MINUTES

Meeting of: Community Committee

Date: Monday, 25th March 2013

Present: Councillors: W.J. Rose (Chairman), A.S. Bennett, Mrs M. Bennett, O.A. Biyi (arrived 7.56 p.m.), J.C. Goodman, M.C.M. Lager, Mrs J.M. Money, Mrs C. Thompson, R. Williams

Also in attendance: Cllr P. Horner, Cllr Mrs J. Beavis (BDC), Mr A. Wright (BDC), PS. D. Wright (Essex Police), Mrs M. Squire (Town Clerk), Mrs G. Kennedy (Committee Clerk)

And one member of the public.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss L. Barlow, N. Coughlan and Mrs P.M. Lee; and from Councillor O.A. Biyi who would be late.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 25th March 2013. Cont’d.

84. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 4th February 2013 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

85. **INTERESTS**

Councillor M.C.M. Lager declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minutes 97 – Mobile Library, as a Member of Essex County Council, 88 – Community and Leisure, as a Member of Braintree District Council, 90(viii) – HomeStart Grant Aid Request, as it is the recipient of his Town Mayor’s Charity and 90(iv) – St Nicolas Church Grant Aid Request, as a near neighbour who will benefit from the repair of the clock.

Councillor R. Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 90(vii) – Witham Carnival Association, as a member of that organisation.

Councillor Mrs J.M. Money declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 90(viii) – HomeStart Grant Aid Request, as she is a District Council representative on the HomeStart committee.

Councillor W.J. Rose declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minutes 88 – Community and Leisure, as a Member of Braintree District Council and 95 – West Ward, as a Member for West Ward.

Later in the Meeting, Councillor O.A. Biyi declared a pecuniary interest in Minute 90(vi) and (x) – Boys’ Brigade Grant Aid Request as he is a volunteer for that organisation.

86. **QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman welcomed Lorne Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of the Boys’ Brigade, to the Meeting.

Mr Campbell explained the background to his post and how there was funding for thirty months to transform the Boys’ Brigade from a team led organisation into a sustainable, strategic youth provision. He stressed the importance of working with hard to reach young people. He explained that next week is the Week of Action with a large number of youngsters signed up to take part. He also mentioned the success of the recent event at the Public Hall. He spoke of the involvement of local interest groups, businesses and sports clubs and the use of two empty shop units.

Mr Campbell spoke of the need for core funding for the Boys’ Brigade and the opportunity to work with businesses. He said that with the rise in school leaving age, young people will be required to be in education or work based learning, so he has been working with businesses with the view to providing apprenticeships.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 25th March 2013. Cont’d.

The Chairman thanked Mr Campbell for his comments.

87. POLICE

The Chairman welcomed PS Dave Wright to the Meeting.

(i) No Drinking Zone

An email was received from Inspector Davey concerning support by police for a Designated No Drinking Zone.

Members were disappointed that despite the police first mooting the idea of a no drinking zone there appears to be little support for it now. PS Wright explained that he had inherited this matter. He stressed the importance of bringing alcohol related issues to police attention as other legislation can be used. He was concerned whether a no drinking zone could be adequately policed and it was important to ensure that it would be enforceable.

It was reported that the District Council had delayed the original scheme to implement a no drinking zone and because of the colder, inclement weather the serious problems of the summer had abated. It had been agreed at a JAG (Joint Action Group) meeting that if there was further evidence of drinking the matter could be raised again.

Councillor O.A. Biyi arrived at the Meeting at this point.

Further discussion took place as to how this matter could be resolved and it was agreed that Councillor J.C. Goodman would take this matter up at the next JAG Meeting.

RESOLVED That Councillor J.C. Goodman be asked to raise the matter of drinking in the town centre at the next JAG meeting.

(ii) Speeding Vehicles

PS Wright said that he had no information concerning speeding vehicles in Church Street.

