

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall
on Wednesday 20 March 2024**

Present Councillor N Farmer (Chair)
Councillors A Brown, A Thomas, R Williams

In Attendance A Docherty (Corsham Running Club)
Ms J Hulme (Story Associate, Story Arcs)
C Hunt (Corsham Running Club)
Miss S Hunt (Corsham Running Club)
Mrs S Leigh (Community Services Officer – Arts)
Miss C Phillips (Community Services Officer – Tourism and Events)
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)
Mrs K Viner (Corsham Community Club)

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

CS 58/23 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor G McCaffery.

CS 59/23 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 60/23 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

**CS 61/23 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting
held on 17 January 2024.**

There were none.

CS 62/23 Grant Applications

Two grant applications had been received.

- i) **Corsham Community Club** – The 3Cs lunch club for older/vulnerable people was seeking £800 towards a new fridge in the Brunel Room kitchen at Springfield Community Campus. Wiltshire Council and 3Cs had worked together on funding, improving and updating the facilities in the kitchen used fortnightly by the Club. It was agreed that 3Cs would seek funding for a new fridge and a serving/work table (which would also be available for other groups to use), with Wiltshire Council funding other improvements, such as a new dishwasher and taking responsibility for the upkeep of all the equipment. The amount sought was approximately one-third of the total cost.

The Committee agreed to the funding request.

Resolved: That the Corsham Community Club's application for a grant of £800 for a new fridge be approved.

- ii) **Corsham Running Club** – Corsham Running Club was looking to set up a Youth Section within the Club for 12-17-year-olds. The aim was to promote running among young people for fitness, socialising and general wellbeing. A sum of £1,680 (50% of the total) was requested. Other funding was being sought from Corsham Area Board and the Blue Spark Foundation.

The Committee was pleased to hear of the plans to set up a Youth Section for this age group, particularly in an Olympic year.

Resolved: The Corsham Running Club's application for a grant of £1,680 to cover setting up costs for a Youth Section be approved.

CS 63/23 Community Wellbeing Update (*Minute CS 51/23, 40/23 and others*)

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's community wellbeing activities, including the Warm and Safe Wiltshire community outreach work undertaken by Warm and Safe and the Community Wellbeing Officer; the RISE Trust's use of the Open Blue Bus as a warm space for young people on a Wednesday evening; Corsham Community Club using the Town Hall for three of its lunches in February/March as Springfield Community Campus was unavailable, with a Celebrating Age Wiltshire Silent Disco taking place at the lunch on 6 March. The Committee was also advised that the Corsham Community Area data from the latest Community Area Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (CAJSNA) was being analysed by Town Council Officers and discussed with local stakeholders. The findings would inform the Town Council's new Community Wellbeing Strategy, a draft of which would be brought to the Committee at its meeting in May.

The Committee was also updated, by Cllr Bush, on the progress of the Deaf/Disabled People's Organisation, Same Difference. The group had held a very powerful public meeting, where various items had been raised including issues with the properties in Smith's Yard which were being investigated by Cllrs Abbott and Brown. Cllr Bush also mentioned the article she had written for the March issue of *The Clerk* magazine on 'Transformational Inclusion'. It was agreed this would be shared with Committee members after the meeting, and with other Councillors via the Members Information Sheet.

The update was noted.

CS 64/23 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 had been covered by a children's short story competition run by former StoryTown Co-ordinator Matthew Tett. A celebration event for the winners and their families was due to be held at the Town Hall on 21 March. The Environment theme also featured in the 'Seeds of the Future' work that Marnie Forbes-Eldridge would be running with local schools in the spring, which would include a sharing event at Springfield Rec in June.

The Community Wellbeing theme saw the poet and author Dawn Gorman working with residents at Holton House and Jargeau Court to capture the memories of their working lives. Artefacts from Chippenham Museum had been used to encourage everyone to talk. It was also hoped that the Year 7s from The Corsham School would visit both sites in the summer term, adding an intergenerational element to the project.

The Business and Economy theme was linked to the 'Story of the High Street' project, with Bath Spa University's Story Associate, Jenny Hulme, attending the meeting to update the Committee. Jenny explained that she was in the process of approaching all the town centre businesses and had contacted 40 of them so far, with interviews with 20 booked for the next few weeks. Everyone she had spoken to was very enthusiastic and positive about the project and keen to be involved. Alongside this, she had done a lot of research on the history of Corsham's town centre, as well as looking at wider reports on the issues regarding retail shopping across the country.

