

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF CULTURAL & ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors A Dodwell (Chair)
 M Freeman
 R Goodchild
 D Scott
 S Jones
 F Kharawala
 C Palmer (substituting for G Perham)

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 M Jahn, Committee Officer (part meeting)
 Cllr V Harvey

Members of the public: 2
Members of the press 0

146/CE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors P Snelling, D Bowater (substituted by Farzana Kharawala), G Perham (substituted by Cllr Palmer), S Hemmings (substituted by Cllr Jones), K Cursons and R Yates.

147/CE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harvey declared a personal interest as a member of South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth.

No pecuniary interests were declared or dispensations requested.

148/CE QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public spoke regarding Black History Month launched on 1 October in the Library Theatre led by speaker Patrick Vernon. A number of workshops were held along with a week-long exhibition at the White House and positive feedback was received from those who visited.

A question was raised regarding why Black History Month had not been included in the events listed for next year. A meeting would be set up in the new year to discuss how the council could support the volunteer group to facilitate future Black History Month activities.

149/CE DELEGATED DECISIONS SINCE PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Committee received the approved decisions taken since the previous meeting, by delegation to the Town Clerk with email approval from a majority of Committee members in accordance with Standing Order 15 (c)(vii). This was as a result of the late cancellation of the scheduled September meeting due to the period of national mourning for Queen Elizabeth II.

RESOLVED to note the decisions.

(b) The Committee received an update report following on from the September report, including the latest information on the Greensand Ridge Walk and Cycleway Gateway Feature, a review of Black History Month, the status of the Buzzard Trails initiatives, an update on the town centre and on staffing.

It was confirmed the Greensand Ridge Walk and Cycleway gateway feature project and cycle feature installation was now nearing completion, pending the sourcing of an approved highways contractor underway to complete the installation.

The temporary Trail in the Trees in Linslade Recreation Ground had been well received and was due to be removed at the end of December. The two town centre based augmented reality story trails had been created – one for Halloween and one for Christmas. There had been approximately 672 players participating in the Halloween Trail. It was anticipated that work could commence in early 2023 on future trail ideas for Autumn/Winter 2023-2024.

Members were informed the town centre maps and shopping directory had been updated for 2023 and would be widely distributed including to new residents in and just outside the parish.

RESOLVED to note the report.

150/CE SUB-COMMITTEE AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Committee received the draft minutes of Sub-Committee meetings held since the last meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Market Sub-Committee held on 10 November 2022.

A concern was raised regarding the barrier used on market days which had been knocked over allowing cars access to the High Street. The Town Clerk agreed to write to Central Bedfordshire Council regarding this recurring problem. A positive meeting had recently been held with local authority officers regarding car parking on the High Street on market days. A concern was raised that the cost of living pressures being experienced by residents

could lead to less shopping at the market.

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Older Persons Sub Committee meeting held on 17 November 2022.

Recommendations from this Committee would be covered in item eleven on the agenda.

151/CE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

The Committee received the Committee Workplan and Objectives for 2022-2023.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Workplan and Objectives for 2022-2023.

152/CE TACTIC WORK UPDATE

The Committee received a written report and a verbal update on the work of the Teenage Advice and Information Centre including young persons drop in sessions, mentoring, schools lunchtime drop-ins, building hire, Gaming Suite, Chatty Café and the Older Persons Christmas Meal.

The newly opened Gaming Suite had proved very popular with young people and the number of drop-ins had increased. TACTIC had also linked up with a group from 'Grove Corner' in Dunstable to organise inter club tournaments during February half term.

The Older Persons Christmas three course meal would take place on Tuesday 20 December at Astral Park Community Hall with 70 places booked and the Rock of Ages Choir would be performing on the day.

Another success was the Chatty Café which had gone from strength to strength with a regular attendance of between 25-30 community members. Digital champions now attend weekly to help anyone struggling with online-IT issues.

Demand for mentoring remained consistent with 23 open cases and a waiting list rising to 17. A query was raised as to whether this was linked to the cost of living crisis. The increased demand for support prior to Christmas was expected as this could be a difficult time of year, but TACTIC would also be providing food to young people and encouraging them to learn how to cook on a budget.

The Committee wanted to thank all the staff at TACTIC for their continued good work for young and older people in the community and was also keen to hear the views of the young people about the town and its facilities.

RESOLVED to note the report.

153/CE EVENTS PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received a report regarding the Christmas Festival Weekend and the community events programme for 2023. Thanks were expressed to the wider team including those who were not permanent members of staff but assisted with the events programme, as well as all the volunteers who contributed.

RESOLVED to note the information and to express thanks to all of the team involved in the community events programme.

The Committee heard that the Grounds & Environmental Committee had that week decided not to enter the 2023 Anglia in Bloom campaign but to hold some other form of celebration to thank the volunteers who worked to make the town greener and more attractive. It was suggested that a wider celebration of all volunteers could take place but acknowledged that in a large parish, this could include a significant number of people.

154/CE CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

The Committee received a report outlining some initial plans to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III on Saturday, 6 May 2023. It was proposed that the coronation be screened in Parson's Close Recreation Ground, to be followed by a live performance from a brass band and in the evening, with a firework display. The timing of the coronation was not yet known so details would be established later.

The Committee expressed a request for quieter fireworks and for the working party to also consider legacy projects, with a focus on themes appropriate to the King such as the environment and young people. It was suggested market traders be contacted to check if they planned to trade as usual on the coronation day.

RESOLVED

(a) To endorse the proposals for the celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023.

(b) To endorse the proposal to establish a working party to ensure community groups are engaged in and involved with the planning of the celebrations, to include Councillors Carberry, Harvey, Kharawala and one member of the Liberal Democrat group (to be confirmed).

155/CE SIX MONTH BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received the six month budget monitoring report for April – September 2022.

RESOLVED to note the report.

156/CE 55UP PROJECT AND OLDER PERSONS SUB COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report arising from the Older Persons Sub-Committee meeting held 17 November 2022. The report set out the various initiatives delivered to date through the 55UP scheme and the impact this was having on older residents. Successful projects included the grant scheme, digital support helpline, information booklet and Chatty Café, with the recent additions of the part-time Community Agent service and a digital tablet device loan scheme off to a flying start. To demonstrate ongoing commitment to projects for older residents, a number of recommendations had been made to committee for consideration.

RECOMMENDED to Council that a resolution be made of commitment to becoming an Age-Friendly Community and joining the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities/World Health Organisation Global Network.

RESOLVED that the remaining £18,604.40 of the £80,000 allocated to the 55UP Project continued to be ringfenced in an earmarked reserve for additional projects to support older residents.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee that a new revenue budget line be established for Older People from 1 April 2023, with an initial budget allocation of £9,000 to fund possible continuation of the digital support project from October 2023 – March 2024 (noting that this reflected half early costs and that consideration might need to be given to increasing this from 2024-25)

157/CE DRAFT BUDGET 2023-2024

The Committee received and considered the draft Committee budget for 2023-2024. This was recommended for approval, with the addition of the new line for older people as proposed by the Older Persons Sub-Committee.

A question was raised regarding the possibility of funding additional activities and events in the town centre. A further question was raised regarding insurance cover for community events, specifically relating to icy weather.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee to approve the proposed budget for Cultural & Economic Services for the financial year 2023-2024.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022.

Chair

13 MARCH 2023