

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall
on Wednesday 6 November 2024**

- Present** Councillor N Farmer (Chair)
Councillors A Brown, A Jones and R Williams
- In Attendance** J Barefoot (Prospect Estate Community Defibrillator Group)
D Martin (Chief Executive)
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)
- In Attendance Online** Councillor T Bush (Committee Member)
Councillor D Jarman (Committee Member)
Councillor A White (Committee Member)

CS 42/24 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors R Munn and A Thomas.

CS 43/24 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 44/24 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

CS 45/24 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 11 September 2024.

There were none.

CS 46/24 Grant Applications

There were none for this meeting.

CS 47/24 Community Wellbeing Update (*Minute CS 33/24 and others*)

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's community wellbeing activities, including various visits undertaken by the Community Wellbeing Officer to groups and organisations including Hungerford House, Jamie's Farm and Wadswick Green; the free concert held at the Town Hall on 6 October 2024 to mark Silver Sunday (thanks were given to all involved, particularly the Community Wellbeing Officer), the National Day for Older People; the work of Corsham Foodbank, and the ongoing youth outreach work by The Rise Trust, including the use of the Open Blue Bus as a warm space for young people.

Cllr Brown explained the latest steps to support Corsham Youth Zone (CYZ) with its future governance and that it was looking likely that The Rise Trust would take on the running of CYZ in the coming months.

Having approved the Community Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2028 at its previous meeting, the Committee was asked to approve the associated Year One Action Plan. Comments on the Plan included emphasising communication and how we can encourage people to spread the word to others, and highlighting that public art and arts engagement is for the whole community.

Resolved

That, with the inclusion of the amends suggested, the Town Council's Community Wellbeing Strategy Year One Action Plan be approved.

The update was noted.

CS 48/24 Prospect Estate Community Defibrillator – Power Supply and Maintenance

At the Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 23 October 2024, it was agreed:

That Prospect Estate Community Defibrillator Group be awarded £750 towards a new pole and connection to an electric power supply to enable the existing defibrillator cabinet to be moved and connected. [This grant would be from Section 137 funds.]

As the funding would come from the Community Services budget, the Committee was asked to consider the issues arising from the proposal to connect the frost-proof defibrillator cabinet to a mains supply.

- i) The energy supplier was not willing to enter into an agreement with the local group but was happy to have an agreement with the Town Council. In turn the group was happy to reimburse the Town Council for the costs (£8-£10 per year).
- ii) Should the column to which the cabinet is attached be damaged, those working on it require specific authorisation. A general electrician would not be permitted to do the work. Wiltshire Council's contractor, AtkinsRealis, has suggested such work goes through the Town Council, then Wiltshire Council contracts for the repair. Again, the group would reimburse the Town Council for the costs.

This was the first instance of the Town Council being requested to take responsibility for energy costs and repairs/maintenance of a defibrillator other than its own equipment.

Julian Barefoot, from the Prospect Estate Community Defibrillator Group, attended the meeting and reiterated that, with the energy supplier only prepared to work with the Town Council under a Letter of Authority, the Group would reimburse the Town Council for any costs incurred.

Resolved

That the Committee agreed to the request to take on the responsibility for the energy costs and repairs/maintenance for the Prospect Estate defibrillator which would then be reimbursed by the Prospect Estate Community Defibrillator Group.

CS 49/24 Corsham – An Age-friendly Community (Minute CS 34/24)

Cllr Brown and the Head of Community Services updated the Committee on the latest steps towards Corsham becoming an Age-friendly Community. An Age-friendly Community sees older residents (age 50+) engaged in shaping the place where they live, meaning that local groups, the Town Council, businesses and

residents all work together to identify and make changes in both the physical and social environment.

The Head of Community Services and Community Services Officer – Community Wellbeing had drawn up a baseline assessment of the relevant work already being done in Corsham which had been shared at a meeting of the members of the Town Council’s Age-Friendly Group on 30 September. The next step would be to undertake a widescale survey, due to be launched in January 2025. This was being created with help and support from the Centre for Ageing Better, which was looking for towns to help them trial a template survey that could then be shared with others in the network.

The update was noted.

CS 50/24 StoryTown (*Minute CS 35/24 and others*)

The Committee was updated on the progress of the ‘Story of the High Street’ project, being run for the Town Council by Bath Spa University’s Story Associate, Jenny Hulme. The stories, facts and information from the project were now being added to the Town Council’s website (predominantly funded by Bath Spa University’s Story Arcs project).

Discussions had begun with previous StoryTown contributors Matthew Tett and Marnie Forbes-Eldridge for projects to run in 2025. It was likely that the short story competition, organised by Matthew Tett, would be linked to the Town Council’s 25th anniversary, and would be open to adults this time as well as young people. Marnie Forbes-Eldridge’s initial proposal involved bringing local children’s authors into schools and youth groups. It was hoped that Marnie’s project may connect with the installation of a memorial tree and ‘storytelling’ bench due to be installed at Meriton Rec by local residents.

