

UNADOPTED
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE
NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23 JUNE AT 3PM
IN THE PARK VIEW MEETING ROOM, COMMUNITY HUB, VICTORIA PARK ROAD

Present:

Councillors Karen Newbigging (KN) Chair, Emma Green (EG) Vice Chair, Sean Austin (SA) and Jude Green (JG)

Apologies: None

Absent: Cllr Josephine Leibrandt (JL)

In attendance:

Linda Blake, Town Clerk (LB)

Lyndsey Davies, Minute Clerk (LD)

Cllr Marilyn Birks (MB)

1. Election of Chair

Cllr Karen Newbigging was elected Chair of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee.

2. Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Emma Green was elected Vice-Chair of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee.

3. Apologies for absence

Cllr Clive Fletcher has submitted his resignation from the Community Engagement Sub-Committee, as it is now a formal committee, rather than a Task and Finish Group.

4. Declarations of Interest

None.

5. Notes of previous meeting held on 24 February 2025

It was **AGREED** that the notes of the previous meeting held on 24 February 2025 be approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

6. Councillor Surgeries in Priory Park

Councillor Surgeries began in Priory Park at the start of the 'Music in the Park' season and have been running for 7 weeks. The following points have been discussed going forward for the remainder of the 'Music in the Park' season.

- The Town Clerk stated that there is a disconnect from the leaflets and information leaving the office and being left for the Operations Team member on duty for the 'Music in the Park' series and therefore it was **AGREED** that the Councillors on duty should collect all the flyers and other information needed on a weekly basis.

UNADOPTED

- KN thanked office staff for producing the information posters and the division of responsibilities flyer, informing the committee that this was extremely useful when speaking with the public.
- The Town Clerk informed the committee that following an updated risk assessment, there will no longer be a gazebo to erect at the 'Music in the Park' concerts, due to the difficulty in erecting it. The committee asked if an alternative which is easier to put up, would be researched.
- The sub-committee also requested that the following be considered for the Councillor surgery stand, tablecloth, bunting, banners – saying something along the lines of 'Come and talk to a local Town Councillor'. EG confirmed that she will donate a plastic tablecloth and bunting for the stand.

7. 'Happy to Chat Tables'

Following the launch of the 'Happy to Chat Tables', a report was received from JM as well as feedback from SA and MB.

- SA informed the committee that Abbey Road Coffee had stopped the initiative altogether as it was not suitable for their business model.
- MB informed the committee that she had visited Great Malvern Library and Malvern Cube and both places have an enthusiasm for it, but there needs to be a review on how it is managed, as in both locations people are either happy to sit and read a book or are meeting friends and are not necessarily looking for someone to talk to.
- JM reported that the Happy to Chat Tables in Weavers have only been available for the last fortnight, so it is too early to establish their effectiveness.
- Lyttelton Well would like to carry on with the initiative but adopt some questions to make the Happy to Chat Tables easier to facilitate.
- Faun said they had not received the information or signage, so had not carried out the Happy to Chat Table initiative.
- The committee discussed ways of making it easier to manage and recognise when people want to talk or need company. SA suggested a spoon rather than a sign, or similar, would indicate that someone is 'happy to chat'. EG said she would investigate signpost training, SA suggested looking at links with Malvern Hills District Council, working with Community Action in terms of using their facilitators.

It was **AGREED** that SA's suggestion of using an object such as spoons etc. to say "I'm happy to talk" would be researched.

Officers suggested looking at other areas, other than those in Great Malvern, for example 'Sunbeans' in Malvern Link run a 'pay it forward scheme' where you can purchase anything from a cup of coffee to a bacon butty and they advertise this on a board, so that members of the public with reduced funds can access this, some just wish to have a chat. MB informed the committee that Elim Church also ran this scheme. Other areas to investigate would be Poolbrook and Barnards Green Café. Cllr Julie MacLusky would be asked to visit these places to check on the feasibility and KN agreed to contact JM to discuss.

8. White Ribbon Initiative

It was **AGREED** to defer this item to the next meeting.

9. Awareness Days in the UK

EG had put together a comprehensive list of awareness days in the UK, it was **AGREED** that the list should be circulated to all, so that it can be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

10. Youth Engagement

KN has discussed options with Lucy Bird, CALC and KN is due to meet mid-July to discuss how to progress.

It was therefore **AGREED** to defer discussion on this to the next meeting.

11. Brainstorming/Discussion of Ideas

The committee **AGREED** that an item would be put on the next agenda to consider a future action plan for the year. This would include a communications strategy and priorities for the forthcoming year.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 18 August 2025 at 3pm.

The meeting finished at 4.30pm.

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Chairman