As the project progressed, outcomes would become more obvious, although Jenny was already considering ways in which the stories could help to encourage more local residents to use the town and appreciate all it has to offer.

It was suggested that, as part of the project, local buskers from the Summer Busking Saturdays might also like to share their stories of performing in the town.

The update was noted.

CS 65/23 Corsham – An Age-friendly Community

Cllr Brown, the Chief Executive, Head of Community Services and Community Wellbeing Officer had attended an online meeting with the Centre for Ageing Better in January, with further information gathered at a subsequent webinar, regarding the process for Corsham to join the Age-friendly Communities Framework developed by the World Health Organisation. 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, for example transport, outdoor spaces, volunteering and employment, leisure and community services.

The first step in the process is for Full Council to make a written commitment to work actively towards Corsham becoming an Age-friendly Community. The Community Services Committee agreed to support the initiative and asked that the next Full Council meeting includes an agenda item regarding the Age-friendly Community status and the support required.

If Full Council agreed to support the work, a Steering Group would be set up and Councillors were asked to consider whether they would like to be Chair of this group.

Resolved: To request that Full Council be asked to approve the process of Corsham becoming an Age-friendly Community, with an agenda item included for the meeting to be held on 8 April 2024.

CS 66/23 Public Art Projects (*Minutes CS 52/23, 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 – Wiltshire Council had granted approval for the land by Tramways to transfer, under licence, to the Town Council, meaning that work could now go ahead on manufacturing the final 'portal' design. A maquette would be produced to trial on site and, despite the delays, the manufacturers chosen by the artists running PACT were still positive about the project.

Brunel Shed Container Project – The plans for graffiti artist Baz Hurlow to paint the Brunel Shed's storage shipping container were moving forward. Baz had created an initial plan which had been revised following initial comments from the Committee and others and would now consult with the local community before finalising a design for approval. The aim was to paint the container in the

spring with members of the Brunel Shed helping with the initial work. It was also hoped that a community noticeboard would be fixed to the container.

It was suggested that Baz should also try and get local young people involved in painting elements of the container.

ii) Cross Keys Plinth

Jonny Sander's 'Cotswold Sheep' project was moving forward. Jonny had created a maquette which was now with the mould maker so the first of the resin sheep could be produced, ready for The Corsham School students to paint it. In the interim, the maquette would be 'bronzed' and sited at Cross Keys.

A platform was being made to lift the sheep level with the top of the base plinth and a site visit was being arranged ahead of manufacture.

Images of the maquette would be circulated to Committee members and the Town Council's Public Art Task Group.

iii) The Prayer

The unveiling ceremony for The Prayer sculpture would take place at The Pound Arts Centre's Community Garden at 11am on Friday 3 May 2024. The Lord Lieutenant had been invited to unveil the sculpture, along with the Chair of Corsham Town Council.

iv) Art at the Heart of the RUH

The Arts Officer had been working with the Exhibition Manager at the Royal United Hospital in Bath on a possible exhibition involving a group of local artists. The artists would need to work together to bring together 30-50 pieces (1-2 artworks each, at a cost of £5 per artwork submission) that would then be curated by the RUH's Exhibition Manager. The original plan was for the exhibition to take place in late 2024 but due to another group pulling out, there was now an opportunity for Corsham's artists to exhibit at the hospital in May, for up to three months, with the opportunity to sell the work on display.

It was suggested that the Town Council should be credited on any literature produced and that, on its return to Corsham, the work should be exhibited locally.

The update was noted.

CS 67/23 Arts Survey 2024 and Creative Corsham Strategy Action Plan – Year Two (2024)

The data from the 21 responses (with 18 individual comments) to the recent Arts Survey was discussed. Although it was a low number of returns, the findings had been used to draw up new tasks for the Year Two Action Plan for the Creative Corsham Strategy. These were: reviewing and improving the Arts section on the Town Council and Visit Corsham websites; looking at where the Town Council could commission small projects, such as signage, allowing more local artists the opportunity to work with the Town Council, and offering support for disabled artists by facilitating links with Arts projects and businesses in the town and ensuring the Town Council's commissioning process was accessible to all.

The Committee was asked to approve the Year Two Action Plan.

