



Chichester City Council

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 2 September 2024

Time 5.30pm – 7.08pm

Location The Council Chamber - The Council House • North Street • CHICHESTER • West Sussex • PO19 1LQ

PRESENT: Councillors Apel, Chant, J Gershater, Kondabeka

EX-OFFICIO: The Mayor (Councillor S Quail)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Councillor Scicluna, Councillor C. Gershater, Civic & Council Support Officer,

Present: Helen Marshall (Chichester BID), Pam Bushby (Chichester District Council) Michael Bevis (Friends of Chartres)

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillor J Gershater.

Councillor Moore was absent

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

Councillor Kondabeka declared an interest as a trustee of VAAC

Councillor Knight declared an interest as a committee member of Friends of Oaklands Park

Councillor Apel declared an interest as a member of the Chichester Singers

23. GRANT APPLICATION PRESENTATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Presentations by Large Grant and Core Funding grant applicants:

Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester (VAAC) presentation by Jackie Sumner.

Jackie Sumner provided an overview of the work of VAAC, and how they support voluntary sector groups across the city. They currently have a gap of £48k in their core funding from West Sussex County Council, Chichester District Council and Arun District Council, which they need to close. Jackie explained that they have helped local groups secure £600k of funding. They also run regular networking events, training and help with volunteer recruitment and placement.

They have requested £5,000 per year over three years to cover the shortfall in their running costs.

24. **DISCRETIONARY ROOM HIRE RATES FOR COUNCIL HOUSE**

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the hire charges for the Council House had recently been reviewed and amended by the property sub-committee and rooms were now charged at a flat hourly rate.

The Town Clerk proposed that a discounted hire rate should be applied to all eligible community groups, with the eligibility criteria remaining consistent across the grants and free hire scheme and discounted hire, with officers making a delegated decision on eligibility at the time of booking.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to delegate the authority for making decisions on discretionary hire rates to the Town Clerk following agreement from the Chair or Vice Chair if the Chairman is unavailable.

25. **APPROVAL OF FREE USE GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Town Clerk explained that for operational and timing reasons, the decision on free use would be best delegated to Council Officers, who can review the application alongside the criteria outlined in the grants funding policy. A list of decisions made can be presented at each Community Affairs Committee meeting, informing Councillors.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to delegate the authority for deciding free use grant applications to the Town Clerk following agreement from the Chair or Vice Chair if the Chairman is unavailable.

26. **UPDATES ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes 5 and 7 - Advise Grant applicants of Committee decision

The Deputy Town Clerk had informed grant applicants of the Committee decisions

Minute 9 - Invite Michael Bevis from the Friends of Chartres to speak to the Committee

Michael Bevis presented under minute reference 29.

Minute 11 - Ensure adequate cover arrangements are in place for hosting of future Homeless Forum meetings

The Communications and Civic Support Officer is now in post and is able to host if required.

Minute 14 - Chairman to write to PRIDE committee thanking them for their efforts in organising the first annual parade.

The Chairman advised they would complete this action.

27. POLICING AND SECURITY IN THE CITY

The committee noted the reports received:

(a) **Community Wardens**

Pam Bushby (CDC) gave a brief update and advised that the warden team had suffered a bereavement following the death of the Wittering's warden Drew Allardice. This has impacted the wider team who have been providing cover. Recruitment for a replacement is underway.

There have been numerous of reports of shoplifting, ASB and minor crime, since the last meeting took place.

During the school summer holidays there had been a noticeable drop in anti-social behaviour reports. This could be a result of the young people's activities, organised by the Joint Action Group, such as the skatepark sessions.

Traveller encampments have been an issue. There have been 28 encampments across the district, many have been in car parks. Some of the groups have been very challenging and led to increased anti-social behaviour.

CDC are looking at how they can address this issue to work better with other authorities and with the travelling community. It can be quite time consuming and difficult to manage evictions, which can take several weeks.

The Community Wardens have been working with Sussex police to undertake 'hotspot' policing, where there is an active presence in problem areas. This new scheme has been effective and the results of this will be more visible over the coming weeks/months.

