

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall  
on Wednesday 17 May 2023**

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

**In Attendance** Ms R Heard (Potley and Portland Rise Art Community Project)  
Ms S Leigh (Community Services Officer (Arts))  
Ms C Rudge (Potley and Portland Rise Art Community Project)  
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)  
Mrs T Walpole (Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events))

**In Attendance Online** Councillor A Mackie

**CS 01/23 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs G McCaffery, A Thomas and R Williams.

**CS 02/23 Public Question Time and Petitions**

There were none.

**CS 03/22 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 D Jarman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 – Public Art Projects, given his links to the Peacock Arts Trail, as his wife is one of the organisers. He remained in the room during the discussion on the item.

**CS 04/23 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 15 March 2023**

There were none.

**CS 05/23 Grant Applications**

There were none for this meeting.

The Head of Community Services updated the Committee on the new budget arrangements for Community Services grants. Following a change in the Town Council's grants scheme, grants between £751 and £2,000 for Youth Activities and Community Wellbeing projects would be considered by the Community Services Committee. (Grant requests for all projects of £750 or under would be considered by the Finance and Administration Committee.)

Following discussions with the Chief Executive regarding 2023/24 budgets and the Earmarked Reserves (EMRs) available, it was suggested that £6,000 of the Community Wellbeing budget be allocated for grants, with the Community Wellbeing EMR (currently £20,888) being used to support Youth Activities grant applications. There would be no fixed figure on Youth Activities grants at this stage, allowing the Committee some flexibility. Other Town Council budgets, such as Creative Corsham and StoryTown, could be factored in as appropriate.

As applications would come to the Chief Executive and Head of Community Services prior to being included on the agenda, they would be able to suggest which budget would be most appropriate, should the Committee be minded to award a grant.

By the end of 2023/24, the Committee would have a better understanding of the kinds of projects needing funding, and their cost. This would also help decide on the allocation of distinct grant funding streams within the budgets for both Community Wellbeing and Youth Activities in 2024/25.

The Head of Community Services also reiterated that the funding stream for Corsham Youth Zone would move to Community Services' budgets in 2024/25.

The update was noted.

## **CS 06/23 Public Art Projects (*Minute CS 32/22 and others*)**

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

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

Artists Rachel Heard and Caroline Rudge, commissioned by the Town Council to run the PACT project, attended the meeting to give an update. The main points were:

- A PACT booklet, explaining the project, along with art activities, had been delivered to every household within the Potley and Portland Rise area.
- Meet and Greet Sessions at both sites, a workshop at The Pound and Nature Walks around Pockeredge Drive and the lakes, had already taken place. The Meet and Greet sessions were well-attended although the workshop at The Pound only had three people, but with two people from Portland Rise and one from Potley, a link between the communities was made. The Nature Walk was popular and featured two hours of drawing, sketching and wildlife watching.
- There had been a very positive reaction from those engaging in the project.
- As ideas were suggested and discussed, they were collated. Popular current ideas were something based around deer and the oak trees in the area.
- It was hoped that 'champions' for the project from both sites would encourage others to get involved.
- Painting a design on the shipping container used for storage at The Brunel Shed could be factored into the project if people felt that was appropriate. If not, it could be a separate project, as could revamping the long-established mural.
- As ideas developed, it was felt that having prototypes or examples could help those not currently engaging to better envision the plans and potentially get more involved.
- Youth engagement was proving difficult, but it was suggested that PACT could link up with the Peacock Arts Trail plans to run workshops for young people at Corsham Youth Zone.

The Committee thanked Rachel Heard and Caroline Rudge for attending. They both then left the meeting.

