

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY ENAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2024 AT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GREENACRE CENTRE, VALERIAN WAY, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present:

Councillors: Headington (Chair), Bendell, Buck, Saunders, Smith (Vice Chair), Talbot, Venneear, Wightwick

Also present:

E. Payne, Town Clerk

Cllr Buck, as Chairman of the Council presided over the first item on the agenda.

01/24 APPOINTMENT OF POSITIONS

a) Nominations were requested for the position of Chair.

For the position of Chair, nominations were received for Cllr Bendell from herself, seconded by Cllr Wightwick. Cllr Headington was nominated by himself, seconded by Cllr Talbot.

After a show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** that:

Cllr Headington is elected as Chair of the Community Engagement Committee.

b) Nominations were requested for the position of Vice Chair

For the position of Vice Chair, nominations were received from Cllr Bendell from Cllr Wightwick. There was no seconder. Cllr Smith was nominated by Cllr Talbot, seconded by Cllr Venneear. There being no other nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that:

Cllr Smith is elected Vice Chair of the Community Engagement Committee

02/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present.

03/23 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

There were no declarations made.

04/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

No questions raised.

____ Chair

05/24 REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

05/24.1 Christmas Lights Event

Members received the feedback from stakeholders of the event and noted the areas for improvement. Members considered the weather and could there be a Plan B. This was not deemed feasible as other stakeholders may be committed elsewhere and the road closure needs to be applied for to CBC 12 weeks in advance.

Members considered that the date should remain as a Saturday as it gives an added benefit to local retail businesses. The Baldock Round Table sleigh and Father Christmas would not be available. This could be accommodated by hiring in a Christmas Grotto or engaging with a local resident who could undertake the role.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Christmas Lights Switch On Event will be Saturday 30 November 2024.

06/24.2 Christmas Lights

Members considered the Town Council's Christmas lights provision. A lot of it is old and the solar light Christmas trees received considerable negative feedback due to their limited hours of operation. Proper investment in infrastructure and a phased approach to replacing the Christmas lights stock was considered prudent.

Members were asked to feedback with some thoughts on streets to be included in the scheme. The solar trees could be used in areas where the town council owns the columns and would be reprogrammed from 4-10pm. The scheme would include those static displays located on various buildings. The festoons on shops and in the car park would be maintained.

Other engagement with residents for best decorated house was suggested, which is currently being undertaken by a local Estate Agent. The new Community Engagement Officer could investigate this.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Clerk will draw up a specification for a new festive light scheme for rental of a display, to be considered at the next meeting.

07/24.3 Stotfold 50

Members received a report with proposals for the 50th anniversary of the formation of Stotfold as a Town Council. Members felt that it would be good to spread a series of events throughout the year from May 2024 – April 2025 with the relevant branding across all of the activities.

These could include:

- A 'festival' event for the first weekend of July including open-air cinema, funfair, musical entertainment, community organisations, craft fair, food and drink vendors, schools, dance groups, gymnastic demonstrations.
- An anniversary beer and gin, liaising with local brewery and suppliers.
- A historical exhibition
- New entry signs to Stotfold

Members considered the marketing for all the activities and agreed that it would be beneficial to have a uniform approach to a 'brand'. Members received a proposal from a local artist based in Hitchin who based their artwork on local architectural features e.g., mill, church, memorial hall etc, gold post-box (Victoria Pendleton). This artwork could be used for the year including email banner, new signage at entrances to Stotfold, beer/gin labels, tote bags, buttons etc.

Members were encouraged to meet informally as a working group as the schedule of meetings was busy and the Clerk isn't able to accommodate additional meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Clerk will bring forward proposals based on these discussions for consideration at the next meeting.***
- b) Katie Hounsome is engaged as designer for 50th Anniversary branding.***

Post Meeting Note: The proposed date for the event has been amended to weekend of 29/30 June 2024.

08/24.4 Youth Engagement

Members received a report from the contractor who delivers youth engagement on behalf of the Town Council. Members received the report and noted its contents. There are other things that this organisation could offer, and a proposal will be drafted to include items such as walking football for older residents. There are other areas to be investigated including health matters (vaping). It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Note the report***
- b) Consider future activities at another meeting of this committee.***

09/24.5 Community Litter Pick

Members received a report setting up a community litter pick. Members considered that this is something that would be organised and could be offered to schools for DofE activities. Members considered that this could be offered two or three times a year and not just once a year. Members also felt

that it should be open during the week and not just on a Saturday for residents who are free during the week. The logistics of collecting rubbish including the colour of the bags and how the Town Rangers could collect the bags was then agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

Organise a community litter pick is organised for w/c 1 April 2024.

10/24.7 Steam Fair

Members were asked to consider their involvement in the May steam fair. They considered more ways to engage with the Town Council. Members considered that they might get better engagement with residents if they had a joint activity and possibly host a history exhibition.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Investigate hiring an exhibition trailer.***
- b) Consider further engagement activities at the next meeting and promotional materials to hand out.***

11/24.8 Civic Service

Members received a verbal report on the work undertaken to date which was noted.

12/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13 March 2024

The meeting closed at 2034.

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN: _____

MINUTES APPROVED (date): _____