

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD
AT THE TOWN HALL ON 7th NOVEMBER 2022**

Present: Councillors David Brunson (Chair), Jennifer McAllister, Susan Rasmussen, Ruggy Singh, Amanda Stevens, Louisa Radice and Nick Wilkins

Katherine Geddes (Democratic Support Officer)

24. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Councillors Will Bryce, Judith Clarke and Jade McGhee.

25. **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.

Councillor Radice declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Leamington International Twinning Society.

26. **PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no representations from Members of the Public

27. **ELIZABETH PHILLIPS – AGE UK COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE**

Elizabeth delivered a 10-minute presentation on the work Age UK Coventry & Warwickshire have been doing at Paintings Plantation over the last four years:

Paintings Plantation started at Champion School as a Millennium project to plant trees to mark the occasion, working with the Tree Council. A small tree nature reserve was created. However, the funds to maintain the reserve became unavailable after 2008 and the area became overgrown and unused.

The Plantation was named after local actor Norman Painting who was a patron of Age UK and vice-president of the Tree Council and who, after his death in 2009, left a legacy to Age UK. It was this legacy which was used in 2015 to redo and thereafter maintain the reserve working in partnership with the Tree Council.

Works done to the reserve since 2015:

- Large pond – leaks fixed and platform installed
- Landscaping work – led by Hinton's of Warwick with volunteer support
- Initial path restoration – grant funded by the Town Council in 2018
- Outdoor classroom repaired and updated, roof fixed - grant funded by the Town Council in 2019 (now houses photography, science and art sessions for the school as well as a monthly dementia club "Musical Memories" using local musicians).
- Circular path around the reserve – better accessibility for all

- Wildflower meadow – a new area has been acquired from Campion School following their recent site redevelopment, new wildflower plants planted by volunteers

Local businesses have done voluntary days on the site, helping maintain the reserve and contribute to improvement works as part of their company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) function. These businesses include Bridgestone Tyres, National Farmers' Union, Warwick University and Jaguar Land Rover.

A greenhouse has also been donated which is now used by pupils for Eco Club activities and for the school's Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

Maintenance works were maintained on the site during the Covid lockdowns as the volunteers could work socially distanced and such outdoors volunteering aided mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic, and continues to do so. The area now covered by Paintings Plantation totals almost 2 acres. Another 420 trees are due to be planted this winter via the Queen's Green Canopy project.

Campion School benefits from this asset on school grounds as do the volunteers who work there and others who attend public sessions there. The support and financial contributions of the Town Council are gratefully acknowledged.

Following the presentation, comments were made including:

- Councillor Brunson proposed a vote of thanks from the Cultural & Community Committee to all the volunteers who give their time to work on the Plantation and to Age UK for continuing the project (unanimously supported by the Committee)
- Councillor Rasmussen underlined the impressive inclusive nature of the project, the welcome regeneration of the land and the increased diversity of the area.

Elizabeth Phillips was thanked for her attendance and presentation. She left the meeting at 6:21pm

28. **TOWN TWINNING MATTERS**

Mrs Karen McQueen presented an Update from LITS:

The visit of the twinning society from Bruhl went very well in October. The group visited Helen's Manor in Worcestershire where a German-speaking guide had given a tailored tour of the property and the visitors were allowed to touch artefacts. They also visited the real tennis club and watched a match followed by lunch and they also walked around Jephson Gardens, doing the Trees of Jephson Gardens tour with the Leamington in Bloom leaflet.

The civic dinner was hosted by the Mayor at Warwick School as usual and the visitors had a farewell reception at Radford Semele village hall.

The LITS Christmas lunch is booked at the Star & Garter this year for members and recruitment of new members is ongoing.

There is an incoming visit from Sceaux scheduled for April 2023 and then an outgoing visit to Bruhl in September 2023. It will be the thirtieth anniversary of the

twinning of Myton School music dept with Bruhl's music school next year so it is hoped a group of pupils and teachers will accompany this visit.

Following the update, queries/comments were made concerning the following:

- It would be welcome and positive to have the LITS civic dinner held at a location in Leamington in future if possible
- Could a list of confirmed attendees for the LITS civic dinner be circulated to guests prior to the dinner?
- The visitors from Bruhl and Sceaux spend money in the local economy when they are here.

Karen confirmed that a Leamington location is being sought for the civic dinner and that a list of confirmed attendees for the dinner could indeed be circulated to guests in advance.

RESOLVED that the Update is received and noted.

