

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall
on Wednesday 22 November 2023**

Present Councillor A Brown (in the Chair)
Councillors M Jackson, A White

In Attendance Cllr S Abbott
Mrs S Leigh (Community Services Officer – Arts)
D Martin (Chief Executive)
Miss C Phillips (Community Services Officer – Tourism and Events)
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)

In Attendance Online Cllr A Mackie
S Gilmartin (iID)

CS 35/23 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors T Bush, N Farmer, D Jarman, A Thomas and R Williams.

CS 36/23 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 37/23 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

**CS 38/23 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held
on 20 September 2023**

There were none.

CS 39/23 Grant Applications

One grant application had been received.

Inclusive Intergenerational Dance

Arts for Health charity iID applied for £925 for a 'My Space' wellbeing group for young people at The Corsham School, specifically Years 8 and 9 (13-15 year olds). The after-school group would use dance movement psychotherapy to support mental health, with young people being referred by the school and attending with the permission of their families/carers. Pupils would attend in 10-week blocks, which could be shortened or extended according to need. It was anticipated that approximately 30 young people would take part. Trial sessions had taken place and the funding requested would enable 'My Space' to run regularly.

As well as the request for £925 from the Town Council, iID was also seeking funding from Corsham Area Board and using some of its own funding for 'My Space'. The Corsham School was supplying staff support, free use of the dance studio, along with snacks and drinks for participants, and taking on the referrals, the coordinating of permissions and communication of any safeguarding issues with families/carers.

Resolved: That Inclusive Intergenerational Dance's application for a grant of £925 to set up the 'My Space' wellbeing group for young people be approved.

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

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's community wellbeing activities, including Corsham Community Club's support from Wiltshire Council and the improved arrangements regarding storage space and equipment at Springfield Community Campus; the potential for using the Blue Bus Project as a warm space for the young people who The Rise Trust meet on Wednesday and Friday evenings in Corsham; the ongoing work by Corsham Youth Zone to establish charity status; the visits to local activity groups undertaken by Cllr Brown and the Community Wellbeing Officer to establish what is available to the local community, and information on the Christmas FUEL camps was shared.

The Committee was also updated, by the Head of Community Services, on the Deaf/Disabled People's Organisation being set up by Cllr Bush. The group was now known as SameDifference and a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary had been appointed. The aim of the group would be to signpost information, advise and advocate and it was hoped that another community meeting would be held in the new year.

The update was noted.

CS 41/23 Public Art Projects (*Minutes CS 31/23 and others*)

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

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

Following the public engagement projects and discussions, the 'portal' design had been chosen as the one to take forward for the project, with further consultation to be done on what wording/wildlife images should be included in the finished artwork. The preferred site was near Tramways, before the railway bridge which, although not officially in Potley was considered the best spot by residents. A meeting with Wiltshire Council's Estates Team was being arranged, with the hope that the Town Council could take the land over under licence or lease.

Other public art projects within the Potley community were also discussed. It was agreed that the mural needed repainting and improvement, and this would be progressed in due course. It was explained that painting the Brunel Shed's shipping container – and, potentially, incorporating a community noticeboard on it – was under discussion, with graffiti artist Baz Hurlow involved in discussions with the Shed's Rodney Veazey and the Community Services Officer (Arts). Again, community engagement would be a large part of the project, which was likely to take place in the spring.

ii) Cross Keys Plinth

The suggestion discussed at the previous meeting, to work with local artist and sculptor Jonny Sanders, was being progressed. The plan was to create a series of large, glass fibre sheep that could then be decorated by local schoolchildren, members of Corsham Youth Zone, etc, along the lines of the Gromit Trail in Bristol or the pigs and lions that had featured in Bath in previous years. The Community Services Officer (Arts) had met with Jonny Sanders and received positive feedback

from the local primary schools regarding their involvement. A further update would be available at the next meeting.

iii) The Town Council and the 2023 Peacock Arts Trail (7-15 October 2023)

