

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall
on Wednesday 22 May 2024**

Present Councillor A Jones (in the Chair)
Councillors A Brown, R Munn

In Attendance Mrs S Emerson-Pink (Corsham Primary School)
Ms 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 Ms S Blandford (Corsham Windband Association)
Cllr T Bush (Committee Member)
Cllr A White (Committee Member)

CS 01/24 Apologies

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

CS 02/24 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 03/24 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

**CS 04/24 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting
held on 20 March 2024.**

There were none.

CS 05/24 Grant Applications

Two grant applications had been received.

- i) **Corsham Windband Association** – Corsham Windband Association (CWA) was seeking a total of £2,000: £1,500 towards repairing the 40 instruments used for the free lessons CWA runs in primary schools and £500 towards the cost of rent/storage space at The Pound Arts Centre (£500 of a £4,600 total). It was explained that the instruments had not been serviced since the lessons started post-pandemic and that a full service at this stage should last three years. The cost of rent and storage of some instruments, stands and music at The Pound had increased, hence the application for the £500 towards this cost.

The Committee agreed to the funding request.

Resolved: That Corsham Windband Association's application for a grant of £2,000 towards instrument repairs and rent/storage be approved.

- ii) **Corsham Primary School – Pound Pill** – Corsham Primary School was seeking £1,000 to improve its Forest School and outdoor learning provision at its Pound Pill site, and thus help the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils in all age groups. (Funding for the school’s Broadwood site was being sought elsewhere.)

The Committee was pleased to hear the children explain, via a video, how important outdoor learning was to them.

Resolved: That Corsham Primary School – Pound Pill’s application for a grant of £1,000 to improve its Forest School and outdoor learning provision be approved.

CS 06/24 Community Wellbeing Update (*Minute CS 63/23 and others*)

The Committee was updated on the Town Council’s community wellbeing activities, including visits to local groups and organisations such as Corsham Community Club, The Memory Shed and Corsham Foodbank by the Community Wellbeing Officer; the extension of The RISE Trust’s use of the Open Blue Bus as a space for young people on a Wednesday evening until the summer holidays; the launch of the Stay Safe Initiative’s Boyz2Men course at The Corsham School; the hope that, with five volunteers in Corsham, Dogs for could now start work with local social prescribers, and the plans to create a Community Wellbeing Strategy for the Town Council, a draft of which should be available for consideration at July’s Community Services Committee meeting.

The Committee was also updated, by Cllr Bush, on the progress of the Deaf/Disabled People’s Organisation, Same Difference. The group now had a bank account, which would enable them to apply for funding from various organisations and had decided to concentrate on being an information/peer support hub. Members would also look to undertake key training on relevant topics, such as benefits.

The update was noted.

CS 07/24 Corsham – An Age-friendly Community (*Minute 65/23*)

Cllr Brown and the Head of Community Services updated the Committee on the latest steps towards Corsham joining 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.

With approval by Full Council at its meeting on 8 April 2024, and the membership of the Age-friendly Steering Group having been decided at the Annual Council Meeting, a draft registration form has been submitted to the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities. A couple of small changes have been suggested and a meeting has been arranged to discuss the application, which Cllr Brown, the Chief Executive and Head of Community Services will attend. Following revisions, the application will be considered by the UK Network’s Steering Group on 5 June.

The update was noted.

CS 08/24 StoryTown (*Minute CS 64/23 and others*)

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.

- i) The Community Wellbeing theme had seen poet and author Dawn Gorman working with residents at Holton House and Jargeau Court to capture memories from their life stories. The transcripts had been turned into booklets for the residents who were delighted with the outcome, but reluctant for the books to be available to the wider public, which was entirely acceptable. It was suggested that the residents might be

happier for audio versions of their stories to be made public and this would be passed on to Dawn Gorman.

The project had been extended to cover a visit from The Corsham School's Year 7 History Club pupils. Both generations had enjoyed an afternoon looking at artefacts from Chippenham Museum. It was hoped that this project could be rolled out to care homes and other groups in the future.

- ii) 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 10 winners and their families had been held at the Town Hall on 21 March.

Matthew Tett's evaluation report on The Corsham Story Prize included some matters to be considered should it be decided to run the competition again. One of these was to investigate the possibility of opening the competition up to adults in the community, but it was felt that concentrating on getting more engagement from The Corsham School might be a better idea for this year.