**ii) Cross Keys Plinth**

The Community Services Officer (Arts) explained that work on the plinth had been slightly delayed due to investigations being required about possible utility wiring under the proposed site. Depending on where the wiring ran, it would be possible to alter the location of the plinth to avoid it. While everyone was hopeful that the plinth would be ready in time for Pound Arts' Blue Sky Festival, it was looking less likely. Should it be ready, Pound Arts were planning to place a large model of Gromit, from Aardman's *Wallace & Gromit* films, on the plinth. The link between Gromit and Blue Sky was the Aardman model making workshops running as part of the festival. There were some concerns about how the link would be made obvious to drivers and passers-by. The Head of Community Services would raise those concerns with the team at The Pound and, if the plinth would be ready in time to host Gromit, would feedback the response to the Committee.

Other potential sources of artworks were discussed, including Bath Spa University's collection of sculptures which could be factored into the rolling programme of pieces on display on the plinth.

**iii) Peacock Arts Trail (7-15 October 2023)**

The Town Council would be hosting two artists in the Main Hall, alongside the entries in the Youth Art Competition. It was hoped that Peacock Arts would also be running workshops with Corsham Youth Zone and work from that project would also be on display.

Cllr Bush raised the question of support (eg reduced fees for joining the Trail) and exhibition space for disabled artists. The Community Services Officer (Arts) would raise this with the Arts Trail organisers.

**iv) The Prayer**

Discussions had taken place at the previous Community Services Committee meeting regarding relocating the sculpture *The Prayer* by Iain Cotton from Springfield Community Campus to the Community Garden. As part of the relocation, Iain Cotton had proposed hand-carving an inscription into the plinth at a cost of over £2,000, which the Committee had dismissed as too expensive. A revised price of £350 to design, manufacture and install a brass plaque, integrated into the design of the plinth, had been received and the Committee was happy to accept this.

The update was noted.

**CS 07/23 The Future of StoryTown**

Following feedback on 2022's weekend festival and a SWOT analysis of StoryTown's status after five years of activity undertaken by the Chair of Community Services and Officers, it was recommended that StoryTown become a community engagement tool for the Town Council, to help in the delivery of the Strategic Plan (2022-2026). The Head of Community Services had produced a report on this, along with suggestions for projects for 2023/24.

Comments included a need to curate, collect and host the work created by the projects on the Town Council's website, with a link to the work on the stand-alone StoryTown website. Information could also be shared via the Town Council's newsletter and noticeboards.

**Resolved:**

That the StoryTown concept be relaunched as a community engagement tool for the Town Council to help in the delivery of the Strategic Plan (2022-2026), and that the suggested projects for 2023/24 be approved.

**CS 08/23 Creative Corsham Strategy (2022-2027) Year One Action Plan (*Minute CS 33/22*)**

Following approval of the new Creative Corsham Strategy (2022-2027) at the Community Services Committee meeting held on 15 March 2023, the Head of Community Services had prepared a Year One Action Plan, based on the objectives in the Strategy.

It was suggested that qualitative research could also be a part of the monitoring and evaluation of projects, with two or three stock questions - which need not necessarily be relevant to the event/project each time - asked when possible and appropriate. These could focus on civic pride, sense of enjoyment, etc. This suggestion would be incorporated into the Plan.

**Resolved:**

That the Creative Corsham Strategy (2022-2027) Year One Action Plan be approved.

**CS 09/23 Business Support Update (*Minute CS 34/22 and others*)**

The Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) reported on the work being done to support local businesses.

**i) Fiver Fest**

The appetite among retailers for Fiver Fest (running a special £5 offer over a specific fortnight) had diminished to the point where it was felt that taking part again should be reviewed, particularly in light of the increase in cost to take part as a town, which was now £250. The next national Fiver Fest was due to take place in June but it was decided not to take part and review the situation later in the year. It was felt that there was potential for the Town Council to do something along similar lines.

**ii) Business Networking Event**

Following two very successful Business Breakfast events, it had been decided to hold a Business Leaders Lunch at the Digital Mansion Corsham on Friday 9 June, 12-2pm. It had always been an aim to offer a variety of timings for these events to make them accessible to as many businesses as possible. This time the focus would be on staff and, in particular, staff wellbeing with guest speakers talking about recruiting and retaining staff and psychological safety.

