CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2024
REG DRIVER VISITOR CENTRE, CHRISTCHURCH PARK, IPSWICH IP4 2BX
7.00 PM

Present: Alexandra Ward Councillors: John Cook, Adam Rae and Jane Riley
St Margaret's Ward Councillors: Inga Lockington and Tim Lockington
Westgate Ward Councillors: Julian Gibbs, Carole Jones and Colin Kreidewolf

Suffolk County Council: R Bridgeman and D Richards

1. Election of Chair

Resolved:

that Councillor Rae be elected Chair of the Central Area Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Holmes.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 21 February 2024

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 be signed as a true record.

4. To Confirm or Vary the Order of Business

Resolved:

that the Order of Business be confirmed as printed on the Agenda.

5. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Bridgeman declared that he was an employee of Ipswich Borough Council.

6. Responses to Public Questions

6.1. The Chair reported that 8 questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

6.2. **Question 1**: Back Hamlet 'Dead End Road Signs' are clearly displayed at the Junction of Devonshire Road however, as previously raised vehicles are driving through Suffolk University car park. The Council spent a huge sum of money removing the roundabout at the junction of Fore/Back Hamlet and Duke Street with obvious intent making Back Hamlet effectively a Dead End Rd from Foxhall Road end. No doubt the intent was traffic reduction of vehicles using Back Hamlet. I have emailed the University and have had a response that I will forward to this email separately – I would like to see the dead-end sign enforcement by blocking the road off making it No Entry into the Uni Car Park from vehicles driving down Back Hamlet formerly making it a driving offence to drive through the University car park.

6.3. The following response was provided by Suffolk County Council:

Suffolk County Council do not support restricting access into the University, and they would expect the University would strongly oppose any such restriction. The University is private land and how they manage their site is a matter for them.

6.4. **Question 2:** I've made repeated complaints regarding the road gutters/surface water drains being blocked opposite 111 Back Hamlet in the parking bay and outside 66 Back Hamlet, also other drains between the Zebra crossing and The Vault, where it floods with water and drains in Duke Street. The response was inadequate saying they are on a 'general scheduled maintenance' with no date for any works to be carried out obviously they need cleaning out properly and promptly.

6.5. The following response was provided by Suffolk County Council:

The gullies in Back Hamlet are next due to the cyclically cleaned around February 2025. The last scheduled cleaning date for most of the gullies was July 2023, also, some were last cleaned in April 2024. There are 3 gullied between 20-76 Back Hamlet that could not be cleaned in May 2023 due to obstruction by parked cars. The gullies in Duke Street were last cleaned in May/June 2023 and are next due for cyclic cleaning around March 2025. Some gullies near Pownall Road were not cleaned at the time with reported out of hours access being required, whilst one in this area was also obstructed. This was reported to the relevant team.

6.6. **Question 3:** In relation to the previous question it has been impossible for me to find out from every single agency being Anglian Water, Suffolk Highways, IBC, SCC and Environment where the water goes I assume it ends up in the waterfront but seemingly no one knows – my concern is the rubbish which is a prolific problem in Back Hamlet especially electronic vapes powered by lithium batteries ending up being flushed down the surface water drains together with cigarette butts, plastic and metal bottle tops and whatever else will pass the road drain grate – where is this all ending up?

6.7. The following response was received from Suffolk County Council:

During cyclic cleansing maintenance, gullies are cleaned out using a gully sucker. Any silt and rubbish that has built up within the gully chamber is collected within the maintenance vehicle tank and then disposed of at a specialist waste facility.

6.8. **Question 4:** Cadent have been replacing the gas pipes in Back Hamlet which is a hot rolled tarmacadam metaled road surface much heavier stones making it extremely hard wearing and tough, but the holes are being filled in with cold rolled tarmac that is much lighter making it susceptible to pot holes – why isn't the road surface being made good to the same standard that it was laid down?

6.9. The following response was received from Suffolk County Council:

The Network Inspectors carry out inspections to ensure the reinstatements are compliant with the 'Specification of the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways' (SROH). This document outlines the standards for reinstating streets after doing street works. Any person who carries out street works must reinstate the street once the work is finished in line with these standards. When it is found that there are failings, these are notified to the utility as a formal request to take remedial action on site.

Once the Network Inspector has carried out an inspection along Back Hamlet, Ipswich, if the material is found to be incorrect following the works carried out by Cadent Gas, a defect will be raised, and they will be required to carry out remedial works. Suffolk County Council will confirm the outcome of the inspection in due course.

