

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD
ON 4th APRIL 2022**

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

58. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Jade McGhee (Cllr Wilkins substituting).

59. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor Amanda Stevens declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Leamington in Bloom.

60. **PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no representations from Members of the public

61. **JULIE DE BASTION – OWN BOOKS**

- Project began in 2014 with some books from a charity shop which were donated by Julie to one local primary school for children to read. The project grew from there to more primaries across Leamington Spa, and there are now over 100 schools benefitting from book donations across the region.
- Own Books has partnered with World of Books which makes significant donations to the project, and with the Oxfam Bookshop in Leamington Spa where people can drop off donations. The Bookshop takes in between 4 – 6 bags of books a week. Volunteers deliver the books to schools in Leamington Spa as well as Coventry and Birmingham.
- 1 school/week enquires about joining the scheme and currently there are more schools which want to join the scheme than there are enough donated books. The project is voluntary with core costs covered by grant funding.
- Also delivers art workshops in central locations in Leamington Spa (and elsewhere) with families using books which have gone beyond their useful shelf lives to produce themed art works.
- During the Covid 19 lockdowns, Own Books did an online webinar called “Poet Tree” for schoolchildren to participate in and write poems about their lockdown experiences. A film of the webinar was made in conjunction with Make Good Grow:
<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AHWnwkhMSymeHEQ&cid=96A8B7FC98B0CB60&id=96A8B7FC98B0CB60%217045&parId=96A8B7FC98B0CB60%21215&o=OneUp>
- (Info re Make Good grow can be found here: <https://makegoodgrow.com/>)
- It is hoped more such webinars and films will be made going forward.

Following the presentation, queries were made regarding:

- Publicity/marketing – not needed as yet as effective publicity is coming from word of mouth currently. It was suggested that the project could benefit from some physical advertising, particularly to families across Leamington Spa who would be very willing to take second-hand children's books to the Oxfam Bookshop. Additional drop-off points in town were also raised – it is currently felt that more drop-off points at the moment risks overwhelming the group as it is and donated books can be dropped off at schools as well.
- Julie agreed to circulate a list of Leamington Spa schools already participating in the project.
- It was suggested that another area for development of the project might be residential care homes in town – many struggle to provide a regular and interesting supply of books for residents. Julie advised that this was something they would look into.
- Own Books currently has three age categories they cater for: 0-5 years, 4-11 years and 11-18 years. Oxfam Bookshop sifts through the donations to ensure suitability of texts.

Julie de Bastion was thanked for her attendance and presentation. She left the meeting at 6:25pm.

62. **JOHN ARCHER – ONE WORLD LINK**

One World Link promotes and supports the link between Leamington Spa and Bo in Sierra Leone. Bo is Sierra Leone's second city and is 150 miles from the capital Freetown. One World Link activities, which have been running for more than 35 years, work towards:

- Linking the people of the UK and Africa through a local friendship
- Supporting school children to learn about each other's lives across the continents
- Bringing people together
- Spreading understanding of Sierra Leone and Africa generally

The prime areas of involvement and development which One World Link work on between Leamington Spa and Bo are:

Education – 14 schools in Warwickshire are linked to schools in Bo, the Day of the African Child event takes place on 16th June and involves schools across Leamington Spa taking part in a day of activities on an African theme and having a live link to schools in Bo.

Local Government – skills transfers which have included finance controls, public health, waste management and traffic and transport. One current major project is the development and roll-out of a city-wide waste management system in partnership with Warwick District Council.

Disease – working with the local District Health officers to improve standards, improvements in children's health with the help of technology.

Land Management – working on the creation and implementation of land/housing purchases regulations. Many properties are built on former swampland over which there is no real community or regulatory control. Working with WDC and the Prince's Trust to put in place a toolkit device to plan development properly and effectively.

This will then enable the community to have agency and a say. Toolkit to include road planning and tree planting.

Following the presentation, queries were made regarding:

- Availability of vaccines – nationally in Bo, these are very limited. Malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and eye infections all have very high rates infection. Inoculations for these are all in development. As yet, Sierra Leone has not been too badly affected by Covid 19.
- Other areas for expansion and partnership working – IT and sports are being looked at but the existing areas of development have the current expertise so will remain the priority areas for the foreseeable future.
- Commonwealth Games 2022 involvement – One World Link is liaising with WDC and Sierra Leone to encourage them to send athletes over to attend and participate in the Games.
- IT equipment supplies from Leamington Spa – some IT equipment has been sent to Bo for supporting projects and upskilling but control over where it goes once in the city is not always viable/possible.

John Archer was thanked for his attendance and presentation. He left the meeting at 6:48pm.

