69,353	-76,795	-70,971	-5,824	-79,002	-81,275	-83,615

**COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

EVENTS

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
401	1092	INC - Concessions	13,000	14,000	13,390	610	14,420	14,853	15,298
401	4001	Salaries	-48,392	-50,031	-49,844	-187	-51,532	-53,078	-54,670
401	4002	Wages	-4,147	-4,411	-4,271	-140	-4,543	-4,680	-4,820
401	4014	Electricity	-2,750	-2,750	-2,750	0	-2,750	-2,750	-2,750
401	4017	Waste Disposal	-18,150	-18,695	-18,695	0	-19,256	-19,834	-20,429
401	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-6,000	-6,000	-6,000	0	-6,000	-6,000	-6,000
401	4035	Cultural/National Event	-10,915	-11,242	-11,242	0	-11,579	-11,927	-12,284
401	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-300	-309	-309	0	-318	-328	-338
401	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,030	-1,061	-1,061	0	-1,093	-1,126	-1,159
401	4055	External Contracts	-7,134	-7,348	-7,348	0	-7,568	-7,795	-8,029
401	4511	St Georges Day Event	-4,851	-6,497	-4,997	-1,500	-6,692	-6,893	-7,099
401	4512	Party in the Park	-25,593	-26,361	-26,361	0	-27,152	-27,966	-28,805
401	4514	Torchlight Carols Event	-12,202	-12,568	-12,568	0	-12,945	-13,333	-13,733
401	4518	Band Concerts	-3,465	-3,569	-3,569	0	-3,676	-3,786	-3,900
401	4522	Dunstable Live	-10,915	-11,242	-11,242	0	-11,579	-11,927	-12,284
401	4523	Proms In The Park	-12,128	-12,492	-12,492	0	-12,867	-13,253	-13,650
401	4524	Priory Pictures	-14,553	-6,990	-14,990	8,000	-7,200	-7,416	-7,638
401	4526	Motor Rally	-3,032	-3,123	-3,123	0	-3,217	-3,313	-3,413
401	4527	NEW - Soapbox		-20,000	0	-20,000	-20,600	-21,218	-21,855
401	4525	Events	-20,000	-10,000	-20,000	10,000	-10,300	-10,609	-10,927
			-192,557	-200,689	-197,472	-3,217	-206,447	-212,378	-218,487

**COMMUNITY
SERVICES****PRIORY
HOUSE**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
402	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	0	4,500	4,500	0	6,000	6,000	6,000
402	1004	INC - Activities	1,200	1,200	1,200	0	1,200	1,200	1,236
402	1030	INC - Retail Sales	20,000	20,600	20,600	0	21,218	21,855	22,511
402	1032	INC - Bar & Catering Sales	8,000	101,250	101,250	0	135,000	135,000	139,050
402	4001	Salaries	-72,305	-214,283	-214,283	0	-294,282	-303,110	-312,204
402	4005	Overtime	-6,802	-7,006	-7,006	0	-7,216	-7,433	-7,656
402	4011	Rates	-7,200	-23,000	-23,000	0	-23,690	-24,401	-25,133
402	4012	Water	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	0	-2,575	-2,652	-2,732
402	4014	Electricity	-17,000	-17,000	-17,000	0	-17,000	-17,000	-17,000
402	4015	Gas	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	0	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500
402	4016	Cleaning	-600	-16,275	-16,275	0	-16,275	-16,763	-17,266
402	4017	Waste Disposal	-2,300	-2,369	-2,369	0	-2,440	-2,513	-2,589
402	4020	Miscellaneous Expenses	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	0	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500
402	4027	Licences	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	0	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
402	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-1,000	-7,500	-7,500	0	-7,500	-7,500	-7,500
402	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-10,000	-14,200	-14,200	0	-14,626	-15,065	-15,517
402	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-5,000	-7,500	-7,500	0	-7,725	-7,957	-8,195
402	4039	Equipment Hire	-4,700	-4,700	-4,700	0	-4,700	-4,700	-4,700
402	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,500	-3,500	-3,500	0	-3,605	-3,713	-3,825
402	4059	Kitchen/Catering Expenses	-2,000	-6,375	-6,375	0	-8,500	-8,500	-8,500
402	4060	Bar & Catering Stock	-8,000	-48,750	-48,750	0	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000
402	4601	Retail Purchases	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000	0	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000
402	4611	Education/Events	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	0	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000
			-134,707	-270,408	-270,408	0	-334,716	-345,252	-352,019

