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Minutes of the Community Resources Advisory Group held virtually on Thursday 9 December 2021 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper – Chair

Councillor Tandy

Councillor Turner

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ*

Councillor Woodman

2021 to 2022

This meeting is available to view using the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJXAeZoenRI>

40. Virtual Meeting Protocol and Use of Mobile Devices

The Chair opened the meeting and explained how it would be conducted and the protocol that would be followed, including how any break in the proceedings due to technical difficulties would be managed.

41. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor Molloy. *Councillor Dr Walsh KSJ was delayed and joined the meeting as soon as he was able.

42. Declarations of Interest

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. The standing declarations were noted, and no other declarations were made at this point.

43. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and it was noted that arrangements would be made for these to be signed at a later date.

44. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

There were none.

45. Public Forum

There were no representations.

46. Officer's Reports

46.1. Standing Orders and Urgent Actions

The Advisory Group received an urgent action, previously circulated, relating to changes required to the specifications of the new trees at Rosemead Park as required in the planning approval. This had resulted in a slight increase in the costs of the scheme from £29,258 to £30,818. It was **Resolved** that:

The Urgent Action be noted.

46.2. Events Periodic Report

The Advisory Group received a report, previously circulated, which set out feedback on this year's Remembrance Sunday event and the Christmas lights Switch On and an update on the plans for the 2022 to 2023 Events programme. Members commended staff for this year's switch on event which had been very well received. The Advisory Group was also asked to consider a proposal to move the day of the Christmas Lights Switch on event from Friday to Saturday going forward. It was noted that if approved, the setup process would be smoother, and the event could be extended. This was considered practical, and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1. In accordance with the decision made by Full Council on 29 April 2021, it be recommended that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to change the day of the Christmas Lights Switch on event from Friday to Saturday with effect from Saturday 19 November 2022.**
- 2. The outcome of the Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Lights Switch on events be noted.**
- 3. The update regarding the preparations for the 2022 to 2023 events programme be noted.**
- 4. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.**

46.3. Visit Littlehampton Report

The Advisory Group received a report, previously circulated, which set out detailed proposals to redesign the existing Visit Littlehampton website. Following the last meeting this had been updated to demonstrate the benefits of the redesign. Having reviewed the update, it was considered that in terms of functionality and features, the move to the new platform would be beneficial in the long term. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

In accordance with the decision made by Full Council on 29 April 2021, it be recommended that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to progress the redesign of the Visit Littlehampton website and that the financial implications be included for consideration as part of the 2022 to 2023 budget proposals.

46.4. Museum Periodic Report

46.4.1. The Advisory Group received a report, previously circulated, which contained information on upcoming exhibitions and activities and an update on staffing. The Assistant Town Clerk reported that the new curator, Mrs Edge, joined the Town Council on 12 November, initially on a part time basis moving to take up her new role full time in January 2022. This update was welcomed by the Advisory Group, and it was noted that Mrs Edge would be attending the next meeting.

46.4.2. Members also considered three potential acquisitions, two of which were recommended for approval. One artifact, a model of a ship, was acknowledged as a good example of the Town's maritime heritage but due to its size, it could not be housed in the Museum. Members were supportive of exploring alternative options that would enable it to remain in Littlehampton and asked to be kept informed of progress. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1. In accordance with the decision made by Full Council on 29 April 2021, the Town Clerk be recommended to:**
 - i. Accession the items listed on Appendix A as recommended.**
 - ii. Explore options that would enable the model of a ship called 'The Teal' to remain in Littlehampton.**
- 2. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.**

* Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ joined the meeting at 7.13pm.

46.4. Community Resources Periodic Report

46.4.1. The Committee received a report, previously circulated, which highlighted the progress with the projects and services that were within the remit of this Committee. This included updates on progress with the annual allotment renewals, the project to replace the leylandii trees at Rosemead Park and discussions regarding the floral contract. Reviewing the report members commented as follows:

- The Christmas tree in Wick – It was requested that it be placed in a more prominent position. This was noted and would be taken forward as part of the plans for next year's display.
- The New Youth Centre in Wick – It was noted that the planning application was progressing and the target date for delivering the new building remained May to June 2023.
- The new avenue of trees in Rosemead Park were expected to be planted in January 2022 and would be dedicated as part of the 2022 Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. It was noted that Members wished to see local groups and children involved in the dedication ceremony.

