

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2024 FROM 7:00 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Mayor), Liz Jones (Chair), Matthew Neall (Vice-Chair), Gregory Alderman, Robert Blennerhassett, Mark Davis, Peter Hollick, and Nicholas Kotarski.

In Attendance: Gina Thanky (Events Officer), Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager), Jackie Carrington (Priory House Duty Manager), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager) Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services) and Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive)

In Attendance: Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager)
(Remotely)

Apologies: Councillors Trevor Adams, Wendy Bater and John Gurney

Public: Nil

167/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hollick declared a non-pecuniary interest in Dunstable Musical Theatre under Agenda Item 8.

168/24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Community Services Committee held on 3 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

169/24 TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

The Town Centre Manager highlighted the key points of the report to members.

Back in July 2023 there were 28 market stall bookings, in July 2024 there were 56 stall bookings. August was similar with an increase in stall bookings from 2023 to 2024.

The Town Centre Manager gave an update on the Twilight Markets which currently have 24 stall bookings for Friday, 30 stall bookings for Saturday and 22 stall bookings for Sunday.

The Town Centre Manager gave an update to members on progress with plans for a pop-up shop in the Quadrant. Market stall holders were contacted to understand their possible interest in hiring out space in a pop-up shop. Most would be interested depending on the details.

170/24 GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Youth and Community Manager summarised the report provided to members.

The Head of Community Services gave members an update on the UKSPF Cultural Project being delivered by NGYT and the BBB Group. Some of the key findings so far include the desire and will to move further with the project and there are lots of opportunities which have been identified. Some queries had been raised about working with the Grove Theatre.

171/24 OLDER PEOPLES' SERVICES

Members noted the report provided which was summarised by the Youth and Community Manager.

Rock and Roll is taking place on 1 October 2024. The tickets went out last week and sold out straight away. Officers are currently creating a waiting list for those who were unable to secure tickets.

172/24 EVENTS

The Events Officer summarised the key points in the report.

The events programme for 2025 provide has been amended slightly. The Motor Rally is now being held on 14 June 2025 to now align with the Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard Truck Convoy as well as the middle row markets planned for 2025. Dunstable Live has been moved to allow for a 2 week gap between the 2 largest events.

Councillor Davis advised officers that east ward residents have queried if Dunstable Rocks could be held within the gap of events in August over the bank holiday weekend. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive highlighted that it had become the Council's practice not to hold events on Bank Holiday weekends due to the additional costs involved and experience of less people attending. The Head of Community Services advised members that some years ago Dunstable Rocks had been ended due to logistical and cost difficulties.

Councillor Jones wondered if Town Council could start to work with Dunstable Musical Theatre to offer them some stability with having one of the Town Council's free uses of Grove Theatre for a period of time to ensure future planning. Members did not make a decision about this approach, preferring to wait for the outcome of the cultural programme and arising recommendations which may be relevant.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve and allocate Dunstable Musical Theatre Company one of the free uses of Grove Theatre in 2025/26 and to decline the request from the Veterans Foundation.

173/24 PRIORY HOUSE

The Priory House Duty Manager summarised the report provided to members and highlighted key information.

Members were advised that the 6-hour post contracted to Saturdays has now been fulfilled along with 2 new casual staff to help with the events coming up later in the year.

The G&T night for the bank holiday weekend unfortunately was not as successful as hoped, however this may have been due to the weather forecast for that evening preventing the public from attending.

Members were informed that Priory House are looking at hosting their decorating a cake workshop, the charm workshop as well as trying out a Christmas themed tea blending workshop over the Christmas period.

174/24 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOWN CELEBRATIONS

The Head of Community Services summarised key points of the report.

Members discussed in detail the recommendations within the report and,

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: for officers to proceed with planning for the following events as of immediate effect to meet the timescales required: Fortnight of Fun (additional activities) £10,000 and Soap Box Derby £10,000. Officers were also asked to explore the potential opportunities for external funding for these events.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: for officers to include proposals for the youth festival and shop front decorating kits, with reports for the next committee meeting providing the draft budget for 2025/26.

175/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee – Councillor Peter Hollick

The next meeting will take place in November. A few Sundays ago, a barbecue was held to thank staff and drivers. There had been bus timetable amendments on the day of the meeting; Central Bedfordshire Council have changed some of their routes.

Dunstable Town Band – Councillor Robert Blennerhassett

Nothing to report.

Men in Sheds – Councillor Richard Attwell

The Shed refurbishment has been completed, with the final part the replacement of the windows with modern double-glazed units (funded by DMiS).

The Shed is financially stable, with in excess of £6,000 in the bank at the end of their last financial year. They have been successful in applying for grants for specific purposes from organisations including BLCF, Whitbread and the Co-Op and continue to explore these as opportunities arise.

Men in Sheds continue to support the DTC markets in Ashton Square. These continue to be reasonably successful for the group, demonstrating support from our local community.

Membership remains stable at around 27 members - now including the first lady member.

Men in Sheds continue to make their 'bread and butter' garden and home objects for general sale, largely from recycled timber provided by local companies. They have also undertaken various commissions, including several raised planters for a community garden at a Doctor's Surgery in Luton, a cat ladder for a local resident and a gate for the ex-president of a local Rotary group.

The meeting closed at 8:29 pm