

AT A MEETING of the CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Monday 21
November 2016:

PRESENT

Chairman:

p Councillor Anna McNair-Scott

Vice-Chairman:

p Councillor Frank Pearce

Councillors:

p Phil Bailey	a Mark Kemp-Gee
p Zilliah Brooks	p Fiona Mather
p Peter Chegwyn	p Alan Rice
p Shaun Cully	p Tim Rolt
a Jonathan Glen	a John Wall
p Brian Gurden	p Chris Wood

Also in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Gibson – Executive Member for Culture, Recreation
and Countryside

158. BROADCAST ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

Items to be
actioned on
the
Committee's
work
programme:

159. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Glen, Wall and Kemp-Gee.

160. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting, they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

161. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 6 June 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

162. **DEPUTATIONS**

No deputations were received.

163. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman noted and praised the work undertaken by the two Task and Finish Groups– the Libraries Group and the Grants Group. Members heard that the Groups had met on a number of occasions throughout the previous two years and had held their meetings at different locations across Hampshire, including libraries and the venues of some of the cultural organisations to whom the County Council awards a grant. The Chairman announced that the visits had been invaluable and thanked those Members of the Committee who were involved for their time and contribution. These Members included Councillors Brooks, Pearce, Rice, Stallard, Wall, Wood, Chegwyn, Connor and Cully. The Chairman noted that there was an outstanding piece of work from the Grants Task and Finish Group which related to Member Representation on Outside Bodies. The Chairman informed the Committee that, following further investigatory work by officers, the intention was for a report to be brought to a future meeting of the Select Committee. The Chairman was also pleased to report that Bursledon Parish Council were able to continue running Bursledon Community Library.

164. **HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS THE SOCIAL ISOLATION FOR LIBRARY CUSTOMERS**

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding the use of technology to address social isolation.

Members were presented with the details of a 12 month pilot project, which aimed to reduce levels of social isolation through the use of technology in rural areas. The project was being trialled under the partnership between the County Council's Adult Services department and an external partner organisation- Argenti. The project piloted the use of two devices - a 'Breezie' tablet and a 'Speakset' box set which could be used to turn a television into a video conferencing facility. 38 tablet devices and 20 'Speakset' box sets had been made available to those eligible individuals and the Committee heard that the participants had been shown how to interact with the device and provided with ongoing support.

It was reported that the eligibility criteria for participants in the pilot project included being over 65 years of age, with no access to their own transport, who lived alone and, in the opinion of the referrer, who were socially isolated. Referrers who were consulted as part of the project included GPs, social workers, pharmacists and local religious and community leaders.

The participants used the devices to communicate remotely with friends, family and with clinicians via email and through video conferencing, for online shopping and accessing online interest groups within their community. Members were informed that this pilot project presented opportunities for the participants to access digital aspects of the Library Service and that users of the Breezie tablet had benefitted from the advantages of pre-programmed preferences, a straightforward home screen layout and an automatic login to the libraries online portal.

Members heard that the pilot project was planned to finish in February 2017 and it was confirmed that the project results and evaluation would be reported to the Committee at a future meeting.

In response to Members questions, it was confirmed that:

- Data collected following the closure of the Mobile Library Service had been used to inform the way in which the Apps had been designed for use on the tablet devices.
- The provision of the devices was intended to supplement, but not replace, social visits.
- The project had enabled 50 individuals to make use of the 'Breezie' tablets and 20 individuals to access the 'Speakset' box sets since its implementation in February 2016.
- Funding for the pilot project, totalling £100,000 had been awarded by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources, and supported by the Assistant on Rural Matters, at his Decision Day on 12 December 2014.

- That staffing costs for the Home Library Service, would remain low given that the Service was run by volunteers. It was also confirmed that, if the project were to be implemented further, there would be an initial capital outlay to purchase the required devices.
- The provision of devices for all eligible individuals throughout Hampshire would not be feasible but that consideration would be given to the most effective use and distribution of resources were the project to continue further.
- That poor internet connectivity had been a barrier in some areas and it had not been possible to access any Government funding to support improvements to this as part of the pilot because the project timelines had not matched the Government's funding deadlines.

RESOLVED:

That the Culture and Communities Select Committee notes the content of the presentation.

165. **GRANT FUNDING FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN HAMPSHIRE 2017/2018**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding the applications received for major grants for 2017/18 from cultural, recreational and community organisations. It was noted that in most cases the proposed grant allocation was the amount of grant awarded for the previous financial year less 2%.

Members noted that it was not desirable to see a reduction in grant payments, but accepted that this was necessary in the financial circumstances. The role of Member representatives on Boards with regards to the allocation of grants was questioned and it was confirmed that the role of Member representatives was being evaluated.

It was confirmed that, since the publication of papers, both Winnall Community Association and the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Activity Centre had now returned the relevant evaluation and monitoring forms and therefore agreed that reference to these be removed from the recommendation. It was furthermore agreed that background information about the Privett Centre be provided to the Committee following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee recommends to the Executive

Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside that he:

- i) Approves grants from the Culture and Recreation Investment Fund totalling £616,440, as set out in Appendix 2. These are subject to receiving the relevant evaluation and monitoring forms from Lymington Museums Trust.
- ii) Approves grants from the Community Investment Fund totalling £60,240, as set out in Appendix 3. These are subject to receiving the relevant evaluation and monitoring forms from Pilands Wood Community Association.
- iii) Approves the transfer of £150,320 to the Community Buildings Capital Fund 2017/18.

166. **BASINGSTOKE CANAL UPDATE**

[Councillor Rice declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item as Vice-President of the Canal Society]

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (item 8 in the Minute Book) providing an update on the Basingstoke Canal.

Members were provided with a historical overview of the Canal and informed that it was jointly owned by Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) with the authorities each owning 16 miles of Canal. Members heard of the considerable maintenance responsibilities involved in managing the Canal including the major engineering assets which were used to monitor water levels and enable navigation.

It was reported that the Canal was managed by the Basingstoke Canal Authority, which comprised of HCC, SCC and six partner borough and district councils. Members from these partnership authorities made up the Joint Management Committee (JMC) which oversaw the management of the Canal. The Select Committee were informed of the challenging financial circumstances involved in the maintenance the Canal, including recent significant repair works following landslip at Dogmersfield, and how this could be balanced with meeting Transformation to 2019 savings targets.

Members heard that future management options for the Canal were under considered and that, as part of this, a report from JBA Consulting had been commissioned to assess possible opportunities. It was intended that the outcomes of the report would be discussed with members from the JMC and with Canal staff before a more detailed business case outlining future management proposals would be prepared in 2017.

Discussion was held regarding the legal implications placed upon HCC as a land owner following a landslip or similar incident. It was confirmed that, although some land alongside the Canal was privately owned and insured, HCC was responsible for maintaining the channel and bed of the Canal.

RESOLVED:

That the Culture and Communities Select Committee notes the content of the presentation and that a further update on progress be presented to the Committee in due course.

167. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Policy & Governance - Corporate Services, item 9 in the Minute Book, which set out the Committee's work programme.

It was agreed that an update from the Hampshire Cultural Trust would be added into the 16 January 2017 meeting and that an update on the Country Parks Transformation would be added into the 7 March 2017 meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted and that the two update items be added as agreed.