

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting Held Remotely
on Wednesday 11 November 2020**

Present Councillor D Jarman (In the Chair)
Councillors A Brown, M Jackson, G Sanders, M Wakeman, A White and
C Woodward

In Attendance Councillor S Abbott
Councillor A Crockford
Councillor T Ellis
Ms S Leigh (Arts and Tourism Officer)
D Martin (Chief Executive)
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)

CS 18/20 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors L Bray and N Farmer.

CS 19/20 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 20/20 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 Jarman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 7 – Arts Action Plan Update and 8 – Public Art Update, given their links to the Peacock Arts Trail, for which his wife is on the committee.

CS 21/20 Matters arising from the Notes of the Informal Community Services Committee Meeting held on 12 August 2020

There were none.

CS 22/20 Review of Corsham StoryTown 16-18 October 2020 (*Minute CS 17/20 and others*)

The Head of Community Services updated the Committee on the StoryTown event, co-produced with Bath Spa University's Paper Nations, that had taken place on 16-18 October.

From a public engagement point of view, the event had probably been the most successful yet. Writer and educator Marnie Forbes-Eldridge had worked with St

Patrick's, Corsham Primary (Pound Pill and Broadwood) and Corsham Regis on StoryTown projects linked to three different books and 925 children and 48 teaching staff had been involved in the work they had done. All the children did enough work to gain Arts Awards (either Discover or Explore levels), a qualification system run by Trinity College and Arts Council England to help young people, up to the age of 25, learn about the Arts but also gives them confidence and skills. The workshops attracted 115 participants online, as well as approximately 250 people at the activities that took place at The Pound and in town on the weekend.

Social distance guidelines meant it was not possible to record new Your Corsham Stories recollections from residents at this year's event but the stories collected in 2018 and 2019 had been edited and two had been released on Facebook with plans to screen more and to get links to them all on the Town Council's website. Another had been shown at the Area Board meeting on 10 November.

Workshops run across the weekend had included sessions on song-writing, getting published, poetry, writing for children and using yoga to unleash creativity. Around 115 people had taken part online.

Some activities had been able to take place in a socially-distanced way including the Smile Inside exhibition, highlighting stories from lockdown; the Smile Inside tree with residents being invited to write what makes them smile on a leaf to be hung on the tree's branches, and performances from dancers, poets and other artists based on people's recollections. The Poetry Takeaway at The Pound was hugely popular and busy all day and the live streamed performance by The Bookshop Band, again organised by Pound Arts, had around 200 views on the night. (Repeat screenings saw this increase to 10,000 views.)

Looking ahead, in 2021 funding from Paper Nations would not be available, although it may be possible for individual contributors to apply to Paper Nations for funding. Alternative funding streams were being researched and a stakeholder meeting would take place in early January.

It was suggested that it was important to tell the story of the event, covering the sheer scale of what had been available to the community; the levels of community engagement and the stories told.

Resolved:

- i) That a resume of 2020's StoryTown should be written, highlighting the work done, the stakeholders involved and the level of community engagement. This could be used to help with funding applications for 2021.
- ii) That everyone involved in this year's event be congratulated on what they had achieved.

CS 23/20 Christmas in Corsham (*Minute CS 15/20 and others*)

The Committee was updated on the plans for this year's Christmas activities in the town, given that the Wishing Tree and Christmas Lights Switch On could not take place due to the pandemic.

The Christmas lights would be switched on, without any fanfare but promoted after the event, on Tuesday 1 December. (St Bart's would also switch their lights on from that date.) The Pound was planning an Activity Trail, to run from 4 December-3 January, around the Martingate Centre, High Street and Pickwick Road area. An art-installation

would be in place in the windows of the Town Hall, in a shadow-puppet style and featuring elements of animation which would be switched on daily, from 4-8pm. Created by local artists and co-produced with The Pound, the installation would also be in situ from 4 December-3 January. The shops had been invited to take part in the annual Best Christmas Window Competition with this year's theme being 'Winter Wonderland'. The competition would be judged on 10 December with the trophy awarded on 11 December. Local musicians would be invited to busk on 5, 12 and 19 December, given the success of this during the summer. The local primary schools had been contacted to encourage children to write their Christmas wishes, with a deadline of 6 December, so the wishes could still hang on the tree.

