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The MINUTES of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Thursday 13th November 2025 at The Village Centre, Hurstpierpoint.

Members present:

Claire Majsai (Chair)	Susan Dyke (Vice Chair)
Duncan Ranger	Annette Street
Michael Avery	Sarah Baldey
Bob Sampson	Lindsay Thompson

Also present: Viv Aloy, Assistant Clerk and 2 members of the public

Absent: Cllr Helen Bedford

CE25/26.021. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received for Cllr Helen Bedford

RESOLVED: That the Committee **ACCEPTS** the apologies for absence from Cllr Bedford

CE25/26.022. Declarations of Interest: Cllr Susan Dyke declared an interest in the Befriended application as an employee. Cllr Michael Avery declared an interest in the Age Concern Grant application as a frequent user of the service.

CE25/26.023. To receive and accept the minutes of the Community Engagement Committee meeting held on 11th September 2025: Members reviewed the minutes, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREES** the minutes of 11th September meeting

CE25/26.024. Adjournment for Questions from the Public: Members of the public were there to speak about their grant applications. Councillors also discussed that resolving on grant applications in advance of reviewing the proposed budget for 2026/27 would provide more accurate information on expenditure year to date. It was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREES** to move forward to Agenda item 7, resolutions recorded under minute ref: CE25/26.027

CE25/26.025. Members reviewed Version 3 of the 2025/2026 action plan, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREES:**

- i) to Version 3 of the 2025/26 Action Plan
- ii) for the Assistant Clerk to update Version 3 of the 2025/26 Action Plan as per the committee discussions and bring it to the next meeting as Version 4 of the 2025/26 Action Plan.

CE25/26.026.1 Budget Monitoring: Members reviewed the budget monitoring report for the Committee, including:

- a) The Nominal Ledger (Year to Date) and
- b) Detailed Income & Expenditure as of 31 October 2025, and it was:

RESOLVED That the Committee **NOTED** the budget monitoring report for the Committee including:

- a) the Nominal Ledger (year to date)
- b) the Detailed Income & Expenditure as of 31 October 2025

CE25/26.026.2 Suggested Draft Budget for 2026/27: Councillors discussed the proposed draft Community Engagement budget in detail. Counsellors discussed whether the Festive Lights budget and corresponding EMR should be transferred to the Finance, Governance and Estates Committee, now it was an ongoing estates matter rather than a project. It was:

RESOLVED

- (i) That Committee AGREES to present the Draft Community Engagement budget to the Finance and Governance Committee in December
- (ii) That Committee RECOMMENDS responsibility for the Festive Lights, together with the corresponding budget and EMR, be transferred to the Estates and Facilities Committee.

CE25/26.027 Grant Applications:

CE25/26.027.1 New Small Grant Applications to be considered 2025/26: Members noted the Grants Budget 2025/26 was £4,500 with £2,000 remaining.

There were 3 Small Grant Application(s) received:

Organisation	Grant Request For	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
a) Hurst Gymnastics Club	To assist with annual competitions, termly awards and clothing subsidy.	£500	£500
b) Age Concern Hassocks	Towards the refurbishment of the main dining hall and entrance hall	£500	£0 (Deferred to February)
c) The Village Piano Project	Hire, transport and tuning of piano for World Piano Day event	£450	£450

The Committee discussed each application in detail.

Gym Club, councillors requested clarification on travel, subsistence, motor and “other” expenses. It was explained that travel and subsistence allowances are for the volunteers who work at the club, primarily for travel to and from the club. Questions were asked regarding controls on these expenses. A vote was taken with 7 councillors for awarding and 1 abstention.

One member of the public left at 19:43.

Regarding the application from Age Concern there were questions from Councillors as to why we have accounts from March 2024 rather than March 2025 and why, given the reserves are so high, they are looking for grant funding. Councillors did note that the £500 out of the £10,000 being raised does seem proportionate for the number of users from our parish but felt unable to award the grant without up-to-date accounts and an explanation of the high reserves.

One member of the public spoke about the Village Piano project. Councillors asked about severe weather plans, and it was explained that risk assessments have been completed, and options would include moving the date, or upgrading to a larger marquee that Hurst Festival could lend. There is a lot of interest locally, including from local schools. A vote was taken with 7 Councillors for and one abstention.

One member of the public left at 8:03

RESOLVED that Committee AGREES to

- a) **AWARD £500 to Hurst Gymnastics Club** to assist with annual competitions, termly awards and clothing subsidy. Comments to be passed back to the club regarding transparency of accounts, particularly should they return for further funding.

b) DEFER the grant request for £500 from Age Concern Hassocks to February's Committee meeting, pending receipt of up-to-date accounts and explanation regarding the large reserves.

c) AWARD £450 to the Village Piano Project for the hire, transport and tuning of a piano for World Piano Day event, with the caveat that this is seed funding and not as an ongoing sponsor.

