

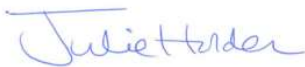
Tel: (01444) 247726
Fax: (01444) 233707
Website: <http://www.burgesshill.gov.uk>

Tuesday 14 October 2025

To: **MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP,
BURGESS HILL TOWN COUNCIL**

A **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP** will be held in the Council Chamber on **Thursday 23 October 2025** at 19.00 hours, when your attendance is required.

Copied to all members of the Council for information



Julie Holden
Chief Executive Officer

Filming, recording of Council meetings and use of social media: there is a notice displayed in the Council Chamber setting out the Councils protocol for filming at meetings.

AGENDA

1. OPEN FORUM
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. SUBSTITUTES
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of any matter on the Agenda.

5. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To consider the Notes of the Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 15 July 2025 (copy previously circulated). These were approved at Council on Monday 29 September 2025.

6. UPDATE ON EVENTS DELIVERED

Purpose of Report: Provide an update on events delivered this Council Year since the last Key Area Group Meeting.

- Teddy Bears Picnic held on Monday 7 July 2025 at Appendix 1
- Summer Holiday Programme – Wowzer Wednesday Event Report at Appendix 2 and Move it Mondays (Sporting Activities) Event Report at Appendix 3
- Family Fun Sessions held in August – Event Report at Appendix 4
- Library Event – A Conversation with Erin Kelly – event held on Monday 29 September with all 40 tickets sold out over three weeks in advance of the event date.
- Silver Sunday Tea Party - Thursday 3 October at Kings Weald from 2pm-4pm. All tickets were all allocated for this event and positive feedback received. Event Report at Appendix 5.

At each event, the Community Engagement Team seek feedback verbally at the events and where possible request written feedback via a QR code to seek specific data. This is then used to assist with the planning of future events. All the feedback captured has been included in the event report appendices provided.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Event Reports are noted.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: These were approved as part of last year event delivery.

Any underspends are detailed on each event report and remain within the allocated budget code for future events.

Community safety implications: Events were delivered with focus on providing free activities.

7. UPDATE ON FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR REMAINDER OF COUNCIL YEAR

Purpose of Report: Provide an update on events to be delivered remainder of this Council Year.

The forthcoming events that the Community Engagement Team are working on are:

- Burgess Hill Girls School Tea Party to be held on Thursday 27 November - support from Town Council to publicise, issue tickets and to support the car park on the day to ensure that the school car park is not blocked.
- Spring Time – we anticipate another tea party to be held at Kings Weald which may have a theme working in partnership with another organisation.

October 2025 Half Term activities to include:

- Family Fun Sessions to be held at Kings Church support funded by Budding Foundation, two sessions available on Monday 27 October.
- Young Carers event on Tuesday 28 October.
- Supporting the Mid Sussex District Council Play Day event to be held at Kings Church on Tuesday 28 October.
- Craft activities on Wednesday 29 October to be held, all being well, in the Creative Community new home at the former Millets unit, to be called the Creative Hub, three sessions with one dedicated session for children with SEND.
- The Return of Witchy Mountain, which is the Climbing Wall to be located outside the Help Point on Wednesday 29 October. Parent/carers must sign a waiver prior to children under 16 climbing which will be promoted in advance.
- Halloween Trail across the week in the town centre supporting local businesses and small prizes will be distributed from the Help Point.

Remembrance events to be held on Sunday 9 November and Tuesday 11 November.

22 November 2025 - Christmas Light Switch On event to be delivered with an entertainment programme across two planned performance areas in the town. We have a Plan A and Plan B to ensure we can deliver an event with an indoor back up for community stalls. Entertainers were given the opportunity to approach us directly if they wished to participate resulting in a revitalised and refreshed event. Highlights of the event are as follows:

- Stage outside Help Point and a dedicated performance area at the top of Market Place Shopping Centre with range of entertainment from 11am-5pm. The aim will be to drive footfall to the stage outside Help Point for the actual switch on so the last planned performance is Marching Youth leaving Market Place at 3.30pm.
- Parade by Burgess Hill Marching Youth leaving Market Place Shopping centre reaching the stage area on Church Walk prior to the musical performances by two live music bands.
- 14 booked community groups and commercial businesses having stalls on Church Walk for duration of event.
- Free facepainting in the Help Point, 12 – 4pm.
- Walk about entertainment to include the Grinch; Anna and Elsa (Frozen princesses) and two Nutcracker soldiers on stilts.
- Imperial Outlanders (Star Wars and Marvel walkabout entertainers).

- SEND meet and greets with the Imperial Outlanders and Anna and Elsa (pre-booking only)
- Santa's Grotto operating in Market Place Shopping Centre operated by voluntary groups located in main central area which is walk in only on the launch day.
- Free craft sessions from 11am -2pm during the afternoon in the Creative Hub (pre-booking only) to include a dedicated SEND session at 11am.
- Parking will be free from 10am provided by Mid Sussex District Council.

