

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall  
on Wednesday 17 January 2024**

**Present** Councillor A Brown (in the Chair)  
Councillors D Jarman, A Thomas

**In Attendance** Mrs S Leigh (Community Services Officer – Arts)  
Miss C Phillips (Community Services Officer – Tourism and Events)  
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)

**In Attendance Online** Cllr T Bush (Committee Member)  
Cllr A White (Committee Member)

**CS 46/23 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillors N Farmer and R Williams.

**CS 47/23 Public Question Time and Petitions**

There were none.

**CS 48/23 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**CS 49/23 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held  
on 22 November 2024**

***Christmas in Corsham Update (Minute CS 44/23)***

Cllr Brown asked that the Committee's thanks to the Town Council's Officers and Grounds Team, for their hard work in delivering the various Christmas projects and events, be recorded in the Minutes.

**CS 50/23 Grant Applications**

There were none for this meeting.

**CS 51/23 Community Wellbeing Update (*Minute CS 40/23, 34/23 and others*)**

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's community wellbeing activities, including Corsham Community Club's temporary relocation to the Town Hall on three dates in February/March while Springfield Community Campus is unavailable; the use of the Open Blue Bus as a six-week trial warm space for the young people The Rise Trust meet on Wednesday evenings in Corsham, funded by the Town Council and based outside the Campus; The Rise Trust-run baby massage course for the families the charity supports in Corsham proved very popular and will be repeated in the spring; the new Boyz-2-Men course aimed at teenage boys to promote positive masculinity and challenge the issue of

online influencers planned by Richard Pomfrett (Stay Safe Initiative) due to run at The Corsham School; the mini roadshow organised by the Community Wellbeing Officer with Warm and Safe Wiltshire which will be visiting various locations in Corsham and providing outreach support, information and guidance to anyone struggling with the cost-of-living crisis; Age-friendly Communities, an initiative from the Centre for Ageing Better, and Street Tag, which is due to launch on 29 January across Wiltshire with the aim of encouraging more people to become physically active.

The Committee was also updated, by Cllr Bush, on the Deaf/Disabled People's Organisation, Same Difference. The group was planning to meet on the third Monday of each month at the Town Hall, with February's meeting scheduled to be an open meeting to which anyone could come. The Committee was hoping to take part in the Deaf Awareness Training currently being researched by the Head of Community Services.

The update was noted.

## **CS 52/23 Public Art Projects (*Minutes CS 41/23 and others*)**

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's various public art projects.

### **i) Potley and Portland Rise Art Community Project (PACT) and Brunel Shed Container Project**

**PACT** - Following a site meeting in November, with representatives from both Wiltshire Council's Estates and Highways teams, neither of whom could foresee any problems with the location of the finished artwork on the green area alongside Tramways, there had been no further update or agreement from Wiltshire Council. The Community Services Officer (Arts) had asked Cllr Belcher, as the Wiltshire Councillor for that area, to find out what the situation was and what was needed to move the project on.

**Brunel Shed Container Project** - Graffiti artist Baz Hurlow, following a site meeting with the Community Services Officer (Arts) and Rodney Veazey, Chairman of The Brunel Shed, had taken on the project to paint the Shed's storage shipping container, funded by the Town Council. Baz had created an initial plan but would now consult with the local community before finalising a design for Brunel Shed/Town Council approval. The aim was to paint the container in the spring.

### **ii) Cross Keys Plinth**

Jonny Sander's 'Cotswold Sheep' project was moving forward. A commissioning brief had been sent to Jonny and it was hoped that work could now begin on the creation of the maquette. It had been suggested that either Corsham Youth Zone or The Corsham School would decorate the first sheep as the older age group would be better able to identify any issues and give feedback for future versions of the sheep compared to primary school children. An artist was being sought to work with the schools on the designs/paintings as Jonny Sanders is unwilling to undertake that element of the project. It was hoped that, by the next meeting, the project would have moved forward enough to be able to get a better idea of timings for the painting, and installation, of the first sheep.

### **iii) The Prayer**

Sculptor Iain Cotton was hoping to start work on the low plinth for The Prayer in late January/early February as well as reviewing the wording for the plaque. An unveiling ceremony would take place at The Pound Arts Centre's Community Garden in due course.

The update was noted.

## **CS 53/23 StoryTown**

The Committee was updated on the progress of the various StoryTown projects being undertaken in connection with the themes of the Town Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

The Environment and Climate Change theme was covered by a children's short story competition being run until 31 January 2024 by former StoryTown Co-ordinator Matthew Tett. The Environment theme also featured in the 'Seeds of the Future' work that Marnie Forbes-Eldridge was planning to run with local schools in the spring.

The Community Wellbeing theme would be covered by the proposal suggested by writer Dawn Gorman, who was hoping to work on projects in Corsham's care homes, starting with Jargeau Court and Holton House, and linked to the residents' working lives. It was hoped that there would be an intergenerational element to this project.

Business and Economy would be linked to the 'Story of the High Street' project, with a Story Associate, funded by Bath Spa University's Story Arcs initiative, interviewing town centre retailers and business owners, customers, landlords, etc. It was hoped that the stories created could be used in a number of ways, including to promote the town; as a means of gathering feedback on the state of retail locally; as a historical record and as a legacy project, given that the resulting stories would be hosted on the StoryTown and Town Council websites.