The update was noted.

CS 51/24 Public Art Projects (*Minute CS 36/24 and others*)

The Head of Community Services delivered an update from the Arts Officer on the Town Council’s various public art projects.

PACT - Issues regarding checking the utilities running under the site were now resolved, and a new, cheaper quote for a plinth for the finished artwork meant that the project could now move forward. It was still hoped that installation would happen this year.

Cross Keys Sheep - The Committee was also updated on the second sheep for the Cross Keys junction, which was currently being painted by pupils at The Corsham School. A third sheep had been ordered and this was due to go to Neston Primary School.

Michael Pennie – The Town Council has been offered the opportunity to display a number of items created by sculptor Michael Pennie, who had strong Corsham links as both a teacher at the Bath Academy of Art when it was based in the town and a lecturer at Bath Spa University. Following early discussions, it has been agreed that the Town Council will fund a feasibility study, to be undertaken by Claire Todd, Pound Arts’ Visual Arts Coordinator, which will look at the most suitable pieces to use, safe and secure locations, which items may need repair/weatherproofing, etc. It was hoped that links could also be made with the Peacock Arts Trail (October 2025) and local businesses.

The update was noted.

CS 52/24 Public Art Sites – Priority List (*Minute CS 37/24 and others*)

At the Community Services Committee Meeting on 11 September 2024, it was suggested that the Public Arts Task Group, on behalf of the Town Council, should consider the Public Art Sites – Priority List and make a decision on what the next priority sites should be. Given the work now being undertaken regarding the installation of works by Michael Pennie (*Minute CS 51/24*), revision of the list at this time would be dictated by finding appropriate sites for his work.

The update was noted.

CS 53/24 Events Update (*Minute CS 39/24 and others*)

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's upcoming Christmas events.

i) Wishing Tree (30 November 2024)

The annual Wishing Tree event would have to take place in the Chapel Garden - between Co-op and Grounded - this year, from 10am-1pm, using the tree at that site. (There was no room on the High Street, due to the hotel building works, to have a tree in the usual place.) Posters had been produced and would be shared over the coming weeks, particularly in the local primary schools. The Corsham and Colerne Military Wives Choir would also be performing.

ii) Christmas Lights Switch On (6 December 2024)

The road closure and permission to erect the lights across the highway had been applied for; Father Christmas had been booked; Corsham Windband, the Rock Choir and a Community School Choir, involving children from Heywood Prep and Corsham Regis, were due to perform; local band Pipe Dream would play on the stage at the Town Hall from 6pm onwards, with singer Sophie Ross (booked by Pound Arts) playing pre the lights going on; 30 stallholders were booked to attend the Christmas Market; the Christmas Shop Window Competition theme would be 'Christmas Pantomimes' and judged on 4 December; and the Design a Christmas Card Competition was underway, with local author and book illustrator Anna Currey ready to judge the entries on 19 November.

The Christmas lights were due to be installed w/c 18 November. It was hoped that the works at Lloyds Bank would still allow for the lights to be strung from the building but, if that was not possible (and it was looking unlikely), only a small part of the High Street would be without lights.

The update was noted.

CS 54/24 Business Support Update (*Minute CS 41/24 and others*)

The Head of Community Services and Cllr Jarman updated the Committee on the Business Breakfast held at Hartham Park on 1 October 2024. The presentations included a welcome from the Hartham Park Estate team and a speech from Sarah Gibson, MP for the Chippenham constituency, who wanted to know what mattered to local businesses. Cllr Jarman ran a survey to establish what type of business events attendees would like to see in the future. As a result, work was underway to pilot a 'Business Leaders Supper Club' for up to 12 businesses at the end of November, and to hold a 'Storytelling for Businesses' workshop after the next Business Breakfast, at Digital Mansion Corsham, on 29 January 2025. Thanks to contacts made at October's Business Breakfast, it was hoped to hold the following Business Breakfast at Wadswick Green in April.

The update was noted.

CS 55/24 Community Services Budget 2025/26

The Committee was asked to consider the draft proposals for the Community Services budget for the next financial year.

The Chief Executive reported that, as well as the allocated budget for 2025/26, there was approximately £54,000 in Earmarked Reserves allocated to Community Services budget streams and projects, as well as funding within the Strategic Plan budget.

The Committee felt that any reduction in the Community Services budget that could be undertaken would help towards reducing the predicted Precept increase, with particular focus on the funds allocated towards the Town Council's newsletter for 2025/26.

Resolved

That, with a reduced allocation of funds for the Town Council's newsletter, the draft proposals for the Community Services budget for 2025/26 be supported.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.37pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIR

DATE