



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

Meeting of: **Community Committee**

Date: **Monday, 6th February 2023**

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

Present: Councillors J. Williams (Vice Chairman in the Chair)
P. Heath
C. Lager
M. Lager
S. Rajeev
R. Williams

Also in attendance: Cllr P. Barlow

Essex Police Sergeant S. Jesse (Community Special)
N. Smith (Town Clerk)
G. Kennedy (Committee Clerk)
C. Strachan (Assistant RFO)

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ager, Bayford, Jay and Weeks.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

58. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 7th November 2022 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

59. INTERESTS

Councillors Barlow, Heath and J. Williams declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute 66 – Carnival Association, as they had been involved in the carnival and knew many of the association.

Councillor R. Williams said that he was the Town Council representative on the Carnival Association.

60. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

61. GUEST SPEAKER

The Chairman explained that the guest speaker was unwell.

62. ESSEX POLICE

- a) The Chairman gave a verbal report on the Braintree and Uttlesford Special Constabulary Awards Evening. She was pleased to announce that Special Sergeant Simon Jesse had received the Community Contribution and Community Special Constable Awards and Constable of the Year had been awarded to Special Constable Charlie Watts. In addition, Lorne Campbell and Simon Jesse had received their five-year award. She was pleased to announce that Lorne had been promoted to Acting Chief Inspector. At present there are five community special constables.

Members congratulated Simon and his colleagues.

- b) Sergeant Jesse said that there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour but this had been coupled with an increase in reporting incidents. Local knowledge was key and perpetrators had been identified, often through the use of CCTV, and arrests or other action taken. He was pleased with successes and hoped that the message that bad behaviour was unacceptable was clear.

Members then had an opportunity to comment. Problems at the railway station were mentioned but Sgt Jesse explained that whilst they had no jurisdiction they were able to assist their colleagues in the British Transport Police with local knowledge. Members were informed that the Chief Constable had attended a recent Braintree Association of Local Councils meeting. It was hoped that the value of ‘bobbies on the beat’ was recognised as a way of combating crime. In answer to a question Sgt Jesse said that it looked as though crime was increasing but in fact figures were skewed as people were now more inclined to report crime.

The Chairman thanked Sgt Jesse for his dedication.

63. TOWN CLERK’S REPORT

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

RESOLVED That the report be received and information noted.

64. GRANT AWARDING POLICY

The Grant Awarding Policy was received.

It was suggested that wording should be revised on the Policy Overview to provide maximum benefit to the community to Council’s funding priorities. For clarity the form should read for

grants between £250 and £5,000 require 25% matched funding and that for grants over £5,000, 50% of matched funding would be required of the total project cost.

A discussion then took place about the Carnival Association which was exempt from matched funding and whether this should be included in the policy. The Town Clerk said that this should not be part of the policy but the new Administration would be informed of this decision.

RESOLVED That the Grant Awarding Policy with the agreed amendments to include funding priorities, grants between £250 and £5,000 requiring matched funding of 25%, and that for grants over £5,000 50% of matched funding would be required of the total project cost, be agreed.

The Town Clerk advised Members of the money available in the Grant Aid budget and other budget lines.

65. ACTION FOR FAMILY CARERS

A grant aid request from Action For Family Carers requesting a grant of £5,000 to assist in the running costs of a Young Carer Club at Parkside Witham Youth Centre was received.

Members commented on the amount of money in the Treasurers Account and whether there would be commensurate benefit in granting an award. After further discussion it was agreed to defer a decision until further information could be sought.

RESOLVED That the grant aid request be deferred until further information could be sought.

66. WITHAM CARNIVAL

Councillors Barlow, Heath and J. Williams had declared interests.

A grant aid request from the Witham Carnival was received.

Members were reminded that all money raised by the carnival goes to charity and a balance of £3,000 would be kept in the account in case grants were not available. It was noted that the accounts would not be audited until May/June.

Members were reminded that no funding would be used for the Carnival Court except for a small amount for petrol. In the last three years people are not charged to enter the park which had reduced takings by £1,500. Members were informed that there was now a new Chairman of the Carnival Association and that during covid there had still been overheads such as insurance and storage costs to cover.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that it had been agreed to fund the marshals for the carnival.

RESOLVED That a grant of £8,000 be made to the Witham Carnival Association to cover carnival costs which was not to be used on the carnival court.

67. ALLOTMENT SITE MANAGEMENT POLICY

An Allotment Site Management report was received and Members asked to consider a revised Allotment Site Management Policy.

It was noted that additional plots would not be allocated to existing tenants and the Town Clerk advised that there was at present over one hundred people waiting for an allotment.

RESOLVED That the amended Allotment Site Management Policy be received and agreed.

68. ALLOTMENT INVOICE REPORT

An Allotment Invoice report was received regarding the overpayment of allotment rents and that repayments would be made.

RESOLVED That the report be received and repayments authorised.

69. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET REPORT

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

The Town Clerk answered questions relating to the budget. She explained that savings had occurred with the Silver Cinema moving to the Royal British Legion Hall and Special Constable Recruitment was by word of mouth rather than through social media which had not resulted in recruiting anyone. Christmas Decorations was over budget as extra surveys had been required.

RESOLVED That the Community Committee Income and Expenditure report be received and noted.

70. SOCIAL MEDIA

The social media statistics for the period to December 2022 were received.

RESOLVED That the statistics be received and noted.

71. 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.

72. INFORMATION CENTRE

A report from the Information Centre Manager for the period to December 2022 was received.

Members congratulated the Information Centre Manager on the success of the Information Centre.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.45 p.m.

Councillor J. Williams
Chairman

NS/GK/8.2.2023