

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held at Corsham Town Hall  
on Wednesday 24 July 2024**

**Present** Councillor N Farmer (Chair)  
Councillors A Brown, D Jarman, A Jones, R Munn, A Thomas

**In Attendance** Councillor G Ward  
Mrs S Thomas (Head of Community Services)

**In Attendance Online** Ms S Leigh (Community Services Officer – Arts)  
R Pomfrett (Stay Safe Initiative)  
Councillor A White (Committee Member)

**CS 16/24 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillors T Bush and R Williams.

**CS 17/24 Public Question Time and Petitions**

There were none.

**CS 18/24 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**CS 19/24 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting  
held on 22 May 2024.**

There were none.

**CS 20/24 Grant Applications**

One grant application had been received.

**Stay Safe Initiative CIC** – Richard Pomfrett from the Stay Safe Initiative was seeking £1,550 towards continuing the successful Digital Empowerment Programme for Year 7 and Year 9 students and their families at The Corsham School, enabling young people to have a more positive online life and make healthy choices. The funding would also be used towards delivering the new Boyz-2-Men course, developed by Stay Safe, for young men at the school to help them understand the maze of masculinity, with topics addressing toxic online influencers, sexual harassment and male mental health. The course helped unlock the potential of boys who may not have positive male role models.

There were some questions on how best to evaluate the Boyz-2-Men course with a suggestion that The Corsham School staff involved in supporting the Year 8 boys taking part could look at the differences it had made over the course of the school year. Given her previous experience of working in schools teaching about similar subjects, Arts Officer S Leigh offered to share advice on how her projects had been evaluated.

The Committee agreed to the funding request.

## **Resolved**

That the Stay Safe Initiative's application for a grant of £1,550 towards continuing its Digital Empowerment Programme and delivering the Boyz-2-Men course be approved.

### **CS 21/24 Community Wellbeing Update (*Minute CS 06/24 and others*)**

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's community wellbeing activities, including visits to local groups and organisations such as Hungerford House's 'Tea at 3', Rethink Mental Health and Corsham Library by the Community Wellbeing Officer; the work by Dogs for Health towards setting up the project in Corsham; the work the Town Council had been doing with the Good Practice Mentor Programme and the sharing of the free training they offer, and the plans for the Community Wellbeing Strategy to now reference the Age-Friendly Community work being done.

The Committee was also updated on the status of the Corsham Foodbank, following the delivery of 87 packages to local families referred by Corsham's schools. As a result, the Foodbank's stocks were now low and they needed donations, both food and financial. The Foodbank was also no longer taking self-referrals (which started during the pandemic) and had reverted to professional referrals so they could focus on those most in need. This also helped to prevent abuse of the system.

A discussion took place regarding Corsham Foodbank becoming a registered charity, but Cllr Brown explained that the current Committee had neither the time nor the willingness to take on such a major task. Cllr Jarman offered to help the Foodbank undertake a Resilience Review as there was concern that the current model was not sustainable, particularly if the Committee and volunteers should step down. Cllr Brown would discuss this offer with the Corsham Foodbank management.

The update was noted.

### **CS 22/24 Corsham – An Age-friendly Community (*Minute CS 07/24 and others*)**

Cllr Brown and the Head of Community Services updated the Committee on the latest steps towards Corsham becoming an Age-friendly Community. An Age-friendly Community sees older residents (age 50+) engaged in shaping the place where they live, meaning that local groups, the Town Council, businesses and residents all work together to identify and make changes in both the physical and social environment.

The Town Council's application to join the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities had been approved on 5 June, which now gave staff and Councillors access to the free support and resources available. A Town Council Steering Group had also been set up and would meet on 30 September to discuss the next steps. To help with this, the Head of Community Services and Community Services Officer – Community Wellbeing would be drawing up a baseline assessment of the relevant work already being done within the Corsham community. A visit to Yate Town Council, already active members of the UK Network, would also be arranged.

The update was noted.