Resolved: That the Creative Corsham Strategy Year Two (2024) Action Plan be approved.

A report on the Year One Action Plan was considered, with four of the tasks completed (Consolidating the Town's Grants Process; Support 2023's Peacock Arts Trail; Assess the Future of StoryTown and Survey of Artists) and four being incorporated into the Year Two Action Plan (Public Art Projects – Cross Keys and Corsham Rise (PACT); Creative

Activities at Town Council Events; Build on Creative Community Wellbeing Projects and Public Art Trail).

The report was noted.

CS 68/23 Business Support Update (Minute CS 56/23, 44/23 and others)

The Tourism and Events Officer updated Councillors on the Business Breakfast held at The Pound Arts Centre on 19 January 2024. The Breakfast had a theme of Creative Habits for 2024 and included presentations by The Pound's Creative Director Russ Tunney and Cllr Dave Jarman. Forty people had booked in advance with around 30 attending on the day. The event produced very positive feedback, with the change in venue being well received.

The next Business Breakfast would take place on Friday 26 April, 8-10am, at Digital Mansion Corsham, with a theme of 'Storytelling in Business'. Jenny Hulme, had agreed to give a short talk on the 'Story of the High Street' project.

The update was noted.

CS 69/23 Events Update (Minutes CS 56/23, 44/23, 33/23 and others)

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

i) Eco Fair (20 April 2024)

Twenty stalls were now booked, plus Spindles and Green Ginger were planning to have displays outside their shops. The stalls included crafts, food and drink and other goods, as well as organisations offering information, Corsham Police offering bike marking, and free children's activities, and these would be based on the pedestrian area of the High Street and in the car park of Digital Mansion Corsham. The Town Council's Environmental Task Group and Corsham Climate Action would both have stalls at the event.

The Pound was also involved, and additional activities would be available, including badge making, additional crafts and a 'Corsham and Nature' poster competition. The Three Brewers on Priory Street would be running a seed swap and junk modelling. A 'Letter Trail' around the stalls and venues would encourage visitors to go to all the locations, and the Town Council's annual Easter Trail, due to start on 23 March, would run up to the Eco Fair weekend. This year's Trail involved finding 10 crocheted bees (made by Little Gems, an Eco Fair stallholder) in shop windows.

It was suggested that the information on the event, and particularly the seed swap, be shared with allotment holders and that local businesses such as May's Greengrocers, Theodora's Flowers and Twigs and Willow might display a poster.

ii) Summer Busking Saturdays (4 May-28 September 2024)

There had been a very positive response from the buskers to this year's Summer Busking Saturdays with almost all dates filled. The project would again be co-funded by Martingate.

iii) Taste of Corsham (15 June 2024)

Planning for this year's food festival had begun, with 19 stalls already booked; the road closure applied for and St John Ambulance confirmed. The Pound's Blue Sky Festival, which had previously run in the week up to Taste of Corsham, was now taking place across the May half-term week but Russ Tunney, The Pound's Creative Director, was still happy to source performers/musicians for Taste of Corsham.

iv) Summer Fete (6 July 2024)

Planning for the Summer Fete was in the very early stages and Councillors were asked for their suggestions on activities that could be included. As it was hoped

that the Skate Park User Group, currently fundraising for the new skatepark, would hold a Skate Jam during the event, it was felt that running an event on the parkour or BMX track would also work well.

The update was noted.

CS 70/23 Social Media Update

The Tourism and Events Officer reported on the Town Council's various social media sites.

Corsham Town Council's Facebook page has 2,776 followers. The content on this page covers Town Council news; information from other clubs and organisations; business support; Wiltshire Council news; events, etc, and is aimed at those who live and work in Corsham. The Town Council's Instagram page has 889 followers and features similar posts but uses more visual content/photographs.

There has been an increase of 101 followers across the two sites since January.

The Town Council also has an inactive Twitter/X feed and a LinkedIn account and the value of both was being further investigated.

Visit Corsham has 1,256 followers on Facebook and 888 followers on Instagram. The content used across both is focused on encouraging visitors to the town so offers information on events, places to go and see, the retail offering, etc. In total, Visit Corsham has 2,144 followers across both sites; an increase of 95 since January.

The Tourism and Events Officer would produce a full report on Corsham Town Council/Visit Corsham social media activity, to include targets for the 2024/25 Council year, for May's Community Services Committee meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.44pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIR

DATE