



Chichester City Council

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 16 January 2023

Time 3.00pm – 3.56pm

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: The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Member Services Support Officer, Helen Marshall (Chairman and CEO of Chichester BID), Jacky Storey (Chairman of Friends of Ravenna)

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from the Mayor (Councillor Joy), Pam Bushby (Divisional Manager, Communities and Wellbeing, Chichester District Council), Graham Pound (Chairman, Friends of Valletta) and Paula Chatfield (Chichester Tree Wardens)

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

The Deputy Mayor and Councillors Apel, Lishman 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 and as a member of the Murray Club.

Councillors Apel and C Hughes declared an interest as members of the Friends of Valletta.

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

59. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2022, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record.

60. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) **Speyer Twinning link**

The Town Clerk gave the Committee an outline of the progress that had been made with developing the Twinning link between Chichester and Speyer, Germany. He reminded Members that an article with photographs had been published on the City Council's website showing scenes around Speyer and highlights of the Twinning Deed signing ceremony that had taken place there in early December 2022.

He also expressed the opinion that the time in Speyer had been very successful and that they had felt a strong connection with the people of Speyer.

The Town Clerk further expressed the opinion that he felt that there would be something for everyone at all levels as the relationship with Speyer developed.

Members were reminded that they had all been invited to the reciprocal signing ceremony being held in the Assembly Room on Monday 6 March 2023.

The Committee heard that a public meeting would be arranged towards the end of February to publicise the Twinning and to start the process of setting up a Friends of Speyer in Chichester. They were also informed that a Friends of Chichester in Speyer had been formed some time ago and that two representatives of that organisation would be accompanying the two Speyer Mayors and two Speyer City Council Officers on the visit in early March.

Councillor Gershater informed Members that he would be having a meeting with a former City Mayor and Councillor to discuss ideas for the development of the Twinning relationship with Speyer.

Members discussed the historical similarities between Chichester and Speyer and Councillor Gershater advised that Speyer had recently been declared a World Heritage Centre for Judaism in Germany and that it also held a special status for this around the world.

b) **City Centre Task Force**

The Deputy Mayor reminded Members about the purpose of the City Centre Task Force that had been set up as a joint project between Chichester City Council, Chichester District Council, Chichester BID and West Sussex County Council.

He advised them that the initial audit of the city centre had taken place to identify the cleanup tasks that needed to be completed and the initial planning meeting would be taking place in the next few days to identify who would be undertaking the work in areas such as graffiti, A-boards, problems with benches and estate agent signs. White-lining on the roads and rationalisation of the smaller signs around the city centre had also been identified as in need of addressing.

He emphasised that the work would mainly be undertaken by voluntary groups and that there had been strong interest from groups such as the Boys Club, Rotary, some schools and the Residents Associations. He expressed the hope that Chichester College and the University of Chichester would get involved and invited those in attendance to lend a hand to the efforts.

Members were informed that it was hoped that, going forward, these groups would take on responsibility for ongoing maintenance of specific areas around the city to help keep it looking as good as possible. They were also informed that,

for the future, the project would look at how best to tidy up some of the shops and empty units in the area.

The Deputy Mayor further reminded Members that it was intended that the work would be completed by Easter and in response to a question from Councillor Scicluna, advised that any financial commitment from the Councils or BID would likely be in the form of tools and materials from existing maintenance budgets.

Councillor Sharp asked for more details about when the working groups were likely to be happening so Councillors were able to attend.

The Deputy Mayor advised that a list of dates would be created and publicised so that those who wished to could get involved.

Members then discussed some of their concerns about some aspects of the current cityscape, including the artwork on buildings around the city and the underpass close to Waitrose and the Avenue de Chartres car park.

c) Coronation of King Charles event

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the decision had previously been taken to arrange an event in Priory Park on 1 July 2023 to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles. They were further reminded that it had been decided not to hold the event on the day of the Coronation because it had been felt that people would want to watch it at home or participate in local celebrations such as street parties.

