

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD  
VIA ZOOM ON 1<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

Present: Councillors David Brunson (Chair), Jennifer McAllister, Amanda Stevens, Jade McGhee, Judith Clarke, Will Bryce and Louisa Radice

Katherine Geddes (Democratic Support Officer), Johnathan Branson (Projects & Development Manager, Arts Service, Warwick District Council), Rose Winship (Head of Cultural Services, Warwick District Council) and Clint Parker (Warwickshire County Council Arboricultural Area Manager)

26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Julija Boulton.

27. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Stevens declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Town Council representative on Leamington International Twinning Society and on Leamington in Bloom.

Councillor McAllister declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Town Council representative on the Leamington Blue Plaques Group.

28. **PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no representations from Members of the public

29. **WDC CULTURAL SERVICES UPDATE**

Johnathan Branson (JB) introduced himself and began his presentation with an outline of his role in the management of the Warwick Area Creative Compact - this project provides strategic leadership for the cultural and creative industries in the district and will deliver the 5 year creative framework – [https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/downloads/file/6090/warwick\\_districts\\_creative\\_framework](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/downloads/file/6090/warwick_districts_creative_framework)

The compact is made up of 19 local leaders from local arts/creative/tourist organisations, and works across sectors to make new connections and drive new partnerships. Its activities are informed by five agreed strategic themes; Engagement, Voice, Pathfinding, Place making and Innovation, and these activities are based on the results of sector-wide consultation.

- With regard to the Commonwealth Games in 2022, there will be a CultureFest which will showcase and celebrate arts and heritage venues, artists, and creatives in the area in a month-long festival with events and activities taking place across Leamington, Warwick, Kenilworth and Whitnash from Saturday 16 July to Sunday 21 August 2022. Arts/creative organisations and groups are welcome to apply for funding to stage events/workshops/projects which match the criteria of Children and Young People, Families, and People and Communities that established cultural institutions do not engage. Both small and large-scale works can be supported. Applications are open now until March 2022.

- There will also be a Warwickshire County Council funded (£30,000) arts challenge to provide a new sculpture to be located on the grass outside the Spa Centre.
- The railway station underpass will be revamped for the Commonwealth Games with a colour palette mechanism whereby colours are showcased which have particular relevance and connection to Leamington Spa – local people to be asked which colours they feel represent the town.
- A mapping exercise is to be carried out to show where existing public art pieces are located in the Creative Quarter. A recent consultation has shown that a majority of residents support street art pieces, more of which have appeared recently in the Old Town area.
- Redevelopment of the Town Hall as a creative hub is moving forward as part of the Future High Street Funding WDC received from central government. Technical drawings are now being developed based on the responses to the concept drawings done in 2019. The Town Council will be a significant consultee throughout the process as one of the anchor tenants of the building.
- The next SPARK symposium is scheduled for Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at the Spa Centre.

Discussion then took place around the Town Hall redevelopment project and a lack of communication about how this is being delivered and taken forward by WDC. JB explained this is a separate project to those under the Creative Compact or the Commonwealth Games and will come under the new Transformational Framework Group whose membership has not yet been decided. The Town Council will be invited to sit on this Group.

The conceptual drawings shared with the Town Council previously had been welcomed as positive changes to update and future proof the building. JB confirmed this project will include upgraded toilet facilities, better meeting rooms, better access for all, cycle storage, 5G enablement and the opening up of the front reception area to become more bright and open, and to better highlight the Victorian design. It was mentioned that an appropriate annual maintenance budget must also be put in place for the property by WDC as well as the Future High Street Funding.

Rose Winship (RW) pointed to the recent move to the Town Hall of Motionhouse Dance Company which is now based in the Assembly Hall for rehearsals as a positive example of creative support by WDC. Whilst this is acknowledged by members, it was relayed that the noise Motionhouse make during their rehearsals is impacting some existing meetings now and will do so in the future unless some mitigation measures are put in place. It was suggested that some level of sound proofing be installed or meeting rooms be booked outside of rehearsals.

It was pointed out that the Town Council has not been asked to participate in any consultation on the proposed sculpture outside the Spa Centre as yet and also that

any public consultation on street art must be robust and open to all so it is properly representative of Leamington residents. There are numerous arts organisations and groups in Leamington who produce affordable live performances for residents – these organisations are being hit by recent increases in the hiring charges to use the Spa Centre thereby reducing any profits. This needs to be addressed by WDC.

JB explained that there are roadshows and open surgeries planned to involve as many local arts groups/organisations as possible and would appreciate the Town Council's assistance in spreading the word about these. He also stated that he would be happy to meet with any Town Council members and have a walk around Leamington to discuss any ideas/input.

The Committee thanked JB and RW for the presentation and ensuing discussion. They left the meeting at 6:44pm.

