

Tel: (01444) 247726
Fax: (01444) 233707
Email: council@burgesshill.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.burgesshill.gov.uk>



9th January 2025

To: **MEMBERS OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP.**

A **MEETING** of the **CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP** will be held in the Council Chamber on **Wednesday 15 January 2025** at 19:00 hours, when your attendance is required.

Copied to all members of the Council for information

Julie Holden
Chief Executive Officer

OPEN FORUM

Standing Order 3.8 does not permit public speaking at the KAGS, however as this has not been practice to date, the Chair will suspend this standing order to allow that each member of the public will be permitted to speak once in respect of business included on the agenda (during the Open Forum). They can also speak during the meeting (at the relevant point on the agenda) as the agenda debate is progressed. Speakers are encouraged not to speak for more than three minutes, at the discretion of the Chairman or nominee (including the Chair of any other meeting of the Council).

If it appears that the number of speakers is likely to unreasonably delay the disposal of business items on the agenda the Chairman may direct that a member of the public submits a question or comment in writing which shall be answered in due course.

FILMING, RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

During this meeting members of the public may film or record the Committee and officers from the public area only providing it does not disrupt the meeting. Any Confidential section of the meeting may not be filmed or recorded.

If a member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) filming must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking.

The use of social media is permitted but members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. OPEN FORUM
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. SUBSTITUTES
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
5. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

To consider the Notes of the Meeting of the Customer Services Key Area Group held on 04 April 2024 (previously distributed).

6. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

To appoint a Vice Chairman for this meeting.

7. HELP POINT REPORT

- 7.1 **This report is to update members on the current position and work of the Help Point, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 1a and Appendix 2**

Mid Sussex District Council provide circa £23k funding towards the running costs of the Help Point and Tourist Information Centre each financial year. See Appendix 2 for the 2023/24 Help Point funding report, detailing the work the Help Point undertakes as part of this continued partnership.

RECOMMENDED

For noting.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: The £23k of partner income relating to the Help Point Contribution received from MSDC which is an annual agreement, should be considered a risk as it could be withdrawn in the future.

Community safety implications: The Help Point is a safe space and the Help Point use the Mid Sussex Business Crime Partnership DISC system

8. [TOURISM UPDATE - RAILWAY 200](#)

Purpose of the item: to advise members of a national campaign and a local initiative which links in to the towns history and promotes walking and cycling in 2025.

- 8.1 In 2025, we celebrate 200 years of the Railway with the national campaign "Railway 200," which we have proudly joined. Nationwide celebrations are planned and details can be found at Railway 200. This platform provides information on all planned events and activities, and allows anyone involved to register their events.
- 8.2 Given Burgess Hill's rich railway heritage with its two stations, we propose participating in the celebrations by creating a signed circular trail that links both stations and notable landmarks. This will involve designing and installing signs (an example sign design is attached as Appendix for item 8) and producing a walking or cycling trail leaflet, complete with information on the landmarks. The leaflet design can potentially be handled in-house.
- 8.3 This initiative is expected to draw tourists and railway enthusiasts to Burgess Hill. It will appeal to families and children to explain to them the history of the railway in the town and provide an outside activity at their own pace during the summer. We will also select pieces of the official merchandise to sell in the Help Point shop, at present the merchandise selection is not available. And a Window display is being considered.
- 8.4 In addition to this family or solo activity, the Bluebell Railway is looking to host many activities and include the schools. The Chair along with the chair of community engagement will be meeting at the Bluebell Railway to discuss how this could engage the local schools via the Youth Council. Who in turn will be asked to consider using some of its budget to support a visit to the bluebell to link in with their school activities, this is to be reported to the Community Engagement KAG.
- 8.5 This is not an overly costly exercise with the signs being around £25 each (and approximately 12 being needed for the two trails. A number of leaflets will be printed but the trail will also be fully electronic by using QR codes to link to our website to give more information about the historical stop. There may be some costs regarding the fixing of the signs, but these are expected to be minimal as these are not permanent signs and with permission, utilising current infrastructure will be preferred. The website pages linked to by these QR Codes will be designed in-house. The entire cost is expected to be within £400.
- 8.6 It is noted that while the Help Point have a promotion budget, there is no budget for tourism despite the help point being a tourist information centre. A modest budget to allow for projects like this or updating of leaflets or guides would be helpful to the overall promotion of the Town to visitors and residents alike.

RECOMMENDED

It is recommended that

- 1) members approve the proposal for the Railway 200 trail, and
- 2) recommend to the Finance KAG that a promotion budget of £400 be

allocated for Tourism.