6.10. **Question 5:** Back Hamlet is a high pedestrian traffic use street with only 2 rubbish bins, one at Devonshire Road Junction and at the back entrance to the University. There are often overflowing, especially used by dog walkers with dog poo deposits. Can a dedicated dog waste bin be put adjacent to the park entrance gate and another general rubbish bin be put at the entrance to the main allotment gate? (being opposite 131 Back Hamlet).

6.11. The following response was provided by IBC's Waste Services:

The Council no longer installs Dog Waste Only containers and has a set process for reviewing requests for additional containers. The Cleansing Team have reviewed the bin provision in the Central Area and can confirm that there

are 202 bins in total. This is higher than average and as such the Department would not support increasing this provision significantly at this time. The team also reviewed comments and complaints relating to litter and overflowing bins reported in this location and confirmed there had been none in the past 24 months. However, the team will consult with the round operative to see if a bin can be relocated to provide additional capacity in this specific location. There are bins provided by the College and University in addition to the Council bins should provide adequate coverage for the footfall.

6.12. **Question 6:** At the last meeting Inspector Turner told of pop-up events. I have attended 2, the first at Broomhill Library attended by a PSCO and one held at an event in Alexandria Park. I assumed such events were to raise local policing issues directly with the Central Area Policing Team, the second pop-up event wasn't attended by any officer from the CPT they had no knowledge of this area, the officer I spoke too stated 'this event wasn't the time and place to raise such issues firmly stating that was the conclusion to the conversation' - what's the point of such events if it's just a day out jaunt in the park for a minimum of 3 Officers- the point must be for officers to engage with local residents particularly I was told not to use the CPT email to raise issues - then what is the point of Ward/Community Policing Team?

6.13. The following response was provided by Inspector Partridge:

Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I apologise if you feel you didn't get the service you were after. Engagement events are really important to us as the police as it is important for us to connect with the community and be seen. I would not describe them as a 'jaunt in the park' and the feedback we receive is positive. You may find that officers/staff are always doing more than it would appear. You did not cover how your experience was at the first pop up event? To help me better understand the situation, what was the date of the second pop up event and what issue were you raising?

6.14. **Question 7:** We wanted to raise a few separate issues related to noise nuisance/disturbance impacting the quality of life for residents living on the Waterfront. Hopefully this is the correct way to raise these issues, but if any other detail is needed, please feel free to let me know.

Below are a number of examples that have happened in the past few months:

- A number of the restaurants/bars on the Waterfront play music so loudly that even closing doors/windows doesn't help. The bass is often so loud, there is no way to get away from it and it usually lasts either for hours (5+) during the day or quite late into the evenings. If it's so loud it's an issue in flats quite a distance from these locations, we couldn't imagine it would be a healthy level for staff or patrons.
- A man rides a bike up and down the Waterfront back and forth, for hours every day, sometimes starting as early as 7am, and lately past 9pm playing music loudly from a speaker either on his person or attached to his bike.
- A few months ago, for about 2-3 weeks, a man would sing what sounded like a call to prayer very loudly in the early morning hours (between 2:30am and 4am).

- Just this morning, at both 3:30am and 6:30am, a man shouted for about 15 minutes at no one in particular. Not to assume, however it seemed he may have been going through a mental health crisis.

  While we're aware there is a procedure for reporting these issues via the Ipswich Borough Council website doing so hasn't produced a noticeable impact and noise has continued at what feels like unreasonable levels.

  It feels like the biggest issue stems from the fact that there's no recourse to deal with the noise at the time of need.

  Noise from businesses such as restaurants and bars
    - Raising the issue on the council website doesn't address the noise at the time it is an issue
    - While we've worked to keep a log of the issues occurring, with some locations, it's impossible to know when the noise will happen again (for instance, we don't know when weddings are booked at one of the locations, which is the cause of much of the disturbance, so we can't pinpoint when the noise will happen), and if it doesn't happen within 28 days, the process has to start all over again
- General disturbances on the Waterfront
    - Many times, this will be people shouting/singing/etc in the early hours or the morning and because these will likely be different people each time, it doesn't feel worth it to keep a log of this

      While there are also recommendations for how to deal with noise, these aren't always possible, for example:

- First recommendation is usually to confront the person responsible
    - We have tried with bars/restaurants – where we've been told they would lower music and simply didn't
    - People causing a noise nuisance on the waterfront
        - The man with the speaker on the bike – it is intimidating and we wouldn't know how to go about stopping him and are nervous about the situation that may arise from trying to speak to him
        - The gentleman possibly experiencing a mental health crisis – as this is just an assumption, again, we would be hesitant of a confrontation, especially at a time like 3am in the morning
        - Another recommendation is to close windows and doors. This is not practical in summer with warmer temperatures

  We completely understand that living on the Waterfront comes with some level of noise, but it feels like it shouldn't be so loud and relentless that it impacts residents' enjoyment of their own homes and ultimately, we feel there should be an option to address the issue at the time of need, at the time it's impacting anyone living on or trying to enjoy the Waterfront.