- iii) The Environment theme also featured in the 'Seeds of the Future' work that Marnie Forbes-Eldridge had run with local schools in the spring, which included a display of work at the Town Hall. The schools would be invited to take part in a sharing event at Springfield Community Campus on 21 June. It was hoped 250+ children and staff would attend through the day and shared activities between the schools were already being planned.
- iv) The Business and Economy theme was linked to the 'Story of the High Street' project, with Bath Spa University's Story Associate, Jenny Hulme. This work was ongoing, with the transcripts from Jenny's first 40 interviews being transcribed. A more detailed update would be available at July's meeting and it may be possible to start to see what the outcomes from the project would be.

The update was noted.

CS 09/24 Public Art Projects (*Minute CS 66/23 and others*)

The Community Services Officer - Arts updated the Committee on the Town Council's various public art projects.

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

PACT – The project was moving into the final stages now that Wiltshire Council had granted approval for the land where the 'portal' would be sited, to be transferred to the Town Council under licence. A maquette would be produced to trial on site. There was some discussion, and clarification would be sought, as to whether the finished design would be embossed or cut into the metal.

A suggestion was made that a bench could be installed, allowing residents to spend some time in quiet reflection, looking through the 'portal' and down Pockeridge Drive. This may be something The Brunel Shed would be interested in making.

Brunel Shed Container Project – The plans for graffiti artist Baz Hurlow to paint the Brunel Shed's storage shipping container were moving forward and a site visit was due to be held on Saturday 25 May, with the Arts Officer, Rodney Veazey of The Brunel Shed and Baz Hurlow in attendance. On closer inspection, the shipping container needed more repairs due to age and weather damage than first thought, but it was felt these would be minor and not delay the work too much. The original design, featuring local wildlife, was still a popular option but the repairs may necessitate a review.

- ii) **Cross Keys Plinth**

The original plan for the 'bronze' maquette of Jonny Sander's 'Cotswold Sheep' to be installed on the plinth had changed slightly. The first sheep to be delivered would now be a white one, which would go to pupils at The Corsham School to decorate. This was

due to be delivered early in the summer term. The 'bronze' sheep would then follow. While delivering the sheep, the fabricator would also make a site visit to Cross Keys to ensure the frame planned for the sheep to stand on would work.

Comment was made that it was essential the Town Council deliver the project as soon as possible, particularly given the long delays following the cancellation of the original 'Peace Feathers' project and the attention the plinth had gained from local residents on its completion.

iii) **The Prayer**

The very well attended unveiling ceremony for The Prayer sculpture had taken place at The Pound Arts Centre's Community Garden on Friday 3 May 2024. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Stephanie Millward MBE, unveiled the sculpture, along with the Chair of Corsham Town Council. Iain Cotton, the sculptor, gave an entertaining speech about The Prayer and his time at Bath Academy of Art.

iv) **Art at the Heart of the RUH**

The Arts Officer had been working with the Exhibition Manager at the Royal United Hospital (RUH) in Bath and a group of local artists to deliver an exhibition of work at the hospital. Due to another group being unable to get their work together in time, the opportunity arose for the Corsham exhibition to take place much sooner than planned. The artists' work was now up along the walls of the ground floor, right-hand corridor of the hospital, just off the main entrance. Pieces of three-dimensional work had also been included. This was a selling opportunity for the artists, with the RUH taking a third in commission. The Exhibition Manager would also like to exhibit the larger pieces of work produced by some of the artists at the private Sulis Hospital Bath, part of the RUH NHS Foundation Trust.

The Committee thanked the Arts Officer for facilitating this project and raising the profile of Corsham's local artists.

The update was noted.

CS 10/245 Public Art Strategy 2024-2028

The Town Council's Public Art Strategy 2020-2024 had been revised and updated to cover the next four-year period.

Resolved: That the Public Art Strategy 2024-2028 be approved, on the proviso that:

- i) Wiltshire Council's new 2024-2030 Cultural Strategy be referenced in the document, and
- ii) Appendix 1 - Potential Public Art Sites be considered again at the Community Services Committee meeting in July, allowing Councillors the opportunity to reprioritise the sites, and consider the accessibility of the sites listed.

CS 11/04 The Pound Arts Centre

Following the email of 9 May 2024 from Cllr Farmer (Committee Chair and the Town Council's Pound Arts representative) to all Councillors regarding his discussions with Russ Tunney, Creative Director at The Pound Arts Centre, the Committee was asked to discuss the issues raised by Cllr Farmer, with a view to setting up a separate group to discuss the matter further.

While Councillors were aware of the proposed increase in grant-funding for The Pound Arts Centre in the 2025/26 budget, it was strongly felt that the Town Council should look to do more to support The Pound's work, given how important it is to the town.

Resolved: That a Pound Arts Working Group be set up to look at how the Town Council can further support The Pound. The Head of Community Services would discuss the best process of instigating the new Group with the Chief Executive.

