



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP HELD ON MONDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 3.00PM

- PRESENT:** Councillors Apel (Chairman), C Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Carter, Lishman and Sharp
- EX-OFFICIO:** The Mayor (Councillor J Hughes), Councillor Scicluna (Chairman of Finance) and Councillor Plowman (Chairman of Planning and Conservation)
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Corfield, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Member Services Support Officer
Pam Bushby (Divisional Manager, Communities and Wellbeing – Chichester District Council), Helen Marshall (Vice-Chair, Chichester BID), Michael Bevis (Friends of Chartres), Liz Turner (Friends of Ravenna), Graham Pound (Chairman - Friends of Valletta), Caroline Sharman and Veronika Buckwell (Chichester Season of Culture 2022) and Cllr Simon Oakley (West Sussex County Council).

42. APOLOGIES AND RECORD OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Gershater.

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Joy) was absent from the meeting.

43. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2021 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP (GRANTS) HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2021.

AGREED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 September 2021 and the Special Meeting (Discretionary Grants) held on 4 October 2021, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record at a future date.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

Councillor Scicluna declared an interest as the City Council representative on all three twinning associations.

Councillor Apel declared an interest as a member of the Friends of Chartres and the Friends of Ravenna.

Councillors Apel, Lishman, Plowman and Sharp declared an interest as Members of Chichester District Council.

Councillor Sharp declared an interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

At this point the Chairman took agenda item 8.

45. SEASON OF CULTURE

The Chairman welcomed Caroline Sharman and Veronika Buckwell from Chichester Season of Culture 2022.

Ms Sharman gave the Working Group an update on the ongoing work and arrangements for the Season of Culture.

Members were advised that a copy of a presentation on the subject would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

The Working Group was informed that the new name for the Season of Culture was Culture Spark and that it continued to have the ambition of attracting visitors to the area and persuade them to stay longer.

It was also aimed at reanimating the city and town centres across Chichester District and it was hoped that the legacy of the events would be to create a template for events going forward.

Members were given a short background about the origins of the plans for the season.

Ms Sharman then outlined some of the planned projects taking place in Chichester and around the District as follows:

- a) Launched in March 2022, possibly at Chichester Cathedral, Selsey and Midhurst.
- b) A lantern procession in June 2022 led by the Festival Theatre in Chichester with others across the District, each with a distinctive leading large lantern reflecting different elements of the District.
- c) Processions meeting at Chichester Canal to celebrate 200 years since its opening with an event led by Chichester University.
- d) Events at each hub to celebrate the return of each lantern to its “home” hub, including the return of the stag to Petworth House.
- e) July 2022 – the Big PicNkic led by Chichester Development Trust and focused on recycling and sustainability.
- f) Beach cleanup at Selsey with plans for a possible seafood festival.
- g) A project involving Everybody Active, who manage the sports centres in Chichester, Midhurst and Southbourne; called Sporting Chance and involving flash mobs and aimed at being fully inclusive.
- h) “We the People” from Chichester College celebrating volunteers.
- i) TikTok22 in conjunction with the Chichester Festival Theatre Youth Advisory Board.

Ms Buckwell from the Advisory Board informed Members that this initiative would be based around the TikTok phone app and would involve twenty 16 to 20 year olds from across Chichester creating 1 to 2 minute TikTok videos to express the importance of culture and what it means to them as well as giving them the chance to be heard and feel included.

Members were also advised that Councillors in each Ward would be asked to nominate the videos created by those involved to be posted on the Festival Theatre’s TikTok and YouTube channel. It was also advised that there would be opportunities for mentors to be provided by the Festival Theatre for assistance with the production of the videos.

- j) BrightSparks – involving organisations that like to go the extra mile. The example given was Denmans Garden Centre who had recently taken on an artist in residence.

The Working Group was advised that the Great Sussex Way would be hosting the seasons online presence and the Novium Museum Box Office would be providing ticketing services.

The Chairman asked that additional information regarding TikTok22 be distributed to Members with the minutes.