63. **DAVID CLARGO – LIGHTS OF LEAMINGTON**

- The Lights of Leamington Festivals originally took place in the late 1950s/early 1960's and occurred in late summer/early autumn in Jephson Gardens. There were several various scenes and entertainments set up with effective lighting in the evenings with music and readings to accompany which visitors could enjoy.
- It is hoped by the Lights of Leamington working group (Carole Sleight, Sidney Syson, Stephanie Kerr and David Clargo) that such a Festival can be reintroduced and revitalised for 2023 onwards. Having sought advice from the Art Council on their original project proposal, they successfully applied for funding from the Arts Council to conduct a feasibility study. That piece of work has commenced and will run until early summer 2022. It is being run by Curated Places with an online survey, consultation workshops and presentations in venues and with different attendees across town. It is acknowledged early on that running a modern Festival of Lights in Leamington Spa could have high costs attached.
- Once the results of the feasibility study are collated, the working group would like to share their report with the Town Council. If the study concludes that the Festival should go ahead and is viable, the next stage would be significant fundraising with a view to securing an Arts Council grant using seed and match funding from within the local area.
- It is envisaged that the Lights would be designed and installed creatively as installations which local organisations would be invited to participate in. A suitable time to hold the Festival would need to be agreed upon so as to get the maximum gain out of the Lights and also not to clash with other local

lights festivals such as Warwick Castle, Coombe Abbey and Compton Verney.

Following the presentation, queries were made regarding:

- Appropriate time to use public expenditure on such a project – it is felt that positives brought about by the Festival would outweigh negatives e.g. tourism, benefits to local shops, restaurants and pubs, bringing the community together after the pandemic
- Possible use of solar/water power – all sustainable options to be investigated in terms of power, keeping the event as sustainable and climate-friendly as possible.

David Clargo was thanked for his attendance and presentation. He left the meeting at 7:08pm.

64. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 28th February 2022 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

65. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Community Grants Fund workshop – April 2022

Further to the recommendation accepted by members at the meeting of the Cultural & Community Committee on 28th February 2022, a Community Grants Fund 'How To' workshop has been organised by the DSO. This will take place on Saturday 23rd April at the SYDNI Centre between 10 – 11:30am. The workshop will cover how to set up a constituted community group, how to set up an appropriate community bank account, how to best complete the application form, what financial information is required, what evidence should be supplied and a look through a successful exemplar application form.

The workshop is being advertised via the Town Council website and social media, posters, the WDC Arts Service and WCAVA. Ten people have signed up to attend so far.

66. **COMMUNITY GRANTS FUND – MONITORING FORMS**

The committee considered and noted the report provided.

RESOLVED that the recommendations within the report are accepted – grant recipients to provide supporting information from their completed project where appropriate i.e. photographs, press coverage, participant feedback and any posters/leaflets/flyers, grant recipients to be strongly encouraged to give in-person feedback to the Town Council and completed monitoring forms to be received by the Town Council before a group/organisation can apply to the Community Grant Fund again. Also, to reiterate in the monitoring form that all Community Grants must be expended within 2 years from the date of payment unless an extension is agreed with the Town Council.

Members also agreed to include the following statement – “The Town Council reserves the right to seek the return of grant funds if the monitoring form is not received after completion of the grant-funded project.”

67. **BLUE PLAQUES GROUP**

The committee considered the update report in relation to Blue Plaques. Two more new Plaques were unveiled on 23rd March to two women of note in Leamington – Miss Eleanor Doorly and Mrs Margaret Fowler. This brings the tally of Blue Plaques to 36 (four having been added in the last six months).

Two more Blue Plaques and a Special Interest Plaque are planned for 2022/23.

The Blue Plaques Walks leaflet will be updated by the Group in conjunction with the designer from WDC with whom they will meet on 14th April to discuss. It is hoped the new leaflet will be available via the TIC and the Town Hall by early summer.

RESOLVED that the Report is received and noted

68. **LEAMINGTON IN BLOOM**

The Committee noted the written report provided.

Updated leaflet for trees in Jephson Gardens to be created in partnership with the WDC Green Spaces Team and Cllr Sidney Syson. Aims to be available again by early summer for visitors via the TIC, Town Hall and the Glasshouse.

Platinum Jubilee Tree (an Acer) was planted by the Mayor and members of LiB on 11th March on Newbold Comyn. Photos and press release to go out to local press and be included on LiB social media and website.

Heart of England in Bloom judges' visit is set for Wednesday 13th July for a three hour visit to Leamington including a presentation and a tour of agreed locations ending at Jephson Gardens and a complimentary lunch at the Glasshouse Restaurant.

Heart of England in Bloom judges' training session will take place at the Town Hall on Thursday 28th April. 15 attendees who will have walking tours of Jephson Gardens, the Pump Room Gardens and Christchurch Gardens, training and a committee meeting.

RESOLVED that the Report is received and noted

69. **STREET TREES PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE**

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

WCC Forestry had confirmed that if trees planted on a new development die within the first couple of years of planting the developer should replace them but that it is WDC Planning who would need to be contacted about any enforcement issues.

Also, a list of trees which fell or had to be removed in Leamington during the recent storms was being compiled and would be sent through once complete. It is their intention to replace lost trees providing the location is still suitable.

RESOLVED that the Update is received and noted

The meeting concluded at 7:45pm.

Signed

Date.....