

NOTES of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **THURSDAY 7 JULY 2022** at 19.00 hours.

Present: Peter Chapman Chairman
Simon Hicks
Tofojuul Hussain
Sarah Lawrence*
Mustak Miah
Sylvia Neumann*
Kathleen Willis

Also Present: Robert Eggleston
Janice Henwood
Anne Eves
Matthew Cornish
Jennifer O’Grady – Community Engagement Section Head
Molly Devine – Events and Administration Officer

78. OPEN FORUM

Many members of local community groups were in attendance at the KAG meeting. The first speaker was Archie Tipple-Wilson, who wanted to thank the Community Engagement team, stating that without them, the community groups could not do the events that they did.

Paul Barnett, from Mid Downs Radio, wanted to thank the Council for their work, saying that the Council had gone through a difficult time over the past couple of years, and that residents and community groups needed to thank the Town Council for their work, as he understood how difficult it was for them, and that the Town Council had made a fantastic effort to keep events going.

Donna Williams from Burgess Hill Bonfire Society said that from the Bonfire Society’s point of view, they were very proud of the Town Council. She stated that she knew of groups elsewhere who struggled to get support from their local councils, and that the Burgess Hill Bonfire Society appreciated how the Town Council supported them, so that they could in turn run one of the biggest events in Mid Sussex.

79. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Sarah Lawrence and Sylvia Neumann.

80. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE KEY AREA GROUP FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

Councillor Simon Hicks was elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Key Area Group for the ensuing year.

81. SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Robert Eggleston substituted for Councillor Sarah Lawrence. Councillor Matthew Cornish substituted for Councillor Sylvia Neumann

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

83. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the previous Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 21 October 2021 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

84. JUBILEE FEST

There was considerable discussion between both Council and local community groups in regards to the idea of a festival, with many suggestions made. One suggestion, by Chairman of Burgess Hill Town Juniors FC, Vince Alfieri, was that there be an overarching theme for the year that all community groups could buy into. This way the events could be spread throughout the year and linked by the theme. These events could then build to a finale at the end of the year.

Councillor Hussain suggested that there be at least one big yearly event for the whole community to get involved. He suggested spreading Council-led events out to every two months, and having the Council assist with community group events

throughout the year.

There was mention that a festival may lead to certain members of the community being unable to attend – Councillor Willis suggested that some people may miss out on events should they all be grouped together, if they were away or working.

The cost-of-living crisis was also raised, with suggestions that putting events too close together could cause strain on families, financially.

Councillor Eves raised the point of staff workload, referring to the amount of overtime worked by the Community Engagement Team over the Jubilee Weekend. Councillor Eggleston seconded Councillor Eves' sentiment, stating that staff require time to recharge between events, and that regardless of the choice made, the Councillors needed to ensure they were supporting staff throughout. Councillor Hicks concurred with this sentiment, stating that the Community Engagement team gave 150% to the events.

On the question of performances by The Lord Chamberlain's Men, Councillor Eves suggested that it continue despite the monetary loss, as it catered to a different catchment group.

Councillor Eggleston stated that he believed Shakespeare to be an important part of cultural life, and that Romeo and Juliet would be a successful event owing to it being a well-known work by Shakespeare.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Councillors considered the Jubilee Report and;
- b) Reaffirmed their commitment to events being held across the year rather than an annual festival, stating that they would like to consider a theme to arch across the year, linking all events together.

The Community Engagement Team were to consider a programme of events and present to the KAG again in October. The Council also said that they would consider grants specifically for events within this plan.

85. SUMMER FAYRE

There was discussion on the Summer Fayre and how the Councillors and community groups felt that it had gone. In the Summer Fayre report, there was much positive feedback, and Councillors were keen to hear about the new ideas to refresh the Summer Fayre for the upcoming year.