Councillor Lishman reminded Members of her background in theatre and childrens theatre and expressed her strong support for the Culture Spark season.

She advised Members that she had attended meetings early in the development of Culture Spark and had put forward ideas for the Season.

Councillor Lishman also advised Members that she had been disappointed to see those ideas taken forward without any further reference to or discussion with her.

The Chairman suggested that Councillor Lishman continued the discussion with Ms Sharman online so that the issues could be fully explored as appropriate.

Ms Sharman apologised for any confusion and agreed to talk further with Councillor Lishman.

Councillor Sharp asked for further written information about all the activities and expressed her enthusiasm for the plans.

She informed Members that she had made initial contact with the High School but had not managed to progress far without more detailed information.

Councillor Sharp commented on the hosting of the seasons information on the Great Sussex Way website and asked for confirmation that the information would be easy to find and distinct from all the other information on the website.

Ms Sharman confirmed that the website pages were not currently available but that the plan was to have separate pages for Culture Spark, Bright Spark and the seasons sponsors as well as links to other popular websites for organisations within Chichester District.

She informed Members that the website launch had not yet taken place as it had been decided to launch the full details together, possibly in January 2022.

Responding to Councillor Sharp's mention of the High School, Ms Sharman advised the Working Group that she had also been in touch with Kingsham School and the South Downs Planetarium about involvement in the season.

Councillor Plowman asked for confirmation that the season would also include science, with particular reference to the Planetarium.

The Chairman thanked Ms Sharman and Ms Buckwell for the updates.

The meeting returned to the published agenda order.

46. UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) **Minute 21(a) – City Centre floral display**

The Member Services Support Officer advised the Working Group that the summer floral display had now been removed with the street planters being replanted for the winter display. He also informed Members that this agenda item was now completed for the year.

- b) **Minute 21(b) – update on the ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic**
Members agreed that this item was no longer required as a regular update and that specific issues should be raised on future agendas as appropriate.
- c) **Minute 21(d) – Season of Culture**
Already discussed under Minute 45.
- d) **Minute 21(e) – Events update – HRH Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee**
The Town Clerk advised that a formal written report of progress would be presented to the next meeting of the Working Group.

He further advised that, while significant Officer time had been spent organising the recent Remembrance commemoration; the organisation of the basics of the proposed Gala and party in Priory Park for the Platinum Jubilee in 2022 was well under way.

The Working Group was informed that Officers were also keeping in mind the possibility that events between the current date and the event date could mean that arrangements may need to be changed significantly.

Councillor Lishman asked for clarification of any contingency plans for the event should they become necessary.

The Town Clerk advised that if a death of a senior Royal were to occur near the date of the gala then it would not be deemed appropriate for the event to take place. He also advised that, if a death were to occur at a much earlier date then the event could be recast as appropriate.

- e) **Minute 21(f) – Discretionary Grants 2021-22**
The Member Services Support Officer advised the Working Group that the second round of Grants had now been decided and paid to the recipients. He also advised that this agenda item would not be updated until the 2022-23 Grants round in the Spring unless specifically requested.
- f) **Minute 25 – Kursk friendship and proposed video linkup**
Members were advised that efforts were still ongoing to arrange a date for the linkup.
- g) **Minute 26(a) – Appointment to outside body – Safer Sussex Task Force**
To be taken under agenda item 13.
- h) **Minute 26(b) – Speed limit and noise on the A27 near Chichester**
Members were advised that, as this issue falls within the terms of reference of the Planning and Conservation Working Group, all future papers and discussions would take place at the meetings of that Working Group.

Councillor Sharp, who had originally raised the issue, agreed to ask for the issue to be discussed at the Planning and Conservation Working Group.

Councillor Plowman, as the Chairman of the Planning and Conservation Working Group updated the Members with what had been discussed at his Working Group on this subject.

He advised Members that they had discussed the terms of reference proposed for an action group by Councillor Sharp and that the decision had been taken to focus more on traffic noise.

