

NOTES of the **CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held online on **Wednesday 18 August 2021** at 19.00 hours.

Present: Robert Duggan Chairman
Joseph Foster* Vice Chairman
Lee Gibbs
Kathleen Willis*
Graham Allen
Emma Coe-Gunnell White*

Robert Eggleston
Tofojjul Hussein
Peter Chapman
Ann Eves
Sylvia Neumann
Janice Henwood
Simon Hicks

Also present: Steve Cridland, Chief Executive Officer, Gemma Wallis, Customer Services Section Head

* *Denotes non-attendance*

(19:00 hours)

94. OPEN FORUM

No members of the public attended.

95. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Joseph Foster

96. SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Robert Eggleston for Cllr Joseph Foster

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

98. NOTES OF MEETING

The Chairman enquired as to what progress had been made with the friends of Bachelors Farm initiative. Cllr Neumann replied saying that

the group was informal and associated with the Friends of the Green Circle. Newsletters had been distributed but no meetings had been held.

The Notes of the meeting of the Customer Services Key Area Group held on 6 January 2021, having been previously circulated, were **AGREED** and will be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

99. COMMUNITY ROAD VERGE PROGRAMME

It was generally felt that the project had been a success and that the significant rains had contributed to this. The verge at St Wilfrids Road and The Drive had not been a success as it was too small and the refuse workers damaged it. It was suggested that a tree be planted there instead. A meeting with WSCC was scheduled for 6 September to discuss the various projects around the county.

It was questioned how success was measured. Was there much assistance from volunteers? Was our project as successful as the one initiated by The Market Place which had set a high standard? Caution should be taken before considering any expansion to the project as the Council does not have the resources to maintain additional verges. Perhaps a smaller number of larger areas would be more successful. There are different ways of measuring success eg if you are a human or a caterpillar. The Market place site had used glyphosphates which resulted in bare patches and is not comparable.

Generally there had been good comments from the public and it was decided to maintain the project at its current level and not expand. Various interventions had had to be made to prevent WSCC from mowing the verges. They will be mowed in October and volunteers will be needed to rake the hay.

NOTED

100. FURTHER UPDATES

PETANQUE: Planning permission was received but before the project could commence, MSDC started a path programme as part of the Place and Connectivity programme and a Homes England initiative. This has taken some 7 months to date to the frustration of the petanque club and the council's contractor. The paths have now caused a further problem in that the MSDC contractor is concerned that the Town Council contractor's heavy vehicles may damage the newly laid paths. Negotiations between MSDC, the CEO and our contractor continue and it is hoped the matter will be resolved in the near future.

VIRGIN BOXES: The first box in Wheatsheaf close will be painted in September.

101. MEMORIAL TREE DEDICATED TO HRH PRINCE PHILIP

It is suggested that a suitable flowering tree be planted in memory of HRH Prince Philip in Folders Meadow. This area is part of Fields in Trust of which Prince Philip was patron for many years. The Group asked that suggestions of suitable trees be made to them before planting.

RESOLVED

That a flowering tree be planted in Folders Meadow in memory of HRH Prince Philip and that the type of tree be approved ahead of planting.

102. HELP POINT

The Group considered a report submitted by the Customer Services Section Head. A further report would be submitted before any closures are considered or additional personnel are appointed. A suggestion was made that a footfall count should be taken before any such report. Changes suggested may well alter the usage of the Help Point. Cllr Eggleston had distributed statistics from 2019. Ms Wallis was thanked for her modern and forward thinking approach. Technology will open a new demographic and will extend the service provided to the community.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that the Help Point will celebrate its 25th anniversary in November and that the services set out in the report be launched officially on Saturday 13 November 2021
2. That live website chat support and Chatbot be introduced as described in the report at a cost of approximately £250,
3. That with the exception of local brochures, all brochures be removed,
4. That the shelving currently used for brochures on the south wall be replaced with shelving and a table to display the goods of local small businesses at a cost of £2,272 including redecorating,
5. That the shelving currently used for brochures on the north wall be removed and replaced by one and possibly two 50" LED screens to publicise Burgess Hill and its services with the second being introduced for advertising if feasible at a maximum cost of £1,450 for the IT equipment,
6. To approve the manufacture of self-service booth at £430 and the purchase of associated IT equipment at a cost of £650,
7. That it be noted that depending on the additional workload being introduced into the Help Point as a result of freezing the position of Operational Services Coordinator, it may be necessary to close the Help Point on a Tuesday and/or Thursday afternoon, and
8. That a 14 hour post be approved for the management of allotments but only be filled if it is clear that the Help Point staff are unable to cope with this work.
9. That the possibility of counting footfall in the Help Point electronically be investigated.

103. REWILDING PROJECT – BURIAL GROUND

There are various open spaces at the burial ground which would be rewilded next year.

NOTED

104. TOWN COUNCIL VANS

The council tipper truck is reaching the end of its life. There are at present no suitable electric vehicles to replace this vehicle with. The Council parks its vehicles at a private site which does not have a charging point. Parking them outside the town council offices previously resulted in vandalism.

RESOLVED:

That the tipper truck be replaced and a 5 year lease be entered into.

105. BURGESS HILL TOWN MARKET

The group considered a report from the Market working group. The working group was keen to grow the market and to hold markets more regularly and had approached various operators to make proposals on how this might be achieved. In addition to the report was a contract from the preferred operator, The Anonymous Travelling Market.

RESOLVED:

That the Anonymous Travelling Market, an independent market operator, be appointed to develop and extend the market and that the contract submitted by this operator be approved and entered into.

106. NEW BENCH QUEEN ELIZABETH AVENUE

A request has been received from a member of the public to install a bench on the south side of Queen Elizabeth Avenue near to the bus stop. It is suggested that a rainbow bench of similar design to that installed in St Johns Park be installed. Sufficient funds are available for the project.

RESOLVED:

That a rainbow bench similar to the bench in St John's Park be installed near the bus stop on the south side of Queen Elizabeth Avenue at a cost of £1400 including installation.

107. URBAN BEACH EXTENDED PERIOD

A request to extend the urban beach to enable non-school going children to continue to use it for a further week was considered. The additional costs for this were set out in the report. The Group felt that there were always adults looking after their children and that the basis of the request that toddlers should be given the opportunity to use the sandpit without older children could not be justified given the extra resources needed for what would be a small uptake.

NOTED

108. URGENT MATTERS

1. Cllr Eves had received a response from WSCC regarding her request to plant 9 street trees around town. These would cost £200 each and would be planted in November. There was sufficient funding available for this.

RESOLVED:

That 9 street trees be purchased from WSCC for various sites around town at a cost of £1800 subject to there not being underground services on the sites.

2. Cllr Neumann reported an an initiative from the Woodland trust and had ordered a free pack of 30 saplings. They would include Wild Cherry, Rowan and Silver birch and together will form a small copse. Volunteers would be asked to plant the trees in November.

NOTED

Meeting ended 20.35