

**Notes of the Informal Community Services Committee Meeting Held Remotely
on Wednesday 13 July 2022**

Present Councillor N Farmer (Chair)
Councillors A Brown, T Bush, A Crockford, D Jarman, A White

In Attendance Councillor S Abbott
Mrs V Fauset (Community Services Officer (Health and Wellbeing))
W Lawton (The Rhythm Practice)
Ms S Leigh (Community Services Officer (Arts))
D J Martin (Chief Executive)
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)
Mrs T Walpole (Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events))

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor G McCaffery.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Corsham Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Cllr Abbott declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 8 – Tourism Update and Agenda Item 9 – Business Support Update, given their links to the High Street where his wife rents a retail unit.

3. Matters arising from the Notes of the Informal Community Services Committee Meeting held remotely on 11 May 2022.

There were none.

4. Community Wellbeing Update (*Notes of the Informal Community Services Committee Meeting 11 May – Item 4, Item 4 and others*)

The Committee was updated, via a report, on the recent work undertaken by the Community Services Officer (Health and Wellbeing) and the Town Council's Community Wellbeing Working Group (previously the Health and Wellbeing Group). Work with families included funding The Rise Trust with their work for families and Under-5s during the summer holidays. For older/vulnerable people, the focus was on the work of iid.org.uk and their ongoing creative arts projects for this sector of the community. For young people, projects highlighted included Corsham Youth Zone's requirement for two new youth workers; the detached youth work being undertaken by The Rise Trust; the SPARKS mental-health event being held for the Year 9 cohort at The Corsham School, and the Contextual Safeguarding training undertaken by Cllr Farmer, the Chief Executive and the Head of Community Services.

Discussion took place over the planned cost-of-living cookery sessions the Health and Wellbeing Officer was working on for referred families and older/vulnerable people, due to take place in the autumn. A session for Year 13 students, ahead of them going to university, was also being considered for early 2023.

The report was noted.

We Are The People – Cllr Bush updated the Committee on the We Are The People project she is running in her capacity as a Research Fellow at Bath Spa University, with events due to take part in early September, culminating at the Town Council's Street Fair on 10 September. There were also potential projects for StoryTown. Cllr Bush would meet with the members of the Community Services team to see how the various elements of We Are The People could best link with their work.

The update was noted.

Kandu Arts Grant Application – An urgent grant application had been received from Kandu Arts, a Chippenham-based organisation that delivers cultural and Arts access, mentoring and support, to predominantly marginalised members of communities. The application, for £500, was to provide mentoring and support for one day a week, over the six weeks of the school summer holidays, to at least one isolated and traumatised young person from Corsham who was currently falling between statutory services. The funds would cover one member of Kandu Arts' staff working full-time with the young person/people, using the Pound Arts Centre as a venue.

The Committee agreed to award Kandu Arts the £500 requested.

5. Public Art Projects (*Notes of the Informal Community Services Committee Meeting 11 May 2022 – Item 5*)

Potley Community Arts Project – The Community Services Officer (Arts) updated the Committee on the Potley Community Arts Project. An interview panel comprising of Cllrs Abbott, Crockford and Farmer, alongside the Chief Executive and Community Services Officer (Arts), had met with the three groups of artists who had expressed an interest in the project. Local artists Caroline Rudge and Rachel Heard, both of whom had worked with the Town Council previously and had wide experience of working with the community, had been invited to undertake the project. Next steps would see the contract being drawn up, timelines and budgets being finalised and introducing the artists to key stakeholders in the Potley/Corsham Rise area.

Work on the project would begin in August 2022, with a deadline of March 2024 for completion.

Public Art Commissioning – The Committee considered a report by the Community Services Officer (Arts) and Head of Community Services regarding the Town Council's Public Art Commissioning. The report proposed a change in the commissioning process, with the creation of a Public Art Task Group and the introduction of a simpler, tiered approach that would grade projects on a small, medium and large basis, with the Group having different levels of involvement depending on the scale of the project.

Cllrs Abbott, Crockford and Farmer had already expressed an interest in being members of the Task Group. The Head of Community Services would contact all other Councillors regarding their involvement. It was suggested that, depending on the location of public artworks, ward Members could still be consulted and involved in discussions without the need to join the Task Group. External stakeholders, such as The Pound's Visual Arts Officer and relevant experts from Bath Spa University, would also be invited to join the Task Group on a project-by-project basis.

The Committee was asked to:

- i) Support the recommendation that the commissioning process for public art projects be simplified and streamlined to allow a Town Council-led Public Art Task Group to develop and deliver a tiered approach, and
- ii) Support revising and updating the Town Council's current Public Arts Strategy to reflect the change, with a flowchart illustration created to explain the new process.

The Committee supported both recommendations.

