



Chichester City Council

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### Minutes

- Date** 14 November 2022
- Time** 3.00pm – 4.21pm
- Location** The Council Chamber - The Council House • North Street • CHICHESTER • West Sussex • PO19 1LQ
- PRESENT:** Councillor Apel (Chairman), Councillor C Hughes (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Carter, Gershater, Lishman and Sharp
- EX-OFFICIO:** The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Plowman), Councillor Quail (Chairman of Planning & Conservation) and Councillor Scicluna (Chairman of Finance)
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Corfield, The Town Clerk, Member Services Support Officer, Helen Marshall (Chairman of Chichester BID), Pam Bushby (Divisional Manager, Communities and Wellbeing, Chichester District Council), Jacky Storey (Chairman – Friends of Ravenna), West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley, a member of the public
- IN ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM:** Steve O’Connell – Community Speedwatch Officer/Admin SPOC, Sussex Safer Roads Partnership

#### 44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from the Mayor (Councillor Joy)

#### 45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

The Deputy Mayor and Councillors Apel and Sharp declared an interest as Members of Chichester District Council.

Councillor Scicluna declared an interest as the City Council representative on all three Twinning Associations.

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

Councillor Quail declared an interest as the Chairman of the Westgate Residents Association.

Councillor Apel declared an interest as a City Council representative on the Friends of Chartres.

*At this point the Chairman took agenda items 6 and 8.*

46. **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRIENDS OF CHARTRES, RAVENNA AND VALLETTA**

a) **Friends of Ravenna**

The Chairman of the Friends of Ravenna, Jacky Storey, presented her report to the Committee.

She expressed the anticipation that, post Covid, the relationship would strengthen and deepen.

Members were informed that it was hoped that members of the Friends of Chichester in Ravenna might be visiting Chichester in the new year and it was also hoped that the group would include the Mayor of Ravenna.

Members and Mrs Storey discussed the membership numbers of the Friends of Chichester in Ravenna and why they might have been struggling to recruit new members. She also reported that it was hoped that new projects in the future may help broaden the support of the organisation in Ravenna. One of these projects was a suggested visit by the Ravenna Youth Orchestra which would hopefully encourage the musicians' parents to get involved.

Mrs Storey informed Members that membership numbers should improve in the near future and expressed the opinion that she felt that the demographic in Italy meant that members of the Friends of Chichester were not always able to devote the time they might want to to the organisation's activities.

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that the Mayor of Ravenna had recently invited the Mayor of Chichester to attend the Mosaic Cities Forum being hosted in Ravenna but that, due to scheduling difficulties, it had not been possible to attend on this occasion.

Committee Members and Mrs Storey discussed an ongoing project involving the mosaics in Ravenna and Chichester (Fishbourne) that was being pulled together from student research in the two locations. It was noted that the project had been running for some time and that some administrative issues were delaying the final publication of the material on a website which would be accessible to all.

b) **Friends of Chartres**

Councillor Scicluna highlighted the report that she had recently sent round.

She noted that there had recently been a successful Zoom link between the Friends of Chartres in Chichester and Les Amis de Chichester.

c) **Friends of Valletta**

In the absence of the Chairman of the Friends of Valletta, Councillor Scicluna noted the contents of the report that he had provided.

She reminded Members that the Friends of Valletta had hoped to bring a play across from Malta for performance in Chichester but that the Covid pandemic had resulted in the plans being postponed.

Members were advised that it was now hoped that the play, called Star of Strait Street, would be performed during the 2023 Festival of Chichester.

#### 47. **SPEEDING AROUND THE CITY AND SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES**

The Chairman welcomed Steve O'Connell, Community Speedwatch Officer/Admin SPOC, Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, who was attending the meeting by Zoom.

Mr O'Connell informed Members that his remit was the support of Speedwatch groups and Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) in Sussex.

As part of his introduction, Mr O'Connell highlighted some speeding statistics in the Sussex area, including 7000 letters per month being sent to drivers caught over the limit by Speedwatch groups and a compliance rate over a 12 month period of 93.2%, meaning only 6.8% of drivers written to were caught reoffending.

Mr O'Connell also highlighted some of the local traffic hotspots and advised that, over a 12 month period there had been 702 road traffic collisions (RTCs) reported although not all of these were speed related and many were considered minor.

In response to a question from Mr O'Connell, the Member Services Support Officer summarised the provision to date of SIDs that the City Council had been involved with and the proposed new locations on St Pauls Road and Broyle Road.

