

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall
on Wednesday 26 July 2023**

Present Councillor N Farmer (Chair)
Councillors A Brown, M Jackson, A Thomas, A White and R Williams

In Attendance Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)

CS 15/23 Apologies

There were none.

CS 16/23 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 17/23 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

**CS 18/23 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held
on 17 May 2023**

There were none.

CS 19/23 Grant Applications

There were none for this meeting.

The Committee was, however, asked whether, in principle, it would be willing to consider two grant applications in the future.

i) The Portable Wellbeing Studio

The Head of Community Services had been approached by The Portable Wellbeing Studio to see whether the Town Council would be willing to fund its residency at The Corsham School for a third time, at a cost of £2,500. A report on the project so far had been received. Should the Committee be minded to consider the request, a formal grant application would be submitted at September's meeting.

While the Committee was very supportive of the work being done by The Portable Wellbeing Studio, and would consider a full grant application, there were some concerns and conditions which would need to be addressed. These included direct feedback from The Corsham School on the wider benefits of arts therapy among its staff and pupils; whether the Corsham Area Board's Local Youth Network would also be willing to fund the project again; whether other funding sources were being sought; if training teachers and teaching assistants in arts therapy techniques was benefitting more pupils and creating a legacy, which would allow The Portable

Wellbeing Studio to move on and what the Studio's exit strategy would be. It was also felt that, should the Committee agree to fund The Portable Wellbeing Studio again, then this would be for the last time.

Resolved:

That the Head of Community Services would contact The Portable Wellbeing Studio to explain the conditions in more detail and invite them to submit an application.

ii) Dogs for Health

Dogs for Health is a non-profit organisation that trains local residents and their dogs to create a team of volunteers who can work alongside health professionals to help reduce stress, social isolation and anxiety in their clients. Following a meeting with the Dogs for Health team in April, along with staff from The Porch Surgery, it was felt that this work would make a positive difference to people in the Corsham Community Area.

The next step would be for Dogs for Health to hold a fund-raising/awareness-raising dog show at the Town Council's Street Fair on 9 September, which would also be an opportunity to recruit volunteers. If enough volunteers come forward to take the project further, then Dogs for Health would apply for a grant of £1,000, potentially at November's Community Services meeting, to cover fifty per cent of the £2,000 costs of set-up, training, etc. Corsham Area Board would be approached for match-funding.

Resolved:

That the Community Services Committee would be happy to consider a grant application from Dogs for Health if enough volunteers come forward to enable the scheme to run in the Corsham Community Area.

CS 20/23 Public Art Projects (*Minutes CS 06/23, 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)

Community engagement for this project was still going well. The nature walks in the area had been successful, as had the community picnics despite these having to be rearranged due to the weather. Two workshops had taken place at Corsham Youth Zone on 30 June and 7 July to allow engagement with young people. Caroline Rudge and Rachel Heard, the two artists commissioned to run the project, would be looking to meet with the Town Council's Public Art Task Group in September to present their suggestions for a piece of artwork.

ii) Cross Keys Plinth

Permission from Wiltshire Council was due to be granted shortly, following changes to the original location of the plinth due to access to utility cables. It was hoped that construction of the plinth would commence at the beginning of August. A draft commissioning brief was being finalised and would be shared with the Public Art Task Group before being circulated.

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

The Town Council would be hosting two artists in the Main Hall, Katherine Stone and Emma Debs. A good number of entries for the Youth Art Competition had now been received. These would be judged by local ceramicist Jon Roynon, who was a finalist in Channel 4's The Great Pottery Throwdown. Jon Roynon, artist Chloe

Pinheiro and former art teacher Claire Houghton had also expressed an interest in taking on the running of the Peacock Arts Trail for 2025 onwards as the current organisers had decided to step down after 10 years of running the Trail.

As part of its community work, the Peacock Arts Trail's Rachael Holtom, with support from the Town Council and the Area Board, had set up four art workshops for the young people at Corsham Youth Zone. The artists involved included graffiti artist Baz Hurlow, wood sculptor Sam Perry and Laura Richards, who works with oil paints. There would also be a trip to the artists' studios at Lancefield Place in Pickwick.

iv) The Prayer

Following discussions with the Corsham Civic Society regarding the provenance of the sculpture, plans for its installation in the Community Garden at The Pound were now confirmed and it was hoped this would take place in November 2023.

The update was noted.

CS 21/23 Business Support Update (*Minutes CS 09/23, 34/22 and others*)

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

i) Business Networking Events

A Business Leaders' Lunch took place at the Digital Mansion Corsham on 9 June, from 12-2pm. The theme this time was recruiting and retaining staff. There were 28 attendees, so not as many as at the previous breakfast events, but it was still useful to those attending, with positive feedback on the information shared and the networking opportunities.

