

**NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

*This is a record of decisions taken by the Town Clerk in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Council at its meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021. All decisions were taken having consulted remotely by Zoom members of the Community Services Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 and were in accordance with the views of those members.*

**Minutes of the meeting held at 18.00 on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021  
Using the Zoom Video Conferencing Platform**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Birch (Chair), Holland-Delamere (Vice-Chair), Ashraf, T Eales, Hibbert, Lane, Marriott, Miah and Soan

Also present were Cllrs Alwahabi and Haque

Officers: Mr S Carter (Interim Town Clerk) and Mrs J Thorneycroft (Administration Officer)

Before formally starting the Chair welcomed everybody to the first meeting of the Community Services Committee

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been submitted by Cllrs G Eales and Ismail.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**3. Community Needs Analysis**

The Town Clerk circulated with the agenda a report detailing a proposed method to develop a Community Needs Analysis (CNA). The report explained that the core components of the needs analysis were:

- Developing a Vision
- Determining the current level of delivery i.e. what is being delivered, by whom, what is missing
- Identify priorities and objectives
- Develop strategies to address the priorities and objectives
- Develop operational strategies
- Develop a short, medium and long term financial plan
- Develop Key Development Indicators.

The report explained that a budget of £150,000 had been set aside for undertaking and implementing a community needs analysis. In response to a question asking how this amount had been calculated, the Clerk stated that he was not part of that process. Cllr

Birch said that it had been an estimate but that a detailed budget around a community needs analysis would be forthcoming as the project progressed and that the committee as a whole would need to closely monitor what it was spent on.

The Clerk explained that the process would have to be managed and driven by councillors and that the establishment of a sub-committee to do this would be key.

It was commented that the process should include neighbouring parishes as it was likely to have some relevance to them. It was also commented that communication would be key. In response to a question on how this would be done, the Clerk stated that a strategy would need to be formulated but that it would also be for councillors to engage and communicate effectively with their constituents.

**RESOLVED:** That in principle the committee supports the formulation of a CNA.

**RESOLVED:** That a sub-committee is created with delegated authority (details of which to be formalised and agreed at a future meeting) to lead on the drafting of a CNA, set priorities, engage with professionals etc. and that the sub-committee consist of 6-7 councillors (names to be confirmed).

**RESOLVED:** That the sub-committee be tasked with preparing a communications strategy as a priority.

#### **4. GRANTS SCHEME AND POLICY**

Circulated with the agenda was a covering report, policies and application forms for the Town Council grants scheme. It was explained that the town council had two pots:

**General Community Grants Fund** (£50,000)

**Councillors' Community Fund** (£75,000)

The Councillors Community Grants was intended to enable every Council Member to nominate grants of up to £3,000 (rising to £4,200 where the Councillor concerned had opted not to receive their Councillor's Allowance of £1,200) to organisations based in or mainly serving the ward they represent.

It was explained that legally Town and Parish Councils generally had comparatively few powers to make grants to community groups and organisations and no power to make grants to individuals. However, having met the necessary eligibility criteria in respect of elected councillors and an appropriately qualified Clerk, this Council at its Annual Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 adopted the General Power of Competence pursuant to the Localism Act 2011. This enabled the Council to do anything which any individual was permitted in law to do. Further it could do it for a commercial purpose with or without charge and do anything for the benefit of the authority, its area or its inhabitants. However, the effect of expenditure under this provision must be proportionate to the policy objective intended to be secured by the provision.

It was further explained that in the past the former Borough Council adopted a Councillor Community Fund in which each Councillor was allocated an annual sum (initially £3,000 and more recently £2,000) which they could, subject to certain conditions, grant to local community groups of their choosing. However, the powers available to principal councils in which decisions can be taken

by individual councillors were not available to town and parish councils. Decisions in these councils can only be taken by the full council or a committee or sub-committee or an officer specifically delegated to make that decision. Accordingly, in the case of this Council, decisions under the new Community Funding Scheme could not be taken by individual councillors.

In response to a question the Clerk confirmed that a grant from the councillor fund that had been supported by a councillor could in theory be vetoed, though the weighting given to the fact that the councillor was supporting this application from their allocation would be considerable.

