

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD
ON 28th FEBRUARY 2022**

Present: Councillors David Brunson (Chair), Will Bryce, Judith Clarke, Julija Boulton, Jennifer McAllister, Louisa Radice, Amanda Stevens and Nick Wilkins

48. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Jade McGhee (Cllr Wilkins substituting).

49. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jennifer McAllister declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Leamington Blue Plaques Group.

50. **PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no representations from Members of the public

51. **TOWN TWINNING MATTERS**

Mrs Margaret Begg presented an Update from LITS in the absence of Mrs Karen McQueen who is currently unable to participate in LITS activities for personal reasons:

- The planned visit to Sceaux from May 6th – 10th is going ahead with a focus on the 50th anniversary of the twinning between Sceaux and Leamington Spa. There are special celebratory events planned and LITS visitors will travel by coach from Leamington Town Hall to Sceaux Town Hall. Members were asked to consider if they would make the trip if possible.
- Sceaux is very keen to establish links between their library and Leamington library and they are looking to hold some inter-twinning football matches between under 18s from Sceaux, Leamington and Bruhl. LITS can help with travel costs for any young people from Leamington who would like to take part (this would occur during school holidays).
- Bruhl is due to visit Leamington from October 8th – 12th and looking to plan the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of twinning with Leamington in 2023. A civic dinner will take place as usual and LITS will be seeking hosts.
- LITS AGM is due to be held on March 11th at 7:30pm in Dormer Place Conference Centre.

Cllr Bryce suggested he contact people he knows in the local football community in Leamington to see if he can find any volunteers to visit Sceaux. The Democratic Support Officer (DSO) will contact Leamington Brakes Community Foundation to ask there as well.

RESOLVED that the Update is received and noted.

Margaret Begg was thanked for her attendance and left the meeting at 6:12pm.

52. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 10th January 2022 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Stevens entered the meeting 6:15pm. Councillor Stevens declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Leamington in Bloom.

53. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Update on delivery of Community Grants projects impacted by Covid 19:

- All Are Welcome (Radford Rd Church) - £1000 grant as yet unspent. The group has not met since March 2020 due to Covid restrictions but is planning to reopen on 17th February 2022. They request that their grant be extended until the end of 2022.
- Own Books - £884 unspent (from original £2000 grant). Would like to extend remaining grant until end of 2022 to provide two more workshops as per their application.
- St John's Community Garden – phase 1 of the project is complete and phase 2 is ongoing. The Garden has become a larger project now with a further grant of £25000 to enable better accessibility, more landscaping and more substantial paths. £455 is unspent from the original £2000 grant and they would like to extend the grant until the end of 2022 for planting once the hard landscaping is complete.
- The Sikh Cultural Centre – had £1000 grant to mark International Women's Day in March 2020 which did not take place due to Covid. They would like to spend it in May 2022 on a celebration of women day.

RESOLVED that the Update is received, and the grant extension requests are agreed.

Responses to requests for further information regarding the Community Grants applications considered on 10th January 2022:

- Application 1 (LOTT) – the additional £900 mentioned in the costs of the events will be covered by their own reserves.
- Application 3 (Parenting Project) – have been asked which children's centres their project will be using in Leamington – on leave currently. DSO to chase.
- Application 5 (RLS Canoe Club) – applicant has been contacted and understands that more detailed information is required in any future applications.
- Application 10 (Leamington Music Festival) - applicant has been contacted and understands that more detailed information is required in any future applications.

- Application 11 (2nd Warwick Sea Scouts) – 25% of their membership comes from Leamington Spa.

54. **COMMUNITY GRANTS ANNUAL REVIEW**

The DSO gave a brief overview of the annual grants review report. The main points of note were:

- Underspend of £5504.94
- Drop in no. of applications from 41 to 26 from 2020/21 to 2021/22 (due to lack of ability of groups to plan or organise large scale events, projects that require in person attendance and lack of people available to plan projects and submit applications due to Covid lockdowns and ensuing restrictions)
- Largest amount of funding went to projects aimed at supporting Covid recovery and reducing social isolation in Leamington while the lowest amount went to projects supporting the environment.
- No further increase in numbers of projects aimed at improving skills/reducing unemployment despite targeted emails and posters to organisations and groups which provide these kinds of projects.
- Health and wellbeing project applications remained stable and second in popularity with applications coming from both established organisations such as Myton Hospice and Air Ambulance but also new applicants such as the RLS Canoe Club.
- Applications for projects to support young people and arts/music fell which can again be attributed to the inability of groups to plan events and workshops which require in person attendance, struggle to secure venues and then struggle to attract enough attendees as Covid restrictions changed throughout 2021.
- No of applications from groups within and without Leamington dropped slightly reflecting the general drop in application numbers and it would be expected that these numbers would rise in 2022 given the removal of all Covid restrictions.
- 6 new applicants, 2 returning applicants and 1 unsuccessful applicant registered in 2021/22. Advice appointment was set up for the unsuccessful applicant but was cancelled by the applicant and not rearranged by them.
- Most applicants knew about the Community Grant Fund as they had applied previously but 6 found out via RLSTC/WDC social media, 3 through the RLSTC website and 2 via the posters.