Councillor Chant enquired about what is being done to deter encampments at Northgate and the Cattle Market. Ms Bushby responded that at the Cattle Market barriers are being installed but Northgate could take longer to deploy.

The traveller transit site currently has capacity for 9 caravans, so it has been identified that there is a need for increased transit capacity and additional sites in the County.

Councillor Scicluna raised concerns that the travellers will target Priory Park in the future as the gates are left open throughout the day. Ms Bushby responded explaining that when travellers are in the area, precautions are taken, but it could be that staffing is a problem in regularly closing the gates.

(b) **Chichester BID Ambassadors**

Helen Marshall gave a brief update and advised that the court trial for the two previous Rangers had ended last week, with both defendants found not guilty of all charges. The BID has sent best wishes for the future to the former Rangers.

The Chairman stated that she will write to the Rangers, expressing thanks and wishing them well.

The BID have no intention of reverting to the old ranger model, as the new City ambassadors' scheme is working very well.

ASB and shoplifting is still an issue within the City, but numbers don't appear to be growing, they have remained consistent.

The PCSO presence is still poor, due to sickness and absence. There is not sufficient cover within the PCSO team.

Mrs Marshall then outlined plans for the Christmas Lights switch on event on Saturday 23rd November. The event will be a partnership between the BID, Chichester City Council, Chichester Festival Theatre, Chichester District Council and will be branded as such.

The event will start with entertainment from 11am through to 5pm, when the switch-on will take place outside The Council House. The cast of Cinderella will in attendance, with the actress playing Cinderella turning on the lights.

There will be activities during the daytime for young families running from 11am to 5pm. During the evening pubs and restaurants will be hosting functions, such as live music for adults. There will also be a food & drinks market on East Street throughout the day.

(c) **Chichester Police**

The committee noted the receipt of the police reports and requested that Sussex Police be invited to attend a future meeting to respond to questions from the committee.

28. TO NOTE REPORTS RECEIVED FROM COMMUNITY GROUPS

Friends of Chartres

Report provided verbally by Michael Beavis under minute 29

Friends of Ravenna
Friends of Speyer
Friends of Valletta
Chichester Tree Wardens

The committee noted the receipt of the reports.

29. CHICHESTER TWINNING ASSOCIATIONS

Mr Michael Bevis from the Friends of Chartres gave a presentation of the benefits, challenges, successes and opportunities of twinning.

Twinning with Chartres dates back to 1959, Ravenna 1996, Valetta 2010 and Speyer to 2022. It is believed it is the only 4-way twinning in Europe.

The key to successful twinning is getting the 'fit' between the towns right, culturally and socially. Chartres have just celebrated 65 years of twinning. School exchanges in the past were very valuable, although safeguarding requirements have made this much harder to do these days.

The school's art challenge in the past provided a good way of doing this, but since Covid, many former links have struggled to be maintained or re-started. The lack of compulsory GCSE languages has also caused a difficulty. A new campaign to re-establish links with schools to promote twinning needs to be explored.

Continuing friendships is a challenge, particularly recruiting newer and younger members to the twinning organisations. Despite this, social media allows the groups to remain in touch much more easily, but this needs to be better exploited.

Lack of local news journalism is also a problem when getting their message out.

Friends of Chartres participate in the 4 cities partnership, have an annual garden party. They also run language circles and various other social events. The group have a quiz and a fish & chip supper coming up in the autumn. They are currently planning their Christmas event and an annual dinner/visit from Chartres in May 2025.

Councillor C Gershater added that the European Movement were planning to run an event utilising the twinning efforts of Chichester, as a model of a pro-European hub.

Councillor C Gershater then advised that the friends of Speyer were looking at the possibility of developing an international sports competition, which may help to encourage younger people to get involved with Twinning activities.

Councillor Scicluna added that the city has had a long tradition of European friendship, and it was looking likely that the Cathedral in Valletta would soon be linked to the Cathedral in Chichester.

The Chairman then asked if Brexit has had an impact. Mr Bevis agreed it has and stated that it would make future visits harder to organise.