It was highlighted that it was quite probable that other Committees may wish to introduce their own grant finding schemes to further their own aims and objectives (for example it is possible that Environmental Services Committee may wish to introduce a grants scheme to further its aims of combatting the climate emergency or perhaps to further support the Northampton in Bloom project). In all such other cases it was suggested that the Council be recommended that the general principles applied to community grants also apply to those other forms of grants.

When considering the objectives of the scheme it was noted that the former Borough Council's community grants scheme had the general objective:

*Any purpose which in the opinion of the Councillor will enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of their ward or part of it.*

The report stated that a similar objective could be applied to this Council's scheme although the Committee may wish from time to time to add that special priority would be given to applications which sought to address particular policy objectives. For example, once the results of the proposed Community Needs Analysis are known, it is likely that the Committee and the full Council will agree that certain priority topics be considered to address issues identified in that Analysis.

The Clerk advised members that within the policy it was recommended that we distribute the Council grants annually and that they are part of the budget making process. In practise this would mean considering and agreeing grants in September/October time which would then feed into the budget. These grants would then be paid in the next financial year. In the present year, the Council would operate two schemes, one to allocate the budget that we have this year, and then one to feed into the budget making process for next year.

When considering the forms and policies members stated that they wished it to be clear that if a member was supporting an application, they would be expected to declare that they had a non-pecuniary interest and that there would be an expectation that they would not take part in any decision making, this would primarily apply to those appointed to the sub-committee. The committee also considered the form for the councillor community fund to be too complicated and that should be made less onerous especially as the amounts were likely to be less.

In response to a question about publicity, the Clerk stated that the Council would do press releases, social media posts, have it on their website, but that members would also need to promote it within their wards and to their contacts.

When considering the policy, the committee thought that having a directive restricting groups/charities etc. to just one application per year should be removed. It may be that they unexpectedly require funding and the council did not want to preclude them from

applying should they need to. If they had already received funding, then this would be part of the decision making process.

The Committee also thought that a requirement for the applicants to attend the sub-committee meeting at which their application was to be considered was not required and should be amended to state that they may attend but that it was not a condition of the grant being considered.

Subject to the amendments as detailed above and to the application form for the councillor community fund it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the grants policy as attached at appendix A to these minutes be approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk give a short informal presentation to councillors at the conclusion of the Council meeting on 19 July explaining the process and how groups could apply. (Launch date to be 19 July)

**RESOLVED:** That other committees who in the future may look to make grants from their own budgets do so in general accordance with the grants policy.

**RESOLVED:** That all councillors engage and promote the scheme to groups in their ward and publicise the objectives of the scheme.

## **5. APPOINTMENT OF GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

Following on from the grants scheme, the committee now needed to appoint a grants sub-committee in accordance with the agreed committee structure.

The details of the sub-committee were as follows:

This sub-committee will report directly to the Community Services Committee and will comprise 4 members from that committee

- (i) To consider and make recommendations to the Community Services Committee on all grant applications made to the Council in accordance with the Council's Community Grants application process including final decisions on the Councillor Community Funding Scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillors Birch (Chair), Holland Delamere (Vice Chair), T Eales and Lane be appointed to the sub-committee and that Cllr Hibbert be appointed as the official substitute should any member not be able to attend.

Cllr Ashraf gave her apologies and left the meeting due to another engagement.

## **6. EVENTS UPDATE AND DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS FOR TRANSFER OF EVENTS**

The Administration Officer, Mrs Thorneycroft, had circulated a report with the agenda regarding the events and their proposed transfer.

Regarding Oak Apple Day, this successful Mayoral event took place on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May. Mrs Thorneycroft advised that a report regarding Northampton in Bloom had been given to the

Environmental Services Committee. Members commented that the displays looked great and they thanked Mrs Thorneycroft for her hard work in getting in this sorted within a short space of time.

