

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT WATLING HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE**

**ON THURSDAY 4 MAY 2017**

Present: Councillors Carole Hegley (Chairman), John Chatterley, Nigel Warren and Nigel Young (Central Bedfordshire Council CBC). Liz Jones (Vice-Chairman), Peter Hollick, John Kane, Gloria Martin and Pat Staples (Dunstable Town Council, DTC).

In Attendance: Hugh Garrod (Promoting Dunstable), Roger Pepworth (South Beds Friends of the Earth), Barry Groves (Central Bedfordshire College), Sharon Warboys (Town Centre Champion), Councillor Ann Sparrow (Dunstable In Bloom) and ViViane Vayssieres with David Ashlee – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Clare Brett (Town Centre Manager) (DTC) and Peter Fraser – Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support (CBC).

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Eugene Ghent (CBC), Rhea Yeung (Grove Theatre), Jason Buckley (Quadrant Shopping Centre), Sharon Knott (DLDD Trust) and John Gelder (Voluntary and Community Action).

Members of the public: 1

**10. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on Thursday 2 March 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**11. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Staples declared a pecuniary interest regarding any issues to be discussed relating to Dunstable Market.

**12. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman referred to the recent visit to Dunstable by Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, stating that it had been a delight to welcome them to Priors View and that the event had gone well and was well attended. She thanked all those who attended. Some discussion took place on this note-worthy event for the town.

The Chairman reported that Central Bedfordshire Council was moving forward in its review of Joint Committees. Volunteers were requested for a dedicated Task Group from the Committee to assist with the review.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillors Hegley and Chatterley (CBC) and Jones and Kane (DTC) form a Joint Committee Task Group with David Ashlee and Peter Fraser.

The Chairman confirmed that the S106 Grant Scheme was progressing well and that there was now a need to promote it.

**ACTION:** The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to create and circulate a one page document on the criteria and how to apply for the grant that could be used to promote them.

### 13. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A university of Bedfordshire Student studying Journalism was in attendance at the meeting and the Chairman extended a welcome. There were no questions.

### 14. ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET UPDATE

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive introduced the report and highlighted the available budget for 2017/18, which included underspend from 2016/17 including remaining funds for the 2016 Special Saturday programme. Members were asked to consider funding a number of proposals for the year and to suggest any additional proposals, both of which would serve to refresh the existing Action Plan, along with any other previously agreed actions.

Discussion then took place on the suggested initiatives.

**RESOLVED:** that the Committee agree to the following expenditure for 2017/18:

<b>Suggested Initiative</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Cost</b>
TCMC performance measures	Annual football survey to take place the first weekend in March 2018.	£650
Christmas Promotions	To create and promote a programme of Christmas promotions (ice rink/lighting finale for Torchlight event).	£15,000
War Memorial Refurbishment	Contribution towards the refurbishments of the War memorial in Priory Gardens (to refurbish the paved area and add a commemorative Combined Armed Services plaque/carving).	£2,000
Big Lunch 2017	Big Lunch event for over 65s in Grove House Gardens, aimed at the socially isolated. 6 June 2017. Funding requested for the lunch element of the event.	£500
Middle Row Lighting	To fund additional lighting under the CBC canopy in Middle Row.	£3,000
<b>Total:</b>		<b><u>£21,150</u></b>

**RESOLVED:** Once further work and costings have been completed on the projects above, delegated authority be given to the Chairman, in liaison with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and Head of Partnerships and Community

Engagement to authorise expenditure and associated action to carry out these initiatives.

**ACTION:** The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to progress the action for additional lighting in Middle Row.

Following the success of the MTRF bid, it was further recommended that the previously allocated contingency for signage improvements (Dunstable Joint Committee Minute 13, 12 July 2012) should be added to the £70,000 secured by DTC for signage and street furniture improvements following the de-trunking of the A5. A discussion took place on signage requirements and it was confirmed to Members that a list of proposed signage had been given to the highway contractor by DTC and the list included local attractions and would be focused on the town centre. However, it was clarified that CBC would need to include a mechanism to maintain and approve signage standards and style for the future. It was further confirmed that some signage was also being investigated for the White Lion/Busway stop.

**ACTION:** The Town Centre Manager to circulate the list of proposed signage to the Committee.

It was requested that the contractor present proposals and designs to DTC and the Joint Committee.

**ACTION:** The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support and Councillor Young to discuss the degree of involvement in the project by DTC and the Joint Committee with the MTRF Board.

**ACTION:** The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to invite Highways officers/designers to the next meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee.