CE25/26.027.2 Community Events Grant Applications to be considered 2025/26 Members noted the Community Events Budget for 2025/26 was £4,500 with £0 remaining.

There was 1 Community Events Grants Applications received.

Organisation	Grant Request For	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Befriended	Towards the monthly afternoon teas at Court Bushes Community Hub	£1,000	£1,000 £743.20 from Health & Wellbeing projects £256.80 from Sustainable Communities

The Committee discussed the application in detail, noting that there is no remaining budget for this year. Challenging questions were asked to ensure that events were not evangelising, and it was highlighted that MSDC & Burgess Hill Town Council have both provided grants to the organisation, and that the Social Prescribers refer people to it. It was also mentioned that, although the events are aimed at older people, they are open to all. Councillors discussed using the remaining health and wellbeing projects budget of £743.20 and that the balance of £256.80 should come from the Sustainable Communities Grant budget.

Councillor Dyke abstained from the vote due to her previously declared interest, and it was:

RESOLVED that Committee AGREES to AWARD £1,000 to Befriended to be funded from Health & Wellbeing Projects and Sustainable Communities

CE25/26.027.3 Health & Wellbeing Grants application to be considered 2025/26 Members noted the Health & Wellbeing Grants Budget for 2025/26 was £1,000 with £500 remaining.

Organisation	Grant Request For	Amount Requested	Awarded
St Peter & St James Hospice	Towards the operational costs of providing expert care to adults living with a life-limiting illness in our community.	£500	£500

Councillors were unanimous and it was:

RESOLVED that Committee AGREES to AWARD £500 to St Peter & St James Hospice towards the operational costs of providing expert care to adults living with a life-limiting illness in our community.

CE25/26.027.4 Sustainable Communities Grants applications to be considered 2025/26. Members noted the Sustainable Communities Grants budget for 2025/26 was £1,500 with £1,000 remaining.

There was 1 Sustainable Communities Grant application(s) received:

Organisation	Grant Request For	Amount Requested	Awarded
Monday Group	Support their work of maintaining and improving the rights of way network	£500	£500

The Committee discussed the application in detail, noting that it showed very clearly how they meet our sustainability strategy objectives, and it was:

RESOLVED that Committee AGREES to AWARD £500 to the Monday Group to support their work of maintaining and improving the rights of way network

CE25/26.027.5 Health & Wellbeing Projects 2025/2026. Members noted the Health & Wellbeing Projects Budget was £1,000 with £743.20 remaining.

There were no Health & Wellbeing Projects discussed but the remaining funds were used towards the Befriended application as set out in minute ref: **CE25/26.027.2**

CE25/26.028 Parish Council Events:

CE25/26.028.1. Events Working Group Updates: The Committee received information from the Events Working Group to assist with discussions on agenda item 8 including:

- a) The notes from the Events Working Group meeting held on 25th September
- b) The Parish Council Events Budget document

CE25/26.028.2 Hurstpierpoint Orchard Wassail: The Committee discussed the proposals for the 10th January 2026 Wassail in detail, noting that Hurst Rethink have offered to fund the costs for the uplighting. It was:

RESOLVED That Committee AGREES to fund all the proposed expenditure for the 2026 Wassail

CE25/26.028.3 St Lawrence Fair 2026: The committee reviewed the items suggested to improve the St Lawrence Fair Stall and it was:

RESOLVED That Committee AGREES to the proposed expenditure for lighting for the gazebo

CE25/26.028.4 Annual Parish Meeting 2026: Councillors discussed the proposals from the Events Working Group for the format of the Annual Parish Meeting 2026, and it was:

RESOLVED That Committee RECOMMENDS the proposals for the Annual Parish Meeting to Council

CE25/26.028.5 Community Forum: Committee received the notes from the very successful Community Forum held at Court Bushes Community Hub on 4th November 2025.

CE25/26.029 Information Items, Correspondence Received and Requests:

CE25/26.029.1 Reeds Lane Recreation Ground Phase 2 update: The Committee noted the update on Reeds Lane Recreation Ground. Cllr Majsai further updated Councillors that the specific roundabout that had been requested has an 8-week lead time from order. The Estates and Facilities Manager is investigating what the potential impact of that would have on any proposed start date prior to any decision being made.

CE25/26.029.2 High Street Update: Cllr Thompson provided a verbal update on the High Street. All the work has been done for the Santa Sunday, posters are going up soon, and the PC will assist in displaying these and sharing the event on social media. It was also highlighted in the Parish Council's December Hurst Life article. The traders are putting together a formal joint response to MSDC regarding their plans to charge for use of the carparks.

CE25/26.029.3 External Communication: Cllr Dyke highlighted the publication “Talk About” magazine who will run news stories without charge. Contact information to be passed to the Assistant Clerk who will investigate this further, initially looking at promoting our events.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 21:17