Corsham
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall on Wednesday 29 July 2026

Present Councillor R Munn (Chair)
Councillors A Brown, J Coward, N Pocock, I Scrannage, V Steadman and A White

In Attendance Councillor A Calkin
Councillor C Kerr
Councillor A Mackie
Mrs S Jefferys (Head of Community Services)
Ms S Leigh (Community Services Officer – Arts)
Ms H Peacock (Community Services Officer – Tourism and Events)
A Walton (Pound Arts Trust)

CS 13/26 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor D Jarman.

CS 14/26 Public Question Time and Petitions

There were none.

CS 15/26 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

CS 16/26 Matters arising from the Notes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 20 May 2026.

There were none.

CS 17/26 Grant Applications

One grant application had been received.

Pound Arts Trust – Pound Arts Trust was seeking £1,985 in support of three strands of its community work. These were Dancing Through Time – a mobility group for the over-70s (£1,275); art classes for adults with SEND (£320) and the FUEL sessions run at The Pound during the holidays for children receiving free school meals (£390). The funding applied for represented 28% of the total cost for all three projects.

Councillors were highly supportive of the application. Questions, comments and suggestions included asking about the number of attendees at sessions and whether the Living Well (social prescribing) team were able to refer clients to Dancing Through Time and the art classes.

Resolved: That Pound Arts Trust application for a grant of £1,985 towards Dancing Through Time, art classes for adults with SEND and the FUEL sessions be approved.

CS 18/26 Community Wellbeing Update *(Minute CS 06/26 and others)*

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's community wellbeing activities. The Community Wellbeing Officer had visited local groups and organisations including Corsham Library, Corsham Foodbank and the Goldies singing group; Corsham Foodbank had delivered 106 summer holiday food parcels to local schools and referrals to the Bags of Taste healthy eating programme had now been widened to allow The Rise Trust and Spurgeons to make referrals. The Committee asked that the Head of Community Services contact Bags of Taste for information on how the project was rolling out across Wiltshire and report back.

Current Town Council initiatives for families and young people included ongoing work with The Rise Trust, who had taken over a unit in Martingate as a pop-up hub/warm space for young people on Friday evenings; the Summer Staycation leaflet highlighting a range of free and low-cost activities for families during the summer; funding the Us Girls project, run by Wiltshire Council, to encourage girls aged 11-16 to engage with various sports and co-funding a FUEL event to be run by scooter and skateboard experts ATB Shop at the skatepark on 13 August.

The update was noted.

The Committee was also asked to approve a request to help with funding the Open Blue Bus' visits to Corsham, as part of The Rise Trusts outreach work on Wednesday evenings. The bus was an important part of the town's youth offering, ensuring a safe space for some of the more vulnerable young people Rise work with.

It was agreed to fund the cost of the bus until March 2027, at a cost of £2,400. It was also agreed to consider including the total annual cost of the Open Blue Bus visits, £4,600, in the draft 2027/28 budget, but Councillors would wish to see the organisation's annual accounts before making a final decision.

Resolved: That Corsham Town Council funds the Open Blue Bus Trust to bring the Open Blue Bus to Corsham on Wednesday evenings, as part of the outreach work run by The Rise Trust, at a cost of £2,400 (until March 2027). Funding the total annual cost of the Open Blue Bus visits, £4,600, would be considered as part of the discussions on the draft 2027/28 budget following receipt of the organisation's annual accounts.

CS 19/26 Corsham – An Age-friendly Community *(Minute CS 07/26 and others)*

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

iID (the organisation behind Creative Lunch and other projects in Corsham) had run the Age Without Limits Day on 10 June 2026, with funding from the Town Council. The event, which took place at The Pound Arts Centre, included taster dance and movement workshops, lunch, art workshops to make props and a silent disco. Feedback had been excellent from the 70+ people who took part.

Work on the Town Council's Age-friendly Action Plan and Accessibility Audit was ongoing. The Audit had seen requests for benches and dropped kerbs returned for consideration. The Chief Executive, Head of Technical Services, Head of Community Services and the Community Wellbeing Officer had met to discuss the requests, and a final list would be produced for discussion at the Age-friendly Working Group meeting due to take place on 4 August.

The Chair of the Town Council and Community Wellbeing Officer had visited Yate, as Corsham's nearest, active age-friendly town, on 15 July, to attend the Yate Ageing Better Festival, a free community event for people approaching or already enjoying retirement.

The update was noted.

CS 20/26 StoryTown *(Minute CS 08/26 and others)*

The Arts Officer reported on the StoryTown school workshops funded by the Town Council.

Marnie Forbes-Eldridge, along with another regular StoryTown contributor, had run lesson-based work in schools and workshops at the Town Hall, based around the theme of British Myths. Local author Emily Randall Jones had also been part of the project. Marnie would also be running a special workshop for the children at the Services Cotswold Centre.

Feedback from the schools had been excellent and it was hoped to repeat the project in 2027.

The update was noted.

CS 21/26 Public Art Projects *(Minute CS 09/26 and others)*

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

Potley and Portland Rise Art Community Project (PACT) – The artwork had been installed with overwhelmingly positive feedback from the local community, and coverage from BBC Wiltshire via an interview with Caroline Rudge and Rachel Heard, the two artists who ran the project. An opening ceremony would take place on 8 August.

Cross Keys Plinth – Neston School's sheep had now been replaced by Corsham Regis' peacock-themed sheep, to some great feedback on social media. The latest sheep would be on the plinth until St Patrick's creation was ready to take its place.

