

NOTES of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER 2021** at 19.00 hours.

Present: Peter Chapman Chairman

Emma Coe-Gunnell White*
Simon Hicks
Tofojjul Hussain*
Sarah Lawrence*
Sylvia Neumann
Kathleen Willis*

Also Present: Robert Eggleston
Janice Henwood
Jennifer O'Grady – Community Engagement Section Head
Megan Hughes – Projects and Administrative Officer

(19.00)

Chairman Peter Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were four members of the public there and during Open Forum the following comments were made:

The President and Chairman of the Welfare Committee of Burgess Hill District Lions expressed support for the events programme to be considered at this meeting and looked forward to working with the Town Council in the future. It was commented that there was a good working relationship and the Town Council were very grateful of the ongoing support for the financial contributions made and would ensure the appropriate thanks and publicity of funds donated was made in every instance. It was requested that rather than several requests for smaller amounts of funding, the Town Council provide one request for the year to ensure Burgess Hill District Lions could plan. This was mutually beneficial as it ensured good financial planning. Robert Eggleston advised that this was likely to be after the Town Council budget had been considered in the New Year and thanked the Burgess Hill District Lions, which was reiterated by all Councillors present.

68. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

69. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Cllr Simon Hicks acted as vice chairman for the meeting. It was agreed a decision would be made as to who takes this position in the future as only three members of the Key Area Group were present.

70. SUBSTITUTES

There were none.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

72. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the 26 November 2020, having been previously circulated, were AGREED and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

73. UPDATE ON WELCOME BACK FUND

Jennifer O'Grady, Community Engagement Section Head, provided a verbal update, as set out below, providing information on the Welcome Back Fund.

- The Community Engagement Team presented their event ideas at the Council Meeting on Monday 20 September 2021 and then collated event suggestions from Councillors.
- The event ideas were submitted to MSDC by Burgess Hill Town Council on 24 September 2021.
- Event ideas were approved by MSDC on 19 October 2021 and the Community Engagement Team had been in daily communication with MSDC.
- The Halloween Pumpkin Trail publicity had now been circulated. This project was funded from the Bridge the Gap budget as it did not fit the timeframe of the Welcome Back Fund.
- The Outdoor Escape Game, which involved QR codes being placed around town as part of an outside trail where residents participate using their smart phone, had been booked for Saturday 13 November to support Market Day.

- The Town Trail and Exhibition led by Lens Cap Off photography group and Burgess Hill Artists started on Saturday 13 November 2021 and culminated in a pop-up exhibition on Saturday 20 November 2021 in St John's Church.
- Plans for an LED performance as part of the Christmas event were confirmed on Thursday 21 October. This would be after the light switch on element of the event.
- Plans for a fire show after the French market were not yet confirmed but were being investigated for Friday 19 November.
- Burgess Hill Community Radio were leading and coordinating the live music activities for the four Saturdays leading up to Christmas and this was now confirmed.
- Plans for an outdoor cinema were being investigated with the suggestion this move to January 2022 in view of the timescales to resolve a licensing issue.
- The leisure skate provider were fully booked, it was suggested that perhaps a local ice rink provider could be hired in the New Year. There was an opportunity to explore different providers and this was being investigated.

RESOLVED that:

Councillors noted the works progressed and formal thanks were given to the Community Engagement team for putting together a full and varied programme for use of Welcome Back funds.

74. PROPOSED EVENTS 2022

As a result of a brainstorming session on Monday 4 October 2021, Councillors had the chance to put forward new event suggestions. It had been a collaborative process between councillors and officers. Nothing was confirmed yet but this was being reviewed by officers.

A Google form was circulated to councillors after the informal meeting held that considered event ideas and requested Councillor feedback. At this meeting the results of the survey completed by residents, which provided an opportunity for feedback on past events and ideas for the future, was presented to councillors. This information formed the basis for the Proposed Events list for 2022. The following points were raised in discussion:

Jump in January, Fun in February, Make in March were to be considered now as part of the Welcome Back Fund.

There was a request from the community for events to be spread out throughout the year.

A summary of the Jubilee Fest was provided to include a programme from 1-5 June:

- 1 June - Wowzer Wednesday children's activity in St John's Park;
- 2 June - Children's craft activity eg crown making;
- 2 June – Beacon to be lit in St John's Park, the Piper had been provisionally booked;
- 3 June – Classic Car event at Fairfield Recreation Ground. The Chairman of the Weald Classic Car Group addressed the Councillors and stated this was a good site to allow a large number of cars, he would like catering at the top of the hill, viewing area for families, and support from a tractor group.
- 4 June - Party in the Park event and a tea party for older residents.
- 5 June – Lord Chamberlains Men performance.

Councillors commented that it was an impressive range of activities and good to have more happening considering the uncertainty of the last two years due to Covid-19. It was requested that there was a focus on market day activities, perhaps something happening like a band or street performers to add to the atmosphere.