COMMUNITY SERVICES

TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
405	1011	INC - Hire of Stalls & Pitches	12,000	12,360	12,360	0	12,731	13,113	13,506
		INC -							
405	1093	Advertising/Sponsorship	800	800	800	0	800	800	800
405	1094	INC - Licences	1,000	1,030	1,030	0	1,061	1,093	1,126
405	4001	Salaries	-73,072	-76,726	-75,264	-1,462	-79,028	-81,399	-83,841
405	4002	Wages	-4,458	-4,590	-4,592	2	-4,728	-4,870	-5,016
405	4027	Licences		-500		-500	-515	-530	-546
405	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	0	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
405	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-5,220	-5,220	-5,220	0	-5,377	-5,538	-5,704
405	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-30,000	-30,900	-30,900	0	-31,827	-32,782	-33,765
405	4520	Christmas Lights	-19,000	-19,000	-19,000	0	-19,000	-19,000	-19,000
405	4715	Street Dressing	-6,800	-7,004	-6,800	-204	-7,214	-7,431	-7,653
								-	
			-125,750	-130,750	-128,586	-2,164	-134,097	137,543	-141,094

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES
(ASHTON SQUARE)

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
407	4016	Cleaning	-3,000	-3,090	-3,000	-90	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
407	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-1,575	-1,622	-1,575	-47	-1,671	-1,721	-1,772
407	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-3,000	-3,090	-3,000	-90	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
			-7,575	-7,802	-7,575	-227	-8,036	-8,277	-8,525

COMMUNITY
SERVICESCAPITAL AND
PROJECTS

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
310	4051	Loan Interest Payable	-19,666	-17,745	-18,045	300	-16,124	-14,503	-12,881
310	4052	Loan Capital Repaid	-31,792	-31,792	-31,792	0	-31,792	-31,792	-31,792
310	4740	Tfr to Community Lottery Res		-1,750		-1,750	-1,750	-1,750	-1,750
310	4714	Tfr to Christmas Lights Res	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000	0	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000
310	4716	Tfr to Downside Building Maint	-27,000	-5,000	-5,000	0	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
310	4717	Tfr to Grove Corner Building M	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	0	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000
310	4720	Tfr to Tearooms Equipment Res	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	0	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
310	4733	Tfr to Priory House Building M	-149,357	-117,872	-50,000	-67,872	-51,500	-60,000	-60,000
			-241,815	-188,159	-118,837	-69,322	-120,166	-127,045	-125,423

SUMMARY

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+ / -	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
300	STAFF COSTS	-351,165	-375,702	-361,700	-14,002	0	0	0
209	OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICE	-31,493	-27,775	-32,560	4,785	-29,325	-30,921	-32,564
303	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	-32,207	-58,505	-32,207	-26,298	-59,496	-60,517	-61,568
304	GROVE CORNER BENNETT MEMORIAL RECREATION GROUND -	-20,795	-21,644	-21,127	-517	-21,960	-22,337	-22,725
115	SPLASH PARK	-69,353	-76,795	-70,971	-5,824	-79,002	-81,275	-83,615
401	EVENTS PROGRAMME	-192,557	-200,689	-197,472	-3,217	-206,447	-212,378	-218,487
402	PRIORY HOUSE	-134,707	-270,408	-270,408	0	-334,716	-345,252	-352,019
405	TOWN CENTRE SERVICES PUBLIC CONVENIENCES	-125,750	-130,750	-128,586	-2,164	-134,097	-137,543	-141,094
407	(ASHTON SQUARE)	-7,575	-7,802	-7,575	-227	-8,036	-8,277	-8,525
310	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-241,815	-188,159	-118,837	-69,322	-120,166	-127,045	-125,423
		-1,207,417	-1,358,229	-1,241,443	-116,786	-993,245	1,025,545	-1,046,021

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The proposed budget would ensure the Council continued to provide the current level of service while maintaining good governance and treasury management. The provision of indicative budget changes for the following three years enables Members to ensure that plans are in place to maintain sufficient reserves to sustain the Council's current assets.

4. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Council have adopted a new Corporate Plan for 2024-2027, the budget proposed would enable the Council to maintain the current range and quality of services provided.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The draft general health and safety budget for 2026/27 has been increased in line with known cost rises and budgetary requirements.

6. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None; salary budgets will be provided for the next meeting.

7. EQUALITIES AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

8. SEPARATE ENCLOSURES

- 8.1. None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. None

10. AUTHORS

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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025

PRIORY HOUSE

Purpose of report: For information and decision
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1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1. To accept grant funding from the National Archives to help fund the young engagement workshops if it is awarded.