It was hoped that some of the local businesses would run Late Night Shopping evenings on, potentially, Thursday 10 and 17 December but with so many being closed due to the national restrictions, it would be a late decision as to whether to go ahead or not. The Head of Community Services would ask the retailers about taking part in her next letter to traders, which would be about the Christmas plans, and Cllr Sanders volunteered to help co-ordinate the retailers and help promote Late Night Shopping should it go ahead.

Community groups, including St Bart's and the Royal British Legion, had been invited to have fund-raising stalls in the town centre on the Saturdays in the run-up to Christmas, given that they had lost so many opportunities to raise money with the cancellation of local events.

It had also been hoped to hold a Best Mince Pie competition, with tastings available on the Saturdays from the end of November until the week before Christmas, but it was felt that recovering from the time lost due to lockdown would be more of a priority to the food businesses in the town centre than taking part in the competition. As a result, the competition would be held over until 2021.

The Committee was pleased to hear that so many things were still planned, even with the loss of Corsham's normal Christmas events.

The update was noted.

CS 24/20 Arts Action Plan Update (*Minute CS 16/20 and others*)

The Arts and Tourism Officer reported on the work done so far on the priority actions from the Arts Action Plan, as agreed at August's Community Services meeting. These were:

- i) Creating a GDPR-compliant database of local artists for the Town Council – Following discussions with Victoria Jarman of the Peacock Arts Trail regarding their database, the Arts and Tourism Officer was hopeful that the two organisations could work together to produce a database that would include as many local artists as possible, who had agreed to be included. (An 'unsubscribe' element would be included.)
- ii) Investigating the possibilities of taking the Artists Café and networking opportunities online, particularly looking at online meeting options – A new database and working with the Peacock Arts Trail would enable information/invitations to be sent out. The Pound's Visual Arts Officer, who had been responsible for running the Artists Café before the first lockdown still needed to be consulted as she had been furloughed by The Pound and had been working on her other Arts role in Swindon.

- iii) Researching the idea of a pop-up shop – The Made in Bradford shop in Bradford on Avon and Fisherton Mill had both been visited and conversations were ongoing with the organisers of both to discover what was involved in running a pop-up shop. A full report would be presented at the next Committee meeting in January.

Suggestions on this point included using a temporary site, such as a large gazebo, for a regular Arts Fair or similar and working with The Pound to utilise space there. Cllr Sanders also offered her support and help with any potential pop-up shop or exhibition.

The update was noted.

CS 25/20 Public Art Update (*Minute CS 07/20 and others*)

The Arts and Tourism Officer updated the Committee on the two public art installations commissioned by the Town Council.

The Peace Feathers installation at Cross Keys had been impacted by lockdown restrictions since March, as well as some technical difficulties the artist, Jane Rickards, had experienced with both the stones for the base from the quarry and the fabricators of the metal feathers. She was now working with a Melksham-based company, Blade, and the stone 'horses' heads' were also on site there ahead of more work being done. Officers were confident that the work was now progressing, albeit with more support for the artist than had been envisaged initially. A date for installation was still hard to predict but Spring 2021 was looking possible.

Artist Anya Beaumont had been commissioned, following an online interview process, to take on the Springfield Valley Road entrance project with a design inspired by the wild flower meadow on site and was already working on the project.

The Chief Executive updated the Committee on the plans now to install two quarry trucks on Park Lane, with a wall behind them that would incorporate an engraved frieze featuring stonemason's tools and markings. This was a longer-term project compared to Cross Keys and Springfield as the members of the Brunel Shed had yet to start work on the second trolley but the Pickwick Association had now overcome their initial concerns about the site and were happy to see the project move forward.