The next event would be a Business Leader's Breakfast, again at Digital Mansion Corsham, from 8-10am on Tuesday 26 September. The theme this time would be Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), volunteering and community involvement.

ii) Retail Map

Tear-off pads of the new retail map had been distributed to various local businesses, along with the Tourist Information Centre, and copies were also available at the Town Hall. Feedback from the retailers had been excellent. Once the town centre noticeboards had been refurbished, large-scale versions of the map would be installed in all of them. In the longer-term, an interactive version of the map would be available on both the Town Council and Visit Corsham websites.

A suggestion was made regarding the Arts-based shops and galleries in the town centre and whether a leaflet could be produced, perhaps with their financial support, promoting their businesses.

iii) Business Health Survey

The survey had received 14 responses, despite extensions to the deadline. A report on the results would be produced for September's meeting. It was felt that Councillors could potentially help interact with the larger businesses in the town, and this could be discussed in more detail when the survey report was shared.

The update was noted.

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's various events and summer activities.

i) Summer Busking Saturdays (6 May-30 September)

All the busking slots had been filled. Social media promotion for the artists was scheduled for Mondays, Thursdays and Saturday mornings each week. There had been very positive feedback, from both businesses and residents, on all the performers so far.

ii) Taste of Corsham (17 June 2023)

Twenty-nine stalls had taken part in Taste of Corsham. Many stallholders sold out or were very pleased with the amount of produce they sold. The children's activities in the walled garden at Digital Mansion Corsham had proved very popular. It was felt that signage between the town centre and the Digital Mansion could be improved, highlighting the stalls, music and activities taking place there.

iii) Summer Trails (22 July-31 August)

There were three trails taking place through the summer holidays: the Sunflower Trail, aimed at pre-school children and sponsored by The Corsham Bookshop; the Pokémon Trail, sponsored by Automattic Comics/The Corsham Toyshop and the Back to School Trail, aimed at parents/carers, in support of shops and businesses in Corsham selling 'school' products. The businesses involved included If the Shoe Fits, The Corsham Bookshop, Corsham Stationery, Grounded and Sweet Pea Kitchen at Hartham Park.

As well as posters, website and social media promotion, the Trails had been advertised in Local Look, the Gazette and Herald, Primary Times and The Bath & Wiltshire Parent. All were proving popular.

iv) Street Fair (9 September 2023)

Fifty-two stalls were now booked for the Street Fair, including a number of local charities and groups, as well as the usual trading and craft stalls. The music stage would be on the rear lawn of the Digital Mansion again, with performances from The Real Imposters, saxophonist Sam Bernald-Ross and Pipe Dream. Busking performances in Martingate would see keyboard player Lenny Osler and Corsham Windband play. The Dog Show, run by Dogs for Health, would take place in the walled garden at the Digital Mansion, supported by stalls from Guide Dogs, Bath Cats & Dogs Home and local dog-trainer The Positive Pup, along with a dog-related arts activity for children and free face painting.

So far only three Councillors had said they were available to help on the day. Further emails would be sent asking for more support. Cllr Farmer suggested that the Councillors present at the meeting could encourage their fellow Councillors to help.

v) Christmas Lights (1 December)

Twelve stalls were already booked for the Christmas Market element of the Christmas Lights Switch On. St John Ambulance had also confirmed their availability to provide first-aid support. A balloon modeller was also booked, as was Father Christmas.

The Committee asked to record their thanks to the Community Services Officer (Tourism and Events) for their hard work in putting together so many activities.

The update was noted.

CS 23/23 Corsham Town Council Events 2024

To allow Community Services Officers to start planning for next year, the Committee was asked to approve the following suggested dates for Town Council events in 2024:

- Eco Fair – Saturday 20 April 2024 (nearest Saturday to Earth Day on 22 April)
- Taste of Corsham – Saturday 15 June 2024
- Summer Fete – Saturday 6 July 2024
- Street Fair – Saturday 7 September 2024
- Wishing Tree – Saturday 30 November 2024
- Christmas Lights Switch On – Friday 6 December 2024

Resolved:

That the dates for 2024 be approved.

CS 24/23 Community Wellbeing Update (*Minutes CS 14/23, 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.

Cllr Brown, Chair of the Community Wellbeing Working Group, explained that he would be asking those Councillors who were members of the Working Group whether they would like to take on individual projects, eg Dogs for Health, Dementia Friendly Town status, etc. It was felt that all Councillors could be asked whether they would like to use their specific skills to help with the Town Council's Community Wellbeing work in this way.

Resolved:

That an agenda item asking Councillors whether they would like to use their skills in support of projects being led by the Town Council's Community Wellbeing Working Group be added to August's Council agenda.

The report was noted. The Committee asked that the Community Services Officer (Community Wellbeing) be thanked for their work in engaging with so many projects and supporting the Town Council's Strategic Plan aims.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 9pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIR

DATE