2. UPDATE

- 2.1. The gift shop was handed back to the Council from the contractors on Monday 20 October and the team worked hard to restock and have everything ready for the reopening on 27 October. A verbal update on how the opening went will be provided at committee.
- 2.2. In the run up to reopening staff spent time in the kitchen preparing for the new Lite Bites menu which is now available from the gift shops thanks to the improvement works. Items such as soup, focaccia and cakes will be available alongside a selection of drinks.
- 2.3. The shop is now fully stocked with a number of new suppliers providing a fresh new shopping experience from jewellery to toys and stocking fillers to dog gifts there is a wide variety of products available.
- 2.4. Showcase Shelving has been re-established with one local crafter trading in November and two in December.

3. PRIORY HOUSE REFURBISHMENT

- 3.1. The Creative Core who have the contract to design and implement the exhibition held the second workshop with representation from the Town Guides, Historical Dunstable, Dunstable and District History Society, Friends of Priory House and Gardens and youth workers. It was a very productive session providing Creative Core with some clarity over style and design.
- 3.2. Officers have been working on a funding application to the National Archives to help fund the young engagement workshops encouraging both co-design and co-creation from young people. As a cohort who use Priory House the least it is hoped that this approach would change this. The funding is for £5,000 and with the deadline of 28 November, however, it has already been over-subscribed so it will be a challenge to

secure this funding. It is however recommended that the committee agrees now to accept the funding should the bid be successful.

- 3.3. Obtaining permissions from Central Bedfordshire Council's planning department for the flood mitigation works is ongoing and whilst frustrating at this stage this is not impacting on the programme.
- 3.4. Steels have now gone into the building, making it much more structurally secure. Where opening up was required plastering is resuming and the stonemasons are due to be back on site this month to resume the repairs to the Undercroft in the last remaining bays.
- 3.5. It has been confirmed that due to the building requiring three new fuse boxes for different parts of the building the Gift Shop will be closed for an extra week after Christmas to allow this work to take place, with minimum disruption and impact on income. Priory House will reopen on Monday 12 January 2026.
- 3.6. Historic England alongside the Heritage Lottery are leading on the communications for the project. Now that work has resumed in earnest there is more confidence in sharing news. A communications plan has been agreed with a small communications group over seeing this which has representation from the Town Council. The Priory House pages on the website have been updated with a statement and a Frequently Asked Questions section. This has also been sent out to our customers who are signed up to our Mailchimp service. The team are considering community engagement opportunities and see this coming summer and the Council's events as a perfect opportunity. In addition, some very small group visits have been arranged with key stakeholders now that the building is safe and before too much is covered up again.

4. FINANCIAL

GIFT SHOP TAKINGS (EX VAT)

- 4.1. Shop income is as expected due to closure of the gift shop. Sales of Honey, Frenchic and loose-leaf tea have continued from Grove House. September's income was boosted by the glow products being sold at Proms in the Park.
- 4.2. The offer of items in the gift shop has significantly improved with eight new suppliers, ranging from Wool items, dog coats and a new jewellery range. It is anticipated that income from the gift shop will now increase.

	2024/25	2025/26	Variation 2024/25 to 2025/26
April	£1,759.75	£267.05	-£1,492.71
May	£2,426.56	£180.48	-£2,246.08
June	£2,667.56	£92.66	-£2,574.90
Total 1st quarter	£6,853.87	£540.18	-£6,313.69
July	£1,596.00	£121.12	-£1,474.88
August	£2,146.28	£134.69	-£2,011.59
September	£2,098.07	£338.36	-£1,759.71
Total 2nd quarter	£5,840.35	£594.17	-£5,246.18
TOTAL	£12,694.22	£1,134.35	-£11,559.86

TEAROOM TAKINGS (EX VAT)

- 4.3. Due to the redesign of the gift shop, a lite bites menu will now be available for customers, which will mean income for the tearooms will resume.

	2024/25	2025/26	Variation 2024/25 to 2025/26
April	£1,697.99	£418.76	-£1,279.23
May	£2,418.64	£792.88	-£1,625.76
June	£1,990.93	£709.94	-£1,280.99
Total 1st quarter	£6,107.56	£1,921.58	-£4,185.98
July	£2,932.83	£196.00	-£2,736.83
August	£2,575.21	£0.00	-£2,575.21
September	£1,746.55	£0.00	-£1,746.55
Total 2nd quarter	£7,254.59	£196.00	-£7,058.59
TOTAL	£13,362.15	£2,117.58	-£11,244.57

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 5.1. The grant funding applied for would increase the Council's budget for consultation about the Exhibition.

6. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS- none

- 6.1. The grant funding would enhance delivery of Corporate Plan Action 23, to “Reopen Priory House and engage users in line with funders’ requirements.”

7. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS- none

- 7.1. The scheme would increase the involvement of young people in the design of the Exhibition

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS- none

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS- none

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS- none

11. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – none

AUTHOR

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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025

EVENTS

Purpose of report: For information only.

1. PAST EVENTS

1.1 Priory Proms in the Park

1.2 Priory Proms in the Park took place on Saturday 13 September and was received well by those who attended, despite lower turnout compared to previous years. An estimated 400–500 people braved the cold and wet weather to enjoy an afternoon screening of *Wicked* followed by a live evening broadcast. Live performances from the Dunstable Town Band and The Memphis Belles added to the atmosphere, further enhanced by the light projections on the church, ending with a fireworks finale. The event received positive feedback via Survey Monkey and Facebook, with comments on the quality of the event and the overall experience.

1.3 Attendance at the event has noticeably declined from previous years when it peaked at over 1,500 visitors. Since 2022, Leighton Buzzard has hosted its own Proms in the Park event, which closely mirrors Dunstable's format – including live music, a large screen, a fireworks display, and the same film being shown this year. On-the-day feedback from regular visitors suggested that friends and family who previously attended the Dunstable event opted for the Leighton Buzzard event instead, as it is closer to where they live. Given the towns' proximity, officers believe this has contributed to the reduction in numbers.

2 EVENTS PROGRAMME 2025 – FORTHCOMING

2.1 Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession – Friday 29 November

2.2 Planning for the Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession is progressing well. In September, a letter was sent to local schools inviting children to take part in this year's event. To date 11 schools have confirmed their participation, alongside the Priory Church Choir, with a total of 331 children expected to be involved.

2.3 The road closure request has been submitted which allows the A5183 to be fully closed for the duration of the event. All businesses and residents affected by the closure will be notified in advance. As per last year, DTC vehicles will be used as additional roadblocks along High Street South and at the junction of West Street/Church Street, which will enhance security and ensure that the audience can safely stand in the road.

- 2.4 The Grove Theatre Panto stars were invited to take part in this year's Torchlight event. Unfortunately, this year the production company will not be releasing the panto stars due to the heavy technicalities of this year's theatre show thereby maximising their rehearsal period which is scheduled for the same day as the event. BBB Group will be providing the light show finale, and the event has been sponsored by Penrose Estate Agents who have also sponsored the Christmas Tree on The Square. Officers are liaising with individuals regarding the compering of the event and will provide a verbal update to the committee.

3 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR 2026

- 3.1 The table below outlines the event dates for 2026, with changes to the Dunstable Soapbox Derby and Priory Pictures. The Soapbox Derby has been moved from Saturday 15 August to Saturday 5 September, while Priory Pictures will now take place on Saturday 15 August.

Event and venue	Date 2025
St George's Day (PG)	Saturday 18 April 11.00 am to 4.00 pm
Around the World (PG)	Saturday 16 May 10.30 am 4.30 pm
Dunstable Classic Motor Rally (PG)	Saturday 13 June 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Dunstable Live (GHG)	Saturday 27 June 3 pm to 8 pm
Sunday Concerts (GHG)	Sunday 21 June, 26 July & 9 August 12.00 noon & 2.30 pm
Party in the Park (GHG)	Saturday 18 July 12.00 noon to 8.00 pm
Priory Pictures (PG)	Saturday 15 August From 12.00 noon
Dunstable's Soapbox Derby (PG)	Saturday 5 September From 12.00 noon
Priory Proms in the Park (PG)	Date and Times TBC from BBC
Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession (TS)	Friday 27 November From 7.00 pm

(PG) Priory Gardens, (GHG) Grove House Gardens, (TS) The Square

- 3.2 Moving the Soapbox Derby to early September, rather than holding it during the school summer holidays (as previously planned), presents a significant opportunity for broader involvement. Scheduling the event at the start of September avoids many of the challenges associated with the school holiday period - such as family travel, term time only groups not meeting and other commitments, which can reduce attendance and participation. This new timing allows students, families, and wider groups such as charities and community organisations to take part more easily. In addition, holding the event after the holidays provides participants with time over the summer to design and build their soapbox karts, offering a valuable hands-on learning experience outside the traditional classroom setting.

- 3.3 The revised date for Priory Pictures allows the remaining events programme to remain spaced appropriately within the summer months, maintaining a good spread of events throughout the year. No other significant changes are proposed to the timing of any other established events.