The Town Council was about to launch its publicity on Bands in The Park. A mix of local, county and regional bands would be playing throughout the summer months as per the list below:

27-Jun	Sax's Cool
04-Jul	Rushden Town Band
11-Jul	Abington Wind Band
18-Jul	Northampton Male Voice Choir
25-Jul	Corby Silver Band
01-Aug	Towcester Studio Band
08-Aug	Milton Keynes Brass
15-Aug	Fynnius Fogg (Hope Centre)
22-Aug	Duncan Craven
29-Aug	Thrapston Town Band
05-Sep	Rushden Mission Band
12-Sep	Northampton Concert Band

With regards to Armed Forces Day, a small event would take place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June. It would be a ceremonial event for the Northampton Royal British Legion who are celebrating 100 years this year.

With regards to Music365, this was due to take place on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September from midday to 21.00. The plan was to have seven open air stages across the town centre with a focus on the Market Square. Other smaller venues included the Boutique Hotel, NN Courtyard, Museum Courtyard, Abington Street, All Saints Piazza, Guildhall Courtyard. It was noted that the event had been running for over 12 years in the town and is sponsored by Northampton Town Centre BID and others. It is noted that within the budget to be provided by WNC, £10,000 was allocated for this event. However, the organisers in the past had also received a £5,000 grant from the former Borough Council, however, this year WNC had stated that they would not be in a position to provide one. The committee stated it could be possible to consider an additional award but that it should be referred to the Policy and Finance Committee.

It was reported that as per the minutes of NTC Executive Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April it had been resolved that the WNC Town Centre Manager be requested to prepare detailed proposals for the Christmas and Fireworks events the following enhancements which the Town Clerk be delegated to approve after consultation with the Town Mayor and the Chair of this Committee:

*Fireworks - 6<sup>th</sup> November at the Racecourse £7,500 enhancement from NTC to include a spectacular finale and additional LED screens and cameras to spread along the Racecourse either side of the stage area, including the catering area to enable visitors to watch the pre-*

*firework stage entertainment and show video clips (agreed at NTC Executive Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> April)*

*Christmas Lights switch on event – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 5pm a family friendly event across the town centre, £15,000 enhancement from NTC to include additional free standing illuminated attractions, a moving light show on the Guildhall (subject to the consent of WNC) plus additional street entertainers during the period up to Christmas. (A suggestion of a short firework display from the top of the Grosvenor Centre Car Park to make the lights switch-on did not find favour with the Committee) - agreed at NTC Executive Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> April.*

There was no further information on this and officers were asked to chase this further with WNC. The committee also stated that further information and an update was required on the proposed TUPE of a members of the events staff at WNC. It was noted that a lot of the events work was undertaken by Stage Right Productions Ltd who had a contract with WNC to manage them. The contract was in place until April 2023.

The Heads of Terms regarding the transfer of events were noted. It was commented that they had already been agreed by the Council.

Mrs Thorneycroft was thanked for her report.

## **7. COMMUNITY EVENTS TO MARK THE PANDEMIC**

Circulated with the agenda was a report seeking the committee's views on a previous resolution which was detailed as follows:

**RESOLVED:** *That the proposals be supported in principle and the matter be referred to the Community Services and Environmental Services Committees for detailed discussions including inviting via the website suggestions from the community for sharing their covid experiences and commemorative ideas which might include:*

- a) An arbour of trees with suitable seating to provide a lasting memorial and a place for quiet reflection,*
- b) A possible enhancement of the Carnival event,*
- c) An exhibition of images from the community of their covid experiences, and*
- d) A commemorative inter faith church service for all local victims, especially for those whose families who were unable to say farewell in traditional ways.*

It was noted that points b, c, and d fell within the remit of this committee. With regards to b, it was noted that this had taken place online so was not an option.

The committee agreed that some sort of exhibition of images could be an option and that this could possibly be run in conjunction with 'Art in the Park' and /or in conjunction with an interfaith church service. Images that reflected people's experiences of the pandemic and lockdown could be submitted to the town council with the view of creating some sort of exhibition and/or archive. This could be faces, street scenes, artwork such as rainbow pictures.

**RESOLVED:** That as part of a reflection and commemoration Northampton Town Council ask residents and groups to submit artwork, photos, images etc. that they believe reflected the town, the community and residents during lockdown and during the pandemic with a view to putting on an exhibition and/or creating an archive.

There being no more business, the meeting ended at 20.25.

Signed.....Chair