Corsham
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall on Wednesday 23 September 2026

Present Councillor R Munn (Chair)
Councillors A Brown, J Coward, D Jarman, G McCaffery and I Scrannage

In Attendance Councillor C Kerr
Mrs S Jefferys (Head of Community Services)
D Martin (Chief Executive)
Ms H Peacock (Community Services Officer – Tourism and Events)

In Attendance Online Councillor A White
Ms S Leigh (Community Services Officer – Arts)

CS 25/26 Apologies

There were none.

CS 26/26 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 27/26 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

CS 28/26 Matters arising from the Notes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 29 July 2026.

There were none.

CS 29/26 Grant Applications

One grant application had been received.

Stay Safe Initiative CIC – Stay Safe Initiative was seeking £900 (50% of the total project cost) to help fund two projects at The Corsham School: Boyz-2-Men and the Digital Empowerment Programme. Boyz-2-Men supported teenage boys through safe, challenging, conversations to explore positive masculinity. The Digital Empowerment Programme would equip young people to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. The Town Council had supported both projects previously with feedback from The Corsham School underlining the importance of the projects and the impact both had made to young people.

While Councillors were highly supportive of the application there were some questions regarding the £30,000 surplus showing in Stay Safe's accounts for 2025; the amount of funding from The Corsham School towards the project and how the project would become self-sustaining.

Resolved: That, subject to satisfactory answers to Councillors' questions, Stay Safe Initiative CIC's application for a grant of £900 towards Boyz-2-Men and the Digital Empowerment Programme be approved.

CS 30/26 Review of the Grants Scheme

Officers had commenced a review of the grants scheme as one of the actions identified in the Strategic Plan 2026-2030. A number of areas which could be updated and improved had been identified. Suggested changes include: moving Health and Wellbeing Grants from the Community Services Committee to the Finance and Administration Committee; increasing all in-year grants from £750 to a £2,000 maximum; creating a web-based application form alongside a paper version; improving clarity over the grant criteria and information to be provided by applicants; promoting the grants scheme more widely to increase take up and creating a new 'Business Events Grants' scheme targeted at supporting the town centre (with a maximum of £2,000 per application). The plan would be to introduce any changes from April 2027.

The suggestions were discussed by the Finance and Administration Committee at its meeting on 19 August, where it was

Resolved That, from 2027/28,

i) the maximum value for all in-year grants be increased from £750 to £2,000;
ii) the Finance and Administration Committee be responsible for the consideration and awarding of all grants;
iii) the Council be recommended to amend Standing Orders so that Committee Chairs are automatically appointed to the Finance and Administration Committee;
iv) the budget towards The Pound Arts Centre be transferred to the Community Services Committee;
v) that the eligibility criteria for grant applications be revised to allow local businesses to apply for funds towards town centre events.

Comments were made about the Community Services Committee still having some oversight of applications, via both the Chair being a member of the Finance and Administration Committee and the Head of Community Services being able to comment; whether there were any limits on the number of grants, given the increase in funding, and the reasons for moving Pound Arts' grant to Community Services.

CS 31/26 Community Wellbeing Update *(Minute CS 18/26 and others)*

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's community wellbeing activities. These included: the Community Wellbeing Officer visiting Corsham Foodbank and meeting with Home Instead and Corsham Link at the Street Fair; Rise Trust continuing to provide outreach support for young people in the town, with a new safe space due to open in the former tattoo studio very soon; the My Space group for young people running on Wednesday afternoons at Springfield Community Campus; supporting Corsham Foodbank in continuing to deliver the Citizens Advice Wiltshire (CAW) outreach service; updating the Warm Spaces leaflet ready for the winter and planning for the next Community Wellbeing Group meeting which would be taking place on 3 November, with a focus on older people.

The update was noted.

CS 32/26 Corsham – An Age-friendly Community *(Minute CS 19/26 and others)*

Cllr Brown and the Head of Community Services updated the Committee on the latest steps towards Corsham becoming an Age-friendly Community.

The Age-friendly Corsham Working Group had met on 4 August to discuss the updated Action Plan (a copy of which was shared with the Committee members) and the final list for bench locations following the Accessibility Audit held earlier in the year.

The update was noted.

CS 33/26 Public Art Projects *(Minute CS 21/26 and others)*

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

Potley and Portland Rise Art Community Project (PACT) – A successful opening ceremony had taken place on 8 August, with good media coverage. The next steps would include deciding on the signage required and the planting of wildflowers around the artwork.

Cross Keys Plinth – Both St Patrick's and Corsham Primary now had sheep to decorate. There had been some issues with paint and varnish flaking on the sheep that had already been on the plinth so expert advice was being sought as to the best materials to use. The Town Council could help to fund these for the schools if necessary.

Michael Pennie Sculptures – Two smaller pieces of Michael Pennie's work had been installed at The Pound Arts Centre. The triptych due to be installed at the Almshouses was still waiting on the design for the plinth required, and further involvement from the Conservation Officer, but it was hoped these issues would be resolved quickly. Another visit to the storage facility would be arranged to look at the other pieces available.

The Town Council's Public Art Task Group (PATG) was due to meet in October, when commissioning new projects and the potential for making stronger links between Corsham and its twin town of Jargeau through public art would be discussed.

Councillors were also told about the request to temporarily locate the Wiltshire Lion on the High Street to The Merchant's House in Marlborough as part of their 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe' themed Christmas display, which would help promote Corsham as a place to visit. Officers were due to meet with representatives from The Merchant's House to discuss the logistics and timings of the move.

The update was noted.

CS 34/26 Events Update *(Minute CS 22/26 and others)*

The Head of Community Services and Tourism and Events Officer reported on the events that had already taken place and those due to happen in the run-up to Christmas.