### **CS 23/24 StoryTown (*Minute CS 08/23 and others*)**

The Committee was updated on the progress of the various StoryTown projects being undertaken in connection with the themes of the Town Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

- i) Marnie Forbes Eldridge's work with local primary schools, based on stories linked to the Environment and Climate Change theme of the Strategic Plan, had come to an end with a sharing event at Springfield Community Campus on 21 June. All the schools presented their work and the event culminated with a shared performance from St Patrick's Primary School and Heywood Prep, in front of parents. It was hoped that both

Marnie Forbes Eldridge and Matthew Tett (who ran an environment-linked short story competition earlier in the year) would work with schools again in 2024/25.

- ii) The Business and Economy theme was linked to the 'Story of the High Street' project, with Bath Spa University's Story Associate, Jenny Hulme. This work, funded by Bath Spa University's Story Arcs project, was giving a level of unprecedented detail via the stories from businesses that were being collected. It had always been anticipated that the outcomes from the project would evolve as the stories were transcribed and these were now becoming clearer, with a meeting planned to discuss next steps due to take place in August. The project would feature at the next Business Breakfast in September, and it was hoped that Jenny Hulme would also be able to deliver a presentation to the Community Services Committee at its September meeting.

The update was noted.

#### **CS 24/24 Public Art Projects (*Minute CS 09/24 and others*)**

The Community Services Officer - Arts updated the Committee on the Town Council's various public art projects.

- i) **Potley and Portland Rise Art Community Project (PACT) and Brunel Shed Container Project**  
**PACT** – A site meeting had taken place with the team undertaking the grounds work and it was felt the installation of the artwork should be straightforward. A meeting still needed to be held with Wessex Water regarding the utilities running under the site and it was hoped this would take place soon, allowing final installation in early autumn.

**Brunel Shed Container Project** – The Brunel Shed members had undertaken the minor repairs needed on the shipping container and painted it ready for artist Baz Hurlow to add the final design, which had been agreed via community engagement.

There had been a suggestion by members of the Town Council's Public Art Task Group that the design include the addition of people. The Arts Officer would discuss this with the artist. It was also suggested that the work be recorded at various stages, either via photographs or video, for future use on the website or social media.

- ii) **Cross Keys Plinth**  
Jonny Sanders' 'Cotswold Sheep' had been installed, with some very positive feedback from residents. A press release had been sent to BBC Wiltshire and other news outlets and the BBC had expressed an interest in recording an interview about the project. A plaque was also due to be installed on the piece, featuring a QR code directing people to the Arts section of the Town Council's website.

The Corsham School also had their sheep, ready for painting in early September, and further sheep were due to be ordered for the other schools.

Councillors also asked that something be posted on the Town Council's Facebook page explaining the work being done at Park Lane for the quarry trucks.

The update was noted.

#### **CS 25/24 Public Art Sites – Priority List (*Minute CS 10/24*)**

Following approval of the Town Council's new Public Art Strategy 2024-2028 at May's Community Services Committee meeting, it was *Resolved: That Appendix 1 - Potential Public Art Sites be considered again at the Community Services Committee meeting in July, allowing Councillors the opportunity to reprioritise the sites, and consider the accessibility of the sites listed.*

Discussion points raised included looking at sites outside of the town centre, particularly Neston and Gastard; engaging with local communities; having something on Lacock Road to recognise the sports clubs; not being afraid to have temporary pieces of work at

sites - there is not always a requirement for things to last; considering whether the Town Council use its Public Art budget every two years, to have more funds available for a project; revisiting the idea of murals around the town; highlighting Corsham's history, particularly the Charles Dickens connection, in conjunction with Corsham Civic Society, and considering that public art does not have to be a physical piece.

### **Resolved**

That the current Public Art Sites list be circulated to all Councillors for their comments, and these would then be considered by the Public Art Task Group, with a new priority list drawn up for approval by the Community Services Committee.

### **CS 26/24 The Pound Arts Centre**

The first meeting of The Pound Arts Centre Support Working Group took place on 9 July. Cllr Farmer reported that the meeting was very productive with a list of potential ideas to help support The Pound created. There had been an initial discussion with Russ Tunney, Creative Director of The Pound, regarding the ideas but these would be discussed in more detail at the Working Group's next meeting in September.

The update was noted.

### **CS 27/24 Events Update (*Minute CS 11/24, 69/23 and others*)**

The Committee was updated on the Town Council's events.