Officers were keen to spread events over the year, to reduce the pressure of so many events in a short space of time and to replace the nine day festival. It was confirmed that the Council was advised that the Friends of Burgess Hill Green Circle Network were not in a position to participate in 2022. They had historically organised a large marquee which hosted a Wild About Mid Sussex Event; a fundraiser for the Bonfire Society; an event organised by the Town Council for children with additional needs or disabilities; and an event led by Burgess Hill Symphony Orchestra. There was an ongoing investigation on the marquee costs and Councillors were asked to consider these. There was a request that groups that used the marquee considered another venue in the town due to the high marquee hire costs.

Support was also confirmed for the Summer Fayre in mid-June to support community groups as this had not been held for two years. The Cricket Club had confirmed they would be happy for the event to be held there but it had to be on a Sunday due to their commitments.

Cllr Neumann requested clarification on the Elf on the Shelf suggestion which she confirmed she did not feel was appropriate for a Town Council to deliver. It was also requested if there were any green themed activities planned. The list confirmed that there were plans for a Green Day event to commemorate thirty years of the Town Council acquiring Bachelors Farm. It was also requested that the Classic Car event consider non petrol fuelled cars and the Chairman of the Weald

Classic Car Club confirmed he would investigate this.

Cllr Eggleston noted that this was a wide and varied programme and he thanked the Community Engagement Team for their work. He suggested alternative venues for the marquee activities could include the Kings Church or an empty unit in the town centre.

The Chairman asked the views of the attending public on the programme of events. It was queried if Park Centre could host any activities and it was confirmed that this was not possible as it was currently under review by West Sussex County Council. It was also noted that the attendees did not support a marquee for one day due to costs.

RESOLVED that:

1. The events and proposed costs were agreed in principle.
2. Figures be passed to the Finance Key Area Group for consideration. The Finance Key Area Group were asked to consider how the events may be funded in context of the following funding pots: Bridge the Gap; Town Events; Summer Fayre, Festival events and Economic Support Fund (ex-Covid).
3. It was agreed that a marquee would not be funded from the Town Council for one day due to costs.

75. MID SUSSEX MARATHON

The report was considered as set out in Agenda Item 8 dated Thursday 21 October 2021. It was confirmed the event had been held virtually for the last two years.

RESOLVED that:

There were no objections against contributing £500 as a Town Council for this event. It was confirmed by Cllr Eggleston, Leader of the Town Council that this could be communicated to the events organising team with immediate effect and would be from the Civic Events budget code.

76. SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

Councillors considered the strategies and policy as set out in Agenda Item 9 dated Thursday 21 October 2021. Officers were looking at how information was communicated to residents. They had launched the Events Notification bulletin to ensure the Town Council were proactive in promoting future events to residents and community groups. The Leader of the Town Council suggested that this should be pushed as part of the Communications Strategy. He also confirmed the statistics within the documents of other Council usage were useful to see.

The importance of using both social media and printed promotions on noticeboards around the town was highlighted as some people rely on more traditional methods rather than online.

It was suggested that perhaps there were cheaper options to producing About Town such as a smaller quarterly leaflet or brochure in the future. It was confirmed that there would be a survey in the About Town magazine and a digital survey for residents to fill out to seek views on the magazine in the next issue.

The Town Council circulated information to residents in different ways, including About Town and the Town Guide, on noticeboards, and social media. An event notification mailing list had been set up recently allowing residents to be notified of upcoming events. A poster was displayed on the noticeboards on the town that had a QR code promoting the sign up to events listings and to the website.

It was suggested that officers could get statistics on how many residents used the Burgess Hill Town Council and Burgess Hill Youth websites and if some pages were working better than others.

It was noted that the Town Council should be careful in not sharing political posts.

It was suggested that Facebook was good for sharing news stories and events, Instagram was good for visuals and perhaps an active strategy should be put forward to increase likes on posts and so more people get notifications about upcoming Town Council news and events.

It was suggested that the strategy included to encouraging followers to share a post instead of spending money to boost a post. It was confirmed that with a full and varied events programme in which co-hosts would be set up wherever possible, reach would naturally be extended and increased rather than paying for boosting posts.

A new Help Point Instagram page was now live, which was being run by the Help Point and was dedicated to promoting shop items. They would continue to build the posts over the next coming weeks, in preparation for the Help Point launch date.

It was raised that the Instagram reel created at the Health and Wellbeing day reached 7,000 views. It was noted that this was a successful way to reach lots of residents and the Social Media and Communications Officer was complimented on this creation.

It was noted that corporate branding could be used on some social media images as this was more likely to be noticed in user's timelines. It would be helpful for the Council to build a library of photos of the

local area to enhance social media posts, which Councillors may assist with.

Facebook Lives had worked well in the past but it was suggested that the Council may wish to be more selective as to when to go Live and when to record for the creation of post event highlight video/reel. It was confirmed that filming was one of the activities covered by event organisers and it was generally more convenient to go live on mobile than set up a camera.

Cllr Neumann gave her thanks to Emily Bryant, the Social Media and Communications Officer for producing the Social Media policy, especially as some residents were not up to date with the social media advance.

RESOLVED that:

1. Burgess Hill Town Council use set stock images used on links to the website. It was noted that the Town Council should ensure there is a preview image to social media.
2. Community Engagement Section Head to discuss the website usage figures with Corporate Services team and report back to the group.

77. [Meeting terminated at 20:15.](#)