- Monitoring forms are sent out to successful applicants when they are formally notified of their successful bid. No further bids can be made to the Fund until the completed monitoring form for an outstanding project is returned. A file of hard copies of these is kept in the Town Council office. From 2022, monitoring forms will be scanned and sent to Committee members in April and November for their information.
- From May 2022, the Community Grant Applications list will include a column to confirm if each applicant has submitted the requisite quotes and a column to confirm if applicants have returned their monitoring form for their previous grant-funded project (if there was one).
- More projects would be expected in 2022/23 which are actively aimed at activities and events which bring people together, support mental wellbeing and promote Leamington Spa as a place to visit. However, applications to support events or projects which require the involvement of numbers of people should still be able to show flexibility in terms of being able to be held online, or to demonstrate the adoption of robust Covid-19 safety measures including an appropriate risk assessment.
- 2021/22 was seen as a good opportunity for groups (particularly sports groups) to apply for funding from the Community Grant Fund in order to benefit from new equipment or other capital improvements. In response to this, Leamington RUFC applied for and were granted funding for ground maintenance equipment, RLS Canoe Club were successful in their bid for new boats and the Sea Scouts were able to obtain new activity equipment for expeditions. This area of focus for grant funding should be maintained in 2022/23, as should those of improving skills/addressing unemployment and supporting young people.

The following recommendations were made:

- A stronger relationship between the Town Council and Warwickshire CAVA and between the Town Council and the WDC Community Partnership team would be helpful in terms of robust promotion and will be further pursued in 2022/23.
- An annual support and troubleshooting workshop at the Town Hall was proposed whereby potential applicants could go through the form, discuss issues, ask questions and feel more confident about submitting an application. This would also have the intended outcome of increasing the number of strong applications and could be promoted strongly to groups from which applications are lacking – heritage, environment, young people and skills/employment.

RESOLVED that the Report is received and noted. The recommendations are accepted with the following amendment – that the grants support workshop be

held in different community locations around town in order to best reach more residents and groups. The first such location suggested was The SYDNI Centre.

55. BLUE PLAQUES GROUP

The committee considered the update report in relation to Blue Plaques.

Blue Plaques for Miss Eleanor Doorly and Mrs Margaret Fowler to be installed and unveiled on Wednesday 23rd March followed by a reception at the Town Hall. Town Council members have been invited. Local press to be invited and a press release done as well as photo coverage for social media purposes.

RESOLVED that the Report is received and noted

56. LEAMINGTON IN BLOOM

The Committee noted the written report provided.

An Acer was planted on Newbold Comyn by WDC contractors idverde on 4th February as Leamington in Bloom's Platinum Jubilee Tree. The species and location was chosen by Jon Holmes as was the date of planting. Photos were taken and used on the Town Council social media.

The Mayor will have a photo opportunity by the tree on 11th March as that is Plant a Tree for the Jubilee Day. This will be used with a press release and on the LiB social media and website.

RESOLVED that the Report is received and noted

57. STREET TREES PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE

A brief verbal update was given by the DSO in relation to street trees:

- Invoices arrived for 2021/22 from WCC for the Town Council funding on 9th February and were in the process of being paid.
- Tree maintenance has been carried out on Leicester St, Queensway, Binswood Avenue and Portland St. Works have been done to 70+ trees along Queensway and this work consisted of pruning/branch removal to give clearance to the highway/footway/street furniture etc and removal of significant deadwood. 2 x Robinia pseudoacacia and an Oak were also felled. These locations are noted for replacement planting.
- Some pollarding work was done on approx. 30 Lime trees on Leicester St but works had to stop due to imminent storms. Following the storms, WCC Forestry worked with Police and WCC Highways to deal with emergencies where trees/branches had fallen into the carriageway and were causing a hazard.
- In relation to replacement trees should recently planted trees die, the Tree Nursery/supplier offers a replacement for a tree that dies / doesn't survive. However, generally if a street tree doesn't survive its first two years, it is normally due to drought (or damage / vandalism), and not something a

Tree Nursery would be expected to replace. The highway verge is a very tough environment for a tree grow in, so there are several casualties each year, and WCC Forestry purchase another tree and try again. Any transport damaged or poor specimens are spotted by at delivery, or later by tree planting staff, and the Nursery will replace them.

Therefore, on a practical level, referring to the trees that WCC Forestry are planting, there is no free of charge replacement for a tree that dies during the early part of its life span. With regard to trees planted on a new development by the Developer as part of their planning permission, these types of dead trees are followed up and the Developer should fund the replacement where appropriate (via their contractor or sometimes ourselves/WCC if necessary).

Questions were raised around the enforcement of tree replacement by Developers as there were examples raised in Leamington where this had not occurred. This to be raised with WDC Planning.

Members requested information where possible regarding the location and number of storm damaged trees in Leamington.

RESOLVED that the Update is received and noted

The meeting concluded at 7:10pm.

Signed

Date.....