#### **i) Summer Busking Saturdays (4 May-28 September 2024)**

There had been 12 musical performances so far, with all performers giving very positive feedback about the experience, along with good comments from residents. All the remaining busking spots were now filled to the end of September. Martingate continued to co-fund the project. There had been a possibility that buskers would need to relocate because of the work starting on the hotel conversion of the old Lloyds Bank building, but this now looked less likely given the delays in starting the development.

#### **ii) Taste of Corsham (15 June 2024)**

Taste of Corsham had proved to be another successful event, despite the bad weather.

- There were 29 trading stalls on the day, with some selling out by 2pm. Six regular stallholders did not book due to events taking place elsewhere.
- The Town Council's Crafts stall proved very popular but had to relocate from the Digital Mansion Corsham to the Town Hall due to the winds.
- The Champagne Trail had 45 entries.
- Entertainment was provided by three musicians, booked via Pound Arts, on the Picnic Lawn at the Digital Mansion; Corsham Windband performed in Martingate, at the Busking Spot, and Café Grounded Corsham organised their own act so they could participate in the event.
- Footfall reports indicated that Taste of Corsham saw a 3% increase on the 2023 event, and that footfall was up by 69% compared to the equivalent Saturday in May 2024. There was a 54.2% increase in new visitors to the town centre.
- Things to consider for 2025 included ensuring that the space at Digital Mansion is full, even if stalls have to be moved at the last minute; ensure all stalls are prepared for high winds and to look at the date the event is held in future to avoid clashing with other events elsewhere.

#### **iii) Summer Fete (6 July 2024)**

The setting-up and first half of the Summer Fete was impacted by heavy rain and strong winds but, as the weather improved, visitor numbers increased and general feedback was very good.

- Twenty-nine stalls attended, with five no-shows on the day, undoubtedly due to the weather. Feedback from the majority of stalls was excellent, although some stalls did less well due to the reduced visitor attendance.

- Numbers attending the Guide Dog's Dog Show were lower than previous years, but it still proved to be a popular attraction.
- Corsham Rugby Club reinvented their assault course plans on the day to take account of the weather and had a steady stream of participants throughout.
- The Last Baguette's environmental-themed walkabout theatre production of *Bin Rat!* proved very popular with families.
- Things to consider for 2026 included siting the music tent closer to the skatepark to increase the shelter from the weather; reviewing the type of musical acts at the event, and, as with Taste of Corsham, ensuring all stalls were prepared for high winds.

iv) **Summer Holiday Trails (22 July-8 September)**

The 2025 Summer Trails were again being sponsored by The Corsham Toy Shop. There were two trails: Pokémon – Can You Find Them All and Sylvanian Families – Join the Sylvanians' Summer Shopping Trip. As usual, there were 10 characters for each Trail hidden in the windows of various shops and businesses in the town centre. It was anticipated that entry numbers would be on a par with last year, when over 200 children took part in the Pokémon Trail.

v) **Street Fair (7 September 2024)**

This annual event would take place, as usual, in the town centre and at Digital Mansion Corsham, running from 12-4pm on 7 September 2024.

- The road closure (8am-6pm) had been applied for and was awaiting approval from Wiltshire Council.
- Thirty-six stalls had already booked for the event, with a mix of food, drink, activities, fundraising and information.
- The CTC Crafts stall would be based at the Digital Mansion, unless the weather forecast was for rain and/or high winds, in which case it could be relocated in advance to the Town Hall.
- Following the positive feedback from, and for, the performers sourced for Taste of Corsham, Pound Arts had been asked to source performers for the Street Fair. The Corsham Windband would be playing at the busking spot from 12pm.
- Councillors would be asked for their availability to help in due course.

The Committee was also updated on the plans to create a 'Summer Staycation' leaflet rounding up Corsham-based free and low-cost activities available for families during the summer holidays. Due to staffing issues, this had been slightly delayed but would be available w/c 29 July.

The Head of Community Services and Community Services Officer – Tourism and Events would be asking the Committee to approve the dates for 2025's events at September's meeting.

The update was noted.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.59pm. There were no members of the public present.

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CHAIR

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DATE