



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

Meeting of: **Community Committee**

Date: **Monday, 25th November 2019**

Present:	Councillors	R.P.	Ramage	(Chairman)
		J.C.	Bayford	(Vice Chairman)
		K.L.	Atwill	
		P.R.	Barlow	
	Miss	C.	Jay	
		M.C.M.	Lager	
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	
	Miss	M.L.	Weeks	
		R.	Williams	(arrived 8.36 p.m.)

Also in attendance:

	Councillors	Mrs	S.	Ager	
			S.E.	Hicks	
Chelmsford City Council			S.	Clark	(Public Protection Manager)
Link CCTV			R.	Mitchinson	
Essex Police	Insp		L.	Campbell	(Community Special)
	PS		S.	Jesse	(Community Special)
			J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
	Mrs		G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
	Miss		N.	Smith	(Assistant RFO)

60. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.C. Goodman who had a previous engagement; and Councillors C.S. Livermore and T.A. Pleasance who were unwell; and Councillor R. Williams who would be late due to employment commitments.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

61. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 22nd October 2019 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

62. **INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

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

There were no members of the press or public present.

64. **CCTV**

(a) **Presentation**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Spencer Clark, Public Protection Manager at Chelmsford City Council, and Mr Ryan Mitchinson from Link CCTV, to the Meeting to discuss plans early proposals made by the Town Council for potential extensions the existing CCTV network.

Mr Clark said that the cameras currently operated by the Council provide excellent quality images with minimal downtime and have resulted in active prosecutions of criminals. He then gave feedback for the past year listing incidents where CCTV has been required, including three burglaries, two welfare concerns, 25 media requests, four missing people, three offensive weapons, two public order cases, one robbery and one theft.

Members reviewed a long-list of potential locations for new CCTV and considered potential impacts on crime and order when extending the CCTV system. A recommended specification for each site was proposed at a draft cost of £6,000 per site. It was further noted that each site would require a dedicated broadband connection which would lead to a notional increase in operational costs of the network.

Members considered that information on crime ‘hotspots’ would be required before consideration is given to the siting of the cameras. It was suggested that further consultation with partner authorities including Braintree District Council and Essex Police would be required to assess the merits of each proposed CCTV location. Members noted the need for an evidence led approach to any future network expansion to ensure that cameras are both fit for purpose and installed in locations that would deliver value for money and a net benefit for local citizens.

Members agreed that Witham is generally a peaceful town but assessing the potential expansion of the CCTV network as a crime-deterrent measure was a sensible and considered approach to keeping public order.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted with the Task & Finish Group for Community Safety to continue its research and feasibility work.

(b) **SMART Devices**

Mr Spencer Clark was asked to give an update on the ability of Police Officers to view Witham CCTV images on hand held devices. Members had previously raised concerns that remote access to CCTV footage was not possible by officers on patrol.

Mr Clark explained that a hardware issue and power outage within an Essex Police building was preventing footage from being made available to officers. It was noted that action was ongoing with a view to resolving the issue with Essex Police.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

(c) **Cameras**

Mr Clark said that at present camera 10 was not working as the aerial had become detached and this was being replaced.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

65. ESSEX POLICE

(a) **Special Constables**

A report regarding Special Constables and the presentation held at the Town Hall on 19th November 2019 was received.

Members congratulated Special Police Inspector Lorne Campbell on his promotion and Special Police Sergeant Simon Jesse on being made a substantive sergeant.

Members were informed that a seminar organised by officers with Essex Police on the topic of 'Employer Supported Policing' had been held at the Town Hall with invited guests to talk about special police officers and the range of options open to employers who wish to support employees as Special Constables. There had been a positive response from those present and the event would be extended in 2020 to include more employers, as part of the Council's continued recruitment campaign commitments.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

(b) **Police Bulletin**

The Police Bulletins for September and October 2019 were received.

SPS Simon Jesse highlighted several points including being recognised as 'Team of the Year' by Essex Police. They had also attended the Hang Out's first birthday celebrations and the Puppet Festival. He spoke about drug issues in Witham but there was no specific location for drug dealing however CCTV could be a great help. SPS Jesse confirmed that police are aware of a number of local areas with increased drug activity and pro-active patrols were taking place to identify individuals involved.

Members were notified that darker evenings in winter hampered speeding deterrent efforts however the continuation of providing visible policing ensured that traffic offences are kept to a minimum. Members were also provided an update concerning a series of thefts from trade vehicles. A suggestion was made that tool marking could be undertaken and this idea could be taken forward by the Community Safety Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED That the report be received and a proposal for providing anti-theft tool marking be taken forward by the Task & Finish Group for Community Safety and assessed for feasibility.

(c) **Street Weeks**

A request was received from Councillor Miss C. Jay to hold a ‘Street Week’. She explained that other ‘Street Weeks’ that had been held in other local communities were a fantastic initiative when police officers knock on doors to talk to the community about issues of concern and give advice.

Members agreed that this would be a worthwhile initiative and should be taken forward by the Community Safety Task and Finish Group. Special Police Inspector Campbell said that this had been done before in conjunction with Greenfields Community Housing.

RESOLVED That a proposal for a ‘Street Week’ event be referred to the Task & Finish Group for Community Safety and assessed for feasibility.

66. COMMUNITY SAFETY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

(a) **Minutes**

The Minutes from the Community Safety Task and Finish Group held 21st October 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

(b) **Secure Locker**

A letter from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex was received.

Members were informed that several letters had been sent on this issue and it was considered that Essex Police would not change this internal decision.

Councillor K.L. Atwill asked that his disappointment with this decision be recorded in the minutes. Members remained unsatisfied with the lack of evidence-led rationale provided by the police in making the operational decision to not allow storing of equipment at a local, secure venue.