It was hoped that journalist Jenny Hulme, our Story Associate, would be able to start the project in January and be available to give an update to the Committee at its meeting in March.

The update was noted.

## **CS 54/23 Business Support Update (*Minute CS 43/23 and others*)**

The Committee was updated on the work being done to support local businesses.

### **i) Business Networking Events**

The latest Business Leader's Breakfast would take place at The Pound Arts Centre on Friday 19 January 2024, 8-10am, with a theme of 'Creative Habits for 2024'. The Pound would also have the opportunity to promote their facilities and focus on how businesses could support them. The Pound Café would supply the food and drinks. Thirty-seven business representatives had so far booked for the free event.

### **ii) Retail Map**

Work on the interactive version of the retail map was continuing. The online version would incorporate photographs or logos of the businesses, a brief description and links to a website or Facebook page. The Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) had discussed the project in detail with the Town Council's web developers and was in the process of creating content for the 109 businesses featured on the map.

The update was noted.

## **CS 55/23 Corsham Market**

The Chief Executive and Head of Community Services had met with Wiltshire Council's Markets Officer to discuss the weekly Corsham Market, run by Wiltshire Council and held in the Newlands Road car park. The market had dwindled to one or two stalls and there were some weeks with no stalls at all. No comments or complaints had been received, however, from residents or visitors about the market which seemed to indicate a lack of local interest in its continuation.

The Markets Officer had explained that markets across the county were struggling for many reasons, including the increase in online shopping; the cost-of-living crisis; the hard work involved in running a stall and traditional market families leaving the sector. The only two markets in Wiltshire running successfully were Salisbury and Devizes.

The Head of Community Services had received enquiries from two event companies, both of whom were interested in holding a general market in Corsham. It was felt that these markets had the potential to impact the town centre businesses and dilute the events run by the Town Council and others, such as the monthly Corsham Creative Market.

**Resolved:** That, while the current weekly market was potentially at the end of its natural life, it should not be replaced by alternative markets over which the Town Council would have no control and that had the potential to adversely impact local businesses and established events.

### **CS 56/23 Events Update (*Minutes CS 44/23, 33/23 and others*)**

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

#### **i) Wishing Tree (25 November 2023)**

The annual Wishing Tree event this year featured live music from the Corsham and Colerne Military Wives Choir, and collection of monetary donations for Corsham Foodbank and the Skatepark project. It proved as popular as ever with over 100 wishes being taken and hung on the tree. The event was also used to promote the Town Council's Transport Plan Survey.

#### **ii) Christmas Lights Switch On (1 December 2023)**

The Switch On went very well. Following on from the trial earlier start in 2022, the Christmas Market again started at 3pm, with 34 stalls booked for this part of the event. St John Ambulance provided First Aid support. The balloon modeller and fairground rides proved very popular, as did Father Christmas, who had a long queue of children and families waiting to see him. The Rock Choir (4-5pm) and Corsham Windband (5-7pm) played at the busking spot, while folk duo Fly Yeti Fly opened proceedings on the Town Hall stage before the lights were switched on at 6pm. Local band The Real Imposters played for the second half of the evening.

The very cold temperatures meant most people started to leave by 7pm, but the feedback received from residents, stallholders and those who took part was excellent.

#### **iii) Eco Fair (20 April 2024)**

The Community Services team was again supporting the Environmental Project Officer, the Town Council's Environmental Task Group and Corsham Climate Action (CCA) in the organising and running of the Eco Fair. Ten stalls had already booked for the event, which takes place in the pedestrian area of the High Street (no road closure) and the car park at Digital Mansion Corsham. Local businesses, such as Spindles and Green Ginger, were expected to have stalls outside their shops as in previous years. A meeting was due to be held with CCA to discuss their involvement.

#### **iv) Summer Busking Saturdays (4 May-28 September 2024)**

Given the popularity of last year's Summer Busking Saturdays, and the response from businesses, residents and visitors, these would be taking place again this year. The Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) would be contacting musicians in February/March to gauge their availability and schedule performances. It was anticipated that Martingate would be happy to co-fund the project again.

**v) Taste of Corsham (15 June 2024)**

Planning for this year's food festival had begun, with booking forms sent out to previous stallholders. Three had already booked pitches.

The update was noted.

**CS 57/23 Corsham Parish/Town Council 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Becoming a Town Council**

Further to the Council meeting on 8 January 2024, the Committee was asked to deal with the details of any events or celebrations relating to the 130<sup>th</sup> and/or 25<sup>th</sup> anniversaries. Suggestions put forward at the Council meeting included: using the activity to increase community engagement; asking for views on what Corsham might be like in another 20/25 years; involving children and seeing their views/vision and holding an open day at the Town Hall.

The Community Services Committee particularly liked the idea of engaging schools and the discussion of what the future might look like in Corsham. It was felt looking ahead 20 years, to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, would work well, possibly with children creating news headlines for the future, which could then be displayed at the Town Hall and used to lead a discussion with a parent audience. The headlines could also be used to create a time capsule.

It was suggested that a Working Group of Councillors be set up to discuss the ideas in more detail, with this being added to the list of Committee Appointments for Councillors, ahead of May's Annual Council Meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.15pm. There were no members of the public present.

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CHAIR

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DATE