The Chairman and Town Clerk confirmed that the City Council's SID was currently in use by a Speedwatch group in St Pancras and that discussions were ongoing about creating additional Speedwatch groups in other areas of the city.

Mr O'Connell confirmed he was aware of other Speedwatch groups in Chichester and advised that he was happy to support these groups alongside PCSO Jason Lemm.

He then summarised the types of available SIDs and confirmed that the preferred type were the portable devices but that if a SID was being mounted on a pole, West Sussex County Highways would need to risk assess and approve the locations.

Members were reminded that, to be effective, the SIDs needed to be moved around regularly to avoid "sign blindness" where drivers learned to ignore the devices instead of modifying their behaviour.

Members were further reminded that, in order to support the application for a licence to install a SID, data needed to be provided to show there was a problem that needed to be monitored.

Mr O'Connell advised that such data was available from combined data gathering from local Speedwatch groups if the City Council did not wish to commission bespoke data gathering exercises.

In response to a request from the Chairman, Mr O'Connell agreed to provide further information about SIDs, Speedwatch groups and what support he could offer, for distribution to City Councillors and local Residents Associations.

After a short further discussion about the statistics that had been mentioned and clarification of the numbers, the Chairman drew the item to a close.

The Chairman thanked Mr O'Connell for his contribution.

*At this point the meeting returned to the published agenda order.*

48. **MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2022 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING (DISCRETIONARY GRANTS) MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2022.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 and the Special Meeting (Discretionary Grants) held on 3 October 2022, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record.

49. **UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

a) **Speyer Twinning link**

The Town Clerk updated Members on the arrangements currently in place for the City Council delegation (The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors Gershater, Scicluna, the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk) which would be visiting Speyer in early December for the signing of the initial Twinning document.

He advised that the Speyer version of the Twinning document had been received for review. He further advised that the Chichester version would be signed at a planned reciprocal visit in mid February 2023.

The Town Clerk reported that he had contacted Bishop Luffa School with a view to including them in developing a link with a school in Speyer as part of the development of the cultural links between the two cities. He also reported that, to date, no formal response had been received but that the Chairman of the Committee had agreed to pursue a response from the school.

Councillor Gershater confirmed that he had received the draft Speyer Twinning document to review the German-English translation and ensure that the “sense” of the document was correct and appropriate.

In response to a question from Councillor Scicluna, the Town Clerk confirmed that he would be seeking Member input in to the Chichester document and expressed the opinion that it would read differently to the Speyer document due to the need to formally acknowledge the Twinning rather than the more informal partnership.

Councillor Sharp suggested that other schools in the city be asked to get involved, such as the High School.

Councillor Gershater supported this suggestion and proposed that the schools under discussion be contacted to confirm that they included German on their curricula.

The Deputy Mayor confirmed that the Rotary Clubs in Chichester were in contact with their German counterparts as part of the relationship building.

50. **POLICING AND SECURITY IN THE CITY**

a) **Community Wardens**

Pam Bushby summarised the Community Warden reports that had been circulated to Members.

She noted that the report from the Wardens in the South and East of the city highlighted particular and ongoing concerns around the incidents in their area.

Members were informed that welfare remained a priority for the Wardens and that they had started attending food bank sessions to get to know the community better as well as making residents more aware of the Wardens' presence.

Ms Bushby noted the City Centre Wardens comments about alcohol related incidents declining, although this may have been due to cooler weather, as well as reduced incidences of graffiti.

The Committee was informed that members of the public should report sightings of graffiti so that it could be removed as it was not formally picked up unless the Wardens did so.

Further incidents in Chichester East were mentioned including drug dealing, prostitution and two young men pointing BB guns at the Wardens, which had now been reported to the Police.

Ms Bushby reported that, in the run up to Christmas, there was a noticeable increase in the number of scams being reported, particularly in relation to the Government's fuel subsidies and other financial support mechanisms.

Members were advised that, as a response to this, the Community Wardens had been trained as digital ambassadors and were now able to provide advice to residents on safe online activity as well as how to spot potential scams.

Members were also advised that the rate of increase in crime had been falling from a 20% rise on the rolling year in April to an 11% rise on the rolling year more recently.

The Committee then discussed the problems being experienced with property vandalism and the need for visible patrols to help prevent this.

Councillor Lishman expressed concerns about a perceived gap in support for teenagers. Councillor C Hughes stated that the problem was not the lack of support, it was the difficulty in attracting attendance from this age group.