External decorations: Christmas Tree to be in Market Place Shopping Centre (16-foot tree) to be barriered off with picket fencing and signage to demonstrate this is provided by Burgess Hill Town Council.

The Best Dressed Window competition will be held and has been promoted to all businesses and will be followed up with those that participate in the Halloween trail. All business notified of opportunity to participate in the Autumn Winter letter to businesses. The judging will be completed by the Youth Council team and the winners will be invited on the stage at some point during the event.

Planned publicity approach for the Light Switch on event has will include:

- Featured as a save the date in July About Town completed. Reminder banner within the November edition issued week commencing 17 November (focus for Christmas events are the chalet promotion).
- Shared on the October-January events calendar circulated on social channels, circulated to schools, delivered to every town centre business prior to Agenda being issued.
- Programmes available in the Help Point for the week of half term with a soft touch approach.
- Social media will thank all attendees to the half term events and state the next big event is 22 November.
- In line with previous years, we have respected Remembrance activities and the main banners will be go up week commencing 10 November and our social media campaign will begin.

Lead for the Christmas Hamper Project to be delivered 2-6 December inclusive – support from Councillors for delivery please.

February 2026 Health screening event to be delivered at Cyprus Hall. in partnership with Places for People Leisure Centre. A funding application will be submitted to the Mid Sussex Health Partnership. The event purpose is to highlight Healthy Living aiming to provide:

- Pre-bookable appointments for blood pressure testing.
- Pre bookable Wellbeing Health MOT's
- Support available for mental health issues
- Refreshment area

RECOMMENDATION:

The contents of the report are noted.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: These were approved as part of last year event delivery programme.

Community safety implications: Events were delivered with focus on providing free activities.

8. PROGRAMME OF FUTURE EVENTS 2026-2027

Purpose of the Report: The Community Engagement Team has put together a proposed programme for the forthcoming Council year for the Key Area Group to consider. Councillors are reminded that the annual programme of events is presented to this Key Area Group in the October for the following Council year for Council to approve. Events programmes are drafted operationally but Council are involved in determining as to which events by approving the annual programme. The delivery lies with the Community Engagement Team.

This would be for events delivered in April 2026 - March 2027. Please note this is a draft working document currently as the team will be finalizing these with partnership groups involved in the delivery (Appendix 6).

Councillors are reminded that external funding will be sourced as part of the budgeting process, but as these funds are not guaranteed we must cover the costs of these within the proposed budget. Any additional funds secured via sponsorship will be used to enhance the events.

Councillors are reminded that the programme for 2026-2027 was touched upon at the last Key Area Group meeting held on 15 July 2025 when it was highlighted the Summer Fayre would be delivered on the same day as the Classic Car event. Reasons were provided for the operational decisions taken to deliver on 14 June (Minute 65 refers) and this date has been communicated with schools to assist with their planning and is in the forthcoming edition of About Town.

There are two options for consideration for Christmas Festival approach with one assuming the chalets will return and one without. Whilst it is appreciated that it is difficult to decide this when the 2025 event has not been held, it is essential that an approach is made to a chalet provider to secure dates.

Councillors will note the introduction of the Mayor's Civic Service. The role of supporting the Mayor's Engagements will be moving from Corporate Services to Community Engagement Team as agreed by the Staff and Member Key Area Group held on 21 July 2025. One event per year will receive the support and organisation by the Community Engagement team with the introduction of a Civic Service to be held annually during the Advent period which will provide an opportunity for Community Groups to come together. The date for the 2026 Civic Service is proposed for Thursday 10 December and has to be booked now to secure a space in the busy St John's calendar of events.

RECOMMENDATION:

The views of the Key Area Group are sought with decisions on

1. Review and approve the programme in full and;
2. Decision to be made on the separate Christmas budget to be created to enable a three or four day Festival considering chalet options.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: The programme and budget will be passed to the Finance Key Area Group for their meeting on Monday 10 November 2025 to approve the budget.

Community safety implications: Events will be delivered with focus on providing free activities.

9. GRANTS

Purpose of Report: Reminder of the previously approved change of timings for grant applications, information on sports club sponsorship and approval for a new Annual Grant. The Grants budget falls under the remit of the Head of Community Engagement and due to the imminent Budgetary process this is being considered on this Agenda. All Councillors receive this Agenda including members of the Grants Award Panel and the Chairperson has been advised of this request.

1. The Town Council will commence publicity of the grants process that is currently available for community groups to apply for with a closing date of 31 January. Applications will be considered by the Grants Awards Panel during February once the new Finance Manager has had the opportunity to review applications. Community Groups can apply for a minor and major grants – all applications will be considered at the one meeting and the grants budget is detailed on the Budget Spreadsheet at Appendix 5.
2. It has recently come to Officers attention that there is an annual sponsorship of £350.00 in place for Burgess Hill Town Football Club. In return for the sponsorship the Council has an advertising board at the ground. Officers remain supportive of this as it shows the Town Council's support for one of the most popular sports in the town and a club which is currently rebuilding and offering many different opportunities for football to residents. The reach of the club for recreation and health and wellbeing is significant.