He advised that Chichester BID had proposed arranging an event for the day of the Coronation which they hoped would involve live streaming of the event as well as family activities on Cathedral Green.

Referencing the events that BID had organised for the Platinum Jubilee in 2022, Helen Marshall from Chichester BID confirmed that plans for this kind of event had been proposed and that they were in the process of working out how it might happen and how it might be funded as the projects that had been identified would be relatively expensive.

She informed Members that the Cathedral had been very positive about the draft proposals and that it was hoped that local schools would get involved with designing a Coronation flag for display around the city centre with the Union flags.

Councillor Apel expressed concerns that people who lived on their own felt excluded if there were not community events for them to attend.

Councillor Sharp and the Deputy Mayor expressed support for the plans with the Deputy Mayor agreeing with Councillor Apel's comments.

Councillor Sharp asked whether the Cathedral had been asked about accommodating the activities if the weather affected the outdoor event and Councillor Quail informed Members that the knaves of churches were seen as community spaces for this kind of activity.

Councillor Scicluna reminded the Committee that an event involving live broadcasts and screens had previously taken place in the Cathedral.

61. POLICING AND SECURITY IN THE CITY

a) **Community Wardens**

Members noted the reports from the Community Wardens that had been circulated with the agenda.

b) **BID Rangers**

Members were advised that, as the figures in the BID Rangers report showed, shoplifting figures had risen strongly recently with the value of items recovered rising to nearly £6,000 over a period of two months, up from an average of £2,000 for other two month periods.

Members were further advised that there had also been an increase in anti-social behaviour linked to the rise in petty theft and shoplifting.

Ms Marshall reported that Chichester BID had arranged a meeting with Sussex Police PCSOs in order to strengthen links and joint working to tackle the problems being experienced within the city.

She expressed the opinion that it was important to maintain efforts to continue to tackle the crime and anti-social behaviour in the city.

Ms Marshall responded to a question from Councillor Apel about vacant shops in the city centre and advised Members that she estimated that approximately 6-7% of units were currently vacant. She also reported that recent new openings had been very well received in the run up to Christmas.

In response to a question from Councillor Apel as Chairman of the Committee, Ms Marshall gave Members a short update about how the BID's Christmas period had been.

She informed Members that the launch event had been very well received with a 47% rise in footfall compared to the previous year.

Members were further informed that positive comments had been received about the new Christmas lighting scheme, that the Nutcracker Trail around the city had proven very popular and that the results of a city centre retailer Christmastime survey would be released shortly.

Members discussed the Christmas Market that had taken place in the city centre in the run up to Christmas.

Those present were supportive of the Christmas Market in principle and it was generally agreed that, while the market had been a good basis for future events, there were aspects that should be reviewed and worked on in order to make it a stand out event to draw visitors to the city.

Councillor Gershater referenced the Christmas Market in Speyer that those who had attended the Twinning ceremony had recently visited. The Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk agreed that it was a benchmark event with a very positive atmosphere driven by local traders. The longer hours of the market, running later in to the evenings, was also noted.

Councillor Carter commented on the fact that the Farmers Market had been moved to make way for the Christmas Market and suggested, in future, that the two could be combined.

c) **West Sussex Police**

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

Councillor Sharp informed Members that West Sussex Police PCSO Jason Lemm, who was known to Councillors and Officers, would shortly be leaving his post and that the number of PCSOs in the area was

The Town Clerk reminded Members that PCSO Lemm had been heavily involved in advising the City Council and local SpeedWatch and other community groups on issues surrounding speed cameras and traffic issues.

He suggested, and Members agreed, that a note be included in the minutes of the meeting thanking PCSO Lemm for his support and wishing him well for the future.

The Deputy Mayor reported an increase in burglaries in the North Ward and that, in his opinion, this could reflect what had been previously mentioned about crime in the city centre with desperate individuals turning to petty crime.

