



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

Meeting of: **Community Committee**

Date: **Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

|                     |             |         |          |                     |
|---------------------|-------------|---------|----------|---------------------|
| Present:            | Councillors | S.      | Ager     | (Chairman)          |
|                     |             | J.      | Williams | (Vice Chairman)     |
|                     |             | J.      | Bayford  |                     |
|                     |             | C.      | Lager    |                     |
|                     |             | M.      | Lager    |                     |
|                     |             | R.      | Williams |                     |
| Essex Youth Service |             | S.      | Hughes   |                     |
| Essex Police        | S/Sgt       | S.      | Jesse    | (Community Special) |
|                     |             | S/Const | C.       | Eaketts             |
|                     |             | N.      | Smith    | (Town Clerk)        |
|                     |             | G.      | Kennedy  | (Committee Clerk)   |
|                     |             | C.      | Strachan | (Assistant RFO)     |

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jay, Rajeev and Weeks who were unwell.

**RESOLVED** That the apologies be received and approved.

### 2. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 3. INTERESTS

Councillor M. Lager declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 13(c) – Grant Aid Request, Templars' Community Association, as he knew the applicant when he was a governor of Templars' School.

Later in the Meeting at Minute 13(a) – Grant Aid Request, St John Ambulance, Councillor Bayford declared a non-pecuniary interest as he used to be the Unit Manager of St John Ambulance and Councillor M. Lager likewise declared a non-pecuniary interest as a friend of Mrs Paula Franklin, fundraiser.

#### **4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No members of the press or public were present.

#### **5. GUEST SPEAKER**

The Chairman welcomed Sue Hughes from the Essex Youth Service to the Meeting.

Sue Hughes wished to introduce herself to Members. She had come back to cover the Witham area just as the country went into lock-down. Ms Hughes assured Members that the Youth Service still exists but was not a front-line deliverer but support for community groups to set up services.

Ms Hughes explained that the Parkside Youth Centre was running at almost full capacity with the Witham Hang Out starting back shortly. She detailed the groups, which use the centre from Action for Family Carers to the Witham Majorettes. Ms Hughes said that a lot of building work had been undertaken including new heating and windows, which now open. She proposed to start taking out the Youth Bus again to events, which had stopped during the Covid pandemic.

Ms Hughes then spoke about initiatives to ascertain what activities young people would wish to see and partnership working with businesses to provide for example bike maintenance. She spoke of Team Kinetix Parkour which helps young people to gain confidence to achieve their aspirations. She spoke also about gangs exploiting young people and the work they were doing to prevent exploitation. Ms Hughes explained that they had been into schools with drama workshops about sexual harassment, county lines and exploitation. She said that she was working with the police talking to young people on trains and at the railway station about exploitation.

Members agreed that they would be unlikely to recognise exploitation and Ms Hughes said that she would email details as well as inviting Members to visit Parkside. She would also be given dates of future events so that the Youth Bus could be present.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hughes for her informative talk.

#### **6. ESSEX POLICE**

The Chairman welcomed Special Sergeant Jesse and Special Constable Eaketts to the Meeting, Simon was congratulated for winning a community award

S/SGT Jesse explained that the award recognised the effort of the team. He said that S/C Eaketts had now completed her training and would be able to patrol on her own.

S/SGT Jesse said that the law on electric scooters would be changing shortly. They would be classed as motor vehicles and a driving licence would be needed. If reckless driving was spotted there was potential for the scooter to be confiscated.

S/SGT Jesse said that the past month was about visibility and they had attended the Easter Egg Hunt on the River Walk and the Civic Service. Blatant drug dealing had been spotted in a car park and the offender arrested, this had involved a large quantity of Class A drugs. A cannabis

factory had been found on the industrial estate following an attempted burglary with a large haul worth £1.1m destroyed.

Following a question, S/SGT Jesse hoped that there would be a speed cap on the electric scooters.

The Chairman thanked S/SGT Jesse and Special Constable Eaketts for attending.

## **7. COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

The Chairman explained that trained volunteers monitor speeding motorists and report to the police who send letters to offending motorists. She spoke of the benefits of the scheme and sought Members' support.

Members were divided as it was considered that for the scheme to work a large number of volunteers would be required and training must not be delayed, as enthusiasm would wane. The purchase of a speed gun would cost in the region of £2,000 but one could be borrowed for a two-week period and Sgt Jesse would need to be asked for suitable locations.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council support seeking volunteers for a Community Speedwatch scheme

## **8. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on matters arising.

She detailed problems with sponsors for July's Dog Show and the difficulties with insurance for the Queen's Jubilee. A different stage would have to be used and there was a possibility that there could be an over-spend of £466 which could be recouped from the food stalls, if not from an underspend in the Easter Trail budget line. The Town Clerk added that the current insurance company would be pulling out of the local government market.