Members were disappointed that this matter had still not been resolved and asked that enquiries be made and a response made in time for the next Town Council Meeting on 15th April.
RESOLVED That the police be asked to provide details of speed checks undertaken in Church Street.¹

(iii) Police Community Support Officers

Information on the work of the local PCSOs were received.

PS Wright explained that a number of PCSOs work in Witham and the surrounding rural areas. Members asked whether it would be possible to obtain a breakdown of the PCSOs’ duties. PS Wright explained that specific cases would be protected under the Data Protection Act but further details could be provided. Members pointed out that in the past PCSOs have come to the Community Committee Meetings.

A discussion then took place concerning travellers that had moved onto Eastways Industrial Estate, near the railway line. PS Wright explained that the situation is being closely monitored.

The Chairman thanked PS Wright for his attendance at the Meeting.

Councillor P. Horner left the Council Chamber.

88. COMMUNITY AND LEISURE

Councillors M.C.M. Lager and W.J. Rose had declared an interest.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mrs J. Beavis to the Meeting and Mr Andy Wright, the new corporate director at Braintree District Council.

Councillor P. Horner returned to the Council Chamber.

(i) Councillor Mrs J. Beavis explained that all the consents had been granted so the building of the new Leisure Centre would begin in the next few weeks. She hoped that there would be a launch to mark the occasion. She referred to the perfect opportunity for Witham to work with Lorne Campbell in assisting young people in up-skilling. She also reported on the success of the Mi Community grant scheme.

(ii) Councillor Mrs J. Beavis explained that dialogue is taking place with the academies to agree joint use of the sports halls for the community. Mr Wright added that it was important to build up a good relationship with the head teachers and agree a suitable handover time when the public can gain access to the facilities. He would expect that the sports halls could be used in the evenings, weekends and school holidays. Members were advised that the Gym Club has already moved into alternative accommodation.

¹ Information has been received from PCSO Jessica Lofthouse that she has carried out speed checks in this location using a hand held laser. She has provided details of the speed checks and hopes to undertake a further check later this week.
In answer to a question, Councillor Mrs J. Beavis said that the new Leisure Centre was never meant to replace all facilities, that Bramston Sports Centre is in a dreadful state and it was a golden opportunity to provide a joint use facility.

The suggestion was made that the District Council’s under-spend of around £900,000, achieved through improved sales of recycling materials, could be used to extend the Mi Community grant scheme which is oversubscribed. Mention was also made of the Joint Working with the District Council that had recently faltered. Councillor Mrs J. Beavis explained that she agreed with the suggestion for extending the Mi Community scheme and further consideration would be given. She suggested that each case of joint working was different and small parishes had achieved this through service level agreements.

Members thanked Councillor Mrs J. Beavis and Mr A. Wright for attending the Meeting and reiterated the desire to work in partnership with the District Council.

89. **TOWN CLERK’S REPORT**

The Town Clerk’s Report on matters arising was received.

Members spoke about the new Police and Crime Commissioner attending a future Meeting. Members discussed whether he should be briefed about what questions he would be asked but those who had been to a previous meeting considered this would be unnecessary. It was also suggested that neighbouring Parish Councils might also be invited.

Members were delighted that Essex County Council had agreed to keep the street lights on so that CCTV cameras will operate on the Industrial Estates. In answer to a question the Town Clerk said that a further reminder about the new Clinical Commissioning Group attending a meeting with the Town Council had been sent that day.

**RESOLVED** That the Report be received and noted.

90. **GRANT AID REQUESTS**

(a) A report concerning the grant aid requests was received.

The Town Clerk reiterated the scheme which had been communicated to all community groups within Witham resulting in a modest increase in the number of new applicants for potential funding. He added that there is a budget shortfall of over £5,000 if all requests were met. He suggested that it is appropriate that some of the grants could come from the Youth Engagement budget.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 25th March 2013. Cont’d.

(b) Applications

Members agreed that it would be helpful to take the applications from the smallest grant upwards.

