

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,  
DUNSTABLE**

**ON MONDAY 7 JANUARY 2019**

Present: Councillors John Kane (Town Mayor), Nigel Warren (Deputy Town Mayor), Pat Staples (Chairman), Eugene Ghent (Vice Chairman), Lisa Bird, John Chatterley, Jeannette Freeman and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: Councillors Peter Hollick and Liz Jones, David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Kelley Hallam (Office Administrator) and Sandy Coyle (Community and Young People's Services Manager)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Terry Colbourne, Claire Meakins, Mike Mullany and Patricia Russell

Public: None

**1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 29 October 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**2 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

The Chairman agreed to take items number 7 and 8 first as the relevant service manager was present.

**3 OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICE**

The Community and Young People's Services Manager reported on attendances, activities and outings for the Good Companions Club and the Creasey Park Community Football Centre over 55s Lunch Club.

The GCC currently had one vacancy, but the CPCFC over 55s Club now had six people on the waiting list.

The GCC had been on another boat trip and both groups had been out for a Christmas meal.

The Older People's Support Services Officer had been on long term sick but both clubs were still successfully being run with the additional support of the Older People's Assistant, other members of the Community & Young Peoples Services team and volunteers.

#### **4 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Community and Young People's Services Manager reported on recent attendance figures and activities at Grove Corner and reported on recent community engagement activities.

The young people had expressed a wish for a table tennis table but there was not enough space so instead they painted the pool table cover into a small court.

Central Bedfordshire College's Pathways group would visit Grove Corner in January to meet staff and look around the centre. The aim was to establish relationships and encourage individuals to access Grove Corner in the evenings.

The position of Senior Community and Young People's Officer was currently vacant. While other members of the team would seek to cover operations at Grove Corner, it was likely in the coming weeks that a number of sessions may have to close. Members would be kept up to date on the situation.

#### **5 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/2020**

The Committee considered the comprehensive report of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive which provided detailed proposals for the Community Services budget for 2019/20 and proposed fees and charges.

Excluding staff costs, the overall Community Services budget had increased by £3,543. This would contribute to the 2.4% increase to the 2019/20 council tax charge.

Members discussed the request from Sorted to not charge them any rent at Grove Corner as they were struggling with their finances. All Members agreed they provided an important service to the Dunstable residents and that we should assist them but this would be reviewed on an annual basis and a SLA agreement would be drawn up.

**RESOLVED:** i) that the Committee recommend the draft Community Services budget as presented with no amendments or further recommendations, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

ii) that the Committee recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee that Sorted be offered free rent at Grove Corner.

#### **6 EVENTS AND MARKETING**

The Head of Community Services presented an update report on past events. She also updated members on the usage of the Council's website and social media.

The Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession had been very successful with the lightshow finale receiving excellent feedback. The road closure had caused minimal disruption and the event would be similarly planned for 2019.

The website was working very well with regular online bookings being made for afternoon teas at Priory House.

The Committee received the full results from the 2018 events survey. 501 surveys had been submitted with 98% of people being satisfied or very satisfied.

## **7 PRIORY HOUSE**

The Head of Community Services presented a report on recent operations and activities at Priory House, including trading account figures and Priory House maintenance.

Following the lack of success in recruiting the 12hour post in the Tea Room, it was agreed that casual staff would cover until April when a 16 hour post would be advertised.

Mistletoe Magic was not as well attended this year with takings down in both the tea rooms and gift shop. The Priory House Management team would be reviewing this event during the year.

Christmas Afternoon Teas and Christmas Pudding Nights had been very well attended with 152 afternoon teas being served and 202 people booked onto the pudding nights. With these additional takings and the good trading figures in the run up to Christmas it was anticipated that the figures for the third quarter would show another positive variance.

## **8 DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

The Head of Community Services updated the Committee on Town Centre Services including Ashton Square Toilets and the themed and craft market trader figures.

Central Bedfordshire Council had now received quotations for the works on the refurbishment of the Ashton Square toilets. Work would start as soon as they had been agreed. The Town Ranger service had now taken over the cleaning of the toilets and this appeared to be going well.

There were plans for officers to bid on an Awards for All grant to hold an event(s) on The Square now that it had been extended and barriers removed. It was hoped this would encourage more community use of this space. Councillor Ghent informed the Committee that parking enforcement was now in place on The Square.

The Town Centre Services Officer and Head of Service had met with CBC/Town Council members to look at town centre units where Section 215 notices could be issued and also where there were possible Council Tax issues. DTC officers would be provided with a link planning officer to progress this work with a view to improving the appearance of many of the units in the town centre.

## **9 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride:

No report.

Dunstable Town Band:

Band rehearsals had now begun for the New Year. The band members were excited as they had been asked to play for 3CR and were waiting for a date. With new members joining, the band was almost full.