

BurgessHill

Town Council

NOTES of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **Thursday 23 October 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 Eggleston
Simon Hicks
Andrew Stowe
Julie Holden -Town Clerk
Jennifer O'Grady – Head of Community Engagement
Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson – Events, Communications and Administration Officer
Valentina Gaggero – Events, Communications and Administration Officer

66. OPEN FORUM

5 members of the public were present. No one spoke during Open Forum, but a member of Weald Classic Vehicle Club spoke during Agenda Item 8.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

68. SUBSTITUTES

There were none.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Brenda Williams and Peter Williams declared an interested in Agenda Item 9, as season ticket holders of the football club.

70. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: Notes of the previous Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 15 July 2025 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair.

71. **UPDATE ON EVENTS DELIVERED**

The Community Engagement Team were thanked for their comprehensive reports.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the reports were noted.

72. **UPDATE ON FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR REMAINDER OF COUNCIL YEAR**

An update was provided on the Christmas Light switch on, stating a plan B would be in place should weather be bad on 22 November 2025. Councillors were also informed printed event programmes would be available for the week commencing 27 October.

Councillors were invited to volunteer to deliver Christmas Hampers in December 2025, and were asked to contact The Kings Church directly should they wish to help.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

73. **PROGRAMME OF FUTURE EVENTS 2026-2027**

It was questioned why the Summer Fayre plans for 14 June 2026 had proceeded, given that it was raised at the previous Council meeting on 29 September 2025. It was stated that procedure had been followed and the Community Engagement Team had met and provided operational reasons to the Weald Classic Vehicle Club why the date had been chosen, as set out in the approved minutes of 15 July 2025, Minute 65:

- 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.

It was added that it was not possible to hold the event on Saturdays due to cricket matches, and that moving it to July or August would negatively affect the stall holders and impact the rest of the event program. It was further stated that residents, schools and community groups would expect it to be held in June, as it always had done since its inception.

A representative from Weald Classic Vehicle Club stated that at the end of lockdown a joint venture had been set up to run the Wheels Through the Years event, which the Council supported financially. The club were not looking for financial support in 2026 as the event had grown, but the clash in date would require additional funds to be spent on advertisement and possible transport between the two events, for which they would require support with. He added they could not move their event due to Father's Day on 21st June and to move to July would create clashes with other car events.

Councillors were reminded that the date was an operational matter, managed by Officers, and not a KAG decision, but that the Group could decide not to go ahead with the Summer Fayre on 14 June 2026. It was agreed that the Summer Fayre would go ahead for 14 June 2026 and that BHTC would work with the Weald Classic Vehicle Club to ensure both events were successful.

Financial support for Weald Classic Vehicle Club was discussed and Councillors agreed there should be £2,000 set aside to cover additional advertising and other associated costs incurred by the clash of dates. The £2,000 would come from an increase of to the overall events budget, with those funds earmarked to support the Weald Classic Vehicle Club. It was requested that evidence of funds spent were required.

An update was provided on investigations into chalet providers for 2026, it was stated the chalet providers for 2025 had already confirmed that they would not be able to support, and a second provider had been contacted for a quote. It was added that other providers would be investigated but a decision needed to be made before the 2025 market had happened, as otherwise a provider may not be secured at all for 2026, due to lack of availability.

It was stated that the market would be tied to the light switch on event in 2026, not held as 2 separate events, but it was questioned if a Christmas market in November would be the best timing. It was then discussed that retailers prefer the festive lighting to go up in November and that most shoppers do not wait until December to start purchasing gifts. It was also stated that, as with all events, the Christmas market would grow and the success of 2025 would be built on.

It was asked that a full report, about the 2025 Christmas Market, be provided to Councillors and a KAG be held in January 2026 to discuss the expenditure and whether chalets would be viable for 2026. It was agreed that if a deposit was required to secure chalets ahead of January 2026, then a clear contract should be drawn up to ensure minimal money was lost, should the hire agreement be cancelled.

The Community Team were thanked for adding World Peace Day to the 2026 events calendar and it was commented it was good to see the popular sports sessions returning in 2026. It was questioned if the April 2026 tea party could be branded as spring tea party but it was decided by the majority that they wished it to go ahead as a St George's Day celebration.

It was queried why there were no costs supplied to some events on Appendix 6 and 6C, such as the Young Carers Fun Days. It was stated that only staffing and admin time were relevant for these events and staffing costs were not applied for any events, as this fell under salary budget. It was added that Appendix 6 showed that no other financial implications were applied to these events. It was clarified that future reports could include a sentence to confirm that staff costings were not included in the event costs.

An update was provided on the Boogie on the Bandstand event, suggesting that it would have a similar format the Horsham Lates, with music and entertainment at the Bandstand until 8pm, at the end of July 2026.

An update was provided on the Mayor's Civic Service, stating that this would be a celebration of the community, with community groups invited to attend an event at St John's Church, to be thanked for their hard work in the town. Adding it would be in the traditional format, around advent time when the Christmas tree lights would be on.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Key Area Group approved the programme in full, adding an increase of £2,000 to the overall events budget, with those funds earmarked to support the Weald Classic Vehicle Club event on 14 June 2026, on receipt of invoices from the club to prove additional costs required.
2. Deferred the decision on the separate Christmas budget to be created to enable a three- or four-day Festival considering chalet options, to be made at a KAG in January 2026. A full qualitative and quantitative report was requested to be compiled by the Head of Projects in advance of the Key Area Group meeting so that an informed decision could be made. It was agreed that if a deposit was required to secure chalets ahead of January 2026, then a clear contract should be drawn up to ensure minimal money was lost.
3. The April tea party will be themed as St George's themed and planned delivery was 23 April 2026. It was noted this would be the poster theme only and the focus would be on delivering an event for older residents.

74. GRANTS

It was stated that the annual grant previously given to Burgess Hill in Bloom, was no longer occurring and therefore additional funds had been released.

RESOLVED that: The Key Area Group:

1. Noted the grants process;
2. Agreed that from 2026/2027 any sports sponsorships will be approved as part of the grant panel deliberations. This included the £350 traditionally given to Burgess Hill Football Club.
3. Approved a new Annual Grant for St John's Church of £500, towards Christmas Tree Lights only.

75. CHRISTMAS MARKET

The CEO thanked District Councillors for their work on securing free parking for the Christmas market. MSDC were thanked for their support of the event, with free parking and the sponsorship of a chalet. It was questioned what the cost was for Mid Sussex Radio to provide support to any of the performers, as this was not in the report. It was stated the costs were to be confirmed but it was expected to be minimal.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

The meeting ended at 20:16 hours.

Chairman's signature.....