Ms Bushby informed Members that they were aware of this particular issue and that ways of tackling this anti-social behaviour was being discussed in other forums.

Councillor Carter commented on her experience of people she knew suffering from noise and anti-social behaviour which the housing association were doing nothing about.

Ms Bushby responded that, while the Wardens would be able to undertake welfare visits, any more serious issues would need to be dealt with by the housing association and the Police. However, she asked Councillor Carter to provide further details for investigation.

In response to a question from the Deputy Mayor, Ms Bushby advised Members that the Wardens would be working with the new Chichester District Council "Supporting You" team and part of that would be raising their awareness of the Warm Network that was being set up around the city.

b) **BID Rangers**

The Chairman of Chichester BID presented her report and informed Members that, following feedback from previous meetings, she had adjusted the format of the report and included additional information.

She confirmed that the Rangers report was largely in line with the City Centre Community Wardens report with regards to reduced anti-social behaviour due to the weather but with the expectation of rising shop-lifting partly due to the cost of living crisis.

Ms Marshall reported that she had recently met with a new city centre Police representative, Sergeant Faal, to discuss the issue of resources, particularly over the peak Christmas trading period.

She further reported that they had agreed that city centre policing had become an issue and that the Police were looking at this at the current time.

Ms Marshall also informed Members that the Police had indicated that there would be a presence from them, in addition to BID Rangers and Rotary Club marshals; during the upcoming large events such as the Christmas light switch on scheduled for the 26 November.

In response to a question from the Committee Chairman, Ms Marshall expressed the opinion that, as Sergeant Faal was new to the city, he would be able to bring a fresh viewpoint to the issues of concern to residents and businesses.

She also advised that the BID were working to improve business' reporting of incidents to the Police in order that a better picture of the situation could be developed.

The Chairman asked about anti-social drinking in the city centre given that the central precinct and surrounding areas were a drink control zone.

Ms Marshall reported that the majority of drink-related incidents over the summer had been on the cathedral green and that BID had been working with Stonepillow and the District Council to support the cathedral authorities in tackling the issues on their land. She also reported that, understandably, the cathedral were reticent about appearing too heavy handed with people on their property.

Ms Marshall further commented that, while she believed the official number of homeless in Chichester was two, the city centre proved to be a lucrative place for begging.

She informed the Committee that the BID were repeating a previous initiative to educate businesses that the people seen begging were not often homeless and that they should respond with non-cash support.

In response to comments from Councillor Gershater regarding the current physical appearance of the city centre, the Deputy Mayor advised that this would be discussed under the City Centre Task Force item.

In a further response, Ms Marshall advised that the number of vacant shops in the city centre was reducing but that the situation could always improve. She also reported that an initiative to make the empty units more attractive while tenants were found had been struggling to find support from landlords.

Members discussed the new shops that had been opening recently. Ms Marshall agreed and highlighted the creativity and uniqueness of the Chichester independent shops sector as well as the support BID were giving to new businesses and pop-ups in the city centre.

Councillor Lishman left the meeting

c) **West Sussex Police**

It was noted that no report had been received from West Sussex Police for this meeting.

The Member Services Support Officer advised Members that he had recently received information regarding the named officer who had previously been invited. He reported that he had now been given four names of Police representatives and that invitations had been sent for the next two meetings of the Committee.

51. **CHICHESTER TREE WARDENS**

It was noted that no report had been received from the Chichester Tree Wardens and that their representative had submitted apologies for the meeting.

52. **GRAFFITI IN THE CITY CENTRE**

The Member Services Support Officer read out an email from the Operations Manager at Chichester District Council Contract Services as follows:

*I can report that our contractor is doing a good job of clearing graffiti across the district. He attends two days a week and clears from public assets and private ones (where it is safe and economical to do so). Incidents of graffiti should be reported to [wasteandrecycling@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:wasteandrecycling@chichester.gov.uk) so we can generate the 'to do' list and monitor any increases or decreases in the number of incidents.*

He advised Members that he would forward on the supplied email address for their information.

Councillor Quail highlighted the poor condition of the underpass near Waitrose and the Avenue de Chartres car park.

Councillor Scicluna urged Members to report incidences of graffiti, in particular those in the smaller side streets where it could go unnoticed.

53. **CITY CENTRE TASK FORCE**

The Deputy Mayor introduced his report that had been circulated with the agenda.

He informed Members that, in conjunction with Councillor Sharp, a proposal had been put to Chichester District Council, which had been accepted, to form a city centre task force.