Ticket sales had been slower for this event, with 12 taken so far, but further promotion and advertising would take place and, as with the Business Breakfasts, it was likely that a number of people would turn up on the day.

**iii) Business Health Survey**

The original deadline for the Business Health Survey had been extended from the end of April, when there had been four responses, to 19 May 2023. The numbers had increased to 14 with two days to go. Once the closing date had been reached, the data would be analysed and decisions made on how the Town Council should respond to the results.

**iv) Retail Map**

The new town centre map was now ready. Once the noticeboards had been refurbished, copies of the map would be installed. The aim was to have this done by the summer. An interactive version of the map was being produced for the website.

The update was noted.

**CS 10/23 Events Update (*Minute CS 35/22 and others*)**

The Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) reported on the Town Council's various events.

**i) Kids' Clean Up (1 April 2023)**

Unfortunately, due to the appalling weather on 1 April, very few families attended the Clean Up at Springfield Rec. Those that did were supported by members of Corsham Climate Action.

**ii) Easter Trail (1-26 April 2023)**

The Easter Holiday Bug Trail (which ran for longer than usual to coincide with the Eco Fair) had 10 wooden bugs hidden in shop windows. In total 39 entries were returned, with those bringing back completed forms receiving sunflower seeds and instructions on how to make a bee hotel, as well as sweets. The Trail was sponsored by Nature Nurture Kids, with a kit from the company as the main prize.

**iii) Eco Fair (22 April 2023)**

The Eco Fair, organised together with the Environmental Project Officer, had received excellent feedback from stallholders and visitors alike. The Recycling Quiz, Crafty Workshop and Seed Swap at The Three Brewers and the Spring Stroll and Creative Mapping Workshop at The Pound had all added to the activities on the day. There had been some last-minute stall cancellations which meant the area at the Digital Mansion Corsham was quieter than hoped, but those stallholders who did attend were very happy with the support they received and a number were keen to come to other Town Council events. From conversations with attendees it did appear that there were some first-time visitors to Corsham who had come specifically for the Eco Fair. Overall, it was felt the event was very successful and there was much to build on for 2024.

**iv) Summer Busking Saturdays (6 May-30 September)**

All the performance slots for the Summer Busking Saturdays were now filled.

**v) Taste of Corsham (17 June 2023)**

Twenty-five stalls were booked for the food festival, including newcomers Siam Street Food and The Greatest Little Coffee Box on Earth. The musical entertainment, which would be in the grounds of the Digital Mansion Corsham, had been sourced by The Pound as part of their Blue Sky Festival. Children's activities would include face-painting and arts activities, and the Taste Trail would return. As only six Councillors had offered to help so far, another email would be sent asking for support on the day.

**vi) Summer Trails (dates tbc)**

The Pokemon Trail and another trail for younger children would run again, given their success last year. The details had yet to be finalised, but the trails would run in conjunction with Automattic Comics/The Corsham Toy Shop.

A new Back to School Trail would also run later in the summer. Building on an idea from Martingate-based retailer If The Shoe Fits, the plan would be to link all those businesses who could support families with their 'back to school' shopping, and

potentially include the cafes and restaurants with a coffee and cake offer. The team at The Sweetpea Kitchen at Hartham Park were also keen to link up with town centre events and were hoping to run a children's lunch bag, or free lunch, offer as part of the trail.

**vii) Street Fair (9 September 2023)**

The early plans for the Street Fair were going well, with 24 stalls already booked. Musical acts were being sorted, and additional buskers would be invited to perform.

The update was noted.

