



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP HELD ON MONDAY 17 JANUARY 2022 AT 3.00PM

- PRESENT:** Councillors Apel (Chairman), Carter, Gershater, 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
Helen Marshall (Vice-Chair, Chichester BID), Michael Bevis (Chairman - Friends of Chartres), Graham Pound (Chairman - Friends of Valletta), Inspector Ross Wickings (Chichester Neighbourhood Policing Team), Steve Buchanan-Lee (Group Manager, Communications and Engagement, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service), Paula Chatfield (Chichester Tree Wardens), Maggie Filipova-Rivers (Regional Co-ordinator/Local Authority Network Lead, City of Sanctuary)

56. APOLOGIES AND RECORD OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor C Hughes, Ms Pam Bushby (Chichester District Council) and Mrs Liz Turner (Chairman – Friends of Ravenna).

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

57. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2021

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record at a future date.

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

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

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

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

Councillor Scicluna declared an interest as the City Council representative with the Friends of Chartres, Ravenna and Valletta.

59. UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) **Minute 46(c) – Season of Culture/Culture Spark 2022**

The Town Clerk informed Members that there had been no further updates regarding the Culture Spark season other than those sent to Members in the previous few days.

The Working Group discussed the various events being planned for 2022 in the city and expressed concerns about confusion around the Festival of Chichester, Culture Spark, various anniversary events and the planned gala. It was agreed that this confusion could negatively impact both the new and the established events.

Councillor Lishman reported that she had arranged a meeting with the District Council's Cabinet Member for Community Services and Culture to discuss any contributions she could make to the Culture Spark events.

b) **Minute 46(d) – Events update – HRH Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee**

The Town Clerk reminded the Working Group that, on the Saturday of the Jubilee weekend, the City Council would be running a gala parade followed by an event in Priory Park involving as many local organisations as possible.

He advised Members that, at the current time, there were no further updates on the Platinum Jubilee events being planned by the City Council.

He informed the Working Group that he would be meeting with other City Council Officers shortly to start to progress the plans with a view to launching publicity for the event in the near future.

Councillor Sharp asked whether the City Council would be applying for one of the small grants (£250) being made available for Jubilee events by Chichester District Council.

The Town Clerk responded to say that Officers were looking at possibilities for the grant funding, including tree planting if the space could be found for this.

c) **Minute 46(f) – Kursk friendship and proposed video linkup**

Members were advised that efforts were still ongoing to arrange a date for the linkup.

d) **Minute 46(l) – The Queens Green Canopy Champion Cities**

The Chairman advised that she had not yet discussed this matter with the Chairman of the Chichester Community Network.

The Working Group were reminded that the City Council did not have sufficient open space for planting any additional trees on its land.

Councillor Sharp suggested that West Sussex County Council could be approached to discuss spaces for tree planting.

She also reported that one of the Chichester Tree Wardens had proposed a tree planting programme across the city for the Jubilee year.

Councillor Lishman suggested contacting Chichester Festival Theatre to discuss joining in with their ongoing tree planting initiative.

e) **Minute 54(a) – Appointment to outside body – Safer Sussex Task Force**

The Working Group noted that no further updates had been received.

- f) **Minute 54(b) – Appointment to outside body – Oxmarket Association Trustee**
The Chairman expressed the opinion that the City Council retained the right to appoint a representative to the Oxmarket Board of Trustees. She reminded Members that Councillor Quail had previously been appointed to this position.

The Town Clerk reported that he had had contact from the Chairman of the Board of the Oxmarket Trustees and also one of the other Board members regarding their governance procedures.

He advised Members that it was also his opinion that the City Council had the right to nominate one of the City Councillors to the Oxmarket Board of Trustees.

After a short discussion it was AGREED that the Town Clerk would remind the Board that the City Council's chosen nominee was Councillor Quail and that there was an expectation that this would be accepted.

60. POLICING AND SECURITY IN THE CITY

- a) **Community Wardens update**

The Working Group noted the Community Warden reports that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Lishman informed Members that she would be joining the City Centre Community Warden on his rounds to get a feel for their work and the issues being dealt with. It was agreed that she would report on her experience at the next meeting of the Working Group.

