

Present: (Chairman), (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Anton Dani, Martin Griggs, Paul Goodale, Neill Hastie, Brian Rush and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnership, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, Local Communities Development Officer & BTAC Grant Administrator and Democratic Services Officer

33 APOLOGIES

Prior to accepting apologies for absence the Chairman welcomed Inspector Fran Harrod to the meeting in support of the 2nd item on the agenda and thanked her for attending.

Apologies for absence were tabled for Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Katie Chalmers, Anne Dorrian and Yvonne Stevens

34 MINUTES

Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 3 February 2022

35 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

No updates tabled

36 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest tabled.

37 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chairman referenced a submission he had received on behalf of Arranging Community Events (copies provided for Members' information) seeking the committee's agreement in principle to Arranging Community Events planting a rose tree within Central Park as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations in June. The submission included visual information of the type of Rose to be planted and the suggested location within Central Park.

Committee agreed in principle the planting of the Rose within Central Park.

38 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

Mr Peter Hunn Boston Borough Council's Community Safety Manager addressed the meeting seeking permission for the siting of a bench in Central Park in memory of Grace Brocklesby (*a copy of his submission being provided for Member's information*). The location of the bench had been chosen close to the amazing new MUGA, in an area near to the skate park which would have a target reach for not only the younger community of Boston, but for all persons using the park. More importantly the bench would also include prominent details of the charity MIND, whose key priority was to support young people and it would also include their helpline number, opening hours and a link to a page specifically tailored towards support for the younger population.

Committee agreed the siting of the bench within the preferred location in Central Park.

39 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Democratic Services Delivery Manager presented the report advising a brief history of the consideration of the report to date. The Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) had requested that Council consider conducting a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the town area of the Borough under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, with a view to establishing a Town Council within the area of the town wards.

That request had then been subsequently considered by the Corporate and Community Committee on 17 August 2021, when a recommendation was put forward to extend a CGR to the whole of the Borough area. At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20 October it was agreed to refer the matter back to BTAC, proposing that an informal public consultation process be undertaken prior to the request for a CGR being re-considered by Cabinet., to allow Members to gauge the public appetite and interest in such a review, prior to the Council committing further resources.

Committee were advised there were four options available to them:

To recommend that an informal consultation exercise be undertaken on the proposal for a Community Governance Review for the town centre area.

To recommend that prior to an informal consultation exercise be undertaken on the proposal for a Community Governance Review for the town centre area, Parish Councils be contacted to inform them of the proposed consultation and asked to consider if there were any issues within their particular parishes which they felt would necessitate a CGR and any issues identified be incorporated into the informal consultation exercise.

To recommend that a Community Governance Review is not undertaken at this time.

To recommend that a Community Governance Review be re-considered when the direction of local government reorganisation for Lincolnshire is known.

Councillor Nigel Welton Portfolio Holder for the report provided Members with an overview of the Cabinet decision stating he wanted to make it clear that Cabinet were not being obstructive. Cabinet felt it was not appropriate for them to take Scrutiny's recommendation or permit Scrutiny, to overrule a decision of BTAC with Scrutiny's request for a borough wide review, without it coming back to BTAC. Cabinet's recommendation to BTAC was that it carry out an initial informal review to gather supportive evidence for a full review, prior to moving into a full Corporate Governance Review for the whole of the Borough area.

Committee deliberation followed which included:

Members' recognised the potential forthcoming changes both in the form of a possible Unitary Council for Lincolnshire along with the potential two Council structure and their role within the current South and East Lincolnshire Council Partnership. Other issues included concerns in respect of the indicated costs of holding such a review in light of the changing financial climate and also the need for the committee to prioritise and focus its' spending on existing services. As the number of concerns weighed heavy in their determination committee's overriding agreement was that it would be foolhardy to commit to such funding at the current time.

RESOLVED: That BTAC recommend that a Community Governance review be re-considered when the direction of Local Government reorganisation for Lincolnshire is known.

40 CENTRAL PARK SECURITY MEASURES UPDATE

The Community Safety Officer presented the report confirming it provided members with an update on the two new security measures recently commenced for Central Park. Security measure 1 being the locking of Central Park during the hours of darkness (timings agreed by members at the August meeting this year) and of which commenced on the 6th September 2021.