4 EVENTS SURVEY

- 4.1 Event-specific surveys were undertaken online through Survey Monkey, Facebook and QR codes displayed on posters. To date, 468 responses have been received with one remaining event still to take place this year.

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

a) How satisfied were you with your visit?

2025 (468 responses collected)

65% Very satisfied
27% Satisfied
1% Dissatisfied

2024 (519 responses collected)

67% Very Satisfied
26% Satisfied
2% Dissatisfied

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

2025 (468 responses collected)

56% Extremely Good
25% Very Good
11% Good
4% Neither good nor bad

2024 (519 responses collected)

57% Extremely Good
27% Very Good
10% Good
5% Neither good nor bad

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

2025 (468 responses collected)

59% Extremely Likely
22% Very likely
13% Likely
3% Not Likely

2024 (519 responses collected)

61% Extremely Likely
25% Very likely
10% Likely
2% Not Likely

- 4.3 The survey results collected to date for 2025 are positive and continue to show strong public support for Dunstable Town Council's events. Satisfaction levels remain high and are in line with those recorded in 2024, despite a lower number of responses received so far. Notably, 92% of respondents this year reported being either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their visit, and 81% said they were "extremely likely" or "very likely" to recommend Dunstable events to a friend. In addition, 92% rated the events as "good" or better, with over half (56%) describing them as "extremely good". The complete questionnaire results will be available for the January Committee.

5 AUTHOR

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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025
GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Purpose of Report: For information.
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1. GROVE CORNER FIGURES

- 1.1. Grove Corner received 254 visits from young people between 14 August 2025 and 13 October 2025.
- 1.2. 22 new young people have signed up over this time. Officers anticipate there will be more young people who join the sessions now that autumn has arrived.
- 1.3. Grove Corner received 320 visits from young people between 13 August 2024 and 18 October 2024.
- 1.4. Pokémon received 112 visits from young people between 2 September 2025 and 14 October 2025.
- 1.5. Pokémon sessions received 103 visits from young people between 3 September 2025 and 15 October 2024.

2. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- 2.1. Officers were approached by members of the Junior Youth Club who asked to organise, facilitate and host their own talent show. The Youth Apprentice worked with the young people, who hosted their talent show at the end of September. This was enjoyed by all who took part, and those who organised the talent show were presented with certificates to acknowledge their efforts.
- 2.2. Officers continue to consult with young people about Grove Corner. Officers facilitated a stall at Central Bedfordshire College for their fresher's fair, and received feedback from young people aged 16+ that some young people did not attend due to working, others wanted to go straight home once college had finished, and others commented that they used to attend but had outgrown a youth club setting.
- 2.3. Officers will be working with young people who are old enough to go to either Junior Youth Club or the 13+ session and will begin to work with these young

people and support them to transition to the sessions aimed at 13+. This will be a gradual process, as officers are aware that for some of these young people, change can be challenging and therefore want to support the young people well in this process.

- 2.4. Officers continue to facilitate informal education around current and emerging issues that young people may experience or be aware of. Officers have facilitated conversations around navigating fall outs with friends, what healthy friendships look like, how to be emotionally resilient, and discuss current themes as and when these arise. When required, officers invite organisations who have specialist areas to come and deliver workshops.

3. DETACHED YOUTH WORK

- 3.1. Between 14 August 2025 and 15 October 2025, officers have delivered 34 detached activities and engagement sessions across Dunstable, excluding Dunstable East. The areas covered include Priory Gardens, Ashton Square, Dunstable Cemetery, Downside estate, Brewers Hill Recreation Ground, Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground, The Quadrant, Eleanor's Cross, Spoodell and Mentmore Recreation Ground.
- 3.2. Since 14 August 2025 and 15 October 2025, officers continue to deliver nine hours per week detached youth work across Dunstable East. Officers have continued to work with the Dunstable Centre providing free sessions, one hour per session, three times per week. Officers continue to visit White Lion Retail Park, Kingsbury Recreation Ground, Grove Skate Park, Grove House Gardens, Peter Newton Recreation Ground and Katherine Drive shops.
- 3.3. Officers continue to be flexible and fluid within their approach to detached youth work, with the colder and darker nights approaching, officers have already adjusted the timings of their engagement on a Thursday evening and will continue to make the necessary amendments when required.
- 3.4. Between 14 August 2025 and 15 October, officers have engaged with 415 young people by headcount. 288 of these young people have been within Dunstable East and the remaining 127 have been within the rest of the town.
- 3.5. Therefore, it is worth noting that the youth team have had 781 interactions with young people between 14 August 2025 and 15 October 2025, through centre-based youth work and detached youth work.
- 3.6. 83 young people have engaged with the youth provision offered by Dunstable Town Council, for the first time, in this duration.
- 3.7. There are several activities taking place over the October half term: a trip to Thorpe Park, a trip to the Pioneer Centre in St Albans, a swimming session, a

ghost walk and a Halloween party. Officers are also working on plans for Christmas which include a meal out and trip to the pantomime and a Christmas party. Other plans are in the process of being finalised – a verbal update will be given at committee on these activities.