Risks:

Environmental implications: Encourages people to walk around the town

Financial implications: Costs are currently unknown but will include correx

signs and printed leaflets and could be met from the existing Help Point

Budget if a Tourism budget is not approved, but this will use a significant part

of the allocated budget which could affect the possibility of other projects and

initiatives such as the new guide and map.

Community Safety implications: A full risk assessment for the self-guided trail will be undertaken

9. TOWN GUIDE MAPS

9.1 The purpose of the report is to consider whether the Town map and Guide should be updated

9.2 The current Town Guide and Map of Burgess Hill is outdated and does not reflect the new developments in the area. An updated map would be particularly beneficial to new residents and visitors, as we have many requests in the Help Point for an up-to-date map. Unfortunately, Local Authority Publishing who have previously produced these guide and maps “no longer actively publishing any area Guides and no longer hold any stocks of maps”. It is noted that google maps are freely available to many.

9.3 We have reached out to other companies and it is hoped that by the date of the meeting we will have a response from them. As noted in point 10.1 during our Visioning Day, the idea of a new guide and map was discussed, which would include twittens, walking and cycling routes, and Virgin Media boxes.

9.4 The maps and guide were formerly provided by LA publishing who were national and provided this for many towns. They covered their costs and made their profits through selling advertising. It is likely that with magazine advertising becoming more difficult to achieve this is no longer being offered. The cost to produce the guide will be similar to the about town magazine and in addition to this there is a map which needs creating. Officers have contacted alternative companies for the map provision, the most recommended company is Lovell Johns, they have advised that the map can be taken from Ordnance Survey’s latest data sets and we can provide street plans for Brookleigh which can then be added. Additionally, they can provide a layout for the leaflet. They estimate the cost for creating the map and layout to be £1,500.00. Printing again will add another £2-3,000 if a quantity of 10,000 were wished. A sponsor will be required for this work as it will not be possible to pay for this from existing budgets.

RECOMMENDED

Officers to investigate the creation of an updated Town Guide and or Map to better serve our community and visitors. To explore the physical map being accompanied by a map on our website. If budgets will be used for the production of these maps and guides this will return to KAG to discuss how this can be funded.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: Costs are currently estimated at £1500.00 for the creation and printing costs on top. The expectation of a cost at £3,000-£5,000 is outside of budget and Staff will need to identify a sponsor for at least part of the costs

Community Safety implications: There are none, maps for new residents will help them orientate themselves and feel safer as they explore their new home.

10. FRONT DESK SIGN

10.1 Purpose of report: To consider welcome signage to help point front desk

10.2 In recent years the Help Point has undergone refurbishment and modernisation. The imposing main desk is purpose built and was too costly to replace with a more modern and welcoming set-up. Some signage was updated during the refurb and we would like to continue this by adding a welcome sign to the front desk. The sign is designed in the Councils corporate colours of the logo, with the inclusion of the new strap line. It does not match the green sign (that can be seen over the desk in the below picture and if the alternative colour would be preferred this can be changed. The Council writing would then have to be in yellow or white to stand out against the Green. The impact of the sign will give a clear message of our desire to help and will further enhance the welcoming atmosphere of the Help Point, the inclusion of our new strapline really re-iterates our aims as a Council. The sign is hard vinyl and would be fixed to the existing front of the desk. See proposed design options.



RECOMMENDED

Members are asked to consider the design and approve the new signage.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: Cost of £516.00 + VAT can be met through existing budgets

Community Safety implications: There are none.

11. [SHOP LOCAL](#)

11.1 **Purpose of the report: To consider the success and future of the shop local scheme**

11.2 The Shop Local annual scheme was launched in September 2024 and ran until 20 December 2024, replacing the quarterly Shop Independent scheme. The primary aim of this scheme is to bolster the local economy by incentivizing customers to visit local shops and businesses, with a prize awarded upon the return of a completed loyalty card. The scheme's timing was strategically chosen to coincide with the festive season, encouraging spending on Christmas gifts. After extensive effort and persuasion, 29 shops and businesses, including 5 located in the Help Point, joined the scheme. These participants were provided with window stickers, posters, and loyalty cards. Securing prize donations from the businesses has proved challenging, with several withdrawing from the scheme when asked to contribute prizes. Despite substantial publicity efforts by Burgess Hill Town Council (BHTC), participating businesses have shown limited initiative in promoting the scheme. While there has been notable shopper interest, the return rate of loyalty cards has been low. Resource allocation in terms of staff time is estimated at 100 hours for the project, which could be used on other areas of work.