Security measure 2 being the additional CCTV operator to monitor BTAC assets including Central Park, other green open spaces and assets within the market place.

A brief referral to incidents followed which included notification of:

6th July 2021 – 6th September 2021.

Total calls to Police - **33**

'Daytime' calls (05:30 – 20:00 hours) – **27**

Within future closure hours (20:00 – 05:30 hours) – **6**

Of the 6 incidents after 8pm:

1 x ASB, noise nuisance.

1 x call by Fire for deliberate ignition, crimed as Arson (to a container)

1 x criminal damage to doctor's surgery (called in by Fire dealing with above). Male threw stone and smashed window.

1 x male extremely drunk believed lost in the area.

2 x common assaults, both by youths on other youths, both offenders well known to Police, both crimes. One victim refused to make any allegations, one was dealt for breach of civil injunction.

6th September 2021 to 3rd November 2021.

Total calls to Police – **11**

'Daytime' calls (05:30 20:00 hours) – **9**

Within closure hours (20:00 – 05:30 hours) – **2**

Of those 2 incidents within the locked times:

21/9/21 @ 21:52hrs - caller (member of the public) rang FCR (Force Control Room) stating that there were 3 youths climbing the fence. CCTV were made aware to monitor the area, nothing seen.

23/9/21 @ 20:28hrs - Male in park refusing to leave (called in by security). Police attended and the male was arrested for theft, which had taken place in a retail premises earlier.

4th November 2021 – 3rd January 2022

Total calls to Police – **7**

'Daytime' calls (05:30 20:00 hours) – **7**

Within closure hours (20:00 Until 20th December – 05:30 hours) – **0**

Within closure hours (18:00 From 21st December – 05:30 hours) – **0**

Addressing CCTV data period the following information was provided:

The data referred to the period between the 1st of November 2021, and the 1st January 2022. All CCTV related data is obtained via VTAS which is the data base software for logging CCTV activities.

In the November – December period, CCTV operators worked **123** hours for the purpose of monitoring BTAC areas in CCTV.

The BTAC CCTV Operator position was vacant during this time, so regular CCTV operators were utilised when they were available for extra work.

Of the **39** BTAC shifts available for the period of this report, **17** were covered, and **22** could not be covered.

Due to this the available data was limited, due to the difficulty in separating it from the rest of the CCTV data.

During the November – December period CCTV operators also logged 5 incidents using cameras covering BTAC concerns. A brief summary of these is provided below.

VTAS Number	Category	Details
32004	Anti-social Behaviour	Youths playing with fire in Central Park
32185	Anti-social Behaviour	Youths throwing stolen xmas baubles
32016	Drugs	Investigating a report of drug smoking in Central Park
32203	Shoplifting	Search for shoplifter in Central Park area
31950	Theft from Person	Search for suspected purse snatch.

The previous report had highlighted issues with CCTV operator recruitment. The BTAC specific role remained vacant, along with 3 other CCTV vacancies. The Council was recruiting again, due to the withdrawal of people who had previously received job offers from the Council.

The recruitment process would continue in the hope of having the control room fully staffed, however it was likely that devoting resources to BTAC specific monitoring would be limited until the CCTV Suite had appropriate staffing levels.

Inspector Harrod voiced her support of the scheme stating that the number of daytime calls had decreased due to the lack of damage nuisance incidents occurring in the evening. The police had not needed to draw the emergency key in response to any incident, but had on occasion done so to proactively to patrol the park in the hours of darkness and ensure all was well, in addition to combatting anti-social behaviour and damage around the Centenary Church. Despite initial negativity by some people saying that people would still break in during the closing hours, it had not happened and clearly closing the gates had worked well for everyone including the neighbours of the park. Furthermore and more importantly, the Police had been able to free up officers no longer having to attend the ongoing calls to the park and use their resources in other areas of the wider town including in youth ASP.

Member comment and questioning followed which included:

Generally Members agreed the closure of the gates had been a success not only for the police with the reduction in calls to the site, but also to neighbouring residents, some of whom had been very vocal on social media about the improvement in their lives with the reduction of nuisance and anti- social behaviour within the park. A Member voiced his thanks to Councillor Neill Hastie who had been prominent in BTAC finally agreeing the closure of the gates.