RESOLVED That the letter be received and noted.

Councillor R. Williams arrived at the Meeting at 8:45pm.

67. TOWN CLERK’S REPORT

A report was received from the Town Clerk on matters arising.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

68. COMMUNITY BUDGET

A draft Budget for 2020/2021 was received.

The Town Clerk advised that a budget line had been inserted for VE Day 75 celebrations with costs based on the Community Day budget. Additional sums had been inserted into the budget to cover administrative costs of Remembrance functions and commitment to the recently established Sunday Cinema. Members were advised that all Earmarked Reserves relating to all committees would be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee on 9th December 2019.

Members were advised that a reformation of the staffing structure dispensing with the 'Community Manager' post had created a reduction of £8,160 in staffing costs, used to offset general budgetary increases, resulting in a net increase in the committee budget of £1,284.

RESOLVED That the draft Community Committee Budget for 2020/2021 be agreed and referred to the Estimates Sub-Committee Meeting on Monday, 6th January 2020.

69. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLAN

A draft 2020/2021 Community Committee Business Plan was received.

The Town Clerk explained that the Community Committee was looking at appropriate large projects for inclusion in the business plan and then feasibility could be considered for taking them forward. Items such as the feasibility of commissioning tool marking sessions should be considered by the appropriate Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED That the Community Committee Business Plan for 2020/2021 be referred to the Estimates Sub-Committee Meeting on Monday, 6th January 2020.

70. SOCIAL ISOLATION

(a) **Report**

A report was received from Councillor Mrs S. Ager regarding social isolation.

Councillor Mrs S. Ager explained that she had read the NALC report – Reaching Out, which gave ways to tackle social isolation. She said that for lonely people the first step can be the hardest. She spoke of a 'buddy' system whereby volunteers visit the lonely but there were no volunteers to extend the scheme into Witham. She considered that loneliness is a stigma. There were so many clubs and organisations in the town but the elderly can be set in their ways. She suggested that a Task and Finish Group be set up to explore ways of combatting loneliness.

Members agreed that this was a good way forward but it was not just the elderly who were lonely as a study had recognised that as a group 16 – 24 year olds are the loneliest. Engagement with the Academies was already being achieved and there was the Town Council's initiative of the monthly Silver Cinema which had been set up originally for Alzheimer sufferers and their carers, but was now being used by the elderly who can be incredibly lonely.

RESOLVED That a report be received and a Task and Finish Group be set up to combat Social Isolation with Councillor Mrs S. Ager in the Chair, and Councillors Miss C. Jay, Mrs S.C. Lager, R.P. Ramage and Miss M.L. Weeks.

(b) **National Association of Local Councils' Report – Reaching Out**

The NALC's Report – Reaching Out, A Guide to helping principal and local councils tackle loneliness was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and considered by the Social Isolation Task and Finish Group.

(c) **Town & Parish Councils – Community Cohesion and reducing loneliness**

A letter, leaflet and the Parish Council Survey were received from Braintree District.

Members agreed that the District Council should be informed that the Town Council had taken the initiative to set up a Task and Finish Group to combat loneliness.

RESOLVED That the information be received and the Office complete the survey with the inclusion about the Task and Finish Group.

Councillors Mrs S. Ager and P.R. Barlow then left the Meeting.

71. DICKENSIAN EVENT

A report on the Dickensian Event to be held Saturday, 30th November 2019, followed by the switching on of the Christmas Lights at 5.30 p.m. was received. The Town Clerk said that the timings were to ensure that it would be sufficiently dark so the lights had an impact and general atmosphere improved; It was noted this was being conducted on a trial basis ahead of the Events Review Group reconsidering the format of Christmas Events in their entirety.

RESOLVED That the report be received and information noted.

72. CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Members noted that the Christmas Carol Service around the Christmas Tree will be held on Wednesday, 11th December 2019 at 7 p.m.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

73. INFORMATION CENTRE

Details of Information Centre statistics for September and October 2019 were received.

Members noted the good work which was being done in the Information Centre and extended their thanks to the Information Centre Manager who continued to increase footfall and margins.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

74. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION STEERING GROUP

The Minutes from the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group Meeting held 17th October 2019 were received.

It was noted that the District Council had earmarked £ ½ million on regeneration of the town centre and there was concern that the money should be spent in Witham.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

75. YOUTH TASK AND FINISH GROUP

(a) **Minutes**

The Minutes from the Youth Task and Finish Group Meeting held 8th November 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

(b) **Membership**

A replacement Member was sought for Councillor J.C. Bayford who wished to stand down from the Youth Task and Finish Group.

It was agreed to let the Town Clerk know if a Member wished to be part of the Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED That if a Member wished to be part of the Task and Finish Group they inform the Town Clerk accordingly.¹

76. SOCCABILITY

Details of the Soccability scheme were received.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

77. VE DAY 75 TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Minutes from the VE Day 75 Task and Finish Group Meeting held 15th November 2019 were received.

Councillor J.C. Goodman, Chairman of the Group, had sent costings regarding the entertainment to be provided over the weekend.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

78. COMMUNITY REPORTS

Reports from Town Council representatives on outside bodies were received and a report from Councillor J.C. Goodman was tabled. It was noted that the number 39 bus service reduction related to the early morning and late afternoon subsidised service provided by Essex County Council.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

79. FIRE SERVICE CONSULTATION

Details of the Fire Service Consultation was received.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

¹ Councillors S.E. Hicks and Mrs S.C. Lager will now be part of the Youth Task and Finish Group.

There being no further business the Chairman arrived at 9.24 p.m.

Councillor _____
Chairman

JS/GK/27.11.2019