Michael Pennie Sculptures – Two pieces of Michael Pennie's work had been installed at The Pound Arts Centre. The triptych due to be installed at the Almshouses had stalled slightly due to conservation requirements and waiting on the design for the plinth required but it was hoped these issues would be resolved quickly.

The Town Council's Public Art Task Group (PATG) was also keen to see new public artwork commissioned and this would be discussed at a future meeting.

The update was noted.

CS 22/26 Events Update *(Minute CS 10/26 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 during the summer.

Middlewick House Open Garden (6/7 June 2026) – The Town Council had a stall at the Open Garden event on both days, with the aim of promoting Corsham as a visitor destination to those attending. This year's event raised a record £245,000 for the Bobby Van Trust and Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance and resolved the issues of previous years by introducing advance ticket only for both admission and car parking with limited numbers. However, there were few visitors to the Town Council's stand and a decision would need to be made ahead of 2027's event as to whether it is worthwhile attending, or whether the Town Council should be represented at the event in a different way.

Corsham Summer Fete (4 July 2026) – The Summer Fete had been a great success, with excellent feedback from stallholders, performers and attendees. The bungee run had proved particularly popular, and it was felt this should feature again at the next Fete or, potentially, at other Town Council events when appropriate.

Pokemon Trail (18 July-31 August 2026) – The Pokemon Trail, for primary school age children, and run in conjunction with The Corsham Toyshop, was proving as popular as ever. Pictures of Pokemon needed to be found in 10 town centre businesses on the High Street and Pickwick Road and in Martingate. Each entry then received free

Pokemon cards from The Toy Shop. The back of the entry form featured a Pokemon picture to colour in and return for the chance of winning another prize.

Street Fair (12 September) – All facilities were booked; the entertainment line-up was almost finalised and included performances from both Corsham Windband and The Corsham Band, and 23 stalls had confirmed attendance, with more applications for pitches expected. There would also be a display of vintage motorcycles and free face painting and balloon modelling. The Sealed Knot's living history tent would be at Corsham Almshouses for the duration of the Street Fair as part of Corsham's Heritage Open Days programme.

Heritage Open Days (11-20 September) – The theme for 2026 was Everyday Histories and the Town Council was working with representatives from Corsham Almshouses, Sealed Knot, St Bartholomew's Church, Corsham Walking Festival, Hartham Park and Monks Chapel to create a programme of events. A leaflet covering all the HODs events would be produced and distributed via the Library Service and held at various venues across the town. The leaflet would also be available at the Street Fair. All events would be listed on the Heritage Open Days (HODs) website, and it was hoped that Pound Arts would be able to help with running the box office for those events that needed to be pre-booked (eg walks, guided tours).

Town of Culture 2028 – The Head of Community Services updated the Committee on Corsham's entry in the competition to become the UK Town of Culture 2028. Unfortunately, Corsham had not been short-listed (no towns in Wiltshire had made it to the second stage) but it was hoped that the conversations begun with the various stakeholders involved would see the ideas and plans in Corsham's application reach fruition. A meeting would be held in the autumn to see how these could be progressed.

The update was noted.

The Committee was also asked to consider a suggestion from Kettlesmith's regarding their potential 2027 Corsham Beer Festival, due to be held at Digital Mansion Corsham. The suggestion was to link the Festival with Taste of Corsham in May.

Councillors felt that the potential issues outweighed the benefits of the two events being run on the same day. Concerns included the logistics involved in trying to close and pack up Taste of Corsham when the Beer Festival would be running; linking a family-friendly event with an event where alcohol featured so heavily, and the impact the Beer Festival could have on other drinks sellers at the food festival.

The Committee was supportive of the idea of the Beer Festival, but felt it was better as a separate event, and that two events in town on different days would encourage more people to visit Corsham rather than having both events on the same day.

CS 23/26 Tourism Update *(Minute CS 11/26 and others)*

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

A new Visit Corsham logo was being designed in preparation for the update to the Visit Corsham website. The logo would also be used on the new version of the retail map.

The launch of the first six episodes of Series Two of the Disney+ adaptation of Jilly Cooper's *Rivals* had caused a great deal of interest in Corsham as a location. Over 40 online features by various newspapers and magazines had been written, along with Corsham being featured on local radio, via BBC Wiltshire, and on TV, via the BBC's *Points West*. Alongside this, the Tourism and Events Officer had also posted regarding *Rivals* on the Town Council's own social media sites. Visit Britain/Visit England had also requested pictures of Cosham and *Rivals* filming for its image library.

The opening of Corsham House, the new boutique hotel and brasserie in the old Lloyds Bank building, had also created excellent press coverage for both the new business and Corsham.

The update was noted.

CS 24/26 Business Support Update *(Minute CS 12/26 and others)*

The next Breakfast would take place in September, with the date to be confirmed. It was likely that the Breakfast would be held at Digital Mansion Corsham, with a focus on the Town Council's new Strategic Plan and what businesses wanted to see in the Corsham of the future.

A suggestion had been made by Mike Booth from Digital Mansion Corsham about the potential for running a boules competition for local businesses and organisations along the lines of the annual Bath Boules tournament. Further discussions were due to take place, and the idea would also be raised at the next Business Breakfast to gauge interest.

The update was noted.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.28pm. There were no members of the public present.

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CHAIR DATE