Karen McQueen was thanked for her attendance and left the meeting at 6:37pm.

29. **WCC FORESTRY – STREET TREES LEAMINGTON 2022**

Matt Alford (MA) presented a briefing note on street tree activity in Leamington Spa during 2022 and planned activity for Winter 2022:

Matt is the Northern area officer for WCC Forestry but attended this meeting in lieu of Alex Plummer (Leamington Spa officer) and Clint Parker (area officer) who both sent apologies.

MA went through the briefing note provided to the Committee prior to the meeting which covered street tree maintenance/pruning works, complete tree planting and upcoming new and replacement planting. Maintenance had focussed on Prospect Rd, Grosvenor Rd and Greatheed Rd with 63 trees having works. New/replacement tree planting for 2023 proposed in Prospect Rd, Grosvenor Rd, Greatheed Rd, Braemar Rd, Briar Close, Gresham Ave, The Fairways and Willes Rd. Town Council funding is used to plant approx. 30 trees annually in Leamington.

The DSO confirmed in an email from WCC Forestry on 10th October 2022 that WCC Highways are no longer planning on the street works they had raised for Prospect Rd/Grosvenor Rd so WCC Forestry were no longer requesting that the Town Council consider ringfencing half of the budget for 2023/24 to these two streets alone.

Following the update, queries/comments were made concerning the following:

- Are existing street tree pits still suitable for future use?

MA - Depends on individual circumstances and a variety of factors such as utilities location and change of use of pathway

- Could the requests for new trees/maintenance be prioritised in future in terms of oldest to most recent? Some requests are still outstanding from several years ago and need addressing.

MA did not see an issue with this and will pass it on to his colleagues to action.

- Some residents have reported home insurance companies now requesting information about whether there are street trees within 7m of a property and have reported issues regarding large street trees causing negative issues re. roofing and guttering.

MA – the insurance companies will be making that query as a formality only, and the tree officers review all existing street trees in Leamington on a 3 yearly cyclical basis. If residents have more urgent issues affecting their properties from street trees, they should register these online at the WCC Forestry webpage on the WCC website or call 01926 412515.

- Is the current street tree maintenance budget overall enough?

MA to confirm.

- Have been issues in the past whereby Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) have been made on trees on private land and this has then prevented the property owners doing what they considered to be necessary works to that tree.

MA – each tree is assessed and measured on a given scale to see if it meets the requirements for a TPO. A TPO does not and should not prevent proportionate works being done to that tree in future. TPOs are put in place by Warwick District Council and if there is a concern around a TPO, their tree officer should be contacted.

Matt Alford was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting at 7:12pm.

30. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 3rd October 2022 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

31. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Amendment required to include apologies received from Cllr Radice and to change the name of the castle visited by LITS with the Bruhl delegation during their visit.

32. **GRANTS MONITORING FORMS**

The Committee considered the report in relation to the community grants monitoring forms. All the monitoring forms received from completed grant-funded projects since April 2022 had been emailed to members a week prior to this meeting for information.

It was acknowledged and agreed that the majority of forms had been completed with detail and many had accompanying photographs, posters and/or attendance figures.

It was suggested that in future the submitted monitoring forms be made available via a link on the Town Council website for better access – this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED that the Community Grants Fund Monitoring Forms as received between April and October 2022 were noted.

33. **LEAMINGTON IN BLOOM UPDATE**

The Committee considered and noted the update provided on the Leamington in Bloom presentation evening held on 19th October.

34. **BUDGET 2023/24**

Draft budget options for community grants, twinning visit expenditure, street trees, guided walks, Leamington in Bloom and Blue Plaques were discussed.

An uplift of funding of £500 has been requested by LITS to cover VAT costs for next year's LITS civic dinner. A funding reduction of £500 has been suggested for the Blue Plaques Group as the leaflet will not be redesigned and reprinted in 2023, and there has been an increase in Plaque sponsorship.

All other proposed budget expenditure for 2023/24 was recommended to be retained at current levels.

It was also requested that the budget lines for LITS expenditure and Twinning expenditure be separated in future budget discussions. The Chair suggested investigating possible changes in grant funding amounts available to individual projects in 2023/24 i.e. increase from £2000 max. to £3000 max. per application and investigating how other Town Councils structure their grant funding offers. This was unanimously supported. The DSO to prepare a report to this Committee for its January 2023 meeting.

RESOLVED that the budget recommendations made be supported and recommended to full Council.

35. **AOB**

There was none.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and ended at 7:43pm.

Signed

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