11.3 It is suggested that in order to boost this scheme there will need to be significant increased publicity which will need a budget. Either Shoppers are not aware of the businesses involved or are not interested in the scheme. Councillors comments and suggestions will be welcome. Having evaluated the responses (or lack of) from the shop keepers if the scheme is not supported by the businesses it may not be worth continuing with this.

RECOMMENDED

Members views are sought as to whether the scheme should run again for Christmas 2025 or whether to take a break and review in 2026.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none

Financial implications: Cost of printing additional posters and cards. – can be met through existing budgets, however more significant publicity, may be outside of the Budgeted allowances.

Community Safety implications: There are none.

12. [CHANGE TO ALLOTMENT TENANCY AGREEMENT](#)

12.1 **Purpose of the report: To consider changes to the tenancy allotment agreement**

12.2 Following a meeting of the Allotment Stewards and interested parties, the stewards have requested that clause 9.d of the Supporting Information Document be amended from allowing a 3-month grace period, to introducing a

3-month probation period. This would encourage new tenants to work their plots immediately to prevent them becoming overgrown and unmanageable.

Current clause:

The tenancy can be terminated with one month's notice in any of the following circumstances:

9.d If the allotment is not clear and in a good state of preparation for cultivation. Between the months of April and September, at least 75% of each plot should be cultivated. This clause does not apply during the first three months of a tenancy.

Proposed change is to remove the sentence '*This clause does not apply during the first three months of a tenancy*', and add a new clause in to section 1, Rent and Agreement, as follows:

Within the first three months the tenant is within a probationary period. If the tenant chooses to return the allotment to the Council during this period, the tenant will have to return the plot in a condition suitable for reletting.

If the tenant undertakes no significant work (no less than 40% cultivation) to a plot within the first three months of receiving the plot, then the tenancy will be terminated, and the plot returned to the Council for re-letting. In such instances of termination, there will be no return of the rental and a charge will be made for the plot to be cleared ready for re-letting.

RECOMMENDED

To approve the change to clause 9.d and the insertion of the new clause in section 1, Rent and Agreement.

Risks:

Environmental implications: Well-tended plots are a benefit to the environment.

Financial implications: There are no adverse costs associated with this proposal.

Community Safety implications: There are none.

13. [MAINTENANCE TEAM REPORT](#)

13.1 Purpose of report: This report is to update members on the work carried out by the Maintenance Team since the last meeting held in April 2024, see Appendix 3.

It has been an incredibly busy year for the team and this was impacted by long term staff absence which necessitated a need for supplementary work to be carried out by Glendale Contractors, as approved at the Strategic Development Key Area Group meeting on 13 August 2024.

RECOMMENDED

For noting.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none.

Financial implications: Glendale costs are currently budgeted for, so there are no financial implications.

Community Safety implications: There are none.

14. IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC REALM

14.1 **Purpose of report: To consider how the public realm, particularly church walk can be enhanced with the allocated budget.**

14.2 The Finance KAG has approved funds to be allocated in the 2025/26 budget for improving the public realm (£10,000) and ideas are now requested. Already suggested are enhancing the Stone Garden and increasing the number of hanging baskets.

14.3 Hanging baskets

These are always well received by the public as they add colour and bring a feeling of festivity to the town during the summer months. Currently there are 22 baskets on Church Walk. A previous investigation in to improving the number of baskets across the town to include all of Church Walk and Station Road area would require 64 additional baskets. This was costed in 2016 at £30,000 The cost for the current scheme is £460 PA for planting and our maintenance is two men for one hour a week. To purchase new baskets and put in the metal trees to hang the baskets from for say 20 new baskets would be a cost estimated at £8000 (plus fixing and maintenance from the existing staff), and would increase the ongoing costs would be £880 for planting each year (plus maintenance time would double). One way to reduce the costs of the baskets would be to have them sponsored by the businesses and fix them by brackets to their buildings rather than provide the trees. Again if we started with 20 this would be an option to explore.

14.4 Another idea was to consider the stone garden. It is not known yet what the plans are for place and connectivity regarding Church Walk, but it is possible that some changes may occur. The Town Council maintains the plants in the stone garden on behalf of Mid Sussex DC, but there is scope for additional planters and troughs to cover much of the discoloured sandstone which is difficult to clean due to the porous nature of the stone and could enhance the area. The costs to attach approximately 9 troughs to the sculpture, plant and maintain them would be approximately £4,000. It would be necessary to affix the troughs with brackets for safety.

