

NOTES of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **MONDAY 10 June 2024** at 18.00 hours.

Present: Brenda Williams Chairman
Diane Black
Cedric de Souza*
Bob Foster
Jon Gardner
Mohammad Hossain
Andy Stowe
Adam White

Also Present: Anne Eves
Janice Henwood
Jennifer O’Grady – Head of Community Engagement
Molly Devine – Events, Communications and Administration Officer
Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson – Events, Communications and Administration Officer

22. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Diane Black was elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Key Area Group for the ensuing year.

23. OPEN FORUM

There were 4 members of the public present.
One member of the public asked why the meeting was at 6pm, as this was a difficult time for residents who may wish to attend after work. This was supported by Councillor Stowe. The comments were taken on board and considered for future meetings.
A second member asked what the ‘breakeven’ ticket sales were for Shakespeare. This was answered at minute reference **28**.

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

25. SUBSTITUTES

There were none.

26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

27. **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 16 October 2023 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

28. **UPDATE ON EVENTS DELIVERED**

Reports on events delivered in 2023/24 were given, with information on October 2023 half term activities, the 2023 Christmas Lights Switch On, the Check Your Health event, Town Centre Trails, Young Carers, Family Fun Sessions, Easter activities, the Lord Chamberlain's Men performance and the D-Day Commemorations.

Councillor Henwood thanked the team for the comprehensive reports attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Questions were raised regarding the budget for events, and how much was spent on each sports session and the Hamlet ticket sales. The budget had been agreed in the October Key Area Group (KAG) meeting and Officers took operational decisions on how much was spent once the budget was allocated.

The Lord Chamberlain's Men performance of 'Hamlet' was allocated £3000, with a further £450 charge for caretaking by staff at Burgess Hill Girls. Ticket sales reached approximately £2500, meaning that the cost was around £1000 to the Town Council. Councillor Stowe questioned whether £1000 was worth it when only 189 people attended. It was decided that the KAG members were still happy to have the event go ahead in 2025.

Councillor Stowe raised questions regarding the Christmas Lights Switch On, stating that whilst he had not attended the event, he had heard feedback that the event was not so well attended and raised issues with the quality of the Santa's Grotto and questioned whether the Town Council should put funds towards it. He asked who 'Polly the Photobooth Caravan' were and why the Star Wars group was used so often.

It was confirmed that the Santa's Grotto was run by volunteers from Burgess Hill Rotary clubs and Burgess Hill District Lions. The Town Council had not contributed financially in 2023. Feedback from members of the public regarding the event and the Grotto was extremely positive. Polly the Photobooth Caravan was a local business paid for by the Town Council to give attendees a free memento of the event, and the Star Wars characters were a free entertainer, which was cost-effective.

A member of the public asked if all events were required to make a profit. They were not as most events were free for residents to attend.

Councillors Henwood and Stowe requested that the Weald Classic Car Club event, 'Wheels Through the Years' continue to be supported by the Town Council. This event was organised by the Weald Classic Car Club and would be the decision of the Grants Award Panel.

All Councillors expressed gratitude for the D-Day event, complimenting the Events team on their hard work and a successful evening. The event was delivered in consultation with the community and thanks were given to the volunteers from both Rotary clubs, the Lions and the Town Council's Maintenance team for their hard work on the evening.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

29. FEEDBACK ON EVENTS DELIVERED

Councillor Henwood questioned the possibilities of changes to the Family Fun Sessions, specifically regarding length of sessions and whether to make it drop-in to stop no-shows.

The team worked with the King's Church on the event, and they kept costs down through the use of volunteers. An increase in session length would not work for the volunteers. When looking at the audience for the event it was important to note that families of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can find it difficult to stick to plans. However, it was important to keep the sessions bookable, as a smaller crowd was better for the children's needs. A waiting list was always operated to ensure that when cancellations were made, another family was offered the opportunity.

It was confirmed that the Town Council hoped to deliver a third event this year to support families with SEND as additional funding had been secured. A venue is being investigated and questions were raised regarding the accessibility of the King's Weald. Compliments were made of the last-minute musician for the last Senior Citizen's Tea Party.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

30. UPDATE ON FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR REMAINDER OF COUNCIL YEAR

A verbal update was given regarding the Summer Fayre, with some draft copies of the programme available to view. This programme would be available on the Town Council website, and via QR codes at the event. The event would be the biggest yet, with approximately 85 stallholders, and a larger parade. Five local schools had been working with Same Sky, a local community arts charity to make animals to be held in the parade. Councillor Stowe expressed that he was glad to see that the event had been changed, as he did not believe it was previously well attended.

A member of the public raised concern regarding the safety of QR codes. The Events Team agreed to look into mitigating any risks. A paper copy for review would be available in the Help Point, and on the Councillors stand at the event.

Councillor Stowe stated that he would like to see an event like Open-Air Music in the Park in the town centre subject to the removal of the stone garden. Councillor White asked that equal opportunity be given to food stalls at the event. It was confirmed that food stalls would be situated near one another.

Councillor Eves asked if pickleball had been considered for summer, as it ran at the Triangle. The Triangle had been approached for 2024 and were only available for badminton sessions.

Councillor Henwood asked it was possible to use the tennis courts at King's Weald. This would be looked into.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the report were noted.

31. **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

32. **IDEAS FOR FUTURE EVENTS**

Councillors, and members of the public, were asked for their views on future events. All suggestions were written down and collated. Ideas were submitted and then a discussion on the potential viability of these. This is available to view at Appendix 1.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

32. **ABOUT TOWN**

Councillor Henwood expressed her gratitude for the inclusion of Councillor contact details in the latest issue, and thanked the team for their efforts with the About Town advertising.

RESOLVED that: The contents of the report were noted.

The meeting ended at 19:32 hours.