CS 12/04 Business Support Update (*Minute CS 68/23, 54/23 and others*)

The Tourism and Events Officer updated Councillors on the Business Breakfast held at Digital Mansion Corsham (DMC) on 26 April 2024. The Breakfast continued the creative ideas from January's business event, with a theme of 'Marketing Your Story' and featured presentations from Jenny Hulme, Story Arcs' Story Associate, who was currently working with the Town Council on 'The Story of the High Street', and Cllr Jarman.

Attendance had been good, with 35 people attending to hear the talks, enjoy a breakfast supplied by Loaf Shack Bakery and network. Cllr Jarman ran a real-time survey of attendees, asking a number of questions including ideas for future topics, the format of the events and whether a different time of day would work well. The overall feedback had been excellent.

It was hoped that the next business event would take place in September, potentially at Hartham Park.

The update was noted.

CS 13/24 Events Update (*Minute CS 69/23, 56/23 and others*)

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

i) Eco Fair (20 April 2024)

April's Eco Fair had gone well, with 23 stalls in the pedestrian area of the High Street and the car park at Digital Mansion Corsham. Local businesses Spindles and Green Ginger also took part. The stalls included crafts, food and drink and other goods, as well as information and advice, Corsham Police offering bike marking, and free children's activities. The Town Council's Environmental Task Group and Corsham Climate Action both had stalls at the event.

The Pound was also involved, running badge making sessions, additional crafts and a 'Corsham and Nature' poster competition. The Three Brewers on Priory Street ran a seed swap and junk modelling. A 'Letter Trail' around the stalls and venues encouraged visitors to go to all the locations, and the Town Council's annual Easter Trail, which started on 23 March, ran 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.

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

Three musicians had busked as part of the Summer Busking Saturdays project so far, with all of them getting very positive feedback from those listening, with lots of positive interaction during their performances. Apart from two dates later in the summer, all the spots were now filled by local musicians. The project was again co-funded by Martingate.

There was a possibility that the busking spot may be impacted by the work to renovate the old Lloyds Bank building. A timeline of works was due to be produced and shared by Martingate with the Town Council, which would allow the Tourism and Events officer to have contingency plans in place for both the Summer Busking Saturdays and other Town Council events.

iii) Taste of Corsham (15 June 2024)

All facilities (road closure, first aid cover, etc) were now in place for Taste of Corsham, with 30 stalls confirmed including some new businesses. A number of other major events were taking place elsewhere, including Chippenham Pride, meaning some regular stallholders were unable to attend. Activities on the day

would include the Taste Trail, with a prize donated by Octavian Wine Services; arts and crafts run by the Arts Officer using recycled and live music on stage and at the busking spot. The on-stage entertainment was being organised by Pound Arts, using funding from the event's budget. All Councillors had been asked to help and support the event.

iv) Summer Fete (6 July 2024)

Planning for the Summer Fete was underway, with all facilities now organised, 20 stalls already booked, and the music line-up sorted. The traditional dog show for Guide Dogs was also due to take place. Alongside the regular events and activities, there would be three, 30-minute performances of Bin Rat, an interactive play for children and families with an environmental message, by The Last Baguette theatre group.

The update was noted.

CS 14/24 Social Media Update

Following the discussion at March's Committee meeting regarding the Town Council's social media profile, the Tourism and Events Officer had produced a full report on Corsham Town Council/Visit Corsham social media activity, including targets for the 2024/25 Council year. The activity across all sites was explained and the differences between Facebook and Instagram highlighted.

Currently, the Town Council had 2,806 followers on Facebook and 945 on Instagram, with 1,343 Facebook followers, and 924 Instagram followers on Visit Corsham. Using the industry benchmark of a 0.65% monthly increase on Facebook and 1.7% on Instagram, suggested targets for the year up to April 2025 were 3,031 followers on Facebook and 1,152 on Instagram for the Town Council, and 1,449 followers on Facebook and 1,124 on Instagram for Visit Corsham.

Resolved: That the report be noted, and the targets to increase Facebook and Instagram followers on the Corsham Town Council and Visit Corsham sites be approved.

CS 15/24 Destination Marketing/Management Plans

Following the Town Council's decision not to sell Arnold House at the current time and to utilise more of the space for the Grounds Team - and to allow the Tourist Information Centre/Made in Corsham to continue to use the building - the Destination Marketing and Management Plans 2015-2018 could now be updated. The Head of Community Services explained the history and reasons behind the decision not to sell and the plans for the building.

The Committee had no suggestions on what should be included in the new Plans. The Head of Community Services and Tourism and Events Officer would, therefore, work on draft Plans to cover the period 2024-2028, with the aim being to bring the drafts to September's Community Services Committee meeting, depending on workload.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 9.13pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIR

DATE