The Town Clerk mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce proposed to set up a Witham Town website and Members asked if it would be possible for a link to be added to reference the Town Council website.

**RESOLVED** That a link be requested on the new Witham Town website to the Town Council website.

Finally, the Town Clerk explained that lots of bunting had been supplied to the Town Council, Newland Centre and The Grove Centre and WTC staff had handed out to shops and businesses in both the town centre and outlying areas. Care Homes would now be asked if they wished to receive some.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Clerk's report be received and information noted.

## **9. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET REPORT**

The Community Committee Income and Expenditure report for the period up to 31st March 2022 was received.

The Town Clerk pointed out that there had been a small underspend in the Community budget.

**RESOLVED** That the Community Income and Expenditure report for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be received and noted.

**10. 2022/2023 COMMUNITY COMMITTEE BUDGET AND CORPORATE STRATEGY**

The Community Committee Budget and draft Corporate Strategy for 2022/2023 was received.

In answer to a question, the Town Clerk explained that Youth Provision had not had a specific budget line but the Other Community Support budget could be used to fund youth initiatives.

**RESOLVED** That the Community Committee Budget and Corporate Strategy for 2022/2023 be received and agreed.

**11. SILVER CINEMA**

Councillor R Williams explained that the Silver Cinema was now being held at the Royal British Legion Hall, which was better equipped than the library. He said that at the moment they were using the RBL's licence to screen the films and he would resolve this issue. He wished to be sure whether the Silver Cinema was a Town Council entity or a stand-alone initiative supported by the Town Council so that the accounting could be correct. He was also concerned about the continuity of the cinema in the future.

The suggestion was made that an options paper be drawn up to include the Silver Cinema being run by the Town Council using volunteers or inviting the RBL to take ownership.

**RESOLVED** That Councillor R. Williams resolve the current licensing issue and the matter brought back to the next meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

**12. POP UP STALLS**

The Chairman explained that she proposed themes for the Pop-Up stalls to include Climate Change, Financial Crime and Speedwatch. The first stall would be on Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022, and as it was half-term holiday information would be obtained from Sue Hughes, Essex Youth Service to distribute. Councillors C. Lager and J. Williams would operate the stall with Councillor Ager.

The second stall would be on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at Spa Road and Ward Members would be asked to assist. The Town Clerk reminded Members that staff would be unavailable to assist at the weekends.

It was agreed that as Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> July was Carnival Day, a Pop Up stall would be held at the park rather than at Forest Road shops. An email would be sent to all Members requesting assistance.

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

### **13. GRANT AID REQUESTS**

A report detailing available funding was received.

(a) St John Ambulance

Councillor Bayford declared a non-pecuniary interest as he used to be the Unit Manager of St John Ambulance and Councillor M. Lager likewise declared a non-pecuniary interest as a friend of Mrs Paula Franklin, applicant.

A grant aid request was received.

It was explained that a Community Interest Company had been set up to allow St John Ambulance to continue to use its purpose-built building at Spring Lodge. They were still in the process of setting up a bank account.

A suggestion was made that the Town Council could consider insurance for small groups but it was pointed out that this would be fraught with difficulties.

**RESOLVED** That a grant of £4,000 be made to Friends of St John CIC to manage their hall at Spring Lodge.

(b) Big Sing Soul

A grant aid request for £600 was received from The Big Sing Soul.

It was noted that the Big Sing proposed to employ a company to visit nurseries, some of which would themselves be companies and might be outside Witham, to teach the children to sing. Members decided that this would be inappropriate use of council taxpayers' money.

**RESOLVED** That the decision be taken not to support giving the Big Sing Soul a grant for this project.

(c) Templars' Community Association

Councillor M. Lager had declared an interest.

A grant aid request for planting trees was received.

It was noted that 25% of the costs might be obtained through District Councillor's funding.

**RESOLVED** That a grant of £750 be made to the Templar's Community Association towards planting trees.

### **14. SOCIAL MEDIA**

A report on social media was received.

The Town Clerk said that she had been able to boost the Jubilee Event on Facebook and the posts had reached over 7,000 people. In answer to a question regarding publicity, she explained that posters were in the Town Centre and banners had been erected in prime locations. In the future, an estate agent would advertise events on their boards.

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

**15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND 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 (S3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**16. INFORMATION CENTRE**

A report was received from the Information Centre Manager.

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

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.23 p.m.

Councillor S. Ager  
Chairman

NS/GK/26.5.2022