- i) **Minute 26(c) – Community led highway schemes**
Councillor Sharp reminded Members that she was going to invite a member of the West Sussex County Council Highways team to talk to the Working Group about how

communities in Chichester could promote and get involved with highway schemes to help make the road in their areas safer.

She informed Members that this was an important way for the Parish Council to get involved with highway schemes to enable changes to be made within their area.

Councillor Sharp expressed the opinion that she felt it was important for all City Councillors to be aware of these schemes and how they worked.

Councillor Scicluna advised Members that she felt that this was a very important issue but that she felt that it was more appropriate to be discussed at the Planning and Conservation Working Group.

The Chairman agreed that this issue should now be passed to the Planning and Conservation Working Group.

j) **Minute 28 – The future of short term care in the Chichester area**

The Chairman asked Councillor Sharp if there had been an update regarding the Marjorie Cobby Care Home in Selsey.

Councillor Sharp advised that West Sussex County Council would be making the decision the following day (Tuesday 16 November 2021) at Cabinet.

Councillor Sharp suggested that this item would no longer be required on the agenda.

Post meeting note: The West Sussex County Council Cabinet took the decision to close the Marjorie Cobby Care Home with effect from an estimated date of 31 March 2022.

k) **Minute 29 – Royal Mail**

The Town Clerk reported that he had sent a letter to the Royal Mail as requested by the Working Group but that no response had been received.

The Chairman advised Members that the issues with the Royal Mail had improved significantly since this had originally been raised and that she felt this item no longer needed to be on the agenda.

l) **Minute 33 – The Queens Green Canopy Champion Cities**

The Town Clerk reported that he had discussed the issue with the Property Manager who had advised him that the opportunities for tree planting on City Council property were now very limited. He further reported that Litten Gardens was now deemed to be fully planted following the recent planting of a memorial tree there.

He also reminded Members that, on this basis, it had been suggested that this matter be raised with Chichester Community Network (CCN) to establish availability of community spaces for tree planting.

The Chairman agree to email the Chairman of CCN to suggested it for discussion at their next meeting.

47. POLICING AND SECURITY IN THE CITY

a) **Community Wardens update**

Pam Bushby (Divisional Manager, Communities and Wellbeing, Chichester District Council) summarised the reports that had been sent to Councillors.

Members were reminded that there was no longer a graffiti removal contract in place and that the Community Wardens had been issued with small graffiti removal kits.

Ms Bushby drew the Members' attention to the report from the City Centre Warden who had illustrated what was possible with the graffiti removal kits on small incidences of vandalism.

Members were also reminded that responsibility for removing larger areas of graffiti had now reverted back to property owners.

The East and South Wardens' report was also highlighted with particular reference to the assistance given by the Wardens to a gentleman who had locked himself out of his flat.

Ms Bushby thanked the City Council for its continuing support for the Wardens service.

The Chairman, Councillor Sharp and Councillor Plowman all asked for their thanks to be passed to the Wardens for their invaluable work.

Councillor Sharp highlighted a large increase in graffiti in her area and thanked the District Council for providing the Wardens with the graffiti removal kits.

Councillor Plowman expressed the opinion that the community engagement work by the Wardens was equally important as the work tackling anti-social behaviour.

He also highlighted that there was a general feeling of rising levels of crime in the local area.

Ms Bushby advised Members that, during the pandemic, reported crime numbers had fallen while anti-social behaviour incidents had risen.

She also advised that, while the statistics were showing that reported crime levels were approaching pre-pandemic levels, there was not a significant increase being seen beyond that.

Councillor Plowman suggested that it would be useful if the Police could be invited to future meetings.

b) Update regarding Community Wardens funding

Ms Bushby informed the Working Group that the District Council had postponed the request for additional funding for Community Wardens for 12 months.

She advised that she would be undertaking a review of the service with the hope that funding partners would be informed of the outcomes in May 2022.

c) BID Rangers update

Helen Marshall (Vice-Chair, Chichester BID) summarised the report that had been sent to Members.