**CS 11/23 Coronation of King Charles III (*Minute CS 36/22 and others*)**

The Head of Community Services and Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) reported on the Coronation activities run by the Town Council. Unfortunately, the arts-based activities (Poem for Corsham, Portrait of the King, Design a Flag) to mark the Coronation received very few entries: nine poems, one portrait and no entries at all for Design a Flag. These had been widely promoted, with details sent to all the schools, and posters and information in the noticeboards and on the Town Council website and social media. Given there were only 10 entries in total, it had been decided to give all the entrants a prize.

The first of the Summer Busking Saturdays launched with three musicians playing 'for the King', despite the heavy rain and The Pound Arts Centre's live screening of the event, part-funded by the Town Council, went very well.

The Crown Trail (1-10 May) for children, with wooden crowns to spot in shop windows, had 10 entries. The bad weather on the Coronation weekend, and the fact that the trail ran outside of a school holiday period, were reasons for the low number.

On 5 May, in a joint initiative between Wiltshire Council, Celebrating Age and the Town Council, the free Big Coronation Tea Party for seniors in the Corsham community area, took place at Springfield Campus from 1.30-4pm. Around 100 older/vulnerable people enjoyed 'afternoon tea' style food, the North Swindon Big Band and poet Jonny Fluffypunk creating a special poem about the day, with input from all those who attended. Local schoolchildren were on hand to serve the tea and encouraged people to get up and dance at the end. Transport to the party was supplied courtesy of the local Link schemes.

On 8 May, The Great Big Help Out took place as part of the Coronation celebrations, promoting volunteering within local communities. Corsham Climate Action held a litter pick and an event at the Community Garden. Information on these events, and other opportunities, was collated and promoted on social media and included in a newly created Volunteering section on the Town Council's website.

The update was noted.

**CS 12/23 Tourism Update (*Minute CS 37/22 and others*)**

The Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) updated the Committee on the recent tourism work undertaken. There had been a focus on adverts promoting group travel, with ads placed with *Coach Tours UK* and *Group Travel World* magazines. A group of 24 ladies visited Corsham for the day on 20 April and enjoyed a tour of Corsham Court, lunch, and a guided tour around the town, courtesy of the Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events), ending at the Town Hall with the photos of the Poldark filming.

The Canine Corsham campaign would launch in time for the summer, with a new page on the Visit Corsham website and associated promotion to encourage dog owners to the town for walks and the services on offer (dog friendly shops, eating places, etc). The project had been delayed due to the availability of the photographer for the photo shoot, and arranging

sponsorship among the town centre vets, but it was hoped that Canine Corsham would be ready in June.

The report was noted.

**CS 13/23 Corsham in Bloom**

The Head of Community Services explained the plans for this year's Corsham in Bloom. The competitions would run as in previous years, but with a proposed change to the Best School criteria, making it more about environmental projects within the schools rather than primarily being about the look of the school grounds. The Environmental Task Group would be asked for their help with this, with members of the group possibly acting as judges.

The update was noted.

**CS 14/23 Community Wellbeing Update (CS 30/22 and others)**

The Committee was updated, via a written report, on the recent work undertaken by the Community Services Officer (Community Wellbeing) and the Town Council's Community Wellbeing Working Group, focussing on families, older/vulnerable people and young people. Upcoming work would concentrate on social prescribing and the impact of this on local health initiatives.

During the discussion that followed points raised included: the plans to try and launch a Therapy Dogs project in Corsham; concerns about the foodbank's decreasing supplies given the increasing calls on its services and how this could be addressed (the Foodbank would be having a stall at Taste of Corsham, with stallholders and visitors encouraged to bring donations) and the ongoing work of the 3Cs lunch club, Corsham Youth Zone and The RISE Trust.

The Make Space for Girls campaign was mentioned - [makespaceforgirls.co.uk](http://makespaceforgirls.co.uk) – which encourages organisations, including councils, to consider the needs of teenage girls when planning parks and open spaces. This would be shared with the Chief Executive and Head of Technical Services.

The report was noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 9.21pm. There were no members of the public present.

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CHAIR

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DATE