Cross Keys – Following the support of the Committee for the changes to the Arts commissioning process, the first project for the new Task Group, once set up, would be to consider ideas for Cross Keys, including the suggestion that a permanent plinth be created at the site that could be used for temporary installations.

6. Summer Events 2022 (Notes of the Informal Community Services Committee Meeting 11 May 2022 – Item 6)

The Head of Community Services and Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) updated the Committee on the Town Council's summer events.

- i) Corgi and Platinum Jubilee Trails (30 April-12 June) – The Corgi Trail (featuring knitted corgis in shop/business windows) had seen 39 entries returned. The interactive Platinum Jubilee Trail, featuring QR codes in seven town centre shops, and run online by High Street Safari, had seen 228 players take part.
- ii) Summer Busking Saturdays – The Summer Busking Saturdays continued to be very successful and popular, supporting local musicians and encouraging people to visit/stay longer in the town on Saturday mornings. The busking would continue until the end of September. It was co-funded by the Town Council and Martingate.
- iii) Taste of Corsham (18 June) – While the poor weather had inevitably had an impact on the event, Taste of Corsham had still seen very good attendance from residents and visitors with a steady flow of people across the six-hour duration. At least six of the 23 stallholders had sold out and the feedback from all of them was very positive. Having buskers in the grounds of the Digital Mansion Corsham, with deckchairs available for those listening, had proved very popular. For various reasons, including staffing, there was less involvement from town centre retailers compared to previous years and this would be something to look at for 2023's event.
- iv) Summer Fete (9 July) – The Summer Fete had proved very successful, undoubtedly helped by the excellent weather on the day. It was thought that approximately 3,000 people+ attended across the four hours. Feedback from all the stallholders had been excellent, with many able to raise much-needed funds after the pandemic. There had been a good mix of activities to enjoy, with the flypast by the Hawker Hurricane of the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight a particular highlight. Given the queues, there was a suggestion that there should be more food stalls and an extra ice-cream van at 2024's Summer Fete.

The Committee asked that its thanks to Town Council staff for their hard work in putting on and running the Fete be noted.

- v) Summer Holiday Trails – Bug Hunt and Pokemon Trail – Two free trails were planned for the summer holidays, from 25 July-31 August. The first, supported by The Corsham Bookshop, was aimed at Under-7s and would involve finding 10

wooden bug toys in town centre businesses and shops. On returning their forms to the Town Hall, participants would receive a chocolate bee or ladybird (or an alternative sweet for those with intolerances/allergies) and a colouring sheet featuring bugs and bug-based facts. At the end of the holidays two winners, drawn at random from the entries, would each receive a book about bugs, donated by The Corsham Bookshop.

The Pokemon Trail, run in conjunction with Automattic Comics/The Corsham Toy Shop, was for Under-11s and would see 10 pictures of Pokemon characters in shop/business windows (different to those in the Bug Hunt). Completed forms would be returned to Automattic Comics, where they would be stamped, and recipients given a free pack of Pokemon cards. The forms would also feature a colouring picture on the back which, once completed, could be returned to the Town Hall for the chance to win a Pokemon-related prize in early September.

- vi) BMX Display (19 August) – Funded by the Town Council, RPM Display would be performing three, free BMX stunt displays at 1pm, 2pm and 3pm for families and young people to enjoy. Toogood Amusements would be bringing some of their smaller fairground rides and games and an ice-cream van was also booked.

Suggestions for other activities/attractions during the afternoon included boot camp sessions at the outdoor gym; a parkour demonstration; possible kickboxing display and an exhibition regarding the proposed improvements to the Town Council's BMX track.

- vii) Street Fair (10 September) – Bookings had already been received from 25 stallholders. Plans so far included free face-painting and balloon-modelling for children; Julian House attending with their fund-raising Smoothie bikes; Corsham Windband playing in Martingate and moving the main stage to the back garden of the Digital Mansion Corsham. Cllr Bush was planning activities at The Pound as part of the We Are The People project and was hoping to work with local people to design a choreographed 'flash mob' around the idea of inclusion.

The updates were noted.

7. StoryTown 2022

The Community Services Officer (Arts) updated the Committee on the work undertaken so far for this year's StoryTown, including events for the weekend of 15 and 16 October.

- An Arts Council England bid for £30,000 over three years had been submitted. The outcome should be known in early September, meaning that the StoryTown group was looking at a phased approach to workshops and events, depending on whether the funding was approved or not.
- The Gilbert and Sullivan event, an extension of last year's event at Corsham Court, was booked at Pound Arts for 7 October. The Pound would also host a family-friendly theatre production.
- Shakespeare Live would be bringing The Comedy of Errors to the Town Hall on 16 October.
- Corsham's Big Read was 'How to Stop Time' by Matt Haig.
- Ideas for workshops were being suggested by contributors, including free events at Corsham Library.
- There would be a 'fairy doorway' trail around the town centre, featuring little wooden doorways to be found at the front of shops and businesses.