Members were advised that the intention of the task force was to bring together the City Council, Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council and Chichester BID in an effort to "tidy up" the appearance of the city centre and that the aim was to complete the work of the task force by Easter 2023.

The Deputy Mayor gave examples of the kind of areas it had been suggested were focused on such as dirty street signs and other street furniture, scruffy paintwork and A-boards

He emphasised that the aim was not to "do down" the city centre but to make efforts to enhance what was already there.

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that he was seeking approval to undertake the first stage of the process along with the City Council's Acting Property Manager.

This stage would consist of a walk through the city centre and the side streets to undertake an audit and list the jobs that were felt to be needed to achieve the aims of the task force. He also informed Members that the intention was to use volunteer groups to undertake the work itself and that groups such as Chichester Rotary and The Chichester Society had come forward to offer to help.

Ms Marshall (Chichester BID) supported the initiative but emphasised that it should not duplicate the wider work of the Chichester Vision group.

The Committee was assured that the City Council was not being asked to commit significant resources to the task force but that it may be asked to supply paint and other materials to be used during the works.

After a short further discussion, it was AGREED that the City Council would participate in the task force and the Deputy Mayor, together with the Acting Property Manager, should proceed with the first stage audit of the city centre to feed in to the task force's activities.

Councillor Gershater supported the initiative but noted that another comment he had received was the lack of a pavement café culture in Chichester, particularly in the evenings.

A short discussion followed about the relative impressions, positive and negative, of the city centre that had been expressed by different groups of visitors recently as well as the problems experienced with developing the night economy and encouraging visitors to make sure it was viable for businesses to open.

Councillor Carter suggested an improvement to the city centre might be to paint the grey concrete posts in suitable colours which would also help people with visual impairments avoid accidentally walking in to them.

#### **54. POTENTIAL COMMUNITY CAFÉ – HARDHAM ROAD**

Councillor Sharp introduced and summarised her report and gave some background to the proposed project and the reasons for putting it forward, including provision of community space in Chichester South for various support groups and organisations.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Councillor Sharp informed Members that her request was for Chichester City Council to act as a guarantor for the community organisation that would be set up to run the new facility, with particular reference to the rent that would be charged by Chichester District Council as the landlords.

Councillor Sharp cited examples of where other authorities had given such undertakings and mentioned Billingshurst Town Council who had bought the property on behalf of the community group rather than underwriting the rent payments.

While emphasising that the project was still in its early days, Members were informed that the intention was to ask whether the Community Affairs Committee would support referring the matter to the Finance Committee for a decision.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Community Affairs Committee could not sanction any spending, other than distributing the Grants budget, and advised Councillor Sharp that she would need to submit a detailed business plan for the project for consideration by the Finance Committee.



The Deputy Mayor expressed support for the principle of the plan and reminded Members that the Whyke Oval had been in need of a community facility for some time.

Members discussed previous efforts for the provision of community facilities and Councillor Sharp informed the Committee that she had been in close contact with the people who had been involved in previous initiatives as well as gathering evidence in support of the proposal currently before the Committee.

Councillor Sharp agreed that the next stage would be to put together a business plan and she expressed the hope that, once that was in place, she would gain more support to take the project forward.

#### **55. CELEBRATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III**

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Coronation of King Charles III had been set for Saturday 6 May 2023 and that there would be an additional bank holiday on Monday 8 May 2023.

He advised the Committee that, following the successful Platinum Jubilee Gala organised by the City Council, a booking had been made for Priory Park for the 1 July 2023.

The Town Clerk expressed the opinion, supported by the Committee, that it was likely that large numbers of people would prefer to watch the Coronation on the television and take part in local street parties, rather than attend large scale events.

He proposed that the City Council should arrange a Coronation themed event on the 1 July 2023 and reminded Members that the City Council did not have sufficient resources to get involved with arranging other, smaller, events on the day itself.

Councillors agreed with the approach being proposed.

The Deputy Mayor suggested that the City Council could support any proposed street parties on the day of the Coronation by helping enable those groups that wished to organise them.

Councillor Sharp proposed that some form of commemorative gift could be provided to children in the city to mark the event.

Councillor Carter suggested that a large screen could be set up in Priory Park on the day of the Coronation to allow people to watch it there if they wished.

The Committee agreed and the Chairman and Deputy Mayor suggested raising the matter with Chichester District Council as the authority responsible for the Park.

#### **56. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: 16 JANUARY 2023

The meeting closed at 4.21pm