

# Burgess Hill

Town Council

**NOTES** of the **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP MEETING** held in the Council Chamber on **Thursday 17 October 2024** at 19.00 hours.

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

\* Denotes non-attendance

**Also Present:** Janice Henwood  
Simon Hicks  
Peter Williams  
  
Julie Holden – Chief Executive Officer  
Jennifer O’Grady – Head of Community Engagement  
Valentina Gaggero– Events, Communications and Administration Officer

**33. OPEN FORUM**

There were seven members of the public present.

A representative from Central Sussex Rotary thanked the Council for their financial contribution towards Mid Sussex Search for a Star event held on Saturday evening. There were four winners and they would be involved in the Christmas Lights event on 23 November. They shared the success of the crochet poppy display that will be installed on the Bandstand and entrance gates to the War Memorial Garden. Finally, the Grotto would be set up in Market Place shopping centre and a local volunteer, an architect, had offered to assist with the design of it. The Grotto was funded by Burgess Hill District Lions.

**34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology of absence was received from:

Councillor Jon Gardner	personal commitment
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**Resolved**

Council accepted the apology for absence.

35. **SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor Simon Hicks substituted for Councillor Jon Gardner.

36. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Adam White declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 11 as he was a member of the Burgess Hill Bonfire Society and was the Councillor Outside Representative.

37. **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:** Notes of the previous Meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group held on 10 June 2024 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

38. **UPDATE ON EVENTS DELIVERED**

Reports on events delivered in this current council year were given and reports considered on the following events:

- Summer Fayre

Councillors commented on the success of the event which was well attended, thanked the team for the Councillor stall as an opportunity to engage with residents and to support the event, and they enjoyed the tortoise. Concerns were expressed on the toilet availability and consideration for portaloos was requested.

- Teddy Bears Picnic
- Open Air Music in the Park – One Councillor commented on the timing of the event and it was advised that this was targeted at families. The event had food providers that attended the D Day event and this opportunity was advertised widely.
- Summer Holiday Programme – Wowzer Wednesday Event Report and Summer Sporting Activities Event Report

Councillors comments that the activities were good, free refreshments were welcomed by the attending public.

Sports sessions were welcomed and non attendance was discussed. Support was given for the change in booking approach.

- Family Fun Sessions held in August

- Library Event – A Conversation with Louise Candlish

**RESOLVED that:** The contents of the Event Reports were noted and approval for a change of approach for booking of sporting activities was agreed.

**39. UPDATE ON FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR REMAINDER OF COUNCIL YEAR**

The Community Engagement Key Area Group considered the report stating the events planned for the remainder of the council year.

It was requested that public thanks were given on our social channels to businesses that supported the trails in the town centre.

One Councillor queried why the Christmas event was held on the same day as Haywards Heath and could the event be a week earlier. It was advised that this had been raised by the District Council and the Council needed to be mindful of proximity to Remembrance events. A member of the public stated it would be difficult to get volunteers to operate the Grotto for any more time than was currently planned.

Further information was provided on the District Council provision of Urban Events which would be supporting our Christmas Light Switch On event. The synthetic ice rink would open at 10.30am and close at 4.30pm in readiness for the main light switch on. It would operate until 8 December and MSDC Urban Event publicity would be shared widely once received.

Christmas Hamper project – support was requested from Councillors with delivery of the hampers on Friday 6 and Sunday 8 December.

It was questioned if the Health event required pre-bookable appointments and it was confirmed this was necessary. A representative from Burgess Hill District Lions also recommended appointment booking.

It was requested by a Councillor that a list of participating businesses in the Halloween trail be published to acknowledge they took part.

**RESOLVED that:** The contents of the report were noted.

**40. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

The Community Key Area Group were asked to consider the delivery of the event to be held on 27 January 2025. The background to the event was set out in the report provided.

Councillor Simon Hicks spoke passionately, mindful of the current heightened tensions in the Middle East, that it was more important than ever to bring communities together and remember genocide and this particular day focuses, on “never again”.

It was requested that the event commemorated all genocides and not just the Holocaust. It was confirmed that all genocide were referred to in the two previous events held.

A member of the public suggested that the Council consider commemorating the Independent Day of Peace held in September.

**RESOLVED that:** That the Town Council continues to support a Holocaust Memorial Day going forward.

#### 41. **PROGRAMME OF FUTURE EVENTS 2025-2026**

The Community Key Area Group considered the programme of events for the next Council Year as set out in Appendix 7.

Questions were discussed on the staffing costs and why these were not factored into each event cost. It was commented that the team delivered a good programme and to evaluate staffing costs would take up a considerable amount of time. This did also not allow costs for the volunteers time which were considerable for each event.

Shakespeare as a cost was discussed and it was confirmed this had been considered at the last Key Area Group and it was agreed this would form part of the new Council year programme. A member of the public asked why the tickets were not free as this could encourage a greater number of attendees. It was confirmed that the current event capacity was a factor, as was the publicity of their tour was much wider than Burgess Hill and it would attract more non Burgess Hill residents.

More town centre events were requested.

**RESOLVED that:** The event programme budget would be passed to the Finance Key Area Group for their consideration on Wednesday 13 November 2024.

#### 42. **ABOUT TOWN**

The Community Key Area Group considered the About Town advertising report.

A Councillor was not supportive of the magazine and suggest that the Council purchased pages in other community magazines to save money. It was confirmed by other members of the Key Area Group that this was agreed by full Council to continue to deliver this magazine and a new tender had been awarded for three years.

Comments from attending public were could consideration be given to reducing paper quality and it was confirmed this had been done. The Council liked the uniqueness of the About Town style magazine.

**RESOLVED that:** The current advertising income for About Town be reduced and be passed to the Finance Key Area Group for their consideration on Wednesday 13 November 2024.

43. **ANNUAL GRANTS**

The Community Key Area Group considered the annual grant budget.

**RESOLVED that:** The changes to the annual grant allocations were agreed as follows and will be passed to the Finance Key Area Group for their consideration on Wednesday 13 November 2024:

1. Burgess Hill in Bloom will no longer receive an annual grant and they move into the standard grant application programme applying as and when they need funds.
2. To recommend Finance Key Area Group that the Burgess Hill Bonfire Society receive an increased annual grant of £7,300.

**The meeting ended at 20.20 hours.**

Chairman's signature

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