14.5 A further option could be trees included on Church Walk, these trees are not able to be planted in to the brick or concrete flooring, as West Sussex CC will not support this (tree roots ultimately cause damage to surfaces and under surface utilities). However it is possible to have a number of trees in planters (not dissimilar to the Haywards Heath public realm enhancement on South Road). An important point to note with trees however is that trees have a finite life span in planters and would need an "exit plan", we have room for some trees in West Park Reserve and Batchelors Farm, but this is not infinite, established trees in planters for Church Walk will cost approximately £500 each, however mature trees are likely to be nearer £750-£1000. Outdoor topiary figurines, which are another idea, as they can be striking and lower maintenance, start at £2,000. A commission for several could result in a lower cost if this was something that the Council wished to consider. It may be possible to secure

some S106 funding towards semi-permanent floral decoration.

RECOMMENDED

That members consider the priorities they would like be put forward for improvements to the public realm, to allow for fuller investigation and costings to be brought back to the KAG.

Risks:

Environmental implications: positive: more plants in the town centre add beautification and can increase cleaner air.

Financial implications: improvements have been budgeted for 2025/26, however the budget is likely to be needed over a few years in order to introduce significant improvements. S106 may also be available to support this.

Community Safety implications: All features will be appropriately risk assessed and secured.

15. FOLDERS MEADOW

15.1 Purpose of report: to consider starting a fund for replacement play equipment to be accumulated over several years.

15.2 Due to the age of equipment in the play area, approximately 12 years old, there is a higher risk of the equipment failing and the costs are very high for replacements.

RECOMMENDED

Members are requested to make a recommendation to the Finance Key Area Group for a fund to be started in either the 2025/26 or 2026/27 financial year, for an amount of £5k per annum.

Risks:

Environmental implications: Broken equipment will not be repaired/replaced and could be left in an unsafe condition.

Financial implications: If no funds are set aside, equipment will not be fixed and replaced.

Community Safety implications: Broken equipment will leave the site looking unmaintained and there would be a risk of it encouraging ASB.

16. DEPOT

16.1 Purpose of the report: to update on the position of the new maintenance depot

16.2 The new Maintenance Depot has now been fitted with a security alarm and fire alarm/equipment and the Maintenance Team have started to move equipment over. Both leased garages at Gravett Court have been emptied and we are in the process of terminating the leases with Clarion Housing. There may be some minor repairs that need carrying out but we are awaiting an end of lease site inspection.

RECOMMENDED

For noting.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none.

Financial implications: There may be repairs required following an end of lease inspection by Clarion Housing.

Community Safety implications: There are none.

17. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

17.1 Purpose of the report: To advise of the position of the Christmas Lights contract and process for letting a new contract.

17.2 The tender is due having completed the Christmas display for 2024 which was the end of a 5-year contract. Since the contract was last let, covid, wars and inflation have all resulted in increased costs. Committee may be aware that the St Johns church tree lights were damaged and needed replacing this year at a total cost of purchase and fit at £3,500. The tender process will start in January 2025 although officers have concerns that the current budget can result in anything like a spectacular display without significant increases. The staff will be seeking sponsorship for at least the first year in order to provide a reasonable display. The purpose of Christmas lights in the town centre as well as providing joy and a pretty display is to encourage footfall in to the town centre to support shopping. At this time the Town Centre continues to struggle and therefore it is unlikely that the town centre businesses will be able to contribute, however officers will be looking to see if they can enhance the current display through external contributions. While a multi-year contract is sought, It may be that the contract is let for one year in order to reconsider costs and budgets.

The time table for the letting of the contract is expected to be

January:. Draw up the specification
Invite expressions of interest

February : Seek sponsors the outline costs

March: invite formal tenders

April: Award contract

RECOMMENDED

This report is for noting, however any views that Councillors have regarding the light display, aspirations for the future and views as to the budget are sought.

Risks:

Environmental implications: as lights are now LED they are reduced electricity and better for the environment.

Financial implications: The budget of £10,000 may be difficult to secure a display and other sponsors will be sought, non-securing of a sponsor adds a risk to the councils financial reserves.

Community Safety implications: Lights present a very low risk as they are fixed by qualified contractors and are usually out of reach.

18. **ALLOTMENTS REPORT**

18.1 **Purpose of the report:** is to update members on the current position of the allotment service, see Appendix 4.

RECOMMENDED

For noting.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none.

Financial implications: There are none.

Community Safety implications: There are none.