- b) **Chichester BID Rangers update**

Ms Marshall, the Vice-Chair of Chichester BID, presented her report to the Working Group.

She reported that the BID Rangers patrols had been increased during November and December with 877 businesses being visited.

Members were advised that, in common with the Community Wardens, the BID Rangers had noted an rise in shoplifting levels with an increase of 30% in recovered goods.

Ms Marshall summarised the BID activities over the Christmas period and the lessons they had learned. She reported that, while support from businesses had not been universal, those businesses that had participated had experienced an increase in footfall.

The Chairman congratulated Ms Marshall on the Chichester BID's success in the recent referendum which had renewed their tenure.

Councillor Plowman, on behalf of the Rotary Clubs of Chichester, thanked Chichester BID for the Christmas events and noted that the Rotary Clubs had enjoyed collaborating on them.

In response to Ms Marshall's comments about crime levels, he asked about Chichester BID's experiences with the CCTV coverage of the city centre.

Ms Marshall reminded Members that the city centre CCTV was not operated by Chichester BID and that the management of the system had changed some months previously, although they were still able to request footage to support investigations in to incidents.

c) **West Sussex Police update**

The Chairman introduced Inspector Wickings from the Chichester Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Inspector Wickings gave Members some background about his role and advised Members that, as this was his first Community Affairs Working Group meeting, he was interested in knowing what Councillors wanted to hear about during updates from the Police.

Members asked that, for future meetings, outline information and statistics be reported that covered the major concerns and incidents happening within Chichester city.

He informed the Working Group that issues currently being reported in Chichester city centre included bike thefts and violence against women and girls in the form of drink spiking and that the Police were liaising with the University of Chichester on the latter.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Inspector Wickings advised that there was not currently a problem with county drug lines in the Chichester area. He also informed Members that this did not mean that drug dealing did not happen in Chichester as this was a separate issue to the county drug lines.

Councillor Sharp welcomed the news that this particular issue no longer appeared to be a concern within Chichester.

Councillors Lishman, Carter and Sharp reported increased anti-social behaviour within their wards with Councillor Sharp advising that she had encouraged her constituents to report incidents to the Police and Community Wardens.

The issues of traffic noise and speeding were raised by Councillor Sharp who informed the Inspector that a group had been formed to address these issues in the south of the district. She then offered to liaise with Inspector Wickings and update him on the group's discussions to date.

Inspector Wickings informed the Working Group that Police generally planned speeding campaigns based on the level of reports in particular areas. He expressed an interest in how the group mentioned by Councillor Sharp would fit with the ongoing Police actions in this area. He also agreed to investigate the Councillors' concerns regarding anti-social behaviour.

In response to a question from Councillor Carter about policing numbers in the city centre and the future of Chichester's Police station, Inspector Wickings reassured Councillors that there were no plans to close the Police station or remove the Police presence in Chichester that he had been made aware of.

Councillor Plowman raised concerns about the link between Police numbers and enforcement in relation to serious traffic incidents and related problems such as speeding and drink driving.

Inspector Wickings agreed that these were concerns and resourcing the Police response could prove challenging. He advised Members that the Road Policing Unit had recently received an increase in funding and that existing Officers in this unit were particularly dedicated to this area. He also agreed to undertake some research and report back to the Working Group.

The Chairman asked about policing numbers in Chichester and expressed the opinion that, without the presence of the Community Wardens, areas of Chichester may not be adequately patrolled.

Inspector Wickings informed Members that, while Police numbers had increased, a change of structure meant that they may have been assigned to specialist teams rather than directly in to visible policing in the city. He also informed Members that Police recruitment was currently active with the expectation of over 200 new officers being added to the force across Sussex in the coming year.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Wickings for attending the meeting and answering the Councillors' questions.

61. CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION AT THE SUSSEX POLICE CHIEF INSPECTOR BIG DATA PRESENTATION

Members discussed City Council representation at the forthcoming Zoom meeting and it was AGREED that the Mayor, Councillor J Hughes, would attend the presentation on behalf of the City Council.

