

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 25TH MARCH 2024

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2024 AT 6PM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Birch (Chair), Holland-Delamere (Vice Chair), Alwahabi, Ashraf, Hallam, Hibbert, Lane, Marriott, Miah and Ismail

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs J Thorneycroft (Assistant Town Clerk) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

63. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Russell and Soan.

64. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were made.

65. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2024

In relation to item 57, the Assistant Town Clerk confirmed the statement of confirmation had been sent to the Northampton Business Improvement District. The Chair went on to explain a trial would be undertaken of the Project Request Form and any feedback would be reported back to this committee.

RESOLVED: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th February 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

66. TO RECIEVE THE MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 6TH MARCH 2024

The Chair referred to the various grant applications that were reviewed at the Grants Sub-Committee meeting and requested any questions or queries.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Grant Sub-Committee meeting held on 6th March 2024 were received and adopted.

67. EVENTS AND PROJECTS UPDATE

The Chair referred to the Events and Projects Update enclosed with the agenda and highlighted the variety of events the Town Council were supporting or hosting this year.

Balloon Festival

The Assistant Town Clerk explained, the organiser of the Balloon Festival requested the Town Council to provide an additional £400 to cover the cost of Chairs for the Community Marquee. A Councillor queried why the Town Council were requested to cover the £400 cost of the table and chairs when the Committee had previously agreed to provide additional funding. A Councillor suggested the £400 for the additional chairs be queried with the organiser of the Balloon Festival.

Action: Contact the organiser of the Balloon Festival and query the request for an additional £400 for chairs.

Tales and Traditions of Northampton Guildhall, (as part of Heritage Open Days)

The Chair explained an idea was posed that former Mayors be invited and present on Heritage Open Day to provide their stories and greet the public. Councillor Hibbert suggested a copy of the 'Guide to the Guildhall' be provided or displayed as it provided great insight into the stone carvings throughout the building. In response to a question, the Chair explained Heritage Open Day would go ahead as normal September 2024 as the Town Council had license to occupy until March 2025.

A supplementary copy of the Heritage Open Day report was circulated at the meeting. The Assistant Town Clerk explained different re-enactors were procured who would portray influential figures from Northampton's History. In response to a question, the Assistant Town Clerk explained the re-enactors were providing their own costumes and completing research.

RESOLVED: It was resolved to approve the expenditure from budget code 4524 Heritage Projects as outlined within the report (appendix A).

Christmas

The Chair highlighted planning had been undertaken for the Christmas Light Switch-On to take place in the new Market Square, at the end of November 2024.

Heritage Projects

The Chair explained a new budget code had been created during budget setting specifically for Heritage Projects. She added, this entailed the 'Snapshots in Time Trail' project, the 350th Anniversary of the Great Fire of Northampton and other heritage projects.

68. TO REVIEW UNSPENT COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY FUND (CCF) AND GENERAL COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME (CGF) MONIES WOULD BE UTILISED

The Chair highlighted many discussions had been held regarding what happens to unspent Councillor Community Fund monies at the end of each Financial Year. Councillor Marriott highlighted any unspent funds were generally transferred into General Reserves however, Councillor Birch requested these funds be retained and used to benefit the community.

The Assistant Town Clerk explained roughly £15,000 was unspent from the Councillor Community Funding this financial year. The Chair referred to the Town Clerk's report, an option was for the Community Engagement Officer to assist Councillors in spending their remaining unspent fund or, provide the Community Engagement Officer with the delegated authority to spend these funds in their wards.

A Councillor posed that remaining funds be split amongst Councillor who have spent their funds. The Chair stated this would be to the detriment of the ward residents whose Councillor(s) had underspent. Councillor Marriott commented the funds should be utilised by the Community Engagement Officer to assist Councillors who are not spending or be delegated authority to spend this.

A Councillor stated reducing Councillor's who had not spent their Councillor Community Funding would penalise the residents and up-to the political parties to not select them as candidate at the next election.

RESOLVED: The remaining unspent Councillor Community Funding at the end of Financial Year 2023-24 be earmarked for the Community Engagement Officer to allocate.

69. TOWN CLERKS' VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS (VAS) REPORT

The Chair referred to the Town Clerk's report on VAS signs outlined within the agenda.

A number of Councillors highlighted many ward residents queried the installation of VAS signs to deter drivers from speeding. The Chair commented in her opinion it was additional street furniture.

Councillor Marriott explained there was no budget allocated for the cost of insurance however, the Town Clerk would need to query the cost of licensing and insurance.

Councillor Hallam explained he had previously assisted with the purchase of a VAS sign and how the management of it could be complex. He added, if this Committee decided to host VAS signs that a process be formulated to ensure consistency.

In response to a question, a Councillor explained VAS signs collect data on the speed of vehicles however, it does not collect any personal or vehicle data. In response to an additional question, he explained the installation was down to the residents' or their association and raised the risks associated with the installation and charging of VAS signs.

Action: Town Clerk to request further information from Kingsthorpe Parish Council on the licensing of their VAS lines.

Action: Town Clerk to gain further information on the costings if additional licenses were required for any additional VAS Line and installation.

RESOLVED: It was resolved and agreed the Committee be the named body on the Section 50 licenses.

RESOLVED: It was resolved and agreed that signs are added to the Council's insurance schedule once purchased.

RESOLVED: It was resolved and agreed that the council, in consultation with the Clerk, delegates the day to day management of the signs to the resident/community associations.

70. BECKETS PARK MEMORIAL UPDATE

The Chair explained, the Shadow Council set this in motion and students at the University of Northampton adopted this as a project to undertake during their course and ran a competition. She added, the design was welcomed by the Buddies of Becketts Park and the Northampton Hospital as it would provide additional facility for hospital staff and members of patients' families to utilise. The Chair stated, the seating area was modular and would be fitting for the space and a consultation would be held to choose the planting to surround it. The Chair added drawings would be provided to a Quantity Surveyor to gain further costings and David Smith Associates were engineering the project pro bono.

NOTED

71. WESTON FAVELL CENTRE 50TH ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL UPDATE

Councillor Holland-Delamere explained a successful meeting was held to discuss celebrating the Weston Favell 50th Anniversary and how other community celebrations would take place. He added, 60 Miles by Road or Rail and Silhouette Theatre would submit a bid for funding for displays demonstrating the heritage and how it was a community hub for the east of Northampton.

Councillor Holland-Delamere stated a report would be provided once the funding bids had been submitted. A Councillor posed whether celebrations would be held for the 50th Year of the Grosvenor Centre being built in 2025.

72. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR NEXT MEETING

No discussion was held under this item.

MEETING CONCLUDED: 7:05PM