### 30. **STREET TREES**

Clint Parker (Warwickshire County Council Arboricultural Area Manager) (CP) attended the meeting to give an update on progress with street tree planting and maintenance in Leamington in 2021:

- Finished surveying 10,000+ trees recently – a work programme is being drawn up for those which need work or removal. Each tree surveyed has a 'state of tree' check with an emphasis on maintenance and improvement. Trees on the Town Council's list are included in this work programme.
- Every item on the Town Council's current list has been addressed for this year's works – trees have been ordered where possible and the budget from the Town Council has been expended up to end of March 2022.
- Looking to plant 500,000 trees across the county in total next year so a big challenge ahead.
- Tree removal works will be going ahead where trees are judged unsafe or having come to the end of their cycle. Replacements will be made where appropriate – these to be staggered over a period of years.
- Members were shown the tree mapping system used by the Forestry Section to show new trees, tree maintenance and tree removal across Leamington.
- CP stressed there has been heavy investment in Leamington this year. A new tree list for 2022 planting from the Town Council is welcome and encouraged

It was queried whether the tree mapping could be made available to the public – it cannot due to lack of staff capacity to deal with enquiries at the moment.

It was noted that local residents are asked and encouraged to water new saplings as there is little County Council budget for watering trees and any funds which are expended on watering cannot then be spent on more trees.

The Committee thanked CP for his attendance and update. He left the meeting at 7:20pm

31. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

32. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Members have been invited to attend a guided viewing of the Warwickshire Open Studios exhibition currently on display at the Leamington Spa Art Gallery. This exhibition marks and celebrates the organisation's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday and it received funding via the Town Council's Community Grant Fund. Don Mason (who led this funding application) has offered to show any members around the exhibition on an upcoming Saturday morning should anyone wish to attend. Dates available are 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> November or 4<sup>th</sup> December.

KG will circulate these dates via email after this meeting and members can select their first and second choices. The most popular date will then be the chosen date.

33. **BLUE PLAQUES GROUP UPDATE**

- Blue Plaque for Eddie Hapgood unveiled successfully on 23<sup>rd</sup> September with a turnout of about 50 people including family members and representatives from Arsenal and Leamington Football Clubs. Unveiling was followed by a short reception at the Town Hall with music and a rolling presentation on Eddie. Blue Plaque Group members happy with the event and a good local press coverage.
- Special Interest Plaque has been ordered and will be delivered to 27 Woodbine Street. Property owners to organise erection of Plaque. Date to be agreed with the BP Group members and the Mayor for unveiling hopefully in December with members of The Specials and the owner of the Studio keen to attend.
- Listed Building Consent application has been submitted to WDC for a Blue Plaque at the Iceland building on Bath Street for Margaret Maitland Fowler. Is now in the system with comments set to close on 1<sup>st</sup> December. To be funded by the owner of the property and by the Leamington History Group.
- Wording for a Blue Plaque for Eleanor Doorly at 23 St Mary's Crescent has been agreed by the property owner, King's High School and Miss Doorly's nephew. Order for this Plaque to be placed - £200 contribution to come from the school.
- Other nominations are being researched and pursued for completion in 2022/23 include Christopher and Janey Ironside, the World War 2 Camouflage Unit at the Regent Hotel (Travelodge) and Eleanor Velasco Thornton.

34. **LEAMINGTON IN BLOOM UPDATE**

Floral Trains

Returned to WDC depot for storage until next year.

Colours for 2022 will be red, white and blue to reflect the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations (red geraniums, white petunias and blue verbena). Plants to be purchased through WDC Green Spaces team again and grown on by them until delivery time in May 2022. Colours of hanging baskets for 2022 will be green and pink reflecting the colours of the Commonwealth Games.

### Magazine

Currently being collated and designed by Annabel Rainbow (volunteer). 2021/22 version to be printed early 2022.

### Portfolio

Secured a fifth consecutive Gold award in the small city category in September from Heart of England in Bloom.

### Green Grants

Five green grants of £200 each have been allocated to schools which applied for green projects on their sites. These are St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Shrubland St Primary, Clapham Terrace Primary, St Margaret's Junior School and Briar Hill Infants School. Another one submitted by Lillington Primary School requires more information/detail before a final decision is made.

### Presentation of certificates/cheques

Cheques were presented to the three winners of the LiB Photographic Competition on the steps of the Town Hall by the Mayor on 21<sup>st</sup> October. Certificates were also presented to some of the winners in the retail/commercial competition.

### Calendars 2022

These have been designed and printed by WDC using last year's template. 100 copies were printed and are available via the TIC at the Pump Rooms. Advertised via social media, websites and posters in parks noticeboards. Sold on by members as well. £3/copy.

## **35. BUDGET 2022/23**

Draft budget options for community grants, twinning visit expenditure, street trees, guided walks, Leamington in Bloom and Blue Plaques were discussed. Two potential changes suggested – uplift to Blue Plaques budget to £2500 to cover cost of reprint of Walks leaflet and contingencies for unveiling ceremonies/receptions and a cut to the grants of £5000 to £45,000 due to projected underspend in 2021/22. The former was accepted, the latter rejected and the current grants budget amount of £50,000 retained for recommendation to Council.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and ended at 7:50pm.

Signed .....

Date.....