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

a) **Friends of Chartres**

The Chairman of the Friends of Chartres presented his report to the Working Group.

He informed Members that, since he had written his report and following changes to Covid-related travel restrictions, a number of the Friends' members were looking forward to travelling to Chartres in the near future.

Members were also informed that, now Covid restrictions were easing, the Friends of Chartres planned to hold their annual dinner in February followed by their AGM in March.

b) **Friends of Ravenna**

Members noted the report from the Chairman of the Friends of Ravenna that had been distributed with the agenda.

c) **Friends of Valletta**

The Chairman of the Friends of Valletta presented his report to the Working Group.

He advised Members that the Friends of Valletta had recently had a very successful series of Zoom presentations and that they had also had an in person meeting which had been transmitted live for people around the world to view.

Councillor Scicluna, as a City Council representative with the Friends of Valletta, informed Members that plans were under way to bring a Maltese group over to the UK with the aim of performing a musical play in the Assembly Room in June as part of the Festival of Chichester.

In response to a question from Councillor Sharp, Councillor Scicluna informed the Working Group that the Friends groups that had been in existence had previously taken part in city galas.

Members agreed that, on these occasions, the Friends groups had made a very positive contribution to the events.

Councillor Scicluna and the Chairman of the Friends of Chartres agreed that all the Friends groups would be interested in participating in the Jubilee gala once further details were known about it.

Councillor Gershater asked about the status of the discussions with Speyer, Germany, now that Covid restrictions appeared to be easing.

The Town Clerk responded that he was still in regular contact with Speyer on this matter and that they were still keen to progress the friendship when circumstances allowed.

The Chairman thanked the Friends' representatives for their reports.

The Chairman then took agenda items 9 and 10.

63. WEST SUSSEX FIRE SERVICE REVIEW

The Chairman welcomed Mr Buchanan-Lee from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

Mr Buchanan-Lee advised the Working Group that there was currently a consultation under way as part of a review of the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. He invited Members to take part and informed them that the closing date was Friday 21 February 2022.

Mr Buchanan-Lee then gave a presentation for Members outlining the proposed targets and structure for the service for the period 2022-2026. *(A copy of the presentation is included with these minutes).*

Members asked Mr Buchanan-Lee to clarify and elaborate on some of the points in his presentation with particular reference to coordination with the other emergency services, the balance of types and timings of fires that were happening and the incidence of callouts to road traffic accidents.

The Working Group agreed that the reported time "wasted" responding to false alarms and hoax calls was concerning. Mr Buchanan-Lee responded by saying that, with respect to false alarms, the Fire Service used them as an opportunity to educate people to try to reduce false alarms in the future.

In response to a question from Councillor Sharp, Members were informed that West Sussex Fire Service had never charged for callouts to false alarms and that the preference would be to not to do so in the future. Members were also informed that, for particularly problematic cases of false alarms and negligence, the Fire Service could use enforcement actions to help those concerned understand their responsibilities and rectify any problems.

Mr Buchanan-Lee reported that the number of callouts to road traffic incidents had risen above the number of fires and that resource allocation was being modified to ensure that the equipment necessary for these types of incidents was available.

Councillor Lishman asked about visiting the fire station to gain more understanding of the work of the Fire Service. Mr Buchanan-Lee responded that the Fire Service was always happy to welcome interested visitors and that anyone who wished to do so should make contact.

The Chairman and Working Group thanked Mr Buchanan-Lee for attending the meeting and for providing such a detailed account of the proposals currently under discussion.

64. SANCTUARY CITIES

The Chairman welcomed Ms Filipova-Rivers from the City of Sanctuary organisation.

Members were reminded that Ms Filipova-Rivers had been invited to speak following questions about City of Sanctuary organisation at previous meetings.

Ms Filipova-Rivers gave Members a presentation about the background to the City of Sanctuary organisation as well as detailed information about the application process and

what cities applying to the organisation could bring in terms of support for refugees and others in need of sanctuary. *(A copy of the presentation is included with these minutes).*

Members asked questions about the presentation and how it might apply to the City Council.

The Chairman expressed the opinion that the presentation had outlined a very bureaucratic process and that her understanding of the Sanctuary City movement was much more people orientated and aimed helping those in need.