She confirmed comments made earlier in the meeting that reported crime incidents had started rising again towards pre-pandemic levels.

Members were advised that, to assist with tackling petty crime, the BID Rangers were being deployed in plain clothes for at least one day a week and that their patrol hours would be increased as peak trading season approached.

48. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF FRIENDS OF CHARTRES, RAVENNA AND VALLETTA

a) **Friends of Chartres**

The Chairman of the Friends of Chartres presented his report outlining the current activities of the Friends.

He advised Members that the Friends were looking forward to the Schools Photo Challenge and also hopeful that travel restrictions would soon be lifted to allow visits to Europe.

b) **Friends of Ravenna**

The Chairman of the Friends of Ravenna presented her report outlining the current activities of the Friends.

She informed Members that the Friends had returned to live meetings in September and that concerns had been raised about levels of attendance.

The Chairman reported that attendance levels had been good and she also agreed with the Chairman of the Friends of Chartres about being hopeful that travel restrictions with Europe would soon be eased to permit regular visits between the associations.

c) **Friends of Valletta**

The Chairman of the Friends of Valletta presented his report outlining the current activities of the Friends.

He advised that, beyond the content of his report, the Three Cities Group had held its first meeting to start to plan for their participation in the Festival of Chichester in 2022.

Councillor Scicluna informed Members that the Friends of Valletta had held a hybrid meeting the previous week in the Assembly Room.

She also informed Members that part of the meeting had included a talk from Paul Macdonald on the subject of two of Malta's Second World War heroes.

The Working Group was informed that the talk had been very successful with the stream being watched live all over the world.

The Chairman thanked the Friends' representatives for their reports.

49. CHICHESTER TREE WARDENS

The Chairman noted that no report had been received from the Chichester Tree Wardens.

50. EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF HISTORIC TOWNS AND REGIONS

Councillor Scicluna mentioned the report that had been included with the agenda and reminded Members that she had advised them to look at the Association's website.

The Member Services Support Officer advised the Working Group that the current subscription rate for the Association for Chichester would be €350 per annum.

Councillor Plowman expressed his support for associations of this type and the opportunities for sharing history and experiences.

In response to a question from Councillor Lishman, Councillor Scicluna gave the Working Group a brief summary of the purpose of the Association.

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Scicluna should present a more detailed report about the benefits of joining the Association at the next Community Affairs meeting and that Members should review the Association's website for further information.

The Deputy Town Clerk expressed concerns that if the decision to join was delayed until the next meeting it would miss the approval of the City Council's budget for 2022-23.

After a short further discussion, it was AGREED TO RECOMMEND to the Finance Working Group that a contingency for the subscription to the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions be included in the budget for 2022-23 with Members agreeing that it did not have to be spent if they felt membership of the Association was not felt to be appropriate.

51. CONDITION OF TRAFFIC ROUNDABOUTS ON THE APPROACHES TO THE CITY

Councillor Scicluna advised Members that, while she did not originally raise the issue, she felt that the condition of some of the roundabouts in and around the city, in particular the Bognor roundabout on the A27, made them dangerous for drivers to use.

She also expressed the opinion that, while overgrowth made attractive habitats for wildlife, this did not balance with the effects it had on traffic safety and the visual appearance.

Councillor Lishman supported this view and also highlighted the safety of the Fishbourne roundabout on the A27.

Councillor Scicluna left the meeting.

Councillor Sharp, as a West Sussex County Councillor, offered to put forward the concerns of the Working Group to the appropriate Officers at the County Council.

The Member Services Support Officer reminded the Working Group that the item had originally been raised by Councillor Gershater who had expressed concerns that, despite some of the roundabouts being sponsored by local businesses, little maintenance appeared to take place.

Councillor Oakley advised Members that some of the roundabouts being discussed, in particular those on the A27; had, historically, been the responsibility of West Sussex County Council but they were now the responsibility of National Highways to maintain.

Councillor Sharp stated that she would still be willing to pass on reports of concerns regarding roundabouts as she had a contact with National Highways.

