

04th September 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of the **Arts and Culture Committee** meeting held on this day in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19.30 to 21:46

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr B Callender

Councillors: S Cornish, P Cunnington, A Domingue, A Fraser, M Fumagalli, S Gurney, M Malvern and A Medhurst.

IN ATTENDANCE

Arts and Culture Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

There was a question from a member of the Council. Due to the complexities associated with the question it is to be considered as Agenda Item 9.

ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr A Domingue and seconded by Cllr A Medhurst and it was

**RESOLVED
30699**

that the Minutes of Arts and Culture Committee meeting held on 17th July 2023 (pages 16789 to 16792), copy attached, be received as a true and correct record.

Cllr Gurney joined the meeting.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 29th August was received and considered.

Amendments to Committee Projects and Events document

Subsequent to the previous meeting the Arts and Culture Officer has added in Decorated Cabinets to this document. Work continues to amend this document during the year, particularly in response to any strategic changes from Council.

Future Lunar New Years

F&P have agreed the requested funds for this event. Work has begun on the 2024 event. The event funding will need to be picked up in November's meeting to confirm with F&P if A&C wish for it to be a recurring event.

COMMITTEE BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

The Arts and Culture Committee's budget dated to 31st July 2023 was received.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



It was noted that the financial IT system is not able to record committed expenditure for different financial years separately. As such commitments made now for future years (the Party in the Park most notably) will show up as a current commitment and give the impression of those events being over committed.

SUNNY SATURDAYS (Agenda Item 7)

The Arts and Culture Officer was thanked for the comprehensive report on this event. The event was discussed at length, noting that it worked much better in Peach Place than anywhere else we have held it but retained a number of challenges. It was acknowledged that it had not demonstrated that it had achieved its original aim and a new aim and direction for the event would be needed. The lack of a wet weather option or alternative contingency date was noted as was the lack of on the day signage to indicate it was a Wokingham Town Council event.

The Committee considered a number of options. It was suggested to use the budget as a fund for external organisations to bid for, to support music in the Town. It was noted that this may not fit into our existing financial regulations, we had no idea if any local orgs would be interested and we were unsure what level of control WTC would have over the acts and how it would fit into the Council's principles. The Arts and Culture Officer to do some cursory investigation to support future decision making.

Alternatively continuing with some form of musical event that supported community acts while retaining diversity of acts was discussed. What this would look like was, as yet, unclear.

It was proposed by Cllr Medhurst and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

**RESOLVED
30700**

to set up a Working Party to provide options for developing Sunny Saturday's in the future.

The Sunny Saturdays Working Party would include Cllrs Callender, Cunnington, Fraser and Medhurst initially.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

THEATRE IN THE PARK (Agenda Item 8)

Members of the Committee expressed their enjoyment of this event. It was noted that Shakespeare doesn't appeal to everyone, even with the work taken to make it more accessible. The Committee would welcome plays in modern English but recognises that rights can be a challenge. The sword fighting was very well received.

It was suggested that if doing Shakespeare then a comedy would be easier, that short scenes from multiple Shakespeare plays worked very well in the past and to consider something like a short Q&A or explanatory session at the end to help the children understand what they just saw.

The Committee remain concerned that this event is not as good value for money as other events it runs and would like to see greater attendance. The lack of

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



microphones for the actors was noted for the latter performance and it was highlighted that these are necessary.

**RESOLVED
30701**

It was proposed by Cllr Malvern and seconded by Cllr Medhurst and it was

to continue Theatre in the Park, extending the contract with Bart Lee Theatre for a further year and requesting from F&P a budget increase in line with inflation.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

There remains a question regarding the tech trailer. The Committee were of mixed opinions, however it was suggested that Wokingham Men's Shed might be able to help.

QUESTION REGARDING PARTY IN THE PARK (Agenda Item 9)

A question from a Councillor was received that was quickly identified as being complex enough to warrant a report to assist the Committee with answering it.

"Some of our most worthwhile local charities are struggling financially. Within the context of the significant reduction in contributions to Charities after COVID and during the on-going Cost of Living Crisis, would the A&C Committee agree to alter the "Party in the Park" event to be the "Charity Party in the Park" event? This could include the Mayor's charity being the nominated charity for that year's event, with money collected during the event going to the Mayor's nominated charity."

The Committee was in broad agreement with the report which highlighted the complexity around the request both from a logistical and legislative standpoint. They were in agreement that the event should not become a charitable event. But should the Mayor's Charity be in a position to do so, they would be allowed to raise awareness and have donation options at the event. It would only be the Mayor's Charity, and there would not be any allocation of this events budget to facilitate a charitable collection. Officer time would be monitored and be in line with any other charitable endeavour by the Mayor's Charity.

**RESOLVED
30702**

It was proposed by Cllr Callender and seconded by Cllr Domingue and it was

to allow only the Mayor's Charity an opportunity for promotion at the Party in the Park.

**RESOLVED
30703**

It was proposed by Cllr Cunningham and seconded by Cllr Callender and it was

that the Committee would not rebrand the Party in the Park to become a charitable fundraising event.

FUTURE EVENTS (Agenda Item 10)

A number of potential options were discussed. The following have been requested to look at in .

Human Library. A global project that encourages people with particular and often marginalised experience to be available to talk on those experiences to others.

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Recycled Sculpture project that potentially ties into a sustainable fashion show.
ACTION ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

It was also noted to revisit the following from the events for consideration list with new information.

Graffiti boards – rather than a permanent option, look to Southend City Jam and how they used temporary boards over a bank holiday weekend.

Get in touch with Places for Leisure about Carnival Hub to put more thought into a battle of the bands/community music event. Which might tie into the ongoing work around Sunny Saturdays.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

Cllr Domingue has a contact that might be able to offer experienced advice on a themed Fun Run. Cllr Domingue to make introductions if applicable.

ACTION: CLLR DOMINGUE

It was noted that in addition to the above ideas the Committee had no projects that were dance or photography orientated.

Additionally in connection to the Human Library project there was scope with the ongoing museum work around oral histories of residents. The Arts and Culture Officer would talk to the Civic Officer on this due to history being under Civic's purview.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 11)

- a) Cllr Fumagalli updated the Committee on the progress for Science with Schools. We have speakers from Syngenta and Kew Gardens with a focus around food security.
- b) When appropriate we may wish to share in marketing that Theatre in the Park is being renewed for another year.

CHAIR

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