The Chief Executive also explained that approximately £20,000 of S106 money would be made available to the Town Council from the Potley Rise development. For this to happen a deed of transfer needed to be agreed between Wiltshire Council and the Town Council and a draft document would be available for approval at December's Council meeting. The funds would be available for work in the vicinity of Potley Rise meaning they would cover Springfield Rec, but could also be used for artwork in Neston and/or The Batters.

The update was noted.

CS 26/20 Health Update (*Minute CS 53/19 and others*)

The Head of Community Services reported on the work being undertaken by the Area Board's Health and Wellbeing Group (HWB), including those projects benefitting from the match-funding agreement (£6,000 budget) set up between the Town Council and HWB at the beginning of the year. (*See report attached.*)

The report was noted.

CS 27/20 Community Services Budget 2021/22

The Committee was asked to consider the draft proposals for the Community Services budget for the next financial year.

The Chief Executive reported that funds from the current budget that had not been used due to the coronavirus crisis (eg for events and youth activities) could go to an ear-marked reserve.

The Committee was asked to consider increasing the level of funding in the budget for youth activities in 2021/22 to help alleviate the impact of lockdown on young people. This could include expanding the Town Council's offering in this area, alongside the work supporting the Hub Club and Corsham Youth Zone.

Questions were also asked about additional funding for StoryTown in 2021 and, should a pop-up shop for artists prove achievable, where funding might be available for that. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Strategic Plan EMR would be available to help fund those projects, if required.

Other suggestions/comments included the need to engage with the disengaged, perhaps by working with organisations such as The Rise Trust; the potential for music therapy and more frequent mental health related events for young people and the upcoming meeting of the re-established Area Board Local Youth Network, which had a budget of £14,000 to allocate to projects in the current financial year.

Resolved:

- i) That the request to increase the Community Services budget allocation for Youth Activities to £10,000 be supported.

The meeting commenced online at 7.30pm and closed at 9.11pm. There were no members of the public present.

CHAIRMAN

DATE



COMMUNITY SERVICES MEETING 11 NOVEMBER 2020
HEALTH UPDATE – Agenda Item 9

This report focuses on the work being undertaken by the Area Board's Health and Wellbeing Group (HWB), including the two projects that have benefitted from the match-funding agreement (£6,000 budget) set up between the Town Council and HWB at the beginning of the year.

Behind Closed Doors had received £2,000 from the Town Council in match-funding (the total request to HWB was for £4,500) for a year-long project. Additional funds had been received from the National Lottery Fund and The Pound (in kind). Participants would also help to fund the project themselves, in the longer term, through paying a small fee. The aim was to carry on the project well past the first year but fund-raising would need to be undertaken.

The project, run by Sarah Gilmartin, of Inclusive Intergenerational Dance (iID), would have two strands. Creative Conversations featured face-to-face conversations exploring artefacts from the local area using storytelling, poetry and movement to take place in people's homes. These had started in a COVID-19 secure way but obviously could not take place currently. Sarah had seen 21 people so far who had either referred themselves or been referred via other means, eg the surgeries, volunteer organisations, etc.

Creative Workshops, the second strand, had started at The Pound on Fridays, 11.30am-5pm, allowing people to have a conversation and take part in socially-distanced movement and music, poetry or visual art activities with tea, coffee and cake. The project links to the already-established Studio 64 project for more mobile/adventurous older people, which spun out of the art workshops from the Peacock Arts Trail last year supported and hosted by the Town Council. For frailer, older adults, or those with dementia and their carers there would be a creative light lunch or tea. With The Pound having to close, the workshops cannot take place at the moment but will restart as soon as possible. It was also hoped that trips out to Lacock (National Trust places are dementia friendly), attendance at performances at The Pound, visits to Corsham Court and even Bath or Westonbirt Arboretum would be possible.