Post meeting note:

In response to an email to National Highways, Councillor Sharp sent the following email:

The roundabouts are now maintained by us at National Highways, a few years back they were maintained by Chichester District Council and by agreement through CDC some were sponsored or maintained by local businesses.

It appears that sponsorship dropped off and also the increased need for traffic management and the cost involved meant that firstly CDC subsidised the maintenance and then concluded that it was too expensive and handed it back to National Highways.

As the road is a National Speed limit dual carriageway the cost of traffic management is considerable and far more than the cost of the actual maintenance.

Our remit is to keep the road safe and as such the roundabouts are cut to maintain safe sight lines only and even then it will not be an aesthetically pleasing cut. This means that they are normally only cut a few times a year, unless we happen to have the road closed for other works when we will also undertake cuts if necessary.

I note the comments about safety and I will ask our inspectors to assess the location and arrange for cutting as necessary.

52. SANCTUARY CITIES

The Town Clerk clarified the meaning of the term Sanctuary Cities.

He advised Members that Sanctuary Cities was a local authority network and the Chichester branch was very active as shown by the recent update given to the Chichester Community Network meeting.

Members were further advised that the Sanctuary City network had strong links with Chichester District Council and that the City Council would qualify to join the network but that it no longer designated members as Cities of Sanctuary.

The Chairman asked, and the Town Clerk agreed, that an invitation be made for a representative of the Sanctuary Cities network to give a presentation about the network to the next Community Affairs Working Group meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor Lishman, the Chairman gave a brief background to the Sanctuary Cities movement.

Members were informed that it had its origins in the Syrian refugee crisis and had been formed with the intention of identifying locations that would be welcoming to refugees and asylum seekers fleeing their home countries.

The Chairman informed Members that, as part of its activities, the Chichester Branch held regular drop-in sessions at St Pauls Church.

53. WILLIAM COLLINS, POET – 300th ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH

Members agreed that a commemoration would have been appropriate but that there was insufficient time to arrange something prior to the anniversary on December 26 2021.

Councillor Plowman suggested that any commemoration be referred to the Season of Culture.

It was agreed that Councillor Bell be asked to submit a written report to the next meeting of the Community Affairs Working Group outlining his suggestions for City Council support for a commemoration.

54. OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATION

a) **Safer Sussex Task Force**

The Town Clerk informed Members that he had received no response to his enquiries and was unable to provide an update at this time.

He advised the Working Group that he would take this as an action and update the next meeting.

b) **Oxmarket Association Trustees**

The Town Clerk reminded Members that Councillor Quail had been appointed by the City Council to the Oxmarket Board of Trustees when Councillor Lishman had had to step down because she had felt unable to do justice to the role.

Members were further reminded that, historically, the City Council had nominated their representatives who had then taken up their positions and attended meetings as the City Council representative as appropriate.

The Town Clerk read out an email he had received from Councillor Bell in his role as Chairman of the Oxmarket Board of Trustees.

The content of the email outlined an approval process for Trustees on the Board and advised that the process was having to be reviewed due to governance concerns.

The Town Clerk also advised that this meant that the appointment of Councillor Quail to the Board of Trustees could not proceed until the review had been completed.

He informed members he was surprised by this email as the concerns being cited at this point had not arisen previously.

Councillor Plowman responded saying that, in his experience, the change over of Trustees was a simple process as had been outlined by the Town Clerk.

The Chairman agreed and asked the Town Clerk to respond stating the City Council's position and asking why it was not simply a case of replacing one nominee with another as had happened previously.

55. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA

- a) Update from West Sussex Police
- b) Queens Platinum Jubilee commemorative tree planting
- c) Chichester District Council Grant for Platinum Jubilee
- d) City centre WiFi provision
- e) European Association of Historic Towns and Regions
- f) Sanctuary Cities – presentation from representative
- g) Chichester District Council Priory Park Task and Finish Group – update from Councillor Plowman

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: MONDAY 17 JANUARY 2022

The meeting closed at 4.10pm