The Town Hall hosted ceramicist Heather Stone, who was very happy with her sales and footfall figures during the 10 days of the Trail. The Town Hall also ran the exhibition of entries in the Youth Art Competition and work created by members of Corsham Youth Zone during the four art workshops co-ordinated by the Peacock Arts Trail's Rachael Holtom. The workshops were hugely popular with CYZ's members and they would be keen to run something similar in the future.

iv) The Prayer

Due to other work commitments, sculptor Iain Cotton had been delayed in starting his design for the plinth for The Prayer and was approximately a month behind schedule. The suggestion was now to have a low plinth, creating a sense that the figure occupied the same space as the view rather than being raised on a pedestal. The plinth would be created using a darker and more robust material, probably Forest of Dean stone, instead of Portland. Iain Cotton was also reviewing the wording for the plaque.

The update was noted.

CS 42/23 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 January 2024 by former StoryTown Co-ordinator Matthew Tett. The Environment theme also featured in the 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 memory projects in Corsham's care homes, as well as a project linked to the families of children with special educational needs. 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 Association, would be able to start the project in January and be available to give an update to the Committee at its next meeting.

The update was noted.

CS 43/23 Business Support Update (*Minute CS 32/23 and others*)

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

i) Business Networking Events

A Business Leader's Breakfast, again at Digital Mansion Corsham, took place from 8-10am on Tuesday 26 September. The theme was Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), volunteering and community involvement, with talks from Cathy Berry, Head of Social Values for Babcock International and Sharon Turnbull, of Turnbull HR, who volunteers for Saxon Group Riding for the Disabled. The pastries were supplied by Becky's Bakeri (local Norwegian bakery business). Eighteen people attended.

The next Business Breakfast, due to take place in January, would take place at The Pound Arts Centre, with a focus on how businesses could support The Pound. The Pound Café would supply the food.

ii) Retail Map

Work on the interactive version of the retail map was ongoing. 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.

A discussion followed about the importance of establishing links with Leafield and the other industrial estates in Corsham and trying to create a new database of contacts. It was felt that this had the potential to link to the work of the Environmental Project Officer.

The update was noted.

CS 44/23 Christmas in Corsham Update (*Minutes CS 33/23 and others*)

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's various Christmas-related events.

i) Design a Christmas Card Competition

The competition had received fewer entries than in previous years, possibly because so many of the primary schools now ran their own competitions, but the standard was still very high. Artist Rachel Heard had judged the competition on 21 November, choosing the winners in the three age-groups. (Illustrator Anna Currey, who normally judged the cards had to step down for family reasons.) All the winners had been contacted and it was hoped all would be able to attend the Switch On.

ii) Wishing Tree

The Wishing Tree was due to take place on 25 November, from 10am-1pm, with live music from the Corsham and Colerne Military Wives Choir, and collections for Corsham Foodbank and the Skatepark project. The event would also promote the Town Council's Transport Plan Survey and encourage residents to share their views online.

iii) Christmas Lights Switch On (1 December 2023)

Thirty-four stalls had booked for the Christmas Market element of the Christmas Lights Switch On. As in 2022, the Market would run from 3pm, allowing extra trading time for stallholders. St John Ambulance would be providing First Aid support. A balloon modeller was also booked, as was Father Christmas. The Rock Choir (4-5pm) and Corsham Windband (5-7pm) would play in the busking spot. On the Town Hall stage, folk duo Fly Yeti Fly would open proceedings (the act sourced by The Pound under our Service Level Agreement) before the lights were switched on at 6pm, with local band The Real Imposters playing for the second half of the evening.

The Head of Technical Services had updated the risk assessment for the event and, as requested following the Street Fair, this would be shared with all Councillors helping on the evening.

The update was noted.

CS 45/23 Community Services Budget 2024/25

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 2024/24, there was approximately £74,000 in Earmarked Reserves allocated to Community Services budget streams and projects, as well as funding within the Strategic Plan budget.

Resolved

That the draft proposals for the Community Services budget for 2024/25 be supported.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 8.52pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIR

DATE