46.4.2. Regarding the floral contract, discussions with the Council's contractor to deliver the changes agreed by Members at the last meeting continued. In order that the plans could progress, it was proposed that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to take the action necessary to deliver next year's scheme. This was considered sensible, and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

1. **In accordance with the decision made by Full Council on 29 April 2021, the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be recommended to take the action necessary to deliver a floral planting scheme for 2022. The budget for the Floral Contract for 2022 being set at £25,985.**
2. **The progress with the Allotments Annual Renewals and allotment site maintenance be noted.**
3. **The amendments to the Rosemead tree work following planning conditions and the revised cost of the scheme being £30,818 be noted.**
4. **The contents of the report be otherwise noted.**

46.5. Southfields Jubilee Centre Fees and Charges Annual Review

46.5.1. The Advisory Group received a report, previously circulated, which set out a review of room hire fees charged at the Southfields Jubilee Centre. The fees had been reviewed against other comparable facilities in the area and whilst these remained competitive, running costs were expected to increase due to inflation particularly in respect of utilities. Acknowledging the challenging budget and the forecasted increases in utilities costs, the consensus was that the Centre would remain good value with a two percent increase and that this be implemented for 2022 to 2023.

46.5.2. The Advisory Group proceeded to discuss options to attract more bookings and improve the occupancy rate. It was observed that whilst the lack of an alcohol license could be considered a constraint, it was also noted that it was in a residential area and that this was not considered appropriate for the venue. Members did however wish to explore promotional activities to engage a bigger audience, and suggested banners, taster sessions and potentially an open day to promote the facilities at the Centre. This was noted and would be taken forward in the new year. Acknowledging that such a review could potentially impact the hiring arrangements at the Manor House it was also suggested that the Property and Personnel Committee might wish to consider embarking on a similar review of the Manor House facilities. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

1. **In accordance with the decision made by Full Council on 29 April 2021, the Town Clerk be recommended to increase the fees and charges for hiring the Southfields Jubilee Centre by 2 percent for 2022 to 2023.**

2. In accordance with the decision made by Full Council on 29 April 2021, the Town Clerk be recommended to retain the discretion to apply a discount to long hours and or multiple bookings.

46.6. Review of Strategic Aims and Objectives

The Advisory Group received a report, previously circulated, which set out the Town Council's strategic policies, aims and objectives as they related to the remit of the Advisory Group. These had recently been reviewed to ensure they were relevant and reflected the Priorities of Council. Members proceeded to review these in more detail and the following further refinements were agreed:

- Allotments Policy – insert an additional objective “To seek to improve the gap between income and expenditure”.
- Community Arts Policy – be amended to state “Provide continued support to the Dairy Arts Drop-in Group and other local arts initiatives”.
- Museum Volunteering – statement be amended to state “Actively promote volunteering”.
- Community Centres – statement to be amended to state “Promote and increase community use of all community facilities”.

It was therefore **Resolved** that:

Subject to the amendments as set out above, Council be recommended to adopt the Aims and Objectives as they related to the work of this Advisory Group.

47. Finance

47.1. Advisory Group Budget Monitor 2021 to 2022

The Advisory Group received a report, previously circulated, highlighting significant variances from Budget in terms of income and expenditure relating to this Advisory Group's Budget. It was **Resolved** that:

The report be noted.

47.2. Community Resources Committee Budget Proposals 2022 to 2025

- 47.2.1. The Advisory Group received a report, previously circulated, which set out the draft Committee Budget for the three years covering 2022 to 2025 as well as the Earmarked Reserves that related to this Advisory Group. The Town Clerk explained that the emphasis had been to maintain budgets where needed, continuing to build ongoing items into revenue budgets for new developments as well as taking into consideration the balance of Earmarked Reserve. There were significant inflationary pressures with anticipated increases in National Insurance contributions, utility bills and the local government pay award. The budget was under great pressure and the 2022 to 2023 predicted expenditure remained in excess of income.

47.2.2. It was noted that the Policy and Finance Advisory Group would be considering how to bridge this gap. However, reflecting on the financial constraints that the Council was operating under, the Advisory Group considered that there was no option but to agree the budget as presented. Members thanked the Finance Team for their hard work in preparing the update and forecasts. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

1. **The draft Advisory Group budget for 2022 to 2023 and the projected budgets for 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 be Recommended to the Policy and Finance Advisory Group.**
2. **The Advisory Group's Earmarked Reserve position be noted.**

48. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

CHAIR