The idea of a cake competition, fancy dress, more performances and a dog show were explained to Councillors, who were keen on the ideas presented.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Councillors considered the Summer Fayre Report and;

- b) Confirmed that they wished to see the event held in 2023.

The Community Engagement Team were asked to look at potential costs to present to the KAG at the upcoming meeting in October.

86. TEDDY BEAR'S PICNIC

There was discussion the Teddy Bear's Picnic with much positive feedback. Central Sussex Rotary member, Julie Smyth, made special mention of the sixteen Ardingly College students who volunteered at the event, thanking them for their help.

Many in attendance at the meeting believed the Teddy Bear's Picnic to be an important part of the Burgess Hill event calendar, saying that it was a generational event, that many families brought their children to.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Councillors considered the Teddy Bear's Picnic Report and;
- b) Confirmed that they wished to see the event held in 2023.

87. CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2022

During discussion on the Christmas Programme of Events for 2022, Councillor Chapman suggested a Christmas Card competition, led by him as Mayor. There were suggestions that this, or another competition – such as a raffle - could be used to decide who could turn on the Christmas Lights.

Councillor Chapman also raised the possibility of continuing the stage performances beyond the Christmas Light switch on – comparisons were made with Concert in the Park, during Jubilee Fest, at which the Beacon was lit, and then there were two further songs to finish the evening.

In regards to the Best Dressed Window Competition, there was concern over the interest shown previously by national retailers. There were suggestions that this could be navigated by making the competition solely for independent retailers.

RESOLVED that:

The views of the Key Area Group were sought on:

- a) Who should switch the lights on? Councillors suggested that the idea of a competition to pick a member of the community to turn the lights on could be considered.
- b) The KAG asked that the Section Head of the Community Engagement Team approach Burgess Hill District Lions for funding for A Christmas Carol on 17

- December and supported adult entry charges to the event.
- c) Councillors supported the Best Dressed Window Competition led by Town Councillors, suggesting that it be directed towards independent retailers.

88. EVENT SPACE ON THE FORMER LIBRARY SITE

Burgess Hill Town Council had been approached by Mid Sussex District Council regarding the former library space, and asked whether the Community Engagement Team would be able to run events on the site.

There was substantial discussion on the matter, with mention made of ITV's use of the site and several questions raised on how the site would be managed.

Councillors agreed that the space was large and would be a brilliant opportunity to create something for the community. Councillor Eggleston stated that not to utilise the site would be a wasted opportunity.

RESOLVED that:

Councillors indicated that they were supportive in principle to the Community Engagement Team using the space for events subject to resourcing and funding availability, and answers to the following questions:

- Who will be in charge of bookings for the site?
- What will be done to mitigate occupier's risk?
- Will there need to be a planning application made for change of use?
- What kind of security will there be for the site?
- How much money will be made available to support events held on the site?

89. MID SUSSEX MARATHON

There had been previous discussion around moving the start and finish line of the Burgess Hill 10K to the Town Centre. Councillors considered the information given to them and considered the benefits that bringing the event into the Town Centre could provide. The move would incur considerable financial increases, with road closures being necessary.

Suggestions were made to encourage retailers to open on the Bank Holiday Monday and incentivise the community to shop using discounts, and other promotional material. The idea of community groups having stalls was also raised.

Councillor Hicks stated he believed that the race needed to improve on numbers, before it moved from its current position. Councillor Henwood agreed with Councillor Hicks, mentioning the effect that the Covid-19 pandemic appeared to have had on numbers entering the race.

RESOLVED that:

Councillors decided to keep the marathon race in its current position at Burgess Hill Academy and to reconsider once numbers had increased.

90. **FORTHCOMING EVENTS SUMMER 2022**

Councillor Miah thanked the Community Engagement Team for their fantastic work on events, and expressed his belief that there should be a larger presence from Councillors at the events, and that Councillors should ensure they are promoting events happening in the town.

RESOLVED that:

The Councillors noted the contents of the report.

Meeting terminated 21:02