- 3.8. Officers have met with Central Bedfordshire Council to discuss their youth work funding commitment to the town. It has been verbally confirmed that CBC will continue their funding for another year, this being £30,000. This would cover most of the costs associated with delivering three nights a week of detached youth work, which is calculated at £35,000. As part of the budget setting process it is recommended that the Town Council commits £35,000 for detached youth work to ensure continuity of the service should Central Bedfordshire Council have to at any point withdraw their funding. Any residual at the end of the year could be placed into a ringfenced youth service reserve.

4. SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. Officers worked in partnership with St Augustine's Academy and Wildlife Trust to facilitate a wellbeing walk. The school was very complimentary about this and was grateful for the opportunity and expressed how beneficial and helpful it would be for their students. Over 60 children attended the walk over Blows Downs.
- 4.2. Officers are currently working with different schools across the town to plant bulbs in different wards. Once this project concludes, 40,000 bulbs for Dunstable Town Council will have been planted, and officers are supporting a further 8,000 bulbs to be planted for Dunstable in Bloom.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. The Youth and Community Manager has completed her studies and has achieved a Level 3 Diploma in ADHD Awareness and Level 3 in Understanding Autism.
- 5.2. Officers met with BRCC Social Prescribers to understand further about Winter Warm Hubs. It was agreed that one would run fortnightly from Bennett's Café and Community Hub. Officers are currently aware that The Disability Resource Centre run a Warm Hub every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10 am to 1 pm at The Mayfield Centre. Dunstable Community Halls also facilitate a well-being space, every Thursday from 10 am to 1 pm.
- 5.3. Officers have built a new connection with Savers and will be joining staff from Savers on a litter pick in November. The hope is that after the first litter pick, the team from Savers will be able to borrow equipment and facilitate this themselves.
- 5.4. Officers have worked with the Parks and Green Spaces Officer to complete the red phone box project on Church Street. This project is now concluded and has officially been opened by the Mayor.

6. BENNETT'S SPLASHSIDE CAFÉ AND COMMUNITY HUB

- 6.1. Between 13 August 2025 and 14 October 2025, there have been 47 organised events organised. The activities that have been facilitated include:
- Breakfast Club
 - Happy and Active
 - Adult Craft Club
 - Winter Warmth Hub
 - Coffee Morning
 - Canine Coffee Club
 - Doggy Splash
 - Youth Café
- 6.2. Between 13 August 2025 and 14 October, there have been four hirers of the space. These have been Youth Café, Breakfast Club, Happy and Active, and one gazebo hire.
- 6.3. Officers have begun advertising for the Friends of Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground Group. The group's role will include supporting event days, contributing ideas for the café, assisting with litter picks and weeding, and offering support to wider community groups. Although initial interest has been limited, officers are continuing to advertise the opportunity through social media, café signage and direct conversations with regular users.
- 6.4. In addition, officers are exploring the potential for existing groups such as the monthly dog socials, adult craft club, and Home Education meetups to become informal subgroups. These subgroups would contribute to the wider Friends initiative by offering ideas and support while continuing their regular activities.
- 6.5. During the summer, officers introduced a community litter pick scheme to help maintain the grounds around the splash park. An A-frame board was installed, stocked with litter pickers and bin bags, allowing visitors to take part in keeping the area clean. This initiative was in response to recurring litter issues during peak summer months.
- 6.6. Officers are actively identifying and assessing funding opportunities to support both existing and future projects. This includes exploring potential grants for the Winter Warmth Hub, installation of a public water refill station, and the development of an outdoor activity area. Conversations with local stakeholders and funding bodies are ongoing.