(i) Witham Army Cadets

It was agreed that a grant of £174.95 should be made to the Army Cadets towards their telephone and internet charges. This sum would come from the Youth Engagement budget.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the Witham Army Cadets a grant of £174.95.

(ii) Witham Allstars Majorettes

Members noted that the referees were not independent and the Town Clerk said that he would advise them accordingly of their obligations in their application. Members understood the problems with fledgling organisations.

It was agreed that subject to two independent referees being provided a grant should be given from the Youth Engagement budget.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the Allstars Majorettes a grant of £300 towards the costs of new uniforms/equipment, subject to two independent referees.

(iii) Witham and Rivenhall Air Training Corps

Members agreed to fund this application through the Youth Engagement budget.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the Witham and Rivenhall Air Training Corps a grant of £1,000 to upgrade its audio visual equipment.

(iv) St Nicolas Church

Councillor M.C.M. Lager had declared an interest.

The recommendation was made that the Parish Church should be supported.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the St Nicolas Church a grant of £1,500 towards the repair of the church clock.
(v) **Youth and Community Project (Boys’ Brigade)**

It was pointed that although this project is being run by Lorne Campbell, it is not solely a Boys’ Brigade issue but would benefit young people in general throughout Witham. Members agreed to take this application in isolation and that it should be funded from the Youth Engagement budget.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards a grant of £1,820 for the Youth and Community Project.

(vi) **Boys’ Brigade (Apprenticeships and extended work experience)**

Councillor O.A. Biyi declared a pecuniary interest and left the Council Chamber.

It was agreed that a grant of £2,500 should be given.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards a grant of £2,500 to the Boys’ Brigade, apprenticeships and extended work experience scheme.

Councillor O.A. Biyi returned to the Council Chamber.

(vii) **Witham Carnival Association**

Councillor R. Williams had declared an interest.

It was agreed to give a grant of £3,800.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the Witham Carnival Association a grant of £3,800 towards the running of the carnival.

(viii) **HomeStart**

Councillors M.C.M. Lager and Mrs J.M. Money had declared an interest.

Members recognised the sterling work of HomeStart with underprivileged families.

In view of the time it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders.

**RESOLVED** That in view of the time Standing Order 4(a) should be suspended to allow the Meeting to continue.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 25th March 2013.  Cont’d.

It was agreed that a grant of £4,241 should be given.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards HomeStart a grant of £4,241.

(ix) **Tabor Centre**

An application for a grant of £5,000 was received from the Tabor Centre towards providing daytime care for severely disabled adults living in the Braintree District.

Members noted the amount in reserves and the proportion of Witham residents assisted. It was agreed that it would be reasonable to give a grant of £1,000.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the Tabor Centre a grant of £1,000 towards providing daytime care for the severely disabled.

(x) **Boys’ Brigade (Core Running Costs)**

Councillor O.A. Biyi had declared a pecuniary interest and left the Council Chamber.

It was agreed that a grant of £5,000 should be made.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the Boys’ Brigade a grant of £5,000 towards it core running costs.

Councillor O.A. Biyi returned to the Council Chamber.

(xi) **Witham Industrial Watch**

A formal grant aid request was received from Witham Industrial Watch for a grant of £5,000 towards the provision of an additional ANPR camera.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council using the General Power of Competence awards the Witham Industrial Watch a grant of £5,000 towards an additional ANPR camera.

Councillor Mrs M. Bennett left the Council Chamber.

91. **‘A’ BOARDS IN THE TOWN CENTRE**

Members were asked to consider options for resolving the current proliferation of ‘A’ Boards in the Town Centre.
Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 25th March 2013. Cont’d.

Members discussed the implications of restrictions and recognised the emotive subject of businesses advertising their companies. It was pointed out however that there is a health and safety implication for pedestrians.

Members agreed with the suggested approach to invite businesses to comply with the County Council code.