A small sports sponsorship budget line is allocated within the budget which covers this, however it does not appear to be reported to Council, outside of the payment listings. It seems appropriate that the sponsorship budget should be overseen by the Grants panel, when taking in to account grant applications that come forward as some grants may more appropriately be seen as "sponsorship" and therefore allow for more funds to be available to community groups to receive.

The sponsorship for 2025/26 has been approved to the BHTFC as previously, however they have been advised that a change in the allocation of these funds

may occur in the future.

3. The Key Area Group are asked to consider a new Annual Grant.

St John's Church host a Christmas Tree each year that is lit up for the benefit of the wider community during the Advent period. The Town Council are asked to consider awarding an Annual Grant of £500 towards the costs specifically of the lights. The Church seek external funding from other suppliers and have received support from the electrical company that support and also P&S Gallaghers. To replace the lights completely is an approximate cost of £2,500 and currently the lights stay up all year due to costs of cherry picker to install and remove them are too high. A cherry picker is required if there is a significant number of bulbs out and then the issues are explored but at a significant cost to the church. As the tree benefits the entire community the Group are asked to consider setting up an annual grant which is restricted entirely to Christmas tree lights, and would enable them to build up a fund to replace the lights as and when needed.

RECOMMENDATION:

The views of the Key Area Group are sought as per following:

1. Note the reminder of the grants process;
2. The Key Area Group are asked to note the sports club sponsorship position and agree that from 2026/2027 any sports sponsorships will be approved as part of the grant panel deliberations.
3. Decision to be made on the approval of a new Annual Grant for St John's Church restricted to Christmas Tree Lights for the benefit of the Burgess Hill community.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: The decision for a new Annual Grant will be passed to the Finance Key Area Group for their meeting on Monday 10 November 2025 to approve the budget.

Community safety implications: There are none. Christmas Tree Lights fall under the remit of the Church.

10. CHRISTMAS MARKET

The following report has been provided by Head of Projects to provide an update to Council:

Preparations for the Burgess Hill Christmas Market (11th–14th December) are well underway.

14 of the 16 chalets have been sponsored by local businesses and 13 strong trader applications have been received. While final confirmation is still pending from some, efforts are ongoing to secure a few more specialist traders to ensure a varied and balanced market offer.

We're confident that all chalets will be in use, with additional horseboxes being considered where catering stalls require more space and gazebos may be used where permitted to further expand the market footprint. Trader offerings will include seasonal food, drinks, gifts and decorations.

We're also pleased to welcome local community organisations, such as the Men's Shed and school PTAs who will be taking part. Trader attendance will vary across the four days, with some attending for a single day and others for the full event.

The market is being complemented by the Creative Community Christmas Market on Saturday, taking place at their new premises on Church Walk. We are in negotiation with local shops and restaurants to offer festive promotions and activities.

Mid Sussex District Council has provided fantastic support through its Economic Development Team, sponsoring one chalet (which will host two different traders across the weekend) and agreeing to waive car parking charges at Cyprus Road Car Park on market days (2pm-8pm, 2pm-5pm on the Sunday). This support is expected to give a welcome boost to attendance.

Entertainment & Community Involvement

Planning is in progress to deliver a full programme of live entertainment, including local bands, school choirs, performers and family-friendly festive activities. A snapshot of the planned entertainment schedule is provided below and will continue to evolve as more confirmations are received.

We'd also like to acknowledge the Head of Projects, who, despite not being in a full time role has shown exceptional commitment to making this event a success. A significant amount of personal time has been and continues to be devoted to researching other markets, engaging with traders and building valuable local connections to ensure the market delivers real value to the community.

Event Outline

Wednesday 10th December

- Chalet delivery and set-up
- Overnight security begins

Thursday 11th December (2pm–8pm)

- Official opening by the Town Mayor
- Wreath-making activity (Glendale)

- Entertainment: Pictures with Santa, live choirs and bands, piped Christmas music

Friday 12th December (2pm–8pm)

- Entertainment: Pictures with Santa, choirs, festive performances, piped Christmas music

Saturday 13th December (2pm–8pm)

- Entertainment: Pictures with Santa, face painting at the Help Point, skating rink (12–6pm), live singers and bands, piped Christmas music

Sunday 14th December (12pm–6pm)

- Entertainment: Pictures with Santa, giant snow globe photo booth, piped Christmas music, vintage jazz singer

RECOMMENDATION:

The contents of the report are noted.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: These were approved as part of the last Key Area Group meeting.

Community safety implications: Event will be delivered with focus on providing free entertainment for community.