

Present: Councillor Paul Goodale (Chairman), Councillor Stephen Woodliffe (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Anton Dani, Deborah Evans, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Brian Rush and Yvonne Stevens

Officers –

Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnership, Town Centre Services Manager, Senior Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Apprentice

Guests:

Ben Shaw and Matthew Van Lier, Haven High Academy

#### **104 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anne Dorrian, Viven Edge and Martin Howard.

#### **105 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 were agreed and would be signed by the Chairman.

#### **106 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnerships reported that the CCTV camera at the Woodville Road open space had been switched on that day.

#### **107 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **108 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

#### **109 APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL STREET - MARION ROAD**

Two representatives from Haven High Academy were invited to present their case for applying to Lincolnshire County Council to have Marian Road, Boston designated as a "School Street".

If the application was successful, a temporary restriction on motorised traffic would apply to the road at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applied to school traffic and through traffic (not residents or emergency vehicles) and the result would be a safer, healthier and more pleasant environment for everyone.

Following the presentation, Members put forward a range of views on the matter. The majority of Members felt strongly that the designation would make the street much safer for the schoolchildren attending the academy. In addition, they felt that the wellbeing of pupils would improve due to the extra exercise that they would have if parents were not

dropping them off and picking them up by car, which would help tackle obesity and increase alertness and learning capacity.

Furthermore, it would assist traffic travelling to and from the crematorium and improve access for emergency vehicles. Members commended the input of the children from the academy.

One spoke in favour of the scheme, but suggested it would be more appropriate for Sherriff Way outside Park Primary School to be designated as a school street, as secondary schoolchildren should have more road sense. Another suggestion was to introduce the designation as a pilot scheme.

A minority of Members were not in favour of the application, believing it could make the area less safe for children, as they would have to walk further, perhaps alone, or cycle on the busy main road, and be more vulnerable to bullying. It might simply move problems to another area, possibly turning Sherwood Avenue into a 'rat run'.

One Member spoke about the difficulties the "school run" presented for parents, particularly those who worked, had children at more than one school, lived at a distance, or had children with disabilities or disabilities of their own, and felt strongly that parents should be consulted as part of the process. It was also suggested that, as all schools had this problem, "Park and Stride" schemes should be considered whereby specified car parks were used as drops off zones, which were successful elsewhere, or for there to be a return of school buses. .

On conclusion of debate, it was agreed that the Chairman would write to the County Council to convey the Committee's strong support for the application to designate Marian Road, Boston as a "School Street", with the letter to reflect all Members' views expressed at the meeting.

**Action: Chairman/Clerk**

Draft a letter to Lincolnshire County Council as agreed.

**110 REVIEW OF 2021/22 EVENTS DUE TO COVID-19**

The Town Centre Services Manager presented a report, which provided an update and recommendations on the 2021 events programme and proposals for a new Summer programme.

The report sought the Committee's support for the proposed Option 1 event plan, as set out in Appendix B for the 2021 events calendar. However, if the Committee chose not to support this, then Members were asked to adopt Option 2, as set out in Appendix C.

Option 1 aimed to keep all the free community events, which people had enjoyed previously, but added some new events that should encourage footfall and benefit the recovery of the town. A major cost for the budget was the return of the Christmas Market and Lights Switch On event (not including the provision of lights) within the budget. Officers had included the expansion of that event into a 4-day Christmas Market on Bargate Green car park.

Option 1 would cost an additional £6,500 for the financial year and a breakdown of this programme in the appendix. The annual baseline budget for events was £41,500.

Option 2 focused on a limited programme of events, but still featured the major attraction of the Christmas Market & Lights Switch On event (not including the provision of lights) within the budget, including the expansion into a 4-day Christmas Market.

The proposal was to deliver Option 2 within the annual baseline budget for events in 2021/22 of £41,500.

During debate, some Members did not support allowing an additional £6,500 expenditure for events. One view was that the budget had not been identified to cover it. Another was that, because it was not known what would happen in terms of the pandemic, they might have to cancel events and, therefore, it would be better to keep them to a minimum.

A Member spoke in support of the additional expenditure due to the need for local events now being greater than ever. People had endured months of restrictions and it had affected them financially. They needed something to look forward to, especially children, and it would help to improve their wellbeing significantly.

Others agreed, though there was concern that events in themselves could increase transmission of the virus.

The Town Centre Services Manager confirmed that all events arranged from March 2020 onwards had been booked on the proviso that they might be postponed due to Covid19 restrictions. Boston Big Local had supported all events so far, but had decided against funding larger events due to the pandemic. Another approach would be made later in the year, if the situation improved. Arrangements for events were under constant review in order to make improvements. Social-distancing measures were in place and capacity reduced accordingly, for example, the outdoor cinema events would cater for 200 rather than 499 as previously.

**Action: KW**

Advise Members of the legal situation with respect to charging for an event held in Central Park, with it being a public facility.

A Member commended the work of the Town Centre Services Manager.

**RESOLVED: That Option 1 be approved, the proposed Event plan for the 2021 events calendar as set out in Appendix B.**

## 111 CHRISTMAS IN BOSTON - COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Town Centre Services Manager presented a report, written in response to a letter from Christmas In Boston, the community-based group of people formed in 2017, which requested financial support to enable the group to install the Christmas lights in Boston.

Christmas In Boston benefited the whole community of Boston, brightened the streets and consistently worked together for the people of Boston. It was recommended that the

Committee consider agreeing to support Christmas in Boston with a £5,000 grant for the next three years (2021/2022, 2022/23 & 2023/24) to continue their efforts with the Christmas lights for Boston.

Members commended Christmas In Boston and applauded the tremendous work the volunteers undertook. It was felt the Committee should give support for the lights, when so many businesses had been closed and the town had suffered from the lockdown restrictions.

One Member suggested that the Committee only agree to give support for the current year and then review the situation after that, as the group was meant to become self-sufficient and might not need the support during the following years. The money could then be used to fund other things for the benefit of the town's residents. However, others considered that giving support for three years would enable the group to plan ahead and give residents confidence that the lights would be provided.

**RESOLVED: That Christmas in Boston be supported with a £5,000 grant for the next three years – 2021/2022, 2022/23 and 2023/24 – to continue their efforts with the Christmas Lighting for Boston.**

## **112 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM**

Members noted that the Committee would meet on Thursday evenings in future, to avoid diary conflicts with other meetings.

The Committee agreed to refer the suggestion of a time-limited amnesty on the collection of bulky items to Cabinet, which Councillor Yvonne Stevens agreed to take forward, and to add it to the Committee's work programme in August to check progress.

Members commended the tremendous efforts of members of the public and staff to keep the town clean.

The Chairman advised the Committee that a report on the proposal to consider a Community Governance Review (CGR) to progress the Committee's aim to become a Town Council would be submitted to Full Council in July.

Therefore, the Committee agreed to add the following items to its work programme for 5th August 2021:

- Setting up a Town Council following Council's consideration of a CGR
- Amnesty on bulky waste collection to check progress of Cabinet's consideration

**Action: JC**

Advise relevant officers of reports requested.