RESOLVED That a letter be sent to all businesses advising them of the County Council’s code and inviting them to comply.

RESOLVED That the situation be monitored for compliance and at the end of a three month period Braintree District Council will be asked to remove any ‘A’ Boards not complying.

Councillor Mrs M. Bennett returned to the Council Chamber whilst the above matter was being discussed.

92. NEWLANDS PRECINCT

The Notes of the joint meeting with representatives of NewRiver Retail and the Town and District Council held on 29th January 2013 were received.

RESOLVED That the Notes be received.

93. CHRISTMAS EVENTS WORKING GROUP

(i) Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Christmas Lights Working Group held 14th February 2013 were received and Members asked to note agreement for its name to be changed to the Christmas Events Working Group.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received.

(ii) Social Event

Members noted that the Working Group had discussed holding a social evening to involve all Community Groups.

Members agreed that such a social event would not be feasible.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.
94. **VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE**

(i) **Statistics**

The Visitor Information statistics for January and February 2013 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the statistics be received and noted.

(ii) **Visual Display**

It was noted that a suggestion had been received that the visual display in the Information Centre should have an audio soundtrack. Members recognised that this would be intrusive and difficult for members of staff working in the centre.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

95. **WEST WARD**

Councillor W.J. Rose had declared an interest.

(i) **Bramble Road Play Area**

A report was received concerning improvements to Bramble Road Play Area, to include the planting of mature trees. The Town Council has been asked to water the trees and the Open Spaces Supervisor has agreed that this can be arranged within the usual schedule of work.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and information noted.

(ii) **Spa Road Shops**

The Chairman reported that he and Councillor P. Horner had met with the District Council’s Architect and a representative from Greenfields to discuss refurbishment of the shops at Spa Road and it was agreed that proposals would be formulated.

Members asked if in future all Ward Members could be included in the discussions.

Members complained about the state of the underpass with graffiti and projecting screws.2

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

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2 Braintree District Council has been asked to remove both the graffiti and screws from the wall of the underpass.
96. COMMUNITY PROJECT

A report was received regarding a community project for volunteers to undertake.

It was agreed to defer the matter to the Town Council Meeting to be held 15\textsuperscript{th} April 2013 to allow Members the opportunity to come up with ideas.

RESOLVED That the information be received and the matter deferred to the next Town Council Meeting for ideas.

97. MOBILE LIBRARY

Councillor M.C.M. Lager had declared an interest.

A report was received concerning changes to the mobile library service whereby the stop in Holst Avenue junction with Gershwin Boulevard is reduced to just fifteen minutes.

It was agreed that South Ward Members would email the Town Clerk with comments from their constituents that use the service.\textsuperscript{3}

RESOLVED That the report be received and Members from South Ward email the Town Clerk with comments to enable an official response to be made.

98. ESSEX HERITAGE TRUST

A report was received concerning grants available through the Essex Heritage Trust.

Members agreed that details should be passed to the Witham & Countryside Society and to St Nicolas Church.

RESOLVED That the details of the grant scheme be forwarded to both the Witham & Countryside Society and to St Nicolas Parochial Church Council.

99. PUPPET FESTIVAL

A report was received.

The Town Clerk advised that he was trying to involve young people in preparation and participation in the event, in conjunction with Lorne Campell’s youth development strategy. He had therefore contacted the Library to arrange story

\textsuperscript{3} Members of South Ward have been notified that the mobile library next stops at Holst Avenue on Friday, 12\textsuperscript{th} April 2013 and an extension to the consultation has been obtained to allow Members the opportunity to discuss the changes with users of the service.
telling and other small puppet acts on that date. There would be puppet workshops and also a competition for children prior to the Festival. There would be a strong emphasis on community and youth involvement which can be sustained in future years.

Members welcomed the ideas.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.02 p.m.

Councillor W.J. Rose
Chairman

MS/GK/ 2.4.2013