



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Community Committee**

Date: **Monday, 17th May 2021**

Present: Councillors

S.	Ager	(Chairman)
J.	Bayford	(Vice Chairman)
C.	Jay	
C.	Lager	
M.	Lager	
C.	Livermore	
M.	Weeks	
R.	Williams	

Also in attendance:

Cllr	J.	Williams	
	A.	Deane	(Chatten Free School)
S/Sgt	S.	Jesse	(Essex Police)
	N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
	L.	Brimson	(Events Co-ordinator)

The Chairman welcomed Adam Deane and S/SGT Simon Jesse to the Meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pleasance who had a previous engagement.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

2. MINUTES

Members were reminded that the delegated decisions had been adopted by Town Council.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Community Committee Meeting held 10th February 2021 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No members of the press or public were present to make representation.

5. GUEST SPEAKER

The Chairman welcomed Mr Adam Deane of Chatten Free School to give a presentation.

Mr Deane explained that he was the Head of Chatten Free School which was being purpose built in Rickstones Road for severely autistic children from 4 to 19 years of age with pre-verbal and challenging behaviour. He explained that the school would open initially with 25 pupils and then rise annually to 50 then 75 pupils.

Mr Deane said that the school building would be a specialist environment with the hall built like a shopping mall, to teach the students how to live in the world and be able to communicate. The core purpose was to ensure that children were happy and healthy and grew to be as independent as possible. Mr Deane stated it was important to ensure that students can communicate their basic needs and this needs to be taught as early as possible. The children would be taught specific life skills from basic communication to tolerance, personal hygiene and safety. Mr Deane stated that students would have one to one training from tutors, geared to their specific needs whilst being supported by speech therapists and other members of staff.

Mr Deane thanked Members for the opportunity to speak and stated that he hoped to form a positive relationship with the Town Council.

The Chairman thanked Mr Deane and hoped there would be an opportunity to visit the school in due course.

6. ESSEX POLICE, PSCO & SPECIAL CONSTABLE UPDATES

The Chairman welcomed S/SGT Simon Jesse to the Meeting.

S/Sgt Jesse explained that he had increased his hours on patrol and hoped Members found his reports informative. He spoke about vehicle theft and criticism received through social media but that arrests had now been made. S/SGT stated that the town's ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) cameras work well but that one was needed for Maldon Road. He said that there had been anti-social behaviour in Cypress Road which following police action had now ceased. S/SGT Jesse urged residents to report incidents on-line rather than relying on social media.

S/SGT Jesse reminded Members that electric scooters were illegal and classed as a motor vehicle; parents of young children using these scooters were given a warning, anyone over 16 would have their scooter removed and crushed.

The Chairman thanked S/SGT Jesse for his report.

7. COMMITTEE INCOME, EXPENDITURE & BUDGET REPORT

The committee income & expenditure report for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 was received.

RESOLVED That the Community Committee income and budget report for 2020/2021 be received and noted.

8. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk had nothing to report.

9. SOCIAL ISOLATION WORKING GROUP

The Notes from the Social Isolation Working Group Meetings held 6th March 2020 and 7th May 2021 were received.

The Chairman hoped that the Group would become more active as Covid restrictions allowed and stated that all Members of the Town Council would be asked to assist with events on a one-off basis. Members spoke about a possible Friendship Bench scheme and the need to be mindful not to encourage anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED That the Notes be received and information noted.

10. YOUTH WORKING GROUP

The Notes from the Youth Working Group Meetings held 18th March 2021 and 29th April 2021 were received.

A verbal report on the Essex Association of Local Councils Youth Conference was given.

Members discussed the District Council's plans relating to the skate park consultation and stated that the Town Council should be involved. Members spoke about play facilities in the town and where shortages in LAPS (Local Areas for Play), LEAPS (Locally Equipped Areas for Play) and NEAPS (Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play) occur.

The suggestion was made that an investigation into existing play provision should be commissioned.

RESOLVED That the Notes be received and an investigation be commissioned for existing play areas and future requirements.

11. WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS UPDATE

The Events Co-ordinator gave an update and presentation on proposed Town Council events. She spoke of the successful Easter Egg Hunt and the positive feedback from participants regardless of the weather. 196 children and over 400 people took part, all socially distanced it was said that there was potential for this event to expand.

The Community Day could not take place in the Town Park as this would normally be held just before Covid Restrictions were due to be relaxed. Not all groups were currently meeting therefore the event would not be viable this year.

RESOLVED That the Community Day be cancelled.

The Events Co-ordinator explained that with the cancellation of Community Day it was proposed to bring forward the Dog Show to 3rd July 2021. The event would be held from 10 until 3 p.m. on the River Walk, with display arena, trade stalls and charities along with catering stalls.

The Events Co-Ordinator explained that it would not be possible to hold the Puppet Festival in its usual format but it was envisaged that the event would be held in the afternoon for children and for adults in the evening.

The Events Co-Ordinator then spoke about the Halloween event which would entail a series of puzzles following a trail, it was hoped that this would not be impacted if there were further Covid-19 restrictions later in the year.

It was hoped that the Christmas Events, to include a Christmas Market, would be achievable this year along with the Winter Wonderland lights on the River Walk.

RESOLVED That the information be received and that the Dog Show for 3rd July 2021 be confirmed.

12. CCTV

A report was received regarding CCTV along with the figures logged by the Monitoring Office.

The Clerk explained that a tablet is used by police to access the CCTV system which was found to be useful.

Members recognised that the incidents logged were small but it was necessary to take into consideration the deterrent effect. It was considered that CCTV promotes the feeling of safety but concern was expressed about the costs of monitoring cameras.

RESOLVED That a full report be prepared and submitted to Town Council.

13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A (Section 3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

14. SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTIC REPORT

Social media statistics' report was received.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

15. INFORMATION CENTRE STATISTICS

Information Centre statistics' report was received.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.08 p.m.

Councillor S. Ager
Chairman

NS/GK/20.05.2021