- 6.7. The community survey remains live and continues to gather valuable feedback from residents. Officers will be re-promoting the survey through digital channels and in-person engagement at the café to boost participation and ensure a broad representation of views.
- 6.8. Officers are currently developing a festive programme of events for December, including themed café days, craft activities, and a community Christmas grotto. The grotto aims to provide an inclusive and accessible experience for families who may not otherwise have the means to visit a traditional Santa's Grotto. The schedule will be promoted via social media, posters, and through local partner networks once the finalised plans have been confirmed.
- 6.9. A Facebook poll was conducted to gather community input on preferred café opening hours. Based on the results, the café now operates Wednesday to Sunday, remaining closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. These hours will be reviewed again before Christmas to ensure they continue to meet community needs.
- 6.10. The café continues to host regular drop-in sessions with partner organisations. These include:
 - *Good Life Sorted*, offering support and information for residents aged 55 and over.
 - *Winter Warmth Hub Agents* from Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, attending bi-weekly to provide advice on energy efficiency, wellbeing, and local services. Officers have also reached out to additional local organisations to expand the range of support available to the community.
- 6.11. Promotion of the café and hub as a hireable community space is ongoing. Officers are engaging with local groups and organisations to encourage use of the space for meetings, workshops, and social events.
- 6.12. A full programme of family-friendly activities has been scheduled for the October half-term week. These include a variety of sessions designed to engage children and families during the school break and bring footfall into the cafe.
- 6.13. The monthly dog social sessions have proven highly successful. Attendance ranged between 8 to 10 dogs for the first session, with a number of accompanying owners. Many attendees purchased refreshments and meals from the café, contributing to increased revenue for that day. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, both in person and via social media. These sessions will now be held on the first Saturday of each month, with the aim of building a regular community of dog owners and walkers who can connect and socialise.

- 6.14. Officers are actively promoting the formation of the Friends of Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground Group. While initial uptake has been modest, efforts continue through social media, café outreach, and direct engagement with existing user groups. Plans are underway to encourage subgroups to emerge from regular attendees such as the dog social community, adult craft club, and Home Education network. These subgroups will be invited to contribute ideas, support events, and assist with maintenance activities such as litter picking and weeding.
- 6.15. The table below shows a takings comparison excluding VAT comparing 2024 to 2025 covering August, September and October (up to 14 October).
- 6.16. The table shows that at the end of the summer the café was performing similarly to the year before with a mix of good and poor weather impacting on sales throughout the month.
- 6.17. The Splash Park opening times were extended by a week again this year, and although the weather was poor it still outperformed the previous year. The following week introduced the first year incorporating a 'Doggy Splash Session' which positively impacted sales resulting in another higher performing week.
- 6.18. Income fluctuated somewhat over the following 3 weeks; home education sessions resumed, and canine coffee club was introduced, which brought a higher than usual Saturday income. The final three weeks of September did host less football games compared to the start of last season, with there being 0 or 1 each week which may have contributed to the weeks which underperformed.
- 6.19. The 1st week of October has done significantly better despite there being no breakfast club due to a staff away day. With the introduction of new initiatives, and the return of other 'winter' sessions, there should be continued growth against last year's financial income.

AUGUST	5th - 11th	£ 2,185.66	£ 1,716.13				£ 1,716.13	-£ 469.53	25,642.88	Missing Till wed-fri. Card only
	12th - 18th	£ 4,065.70	£ 4,489.13				£ 4,489.13	£ 423.43	30,132.01	Good Weather Week
	19th - 25th	£ 1,092.77	£ 1,483.23				£ 1,483.23	£ 390.46	31,615.24	Poor Weather Week
	26th - 1st	£ 2,364.75	£ 1,690.65				£ 1,690.65	-£ 674.10	33,305.89	
SEPTEMBER	2nd - 8th	£ 222.22	£ 402.42				£ 402.42	£ 180.20	33,708.31	Extended splash being open but weather wasn't good.
	9th - 15th	£ 167.25	£ 272.64				£ 272.64	£ 105.39	33,980.95	Doggy Splash 13th/14th (Weekly income with activities
	16th - 22nd	£ 289.40	£ 258.48	£ 21.67	£ -	£ 25.00	£ 305.15	-£ 30.92	34,239.43	
	23rd - 29th	£ 221.78	£ 236.76	£ 23.33	£ 0.83	£ -	£ 260.92	£ 14.98	34,476.19	
	30th - 6th	£ 337.56	£ 269.18	£ 23.33	£ 1.66	£ 11.67	£ 305.84	-£ 68.38	34,745.37	Home ed session, Canine coffee club session
OCTOBER	7th - 13th	£ 152.02	307.36			38.33	£ 345.69	£ 193.67		No breakfast club, first messy play session, 2x home ed sessions
	14th - 20th	£ 186.92					£ -	-£ 186.92		
	21st - 27th	£ 252.77					£ -	-£ 252.77		
	28th - 3rd	£ 860.86					£ -	-£ 860.86		half term

7. COMMUNITY LOTTERY

- 7.1. There are currently 30 good causes signed up to the Community Lottery and 151 players.
- 7.2. There have been eight winners to date, all winning £25 each.
- 7.3. The total revenue for local good causes to date is £3,175.20.
- 7.4. There has been marketing in Talk of The Town focusing on the benefits for sports clubs and encouraging them to sign up. A short video has also been created for social media featuring some of the good causes and the positive impact the Community Lottery has had for them and their fundraising. Once Talk of The Town has been distributed we will review the impact these campaigns have had.