30. **VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY**

The committee **AGREED** to investigate the possibility of running a series of events again.

The Committee agreed to establish a working group – membership includes Councillors Apel, Scicluna and The Mayor, Councillor Quail.

31. **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FAIR 8th JUNE 2024**

The Committee noted receipt of the report from the Communities Officer and **AGREED** that it would be repeated in 2025.

32. **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The committee reviewed the current list and resolved to make the following amendments:

The following to be removed as they are no longer active:

Removal of the Neighbourhood Plan

Removal of Chichester Strategic Partnership

Representative changes:

Councillor Pramas to be removed from Friends of Speyer – replaced with Councillor C Gershater

Councillor Chant to be removed from Friends of Valetta – Town Clerk to request volunteers from councillors to replace.

33. **MAYOR'S CHAIN AND BADGE REPAIRS**

The Committee **AGREED** to proceed with the repairs, with the work to be completed during December with funds being taken from the civic regalia reserve budget at a cost of £3,495.

34. **CHICHESTER GALA 2024**

The Committee noted the Front of House Managers report.

Councillor Scicluna mentioned that she had received complaints from the neighbours about the amount of time that the event went on until and how late the final site clear-up and breakdown went on.

Committee **AGREED** to proceed with the Community Gala in 2025.

Committee **RESOLVED** to establish a working group containing Councillors Apel, Chant, C Gershater and The Mayor Councillor Quail to work on planning for 2025.

35. **PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT) 1960**

The Committee resolved that the public and press be excluded from this meeting for Agenda Item 16 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted namely financial and business affairs of third parties.

36. **CONSIDERATION OF GRANTS APPLICATIONS**

(ii) Large Grant and Core Funding grant applications

Councillor Kondabeka left the meeting.

Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester (VAAC) – proposal £5,000 over three years, **AGREED**, any shortfall in the budget to be funded via the underspend in the public realm budget.

Councillor Kondabeka re-joined the meeting

(iii) Small Grant Applications

Chichester BID Ltd - request for £3,000 for Christmas Switch on event, **AGREED**.

Contact 88 – Application was **WITHDRAWN** as they had achieved their fundraising target.

Carers Support West Sussex - request for £967.28 **AGREED**.

Councillor Knight left the meeting

Friends of Oaklands Park – request for £2,000 **AGREED**, the Committee requested that release of funds be upon condition of receiving written agreement from CDC that they will adopt the bench for future maintenance once it is installed.

Councillor Knight re-joined the meeting

(iv) Free Use applications

Young Peoples Shop – 2-hour Counselling sessions 3rd and 17th Sept. 15th Oct, 26th Nov and 10th Dec 9.30am to 11.30am (crush bar) **AGREED**.

Cllr Apel left the meeting

Chichester Singers – Weds 4th Dec 18.30pm to 21.30pm – for a choir rehearsal 140 members

AGREED that the group would be offered free hire between the hours of 5pm and 8pm with any additional time charged at the discretionary hourly rate.

Cllr Apel rejoined the meeting

Rotary club of Chichester Harbour – Saturday 30th Nov 8am-1pm for a Charity Christmas Fair - **AGREED**.

37. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Arts Forum update
- Civic & Ceremonial working group report

38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: 2 SEPTEMBER 2024

The meeting closed at 7.32pm

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Minute ref.	Agreed action	Assigned for action to
26.	Chairman to write to PRIDE committee thanking them for their efforts in organising the first annual parade.	Councillor Apel
27 (c).	Sussex Police be invited to attend a future meeting to respond to questions from the committee.	Communications & Civic Support Officer
30.	VE Day 80 th Anniversary working group meeting to be arranged.	Town Clerk
32.	Request volunteers from councillors fill vacancy in Friends of Valetta.	Town Clerk
33.	Schedule repairs of the Mayor's Badge and Chain.	Communications
34.	Chichester Gala 2025 working group meeting to be arranged.	Town Clerk
36.	Advise Grant applicants of Committee decision	Deputy Town Clerk