

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 23 January 2023

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor L Ashbourne (Chair)

Councillors:	V Gwatkin A Prosser	R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Sharon Groth	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Town Clerk
Others:	None.	

SC36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Duncan, J Aitman and O Collins.

SC37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

SC38 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities committee held on 14 November 2022 were received.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the 'chat bench' was nearly ready and would be installed soon.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities committee held on 14 November 2022 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the chair.

SC39 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

SC40 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer.

A Member asked what the plans were for spending the £10,000 budgeted, but yet unspent of 408/4111 – *Water Safety/Education*. The Town Clerk confirmed that there were plans to enhance the signage around the lake and any remaining funds would be rolled over to next year to be used as needed.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

SC41 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

The Committee received the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

Members discussed the options for the delivery of the annual Newsletter to residents and preferred Contractor Two as this would be a separate A4 newsletter and not included inside another publication. Members had concerns that Contractor Two wouldn't deliver to Windrush Place however the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed this estate would be covered for an additional cost but would include Colwell Green, outside of the parish boundary.

To get the most reliable results members suggested that a space for the respondent to write their postcode on the reply questionnaire would allow officers to remove any responses that were outside of Witney.

Members delegated to Officers, in conjunction with the Chair of the Stronger Communities Committee, to resolve any issues that arose in relation to the issuing of the newsletter.

Members also discussed the review of press coverage; they were pleased to hear that press releases issued by the council generally always appear in the media. Members agreed that any council news, however small, was shared with the media to maintain clear communications with the residents of the parish. Members asked for the Press Spreadsheet to cover any press releases including those that do not get picked up by the media outlets.

Resolved:

1. That, the report, and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Council proceeds with Contractor 2 for the newsletter distribution and,
3. That, any issues with this should be delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair and,
4. That, any news is forwarded to the media no matter how small and,
5. That, all official press releases should be noted on the Press spreadsheet.

SC42 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee received the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

The Committee welcomed updates on the annual resident's survey which was due in March, a revamped mailing list, and advertisements on new Councillor recruitment ahead of elections in May.

The Deputy Town Clerk gave a verbal update advising members that a meeting attended by the Deputy Town Mayor regarding Le Touquet airport was in fact with representatives from a company who were tendering to manage it and therefore this was not something the council would engage in further.

Members discussed the request from Witney Blanket Hall for a display in the administration office window and agreed to install three A3 advertising boards to promote 'Witney Heritage', one of which could be provided to the requestor. The others could be offered to other historical organisations in the town, and these would be to advertise the buildings, their work and locations but not advertise fee-paying events; the Council had noticeboards for the latter and would be happy to advertise community events there.

The Committee discussed the request from the Rotary Club of Witney to have a window display for two months at the end of the year to highlight the 'Wrap Up Project'. Members considered the request which was outside of the policy and thought it unfair whilst there was such high demand from other groups, particularly in the run up to Christmas. Members agreed to limit the window display to one month however agreed for Rotary to display an A3 poster in the window for the additional month if space allowed.

Resolved:

1. That, the report, and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Rotary Club request for a two-month display be refused however the offer of one-month additional advertising by way of a A3 poster be granted and,
3. That, Witney Blanket Hall, Cogges Farm Museum and Witney Museum be approached by officers to provide display advertising material for the Heritage display boards in the administration office window.

SC43 CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

The Committee received the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer, this was an updated report following the announcements from Buckingham Palace the day before the meeting regarding the type of events King Charles III wished to hold over the coronation weekend.

The Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update advising members that there would no longer be a bonfire as this was specifically requested by the King.

Members supported a suggestion that the Corn Exchange be offered to volunteer groups on 8th May in order to meet with the King's idea of "The Big Help Out".

The committee heard the bunting campaign and schools commemorative book idea would commence soon. The bunting campaign would ask the parish to create sections of bunting, ideally upcycling old material, to be hung over the coronation weekend which would then be used for future events.

Resolved:

1. That, the report, and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Corn Exchange be offered as a subsidised let to local Volunteer groups for the Big Help Out.

SC44 **THIRD PARTY EVENTS REPORT**

The Committee received the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

Members were pleased to see that the children's play day event would be hosted at Oxlease after several successful years in the South of the town, this was a welcome alternative that would allow families from the North and East areas of Witney, that couldn't reach Burwell to participate.

The Committee welcomed the schedule of other third-party events and agreed for the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to host a pop-up stand on The Leys in February and August.

A member asked if the Theatre Group which performed to children on The Leys recreational field last year would be returning. Officers advised it was currently not known but enquiries could be made.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the request from BBOWT be granted and,
3. That, the Venue & Events Officer contacts the Oxford Playhouse theatre group to see if they wish to host an event this year.

The meeting closed at: 6.53 pm

Chair