Overall iID would like to offer high quality creative experiences that help to build connections and relationships that support the wellbeing of older people, reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation and make Corsham a good place to grow old and live longer healthier lives.

Celebrating Age received £500 in match-funding, as the annual contribution (up to August 2021) to the costs of the Corsham element of this well-established project. The total application to HWB was £1,500 for whole community area.

Phase 2 of Celebrating Age was up and running although it would obviously look different while COVID-19 restrictions were in place. Lottery funding meant that

Celebrating Age Wiltshire (CAW) was now working with 10 community areas, including Corsham, for the next five years. The current focus would be on online concerts produced in conjunction with the Wiltshire Music Centre, all of which were available on the Music Centre's YouTube channel and were proving very popular with care homes.

As well as online concerts CAW were hoping to continue with outdoor concerts while the weather allowed – these had worked well in the south of the county and most recently in Trowbridge – and were targeted really locally to individuals who could not or did not want to get out, or very small clusters of people in their own front gardens or streets. This required local support and help to identify the people and locations that would really benefit from this musical intervention. Concerts were not publicised but there was a leaflet drop to the immediate neighbours to let them know. CAW would like to work with the Corsham area (including Box and Colerne) on three outdoor concerts – perhaps one in Nov/Dec, one in the spring and one in the summer but it would require support from the local area. They would prefer to concentrate on residential rather than care homes (although neither were possible at present). Jargeau Court and Holton House had been suggested as places where individuals were living in a group setting.

CAW was also working with Sarah Gilmartin/Behind Closed Doors to take the Creative Conversations via telephone to older people who were unable to leave their homes and could not have face to face visits. They hoped to start that in January following a pilot scheme in Melksham.

Other projects covered by HWB:

Wiltshire Together was a new website from Wessex Community Action (an organisation that supports community and voluntary activity), funded by a £400,000 National Lottery grant. The aim of the site was to allow communities to share information about services, activities, support, etc, initially in a Community Directory. The potential to add in and match up people looking for volunteer opportunities with those groups who need volunteers was also being considered. The platform was not being designed to usurp other websites but to create increased connectivity from the grass roots up and organisations will be able to create links directly to their websites too. Promotion material had been produced and would be circulated in due course.

Groop was a Corsham-based company that had developed an online, administration management system which is free to Corsham organisations. The system was aimed at charities, sports clubs, the public sector, etc. Among other things, it was GDPR compliant, allowed for safeguarding, could be used for the payment of subscriptions and allowed documents to be kept in a central location for group members to access. The Town Council was successfully using the system for the Environment Group. Corsham Youth Zone use it for their 600+ contacts. Officers had encouraged Groop to get in touch with Wessex Community Action as there was some crossover between what they were both doing.

The Porch – Jane Brake, Community Coordinator at The Porch Surgery reported that the flu jab campaign was going well, but the surgery was concerned about the people they were not seeing, who were cancelling regular – and necessary – appointments. Numbers attending the surgery remained low. Jane Brake had started going to the homes of those who should be coming to the surgery but were not, despite phone calls and reminders, to reassure them as many of them were too scared to attend.

Corsham Foodbank – The Foodbank was busy and had been surprised and grateful to receive harvest donations from schools and churches. They were planning Christmas packs for families and would be asking for nominations from schools and local organisations. In the summer they helped 38 families and expected to exceed that number at Christmas (58 families in 2019). The volunteer situation was good and they had also been able to give some surplus stock to other local organisations.

Corsham Town Council – Work on the new What's On Guide had taken a backseat as so many local clubs were not running. Rachel Sellens was putting together a GDPR-compliant distribution network of contacts from various groups to allow the Town Council to share health and wellbeing information which they could then feed out to their own members. As a more targeted, direct approach, the aim was that as much information as possible could get out to the people who needed it and the main contacts for the groups would also know who of their members would most benefit.

*Sharon Thomas
Head of Community Services
November 2020*