

NOTES of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **TUESDAY 15 JULY 2025** at 19.00 hours.

Present: Brenda Williams Chairman
Diane Black
Stuart Condie *
Bob Foster
Jon Gardner
Janice Henwood
Adam White
Peter Williams

* Denotes non-attendance

Also Present: Robert Eggelston
Trevor Hines

Jennifer O’Grady – Head of Community Engagement
Ramize Easter – Head of Projects
Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson – Events, Communications and Administration Officer
Valentina Gaggero – Events, Communications and Administration Officer

53. ELECTION OF THE VICE CHAIR

Councillor Diane Black was elected as Vice Chair.

54. OPEN FORUM

Five members of the public were present and spoke during Agenda Items 7 and 13.

A representative from Central Sussex Rotary stated that Santa’s Grotto in 2024 had incurred a business rates bill of £2000, which took 6 months to clear. She asked that Councillors inform her if they were aware of any empty units that had a rent an of under £12,000, so business rates not to be applied for the grotto in 2025.

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology of absence was noted from Councillor Stuart Condie.

56. SUBSTITUTES

Resolved: Councillor Robert Eggleston substituted for Councillor Stuart Condie.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Adam White declared an interested in Agenda Item 8.2 as a member of the committee at the Burgess Hill Constitutional Club.

Councillor Trevor Hines declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 as a family member worked for a company he hoped would be interested in having a chalet at the Christmas Village.

58. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: Notes of the previous Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 7 April 2025 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair.

59. FESTIVE MARKET

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the report as set out in Agenda Item 7 dated Tuesday 17 July 2025. It was highlighted this was brought forward by the Head of Projects for consideration.

Councillor Brenda Williams thanked Ramize for the work to date, on the Festive Market, adding that since the report was shared, further sponsorship had been confirmed.

Councillor Henwood questioned how much money was available in the 'Bridge the Gap' fund and Councillor Eggleston responded stating there was £14,000 in the budget, which was suffice to meet the needs of the market.

It was questioned if the 4-day market was the best length. It was stated that 4 days gave residents time to enjoy the event, and that it covered the days most likely to have high footfall, Thursday-Sunday. Holding it over 4 days also encouraged business to attend, as it gave them more opportunity to sell products.

It was asked if an indoor location had been agreed, should the weather be bad. In response, it was stated that the chalets were waterproof but should the weather be extreme, the safety of workers and the public would be considered and appropriate action taken.

Councillor Trevor Hines stated that the town centre needs improving as the most important issue facing the town; he has supported Head of Projects sourcing contacts; and this was not just a market, but reviving the heart of Burgess Hill creating a vibrant, welcoming space for residents and visitors alike.

A member of the public stated that he and many of his friends thought the Festive Market was a great idea, but parking charges would put them off attending. Councillor Eggleston stated that the Town Council would need to approach MSDC to request concession charges, but that there was no evidence to show free parking would drive footfall. Councillor Brenda Williams stated that Town Council Officers would look to see what can be done.

RESOLVED that: the Key Area Group approved all the recommendations as follows:

- a) the Festive Market would be delivered in 2025 operational over 4 days.
- b) Agreed the focus to secure sponsorship and agreed that any overspend on the entertainment would be met through the Bridge the Gap funds, sufficient to meet any shortfall and had been allocated by the Council for use for events such as this to encourage footfall into the town during the redevelopment of the town centre.
- c) Agreed that an additional contractor would be part of the project for 5 hours per week for 6 weeks to complete the sales and sponsorship work to come from the Bridge the Gap budget.

60. UPDATE ON VICTORY OVER JAPAN DAY 80th ANNIVERSARY

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the report on events planned for VJ Day to be held on Friday 15 August 2025.

Councillor Henwood requested that World Peace Day also be incorporated into the program of events for future. It was agreed that this would be looked at for 2026. A Royal British Legion representative thanked the Town Council for planning VJ Day commemorations.

RESOLVED that: The Key Area Group approved the plans.

61. UPDATE ON COMMUNITY FACILITATION BY THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the report on new initiatives as set out in Agenda Item 9 dated 15 July 2025.

Councillor Henwood requested that the One Stop Support Shop be extended to the east side of town, such as King's Weald. It was added that the Burgess Hill One Stop Support Shop was planned to coincide with the Pantry and Food Bank opening times but that the Community Team would look at demand at other venues once the Salvation Army venue had been established and this explored with the co-partners.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

62. REPORTS ON EVENTS COMPLETED BY THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the reports at Appendices 2-8 on events delivered since the last meeting.

Councillor Brenda Williams thanked the Community Team for the reports. Councillor Eggleston added that the reports were a useful tool to see what went well and where improves could be made, as well as showed the effort

the Community Engagement Team put into events stating the team were a tremendous credit to the Town Council.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

63. REPORT ON VE DAY 80

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the VE Day reports at Appendices 9 and 10 and the following comments were made:

The Chairman thanked all the Council Officers involved in delivering the event, as well as Community Groups involved.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

64. REPORT ON SUMMER FAYRE

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the Summer Fayre report at Appendix 11.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for delivering the event. It was questioned why plots were not allocated prior to the event. It was explained this was to ensure there were not space between stalls on the day and for 2026 further changes had been discussed to ensure the smooth running of the event set up.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

65. UPDATE ON FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES 2025

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the forthcoming events for the summer until November as set out in Agenda Item 13 dated 15 July 2025.

Attendees of the meeting were also asked to share idea for 2026.

It was stated that the Community Team had already been asked to included Armed Forces Day, on June 27th 2026, in the program for 2026, and this was being considered.

2026 potential dates for events was discussed. Officers shared that there was a potential clash with our proposed date of Summer Fayre, 14 June, with the Classic Car event to be held on Fairfield Recreation Ground.

The reasons the Community Engagement team wish to bring the date forward (and highlighted this event was always the first or second weekend of June dependant on the falling of half term holidays) were:

- 7th June was too near half term for the schools (plus team were likely to be delivering event on 31 May)
- 21st June needed to be avoided as this was Father's Day, which historically had caused issues for attendees at the event;

- 28th June was too late for the schools as they have a hectic end of term schedule and we need to work with them to ensure maximum participation.

The Key Area Group highlighted that the events should not compete and a debate ensued:

- there was a discussion about the different audiences the two events attracted;
- it was suggested the two events promote each other's with aim to bring a huge footfall to the town;
- could there be a parade between the two events? The costs to deliver this would be high as road marshals would need to be employed as volunteer groups could not be expected to manage this when already involved in supporting the Summer Fayre event;
- it was also suggested that certain elements be allocated to each event, such as the dog show to be held at the car event, but the bird show to be held at the Summer Fayre,
- Mid Sussex Radio do have capacity to attend both but this would need to be discussed with them as a provider;
- could the cars form part of Summer Fayre? The history of the events was shared and it was highlighted the excellent work the Weald Classic Car had achieved to grow their event as they had and this was not achievable;
- it was also discussed that there was little crossover in stall holders, as the car event attracted suppliers from across the South East whereas the Summer Fayre attracted more local community groups and charities;
- Finally, it was agreed that in view of the growing Town Council events, a two year plan be available on our website with dates so that groups could work around these to avoid future clashes.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted. It was agreed that the Officer team would have further discussion with the Weald Classic Car club to share their reasoning as to why the 14 June was the only available date for the Summer Fayre to proceed. Should both events be held on the same day, the Key Area Group requested they work to complement each other and ensure the town became a destination location on that day.

The meeting ended at 20.04 hours.

Chairman's signature

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