

NOTES OF THE **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: A Hall (Chairperson) Presiding

Councillors: L Cooke M Joyce  
D Corney-Walker (Mayor) C Parker  
T Corney-Walker M Ryan  
C Davieson

By invitation Emily Farrell – Business & Community Manger of Newton Abbot Community Interest Company (CIC).

Officers In attendance: Linda McGuirk – Principal Administrator.

**CE09. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors R Buscombe (Vice Chairperson), S Walker, G Jennings and Sally Henley – Town Development Manager. Members agreed the reasons for absence were valid.

Councillor J Cook did not attend.

**CE10. INTERESTS**

None declared.

**CE11. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Community Engagement Group meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were received and signed as a correct record.

**CE12. NEWTON ABBOT COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY (CIC)**

The Chairperson, Councillor A Hall, welcomed the Business & Community Manager of Newton Abbot CIC Emily Farrell, to the meeting and invited her to give a presentation to members on the work of the CIC and to discuss priorities identified in the Community Plan.

A presentation was displayed to support the verbal report. The presentation covered:

- An overview of the work of the CIC.
- How the organisation is funded.
- Management of the Buckland & Courtenay Community Centres.
- Projects and activities.
- Buckland Hub Project.
- Base Youth Club.
- Volunteer Gardening Team.
- Community Fridge at the Courtenay Centre.

- Tunnels of Love project.
- Ukrainian Guests.
- Projects identified in response to local needs.
- Consultation – surveys of resident's views.
- Partnership working with the Town Council and TDC on the Community Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.
- Consultations on establishing a youth council as identified within the Community Plan and a new community facility at Houghton Barton.

The CIC is entirely grant funded, including an annual grant received from the Town Council. Income is generated through room hire. There is a small, dedicated staff team who are working way above and beyond their contracted hours and have given 3,500 hours of voluntary staff hours.

The CIC Manager asked Councillors to identify projects from the Community Plan which they would like the CIC to deliver as a priority?

Councillors identified the following projects as priorities:

- Youth initiatives
- Youth Council – the CIC has been liaising with Cllr A Hall to establish a Youth Council and a date has been arranged for the inaugural meeting.
- Art installations in the town – building on the success of the Tunnels of Love. Members identified the Decoy underpass and Balls Corner roundabout.

Members suggested Police involvement with youth groups would be beneficial.

Councillors asked the CIC Manager what projects identified in the Community Plan she thought the Town Council should prioritise. It was suggested the Town Council focus on improving the town centre as a cultural hub and ensure Market Walk is an attractive place to gather i.e., installation of benches, trees and cycling routes.

The Principal Administrator confirmed that in accordance with minute number 23/07(CE07) a recommendation from the Community Engagement Group will be submitted to the Community and Heritage Committee at its meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, that the Council purchases and installs benches in areas identified by the Town Development Manager.

Members discussed the timescale for the Houghton Barton Community Centre and expressed their frustration at the planning process which permits developers to build houses before installing community infrastructure. The CIC Manager confirmed that the project timescale will take years.

Councillors praised the voluntary work of Lyn McElheron, a member of the CIC team, who was awarded a British Empire Medal during his Majesty's Birthday Honours for services to vulnerable people in Newton Abbot. In addition, members expressed their sincere thanks to the CIC Manager and her dedicated team for their remarkable work in the community.

**CE13.FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP**

The Chairperson suggested that the Community Engagement Group increases the number of its meetings to four per year and that each meeting should be held at a different venue with a guest speaker invited to attend from community groups and organisations. Members felt this would help Councillors identify the needs of the community and encourage residents to attend. Town Councillors who are also District Councillors suggested they report on communication from residents. Members supported the Chairperson’s suggestion.

**CE14. COACH ROAD ORCHARD**

Councillor M Joyce highlighted the report, circulated prior to the meeting, on his recent visit to the Community Orchard on Coach Road and encouraged members to visit this great initiative. Members noted the report and thanked Cllr Joyce.

**CE15. HOT TOPICS**

The Chairperson re visited the minutes of the previous meeting and provided updates on agreed actions:

- Floral displays are progressing.
- Linger Longer benches to be considered by the Community and Heritage Committee.
- Parking at the Quay causing obstruction, Ward Councillors on the Community Engagement Group will send a joint letter to TDC regarding the problems caused by parking on the access road to the Quay.
- Town Clerk has written to DCC regarding green waste disposal. Due to the County Council budget constraints the Town Council is not able to receive a concession.

Hot Topics for future meetings:

- Art in the town including possible installation of a sculpture to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Town Council.
- Play Parks – regeneration.
- Invite local transport representatives to future meetings.

**CE16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairperson advised there were no more dates scheduled on the current calendar of Council meetings for the Community Engagement Group. Members agreed the Community Engagement Group will meet on:

- Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Meeting closed at 20:00

CHAIRPERSON..... Date.....