Pokemon Trail (18 July-31 August 2026) – The Pokemon Trail, for primary school age children, and run in conjunction with The Corsham Toyshop, had proved as popular as ever, with over 150 entries and visitors from the wider area, including Bath, Frome and Swindon.

Street Fair (12 September) – The Street Fair had received excellent feedback from residents and visitors. Many of the stallholders had sold out. The Picnic Lawn area at Digital Mansion Corsham had been particularly busy with families spending a lot of time there listening to the music and enjoying the free face-painting, balloon-modelling and craft activities. The free bus travel on the 10/10A had encouraged 100 extra, non-concessionary passengers to travel to and from the event compared to the previous Saturday. It was hoped to repeat this initiative at future events.

Heritage Open Days (11-20 September) – Corsham had seen its highest numbers yet for Heritage Open Days (HODs) events, which had included involvement from St Bartholomew's Church, Corsham Walking Festival, Hartham Park and Monks Chapel. Corsham Almshouses had been heavily involved, with around 30 visitors at each session, and over 120 at the display by the Sealed Knot on the day of the Street Fair. While many people who came along to events were local, visitors from as far as the USA had seen the listings on the Heritage Open Days website. A wash-up meeting was due to be held and it was hoped that the theme for 2027 would be announced soon.

Ramp Antics (19 September) – Unfortunately, due to the rain forecast, this event was cancelled two days before it was due to take place. It would be rearranged, probably to Sunday 18 October.

Wishing Tree (28 November) – The Wishing Tree event would continue to run in the Chapel Garden, following its relocation in 2024 as a result of the works to Corsham House. Wishes would be taken from 10am-1pm and hung on the tree for free, although donations for the Chair's charity and the Corsham Skatepark Group would be gratefully received. The Corsham and Colerne Military Wives Choir would be contacted to see whether they would like to be part of the event again.

Christmas Lights Switch On (4 December) – Plans for this year's event were underway, with stallholders contacted and music performances being agreed. All logistics (road closure, etc), were also being arranged.

Town of Culture 2028 – The Head of Community Services hoped to organise a meeting in the autumn to discuss how the ideas and plans in Corsham's unsuccessful application could be progressed.

The update was noted.

CS 35/26 2027 Event Dates

The Committee was asked to approve the suggested dates for Town Council events in 2027:

Eco Fair: Saturday 17 April 2027
Taste of Corsham: Saturday 15 May 2027
Street Fair: Saturday 11 September 2027
Wishing Tree: Saturday 27 November 2027
Christmas Lights Switch On: Friday 3 December 2027

There was some discussion about asking MOD Corsham about the date-setting for their Communities Day, which had clashed with the Street Fair on 12 September. This would be raised at the upcoming MOD Liaison meeting. It was hoped that the MOD would be happy to hold their event on 4 September to allow their staff and families to attend the Street Fair.

Resolved: That the event dates for 2027 be approved.

CS 36/26 Tourism Update *(Minute CS 23/26 and others)*

The Committee was updated on the latest tourism-linked work undertaken.

The new Visit Corsham logo had been finalised and produced, with advertising being revised to include the new colourway and design. The Tourism and Events Officer had attended the online Great West Way Marketplace on 22 September, talking to various tour operators (national and international) about what Corsham had to offer, particularly to groups. The Head of Community Services would be meeting many of the tour operators at a networking day on 25 September at SS Great Britain in Bristol.

Trailers had been launched for the final six episodes of Series Two of the Disney+ adaptation of Jilly Cooper's *Rivals* so officers were expecting an increase in press interest and visitor numbers as a result. Reviews for Corsham House continued to be featured in the national press, giving excellent coverage for both the hotel and brasserie and Corsham.

The update was noted.

Councillors were asked to review the first annual Tourism Report and approve the Destination Marketing and Management Plan 2025-2030 for Year Two.

Resolved: That the Destination Marketing and Management Plan 2025-2030 Year Two Action Plan be approved.

CS 37/26 Business Support Update *(Minute CS 24/26 and others)*

The next Business Breakfast would take place on 22 October, 8-10am, at Digital Mansion Corsham, with a focus on the Town Council's new Strategic Plan, Neighbourhood Plan and what businesses wanted to see in the Corsham of the future.

The update was noted.

CS 38/26 Community Safety: Bleed Kits

Wiltshire Police was working with HeartSafe UK, NHS England South West, and South West Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust to launch the Wiltshire Police Bleed Kit Partnership. The initiative aimed to improve community safety by providing potentially life-saving emergency bleed kits in public spaces throughout local communities.

Following discussions with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team, it was proposed that three medically approved NHS bleed control kits and dispensers be installed alongside the Town Council's three defibrillators, sited at the Newlands Road public toilets, the Town Hall and, with permission from the landlord and brewery, The Royal Oak on the High Street. Each dispenser and kit would cost £239+VAT.

The former members of Peacock WI may be interested in fundraising to supply other venues with bleed control kits in the future, or organisations could approach the Town Council for grant funding to enable the purchase of kits.

The Committee was asked to approve the purchase of the three bleed control kits at a total price of £717+VAT.

Resolved: That the purchase of three bleed control kits be approved.

CS 39/26 Budget Setting for 2027/28

Ahead of the budget setting discussions in November, the Committee was asked for its suggestions and priorities for inclusion in the 2027/28 budget.

Suggestions included more digital signage at bus stops; a budget for experimental funding, allowing trial projects to run, and trying to anticipate the next trends to support young people. It was also felt that continuing the free parking and the work towards opening Corsham Railway Station should be a priority.

The Chief Executive would look to factor the suggestions/priorities into the 2027/28 budget.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.48pm. There were no members of the public present.

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CHAIR DATE