Ms Filipova-Rivers responded that Sanctuary City, as outlined in the presentation, was a framework for councils to adopt and build on and that it was aimed at helping to guide those councils in how they provided their support.

In response to a question from Councillor Gershater, about the relationship between Sanctuary City and central government; Ms Filipova-Rivers informed Members that her organisation and the councils involved had to work within the legal framework to provide the best support that they were able to and to report back to central government about the support they needed.

She also expressed the opinion that local councils were best placed to provide meaningful and positive support to those in need in their areas.

Councillor Sharp asked for clarification about how the City Council might fit within the Sanctuary City framework given it did not have a wide range of relevant support responsibilities.

Ms Filipova-Rivers responded that councils applying to Sanctuary City did not have to provide a fixed range of services to be considered. She further responded that all councils who felt able to provide some form of support to refugees and those in need were welcome to apply and that this could include services such as arts, culture and allotments.

The Chairman thanked Ms Filipova-Rivers for attending the meeting and for her presentation.

The meeting returned to the published agenda order.

65. CHICHESTER TREE WARDENS

Members were advised that Mrs. Chatfield had had to leave the meeting and that a written report would be included with the minutes.

66. EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF HISTORIC TOWNS AND REGIONS

Councillor Scicluna had left the meeting so this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

67. QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTING

Councillor Plowman informed Members that Hampshire County Council had named one of its country park areas in honour of the Queen as part of its Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

He further advised that he felt that the currently unnamed country park area being created as part of the White House Farm development could be an appropriate site for commemorative naming as well as the tree planting.

The Working Group agreed that this would be a positive way forward and Councillor Plowman was asked to discuss the idea further with the developer which could then be further debated by Members at a future meeting.

Councillor Sharp reminded Members of her earlier comments about a proposal from a Chichester Tree Warden for a Platinum Jubilee tree planting of 70 trees across all city wards.

The Working Group agreed that this was a good idea and asked Councillor Sharp to liaise with the Tree Wardens going forward.

68. CITY CENTRE WIFI PROVISION

Councillor Lishman, who had requested the item for the agenda was unavailable for this item.

The Member Services Support Officer advised Members that he had had no further contact with the original contractors that had installed the WiFi system for Chichester BID several years ago so no further progress had been made.

Councillor Plowman advised the Working Group that he was aware of another city centre WiFi project that had been progressing well. He agreed to bring an update to the next meeting of the Community Affairs Working Group.

69. CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL PRIORY PARK TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chairman informed Members that it was her understanding that the discussions at District Council Task and Finish Groups remained confidential until discussed in open Council or Committee meetings.

Councillor Plowman confirmed this and gave the Working Group a brief update in very broad terms.

70. SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA – CHICHESTER RAILWAY STATION

Councillor Plowman advised that the Rotary Clubs had previously discussed involvement with works at Chichester Railway Station and expressed the opinion that he felt this would be a more appropriate way of progressing this matter.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the City Council had been approached in name only as a potential partner for the railway station. He expressed the opinion that the railway station would benefit from an association with a supportive local authority. He also agreed that the expectation was that groups such as the Rotary Clubs, residents' associations and Chichester Community Network would be the ones getting more physically involved.

In response to a comment from Councillor Lishman, the Town Clerk advised Members that the railway station was not seeking City Council funding and that they had already received a grant for the required materials. He also informed Members that the Railway Station were now looking for people to volunteer to get the work done in much the same way that volunteers helped look after Chichester canal.

Members considered the idea and agreed that Councillor Plowman should discuss the idea with the Rotary Clubs and report back to the next meeting. They also agreed that having the City Council connected with the project as a conduit for volunteers and relevant organisations would be a positive step forward.

Councillor Plowman agreed to talk to the Rotary Clubs and report back to the next meeting.

71. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA

- Sussex Police Chief Inspector's Big Data presentation – the Mayor to report
- City centre WiFi
- European Association of Historic Towns and Regions
- UK Harvest – invitation to speak

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: MONDAY 21 MARCH 2022

The meeting closed at 4.49pm