- Theatre practitioner, writer and teacher Marnie Forbes-Eldridge would be collaborating with schools again.
- Writer Dawn Gorman was happy to run the previously very successful poetry competition again.
- Martin Hirst, of the Town Council's grounds staff, and his vintage motorbike would be involved in an event about the stories behind classic vehicles.
- Trees/books/nature in the landscape activities would be included in the programme of events.

Other ideas were invited. Cllr Bush suggested some more contemporary themes, including climate change and issues affecting young people.

The update was noted.

8. Tourism Update

The Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) updated the Committee on the work undertaken, including working with Visit Wiltshire; local advertising; updating the Visit Corsham website; meeting with Visit West to raise Corsham's profile within Bath/Bristol, and possible opportunities to link up with Bradford-on-Avon and Marlborough on tourism activities.

The three main areas of focus going forward would be dog-friendly tourism, green tourism and accessible tourism. The Committee was asked to consider a report on Canine Corsham – Making Corsham a Tourist Destination for Dog Owners. The Tourism and Events Officer explained that, as a result of the increase in dog-ownership during the pandemic, dog-friendly destinations were now seeing an increase in visitors and that there were various ways in which Corsham could benefit if the town's dog-friendly credentials were made more obvious. Ways of doing this could include creating a dedicated Canine Corsham page on the Visit Corsham website; having a Canine Corsham window sticker for those local businesses that allowed entry to all dogs and organising a photo shoot with local dogs and Guide dogs to use in tourism (and accessibility) campaigns.

Concerns were raised regarding a potential increase in dog mess and dogs off leads in the town, particularly on parts of the Corsham Court estate, but Members were reassured by the advice that would be included in printed material regarding using dog bins and keeping dogs under control. It was also hoped that a local vet practice could be encouraged to sponsor bags and dispensers. A suggestion was also made regarding the involvement of a local dog-training company, The Positive Pup, in working with residents, rather than visitors, on the importance of responsible dog-ownership.

The report was noted, and the Committee was happy to support the Canine Corsham project.

9. Business Support Update

The Committee reviewed a report from the Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) on the business support work undertaken. Highlights included:

- The ongoing positive reaction from retailers and local businesses to the two hours' free parking.
- An update on the Fiver Fest Campaign, which had proved extremely popular with local independent shops and businesses and a decision on whether to join the next national Fiver Fest, planned for October, would be made once feedback had been received.

The Committee was also asked for its views on changing the current red, white and blue bunting colour scheme – the bunting would need replacing after this summer – with peacock-coloured bunting. The cost implications of the change were very small, based on quotes received so far. Comments on the proposed change included ensuring the colours were contrasting to make them accessible to those with visual disabilities; asking whether it would be obvious enough, from just the colours, that the bunting represented Corsham's peacocks; the possibility of including a feather or 'eye' on each flag, although this might increase the production costs; whether it was possible to retain/replace the current bunting for times of national celebration, and whether it would be possible to obtain a mock-up of the proposed colours/bunting.

Given that the Committee agreed, in principle, to the proposed change, the Tourism and Events Officer would continue to research colours and costs for peacock-coloured bunting and report back to Councillors in due course.

10. Strategic Plan Actions for 2022-26

Further to recent Council meetings regarding the Town Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26, the Chief Executive delivered a presentation asking the Committee to consider the draft actions produced to deliver on the Strategic Plan's objectives, particularly those under the themes of Business and the Economy and Community Wellbeing.

The draft actions and initial timescales were agreed, with a request to bring the deadline for business surveys (Action: Carry out regular business surveys and act on the outcomes) forward from December 2023.

Councillors would continue to be consulted on the Strategic Plan at both Council and Committee meetings.

11. The Rhythm Practice Music Therapy

Will Lawton, of The Rhythm Practice, attended the meeting in support of a grant application from The Corsham School seeking funding for more music therapy sessions for its students. The Town Council already helps to fund, along with the Corsham Area Board's Local Youth Network (LYN), music therapy sessions for students at the school. The impact of the therapy on those students who take part, and the difference the change in their behaviour had had on their classmates, the wider school and their family lives, has been of huge benefit. To continue working with Will Lawton in 2022/23, supporting more one-to-one sessions and enabling some group work to take place, will cost the school £13,650. They were able to fund £6,000; an application had been made to the LYN for another £6,000 and the Town Council was being asked to fund the remaining £2,650.

The Committee agreed to approve the funding requested and felt it sensible to consider ring-fencing funding for The Corsham School's work with The Rhythm Practice within the Youth Activities budget for the next three years. Members were also interested to hear Will Lawton's plans to set up The Rhythm Practice as a Community Interest Company (CIC) and offered their support in helping him do so.

The meeting commenced online at 7.30pm and closed at 9.33pm. There was one member of the public present at the beginning of the meeting, and none at the end.