

DURSLEY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES and REPORT of the MEETING of the TOWN IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE of the Council held in the Methodist Church meeting room at 7:30pm on Tuesday, 17th January 2023 for presentation to the Council on Tuesday 24th January 2023.

PRESENT

Councillors: D Savvidou (Chair), S Ackroyd, M Woodward, W Thomas, P Hayes, J Rubin, T Kinnison and T Stride.

In Attendance: L Wellings (Deputy Town Clerk), PCSO A Martin, C Marwood and A Judge from The Engine.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were accepted from Councillors D Cornell (District Council meeting) and T White (personal).

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

- a) PCSO Tony Martin was welcomed to the meeting, having moved to the Dursley police team 5 months ago. PCSO Martin explained that Dursley has two PCSO positions from the end of February 2023; working arrangements had recently been changed at the station and they had moved from a 2 to 1 team system, which was being closely monitored; the team was currently dealing with shoplifting and low level anti-social behaviour issues in the town. In response to a question regarding electric scooter use, PCSO Martin confirmed that such vehicles should not be used on the public highways and can be seized if they are, such incidents should be reported to the Police when witnessed.
- b) Two grit bin requests were considered at the following locations:
- i) Junction of Second Avenue to Fourth Avenue, Highfields.
 - ii) On the corner by the roundabout outside Dursley C of E Primary Academy, School Road, Highfields.

IT WAS RESOLVED that Council purchase suitable grit bins for location i) and ii) above, at a cost of approx. £210 each from the street furniture budget, subject to gaining the necessary agreements from Gloucestershire Highways, in relation to them positioning and filling the bins, including them on their schedule/map.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Improvements Committee held on Tuesday 11th October 2022, having been circulated among the members were taken as read, confirmed, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

The Chair had no matters to report.

6. TO DISCUSS IDEAS AND POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES RELATING TO LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT AND THE ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF THE TOWN, WITH CHARLIE MARWOOD AND ADRIAN JUDGE FROM THE ENGINE

Charlie Marwood gave members a presentation on The Engine, which formed as a not for profit Community Interest Company (CIC) in November 2021, with the overall aim to propel new businesses with social purpose. The Engine aims to create a welcoming hub of business and development support, to the benefit of the local economy and community.

The following points were noted during the presentation and discussion:

- The Engine developed the Escape Room venue for the town, supporting the local economy by contributing to the town centre offering and employing staff. Also, the Dursley Craft Market, enabling it to continue whilst supporting local artisans and using the prominent Market Place space.
- In relation to the local economy, there is a communication/knowledge gap which makes it difficult to ascertain – What our business community looks like, what do businesses want? How can we engage them? How can we support the business community in our town?
- The town hasn't undertaken a business audit itself or recent business survey and doesn't have a Chamber of Trade, the Business Inclusive group folded some time ago. There are many businesses out there within the community, in addition to what we can see on the high street.
- Current local support for businesses is very limited, there is a growth hub area in Dursley Library but you have to go to Stroud to access main support. The Digital Dursley platform was set up and still exists, but it is not really being used as originally intended and requires further development if it is to be in the future.
- There may be potential for The Engine to access grants as a CIC which relate to the development of business support for the town. It was noted that having the Council's agreement/support, could help with the success of any future applications.
- A business audit would be a first step to help determine what the local economy looks like, how business support could be developed, including the development of any future network and economic plan, for our town and local business community.
- **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Committee would welcome a formal detailed proposal from The Engine to go to full Council, to seek Council support and endorsement for a suitable business audit exercise, as a first step, that could help determine: what the local business community looks like, give insight into what support, engagement and network businesses may need to help them thrive in the town.

7. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE OF AN ART PROJECT FOR THE STONE BUS SHELTERS ON KINGSHILL ROAD

Members noted an update from Rednock School circulated with the agenda.

Members noted that the project was being run as a tutor time competition for students to come up with potential designs for the bus shelters; the school had engaged with the Cam and Dursley Creatives Catalyst from Create Gloucestershire for advice. With regards to the design, the school team had looked at other designs across the country to get ideas and been made aware, to have in mind, that the shelters are used by members of the public, so all sections of the community (ages etc) and the aim was to try and have something that would deter vandalism/graffiti within the shelter, so this might have a bearing on the design/image itself too.

Members noted that the designs themselves may be submitted in time for the next Committee meeting; the school would pull together a budget and plan to translate a design onto the shelters, they suggested summertime weather would be good to paint shelters; the Deputy Town Clerk would liaise with committee members and those involved to organise judging arrangements, as well as get some publicity out into the wider community regarding the project.

8. REGARDING TOURISM INITIATIVES, TO RECEIVE UPDATES.

a) The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) Trial at Dursley Library

It was noted that the Committee Chair, Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had met with the new management team at Dursley Library. The meeting had been very positive and it was hoped that the VIC could continue to be based at the Library. There had been some IT issues with the VIC facebook page which were hoped to be resolved. Work had started to review the agreement and the Library had today provided updated enquiry figures, which would be reviewed.

b) The Stroud District Smartphone Trails App Pilot Project

The Trails App had launched a mince pie trail over the Christmas period and there had been district promotion of the Dursley Town Trail in January 2023. There are plans to develop a royal themed trail to coincide with the Kings Coronation and a Dursley Pedersen Trail to coincide with the Pederson Pilgrimage event in April 2023. The district had been growing social media following via promotion on the Instagram page @discover_stroud_district.

c) Visit Dursley Group

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 14th February at 10:30am on Zoom. As a way of jointly promoting events and the town, the group had developed a 'December in Dursley' poster for the festive period which had been welcomed and shared widely by others across the district as a poster and social media post. The meeting on 14th February would focus on the year ahead, to see what plans are already in place, or could be developed and where people might work together. There may be some opportunity to engaged in English Tourism week which takes place 17th – 26th March.

d) The Stroud Market Town Councils Tourism Brief project

Tourism Angles had been commissioned jointly by the market towns to create some content, town visits/meetings had been held with key representatives prior to Christmas. Market Town Council reps had attended a quick zoom update meeting with Tourism Angles today (17th January). At the moment town research was in hand and the town profiles were being drafted, towns hope to receive some draft copy very soon. It was agreed at the update meeting that alignment to the Cotswolds, as a strong tourism brand, was a good idea. Reps had been asked to consider a collective title – the most popular, during the discussion, appeared to be Hidden Cotswolds, Unexplored Cotswolds, Undiscovered Cotswolds. Members were made aware that Stroud District Council had just launched some promotional videos from 2022, featuring local Dursley high street businesses on their You Tube Channel.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:32pm.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date