It was therefore agreed to leave the signage contingency as a separate fund at the current time.

Discussion took place on the Christmas programme for 2017 and Members expressed a wish to promote the Christmas Shop Front Competition again for 2017.

**ACTION:** The Town Centre Manager bring back costs for the proposed Christmas programme to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were informed that a S215 officer had been trained and had been taking pictures of Dunstable properties and beginning the process. Various individual properties were discussed and it was reported that another meeting would be held in 3 weeks' time with CBC officers for an update and that actions were being escalated with officers. It was confirmed however that CBC has no power to force builders to complete when planning permission has been granted.

The issues with the new pay on exit car parking at Ashton Square were discussed and members were advised that these were being investigated. It was confirmed that free parking on Tuesday afternoons was still in place at the moment. Members expressed

concern and disappointment about parking fees and the negative impact this was having on the Market. Members were reminded however that they have the opportunity to lobby the Leader of CBC.

**ACTION:** The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to check if the Car Park barrier let users out without putting the car registration in first if they had not parked.

A question was raised on how much the net cost would be to make the car parks free of charge and it was reported that a new back office system for CBC would make more detailed information possible.

The town centre performance results for 2016/17 were discussed and the high level of retail was noted along with the low level of vacant units, especially in relation to the Quadrant Shopping Centre.

Discussion took place on the Market and the programme of Craft and Themed markets that were being offered at a discounted rate to traders that had already resulted in new traders to the Market. Members were informed that a survey on Dunstable Market was currently being undertaken and the results would be presented to the Town Council's Community Services Committee meeting in June.

It was requested that consistent population data be provided, however, it was noted that there were no plans for another census.

## **15. CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL- UPDATE ON SERVICES**

The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support took questions on the Central Bedfordshire Council report.

The arrests made through CCTV activity were highlighted and a discussion regarding licensing followed where it was requested that DTC get licensing reports and the opportunity to comment on licensing applications.

**ACTION:** Town Clerk and Chief Executive to contact the Assistant Director Public Protection & Transport to progress.

**ACTION:** Chairman and Councillor Young to discuss localised police resources with the PCC.

It was noted that the Committee did not have a representative from the licensing trade.

**ACTION:** Chairman to write to the Chairman of the Dunstable Licensees Association to encourage attendance engagement with the Dunstable Joint Committee.

Concern was raised at the level of bike crime and anti-social behaviour in relation to bikes.

The Town Centre Manager informed Members that a meeting was to be held the following day with CBC, Police and The Quadrant Shopping Centre to look at ways to tackle this anti-social behaviour.

Members were informed that it was anticipated that the Dunstable Leisure Centre would be re-opened in the winter of 2018.

Concern was raised about notices on abandoned vehicles and whether this was compliant with current guidance and regulations.

**ACTION:** The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to check the current regulations and guidance.

It was noted that the number of young people not in education, employment or training in the area was still at the lowest ever level.

Members were reminded that the Cheering Volunteering Awards would be taking place on Tuesday 6 June at the Grove Theatre.

#### **16. REPORTS FROM CO-OPTED OR OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Chairman thanked Hugh Garrod of Promoting Dunstable and Ann Sparrow of Dunstable In Bloom for submitting written reports in advance of the meeting that meant they were able to be sent out with the agenda.

It was confirmed that Keep Dunstable Tidy litter picks were promoted using leaflets and posters in the area that was being targeted and Sharon Warboys offered assistance to publicise the information. It was explained that the hope was that self-generating groups would eventually emerge.

The In Bloom campaign was waiting on news regarding works on the A5 in the town centre, post detrunking as this may affect elements of the campaign for 2017.

**ACTION:** Town Centre Manager to put the Reports from co-opted or outside bodies earlier on the agenda for future meetings.

#### **17. DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Committee reviewed the Dunstable Joint Committee Risk Assessment.

**RESOLVED:** that the Risk Assessment and control measures be approved.

#### **18. MARKET TOWN REGENERATION FUND (MTRF)**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave a verbal update on progress with Dunstable Town Council's MTRF projects as follows:

- Town Centre Ranger Scheme was up and running.
- Bennett's Splash (Splash Park) contractors were onsite and on schedule and looking at a mid-June completion and late June opening.

- Priory House Feasibility Interim Report had been received.
- A design for the Priory Gardens entrance feature was about to be commissioned.
- A future meeting would be held with the Quadrant regarding the toilets.
- Planning for phase 2 of the architectural lighting was awaited.

An update on the High Street Improvement Scheme was also given with 12 businesses going through the final review stage to date.