Referencing his concerns at the time of agreeing the closure and the resulting loss of amenity, one Member stated he felt reassured that the committee had agreed the closing hours at that point.

Noting the reduction in incidents and anti-social behaviour within the park, a Member asked if there had been a displacement of that activity to other areas within the town and also enquired if the loss of the CCTV operator had impacted in anyway. Inspector Harrod advised that CCTV continued to work well and that whilst a displacement of activity had been anticipated, closing down the park at night had actually closed down an area of the town which had been difficult to control and it had also taken away the casual nuisance in the early hours.

Whilst there was a cohort of troubled individuals within the town, incidents were now in areas that were far easier to control.

In summary the Chairman recognised the success of the closure which he agreed had been very successful and well received by residents of BTAC. Clearly when the park was opened until later during the summer months, the situation could change but overall the outcome had been a positive one and the decision had been a good one by the committee.

41 BTAC SMALL GRANT SCHEME AND BTAC EMPOWERING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES GRANT SCHEME

The Local Communities Development Officer and BTAC Grant Administrator presented the report tabling the applications made to the Small Grants Working Group in Round 4 of the financial year 2021/2022 for both the BTAC Small Grant Scheme and Round 2 of the Empowering Healthy Communities Grant Scheme.

3 applications had been received in Round 4 of the Boston Town Area Committee Small Grant Scheme, which were considered eligible for consideration and 2 applications received in Round 2 of the Empowering Healthy Communities Grant Scheme, which were considered eligible for consideration.

The following grants had been agreed by the BTAC Small Grants Scheme:

Boston Book Festival. £1,000.00.

Cost of hire of the Guildhall for the event

Wednesday Club. £600.00.

Contribution to cost of summer and autumn events / activities

St. Leonard's Trust £874.24

Cost of purchasing a blue plague commemorating 820 of almshouse provision and to hire a marquee for the celebration in May

The following grants had been agreed by the BTAC Empowering Healthy Communities Grant Scheme:

Louise and Sarah Memorial Fund. £1,000.00

To contribute to the cost of building and installing further memorial benches at the site in Lime Woods.

Community Safety Team – Grace’s Bench. £1,000.00

To contribute to the cost of a memorial bench dedicated to Grace Brocklesby which will also provide information about local support services for young people with mental health issues who may be in distress

A Member questioned why a grant of £1,000.00 had been made to the Guildhall which was an asset of the Council and asked why the Council did not just let them have the site for free. In response and whilst recognising that it did appear a little strange, the Chairman stated that that the applicant would have had to pay for the hire of a venue wherever they held the function. The Guildhall was an income stream for the Council and should a decision be made to offer it free to one organisation, then how could others be refused. The same principle applied to offering free car parking and other services. The Guildhall had costs including staffing of the site and furthermore and more importantly, BTAC had no power to change charges and fees.

RESOLVED:

That BTAC endorse the recommendations made by the Small Grants Scheme and the BTAC Empowering Healthy Communities Grant Scheme:

42 WORK PROGRAMME - INCLUDING ANNUAL REPORT

The Assistant Director – Leisure and Culture (Lead Officer for the committee) advised that the next scheduled meeting would be on the 14th April with reporting to include an update on the Public Conveniences, reports by the two working groups in respect of the Committee Terms of Reference and the Small Grants review and the financial statement. Furthermore the meeting would also include representation by Members of BTAC who were Lincolnshire County Councillors for the BTAC wards.

Referencing the appended report of the Internal Auditors of the Committee, the Assistant-Director noted the high assurance given by the auditors for the work of the committee and said it was a very positive audit.

Members offered their recognition of the high assurance rating which identified the volume of work undertaken by the committee, agreeing that the committee worked to deliver to the community. They stated one of the committees strengths was that it worked in a non-political manner and noted their appreciation to the officers who supported the committee and the Chairman for his commitment to driving the committee forward.

Summarising the Chairman thanked the committee members for their support in enabling the high assurance rating noting that such a rating was not easily achieved and that it addressed issues some non-committee members had raised in respect of the governance and activity of the committee.

The Meeting ended at 7.40 pm