

BurgessHill Town Council

NOTES of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 7 April 2025** at 19.00 hours.

Present: Brenda Williams Chairman
Diane Black
Cedric de Souza*
Bob Foster
Jon Gardner*
Mohammad Hossain*
Andy Stowe
Adam White

* Denotes non-attendance

Also Present: Janice Henwood
Simon Hicks

Julie Holden – Chief Executive Officer
Jennifer O’Grady – Head of Community Engagement
Ramize Easter – Head of Projects

44. OPEN FORUM

There was one member of the public present. He raised a question on the Christmas Light Switch on event to establish if the event had been planned yet, and whether public comment on this would be possible before it is decided. Jennifer O’Grady, Head of Community Engagement confirmed that the event was not being planned as yet as the focus was delivering VE Day and planning summer holiday activities. However, the Town Council welcomed any ideas on future events by popping into the Help Point or contacting the Community Team directly.

45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were noted from:

Councillor Mohammed Hussain	
Councillor John Gardner	Unwell

46. **SUBSTITUTES**

Resolved: Councillor Simon Hicks substituted for Councillor Mohammad Hossain.

47. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

48. **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: Notes of the previous Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 17 October (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair.

49. **CHRISTMAS VILLAGE**

The Community Engagement Group considered the report as set out in Agenda Item 6 dated Monday 7 April. It was highlighted this was brought forward by the Head of Projects for consideration.

It was commented by all members of the KAG that this was an exciting and welcome opportunity particularly if sponsorship secured. Particular comments were:

Existing retailers were struggling with increasing business rates, could they be offered preferential treatment?

There was a demand for a market and this was a good opportunity to try this approach in Burgess Hill.

If possible could a chalet be shared amongst potential traders to split resourcing and stock to make it easier.

Could the time be extended to 9 or 9.30 pm to ensure that all after work families could attend?

If sponsorship and funds were not achieved would the Council consider making up a shortfall? It is a good idea, but there are risks and we may need to support financially.

If this was being done it should be done well.

Were the rents too low should we pitch higher?

Had market research been carried out?

Entertainment and other facilities were needed to make this a success.

School choirs would bring families to support

Could rents be considered and charged based on percentage of profits, especially for the community groups.

Could MSDC be asked to allow free parking? If not, could we pay for the free parking?

Social media to start getting ideas for the traders could be used early.

It was confirmed that there would be flexibility to ensure that the chalets were full. Officers wanted to bring as many different offerings as they could to the event. It was year one and the object would be to start an event that can carry on and flourish. While the Council had not undertaken formal market research, the officers had been thinking about this for a while and visited markets last Christmas of the type that are being suggested. The event would need a lot of entertainment attached and the idea was to link in with other community events to bring them in to or signpost from the market. The Officers confirmed that rents for community groups would be sensitively considered, the balance is between filling the chalets and making it a worthwhile market. Car parking was on the list of items to discuss with Mid Sussex DC. If the market is not looking to be successful it will come back to KAG for a decision on any shortfall needed.

A comment from the public was around advertising, the report stated that significant advertising would be needed and a budget not yet determined on this. The officers advised that all help and advice on social media and other marketing would be welcome. At this stage going out on social media would need to be targeted at traders sites.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) KAG approved the concept of the Christmas Village, and preference was expressed for the dates 10-17 December 2025.
- 2) KAG did approve the booking of the chalets for £1,794 from the Bridge the Gap fund.

The member of the public queried the advertising approach and budget allocated. It was confirmed that all advertising avenues would be explored.

50. [UPDATE ON VE DAY EVENT THURSDAY 8 MAY 2025](#)

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the report on events planned for VE Day to be held on Thursday 8 May 2025.

A Councillor requested it was minuted that this was not a celebration. That many had died through to the end of the War. It was advised that the Council were following the national guidance wording which included reflection and celebration going hand in hand.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

51. **UPDATE ON HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES 2025**

The Community Key Area Group were asked to consider the report on forthcoming Holiday Activities.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

52. **UPDATE ON SUMMER FAYRE**

The Community Key Area Group considered the report on plans for the Summer Fayre to be held on Sunday 22 June.

It was asked if toilets at Mid Sussex District Council St John's Park were currently in a good state of operation. It was confirmed that additional toilets were sourced.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

The meeting ended at 19.42 hours.

Chairman's signature

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