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

a) **Friends of Ravenna**

The Chairman of the Friends of Ravenna, Ms Storey, introduced her report and highlighted the desire of the Friends to celebrate a belated 25th anniversary of the association, possibly during an Autumn visit of the Ravennati to Chichester. She informed Members that this would hopefully be confirmed once the new President of the Friends of Chichester in Ravenna was appointed in February.

She also advised that she had been in contact with the Mayor's office in Ravenna to try to arrange for them to visit for the celebration and that she was working on the necessary protocols to enable this to happen.

In response to a question from Councillor Apel, Ms Storey reported that they currently had approximately 100 members, many more than their partner organisation in Ravenna, but that it was hoped that they would be able to work together to improve this. One initiative being suggested was a visit from the Ravenna youth orchestra, with work to broaden the scope and appeal of the Friends groups also under consideration.

The Deputy Mayor suggested that, as part of the process of Twinning with Speyer, work should progress on bringing the four Friends associations together to enhance and stimulate the relationships across areas such as the arts and sports.

Councillor Gershater agreed and suggested that the four-way Twinning being developed may be unique and represented an opportunity for Chichester to develop its pro-Europe credentials.

b) **Friends of Chartres**

Councillor Scicluna, as Chairman of the Friends of Chartres, introduced her report and highlighted the recent, very successful, soiree at the Bishop's Palace.

c) **Friends of Valletta**

Councillor Scicluna presented the report on behalf of the Chairman of the Friends of Valletta who had been unable to attend.

She reminded Members about the forthcoming live performance of “The Star of Strait Street”, taking place in the Assembly Room on 19 June 2023 and featuring a cast travelling from Malta.

Members were also reminded about the Three Cities event which would be taking place on 26 June 2023, also in the Assembly Room.

63. **CHICHESTER TREE WARDENS**

The report from the Chichester Tree Wardens was noted without comment.

64. **VALLETTA FRIENDSHIP**

The Town Clerk advised that, following a recent refresh of the Parish Boundary signs, all four of the cities currently with a civic relationship with Chichester had been included under the heading “Twinned and in Friendship with” to ensure that both types of relationship were included.

He reminded Members that, at the time the link with Valletta had been developed, the City Council had agreed to a Friendship link rather than a Twinning link.

Members were further reminded that there was no legal difference between the two types of link and it had therefore been suggested that the Valletta link be changed to a Twinning one.

In response to a question from Councillor Apel, the Town Clerk asked that the Committee give some direction on the suggestion which could then, potentially, be discussed at a future meeting.

Members discussed the proposal and expressed support for the existing link.

Councillor Scicluna referenced the wording of the Friendship Deed and expressed the opinion that she thought the current arrangement was quite strong, worked very well and was already very close to the intentions of a Twinning Deed.

She suggested that Valletta could be informed of Chichester’s interest in a formal Twinning and that, as the Mayor of Valletta was being invited to the Chichester-Speyer Twinning ceremony, the matter could be discussed informally at that time.

The Deputy Mayor expressed the opinion that any discussion on this matter should be handled delicately in order that Valletta did not feel it was being pushed to change the arrangement. He agreed with the previous comments and suggested that any change in the future should be initiated by Valletta.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands and it was AGREED that the matter of a formal Twinning with Valletta should remain a possibility in the future.

65. **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from this meeting for agenda item 10 due to the nature of the business to be transacted, namely confidential business matters.

66. DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATION

Councillor Quail declared an interest as a former customer of one of the contractors being discussed.

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members that, following the presentation by the Friends of Centurion Way, the Committee had asked for further information in support of their application.

She confirmed the quotes that had been received by the Friends of Centurion Way and also gave Members details of the additional funding that had been applied for.

After a short discussion, Members AGREED that the information requested had now been satisfactorily supplied and that the grant of £2,500 could be released.

67. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: MONDAY 13 MARCH 2023

The meeting closed at 3.56pm