8. AUTHORS

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

Purpose of Report: For information.
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1. GOOD COMPANIONS CLUB

- 1.1 Good Companions Club is currently full with 25 members; however, two of these are currently off sick, and therefore the decision was made to allow someone from the waiting list to begin.
- 1.2 The group enjoyed a visit to Poplars Garden Centre, where they were able to do some shopping and have lunch in the restaurant. The Club have had visits from different organisations and have also enjoyed some in-house activities.
- 1.3 In the lead up to the Christmas period, Good Companions Club will have a Christmas meal at one of their sessions, have a meal out booked, and have visits from the local school and nursery planned.

2. LUNCH BUNCH

- 2.1 The Lunch Bunch currently has 38 members. The Older People's Officer continues to support the group and has been working on continuing with a staggered approach to introduce new members.
- 2.2 The Lunch Bunch has a waiting list of 23 people. Officers have spoken to Priory View about the possibility of the caterer for Lunch Bunch visiting Priory View once per month on a Sunday to cook a roast dinner for the residents, their families and members of the public, and have left this with Priory View to explore.
- 2.3 The Lunch Bunch have enjoyed a talk on wellbeing, which was facilitated by the Youth and Community Manager, have taken part in bingo, some in house games, and will have a Halloween party during October half term.
- 2.4 Officers have built a good relationship with Café Nostalgia, who covered the catering for an interim period before the current caterer for Lunch Bunch was able to begin. Café Nostalgia has kindly agreed to cover sickness or holidays when required.

- 2.5 Officers continue to have bi-monthly meetings with Priory View to ensure all parties are happy with the set up and resolve any concerns.

3. OVER 55s BREAKFAST CLUB

- 3.1 The over 55s breakfast club continues to be popular with those who attend. There are currently 18 members signed up.
- 3.2 Officers have been liaising with members of the breakfast club to ensure they are receiving the type of breakfast that caters for their needs, and have different activities for the group to enjoy, including organisations visiting to deliver talks, and in-house activities.

4. ROCK AND ROLL

- 4.1 Rock and Roll took place on Tuesday 16 September – these who were in attendance enjoyed an afternoon with Elvis, and there were many verbal comments that this was the best Rock and Roll yet!
- 4.2 The next Rock and Roll event takes place on Tuesday 25 November and will be Christmas themed, with entertainment provided by The Wilsons. Currently, 37 tickets have been sold.

5. FOOD CLUB

- 5.1 Officers launched the first Food Club meet up, where 14 people enjoyed a meal at Kasmicks. There are currently 22 people who have signed up to be part of the food club, and the Community Services Assistants have carried out a poll to decide where the group wishes to go next. There is space for 30 people to be part of this group. Officers plan to support the group for 6-9 months and once established, will step aside, so that the group can run on its own without support from DTC.

6. HAPPY AND ACTIVE TOGETHER

- 6.1 Happy and Active Together has concluded for the 12 sessions that officers secured more funding for. However, there was funding left over, and so officers can run a block of further sessions, which will begin in January – this will be advertised in the coming weeks, for new or existing people to join.

7. COFFEE MORNINGS/AFTERNOONS

- 7.1 Officers facilitated a coffee afternoon at Bennett's Café and Community Hub which had four people attend. Officers will be facilitating another coffee afternoon, at St Mary's Church Hall on Tuesday 28 October. Officers are currently in the process of looking to get a group of volunteers to take over the facilitation of

coffee mornings/afternoons. Officers will be advertising for volunteers on social media, on local community boards, via the website, and through word of mouth. The aim is to have volunteers in place early next year, who can then be induced and supported by officers for a period of time, before handing out the facilitation to volunteers, and supporting as and when required.

8. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

- 8.1 Officers will shortly be receiving £1,839 from the Household Support Fund. This will go towards buying members of Good Companions and Lunch Bunch, supermarket vouchers for the week when both groups are closed, between Christmas and New Year.

9. Kindness Bags

- 9.1 Officers have received Kindness Bags from the Small Acts of Kindness Charity - these will be distributed between the Good Companions Club and Lunch Bunch. The bags have winter warmers in them.

10. AUTHORS

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