

**NOTES** of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **MONDAY 16 OCTOBER 2023** at 18.30 hours.

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**Present:** Brenda Williams Chairman  
Diane Black Vice Chairman  
Cedric de Souza  
Chris Cherry  
Richard Cherry  
Anne Eves  
Mohammad Hossain  
Adam White

**Also Present:** Janice Henwood  
Tofojjul Hussain  
Jennifer O’Grady – Community Engagement Section Head  
Molly Devine – Events and Administration Officer  
Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson – Events and Administration Officer

**12. OPEN FORUM**

There were 5 members of the public present. No one spoke in open forum but residents did ask questions during the agenda items.

On agenda item 5.5, a member of the public asked how the Town Council trails supported local businesses and was given a brief description by another member of the public.

On agenda item 7.4, a member of the public asked what proportion of the Town Council budget was spent on staffing. They were advised that this was part of the annual town report, which was made available at the annual town meeting, and that it would be a question that should be asked at the Finance Key Area Group. Councillor Richard Cherry added that the Councillors would look at how Burgess Hill Town Council compared to other similar towns.

**13. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

**14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

15. **SUBSTITUTES**

There were none.

16. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

17. **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 14 June 2023 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

18. **EVENT UPDATE FROM START OF COUNCIL YEAR TO DATE**

Councillors were informed that the Community Engagement Team had delivered 34 events to date and that they continued to work with partner organizations.

The Chairman summarised the information contained within the reports, specifically pointing out the large number of attendees at the events. She added that the Wowzer Wednesday series in August had over 900 attendees, calculating that the spend for the magic show and inflatables came in at £1.40 and £4 per child, respectively. These events were free to attend and she was glad that parents were able to access free events, where usually they would have to pay.

Councillor Henwood questioned whether some tennis and basketball sessions could be reserved for children aged 12 plus. Councillor Eves suggested the possibility that additional sessions be added for this age group. Jennifer O'Grady responded that previously it had been hard to engage over 12's and that the tennis and basketball sessions were open for all ages. The team would investigate the interest with youth groups to see if there was a need for separate sessions.

Jennifer O'Grady informed Councillors that the Community Engagement team were meeting with other organizations in the town to ensure that vulnerable people in the town were getting the best support, with minimal duplication across the week.

**RESOLVED that:** The contents of the report were noted.

19. **EVENTS FOR REMAINDER OF COUNCIL YEAR 2023-2024**

Councillors were informed of the upcoming events for the remainder of 2023/2024.

Councillor Eves asked whether Councillors volunteering as distributors for the Christmas Hamper Project could deliver to those in their respective wards. Jennifer O'Grady informed Councillors that the Community Engagement Team had taken back the management of applications for the Hamper Project and that the team would look to do this, however this would be dependent on the number of Councillor volunteers.

Councillor Eves and Councillor de Souza questioned the need for security at the Holocaust Memorial Event due to recent antisemitic attacks. Jennifer O'Grady responded that it was 85 years since the Kindertransport's arrival and that the event was planned to take place at Marle Place where the commemorative plaque was, and that the need for security would be discussed with those involved and a consultation would be sought with local police.

Councillors requested that the dates for support/volunteers be added to the next Council meeting, this was agreed by Councillor Richard Cherry, as leader. Councillors were asked to check briefing note as this had important information regarding events and Councillor activities.

**RESOLVED that:** The contents of the report were noted.

## 20. [EVENT PROGRAMME 2024-2025](#)

The Panel were informed of the proposed event programme for 2024/2025, which had been considered alongside feedback from the public.

Event publicity was discussed as some members of the public had not been aware of events. The Community Team used many ways of communicating with the public, including: twenty-two noticeboards throughout the town, social media, press releases and the event mailing list. The team had little control over the decisions made by the editors of local newspapers, and no control over the algorithms of social media.

Councillors were asked to share social media posts and posters which were sent to them via briefing note. Jennifer O'Grady added that the team were building good relationships with the local schools. The Town Mayor had recently spoken in school assemblies, and that this would help in publicising events. Councillor de Souza added the number of people attending events demonstrated that the current publicity plan for events worked.

Councillor Henwood questioned whether handing out sweets to children at events was appropriate. Councillor Willaims stated that at the Wowzer Wednesday on 30 August there was a mix of snacks provided by Co-op, including sweets and fruit, that many children chose to take the fruit instead of sweets, and that parents were asked for permission. Jennifer O'Grady added that there would be a choice available at the Christmas event and it was a great opportunity for Councillors to talk to members of the public.

Molly Devine spoke about the plan to have an environmental theme for the Summer Fayre, with themed stalls and activities. The team were looking to work with Same Sky again but to create a larger item for the parade, to allow the parade to build over the coming years.

Councillors questioned whether the Community Team had requested sufficient funds to cover the number of activities planned. The Chairman responded that the Officers had the expertise to deliver the events and had investigated the funds needed to do so. Councillors discussed that they would like to see an increase in the number of events as they were so popular. Jennifer O'Grady stated that the team were working to capacity and were unable to take on more events. Councillors discussed the need for another member of staff to work within the Community Engagement team on a part-time basis. It was discussed that an additional member of staff would mean an increase in the events budget, to accommodate a larger events programme. Leader of the Council, Richard Cherry, agreed that this should be an agenda item at the Finance Key Area Group for consideration by Council.

**RESOLVED that:** Councillors agreed the events plan at Appendix 6. Councillors agreed that a fourth member of the Community Engagement team be discussed at the Finance Key Area Group, as part of the budget review.

## 21. [ABOUT TOWN TENDER AWARD 2023](#)

Councillors were informed that the About Town Tender had been awarded to Cliffe Enterprise Ltd and would commence from March 2024 - November 2026 for nine issues. The contract was awarded based on price.

Councillor Williams informed Councillors that it had been awarded on the basis that the printer was able to offer the same paper quality and keep the format, for a lower price. Councillor de Souza added that when deciding, the Officers and Councillors responsible honoured what had been agreed at the previous Community Engagement Key Area Group by Councillors.

**RESOLVED that:** The contents of the report were noted.

Councillor Henwood thanked the Community Engagement team for their comprehensive reports and for doing a commendable job delivering so many events for the town.

The meeting ended at 19.15 hours.