  We appreciate also that going into the autumn and winter, it will likely get a little quieter, however it seems to get noisier each year.

6.15. The following response was provided by IBC Public Protection:

Noise nuisance caused by premises can be investigated and controls put in place where noise emanating from the premises is considered unreasonable. This can be through enforcement action or under licensing conditions.

Regarding the issues with noise from people on the street, we do not have the power to deal with general people noise/ disturbance on the street. If public disorder is being caused, the police can investigate these matters.

We do have a reactive service and officers will endeavour to respond to noise complaints emanating from a premises when alerted to the issues. There is a process for investigating these matters, which includes keeping a noise log and reporting issues as they occur so that an officer can attend and witness the nuisance being experienced.

We can also visit to ensure compliance with licensing conditions which includes noise immitted from the premises. It is essential therefore that these matters are reported as they occur so we can progress these investigations and take any necessary enforcement action.

6.16. **Question 8:** Why are Ipswich pavements and verge riddled with weeds? The town really looks downtrodden and sad. Any plans to give it a spruce up? I have volunteered my help and not had a reply.

6.17. The following response was provided by Suffolk County Council:

Suffolk County Council generally carry out weed treatment on highway footways and road channels (adjacent to the kerb) in Ipswich twice a year using a systematic weed killer, Glyphosate.

Due to the poor weather earlier in the year, particularly in May and first half of June, this has had the knock effect of delaying the first weed treatment being carried out not just in Ipswich but also Suffolk. Consequently, SCC's weed treatment contractor is now scheduled to complete the first weed treatment in Ipswich week commencing 2nd September 2024 and the second weed treatment across Ipswich is now scheduled to be carried out during September and October 2024.The weed treatment is only sprayed where weeds are identified either growing in the footway or road channel at the time of the treatment. Adjacent verges are not sprayed.
SCC confirms that the third cut of the highway grass verges in Ipswich started during week commencing 5 August 2024 and SCC's grass cutting contractor is currently on schedule to complete the third cut by the end of September 2024.

6.18. A resident raised that often issues were identified, and residents would be passed on to various services without a response or solution provided and commented that authorities/agencies should communicate with each other to ensure issues could be considered and resolved. It was noted that successful multi-agency approaches had been used in the past within certain areas of the town.

6.19. Councillor Cook commented that they understood the resident's frustration and advised that it could be confusing for people to know which authorities were responsible for what services. It was advised that the first step for residents could be to contact their local Councillors about an issue which would then be looked into on their behalf.

6.20. Councillor T Lockington noted that weeds had recently been cleared from the pavement on Valley Road and that this area was now looking much more improved. IBC were responsible for the clearing of detritus which took place after the weed clearance.

6.21. A resident asked who was responsible for the maintenance of flowerpots outside a premises on St Matthew's Street and offered their help. Councillor Jones agreed to discuss holding a litter pick in the area with the resident after the meeting.

7. Policing Update

7.1. Inspector Partridge, Ipswich Central SNT, provided the policing update and confirmed that efforts had been dedicated to the national response toward the disorder which took place in the Summer. Dedicated patrols had been undertaken locally to ensure Ipswich communities had extra reassurance and Officers had been engaging with residents during the heightened disorder. No disorder of this type had been reported in Ipswich.

7.2. As part of the national disorder, a number of Officers had been dispatched to other Constabulary's which had impacted what the Community Policing teams could achieve during this time. Demand within Ipswich had also meant Officers were required to undertake other key investigations.

7.3. ASB within parks continued to be considered and following increased reporting of this in both parks and central Ipswich, Officers were working hard to carry out patrols to reduce this. The Crime & Design Officer had visited Christchurch Park to provide advice about how safety could be increased.

7.4. Since May, Police in Ipswich Central had undertaken 94 hours dedicated to ASB patrols which hopefully offered reassurance. The night time economy continued to be policed and there had been a slight rise in events during the Summer and the team was working closely with premises and partners to reduce offending. Other areas being considered included reducing offending against women and girls, working with the SOS bus, undertaking training, and working with IBC around how streets could be made safer which would continue throughout September and Fresher's week.

7.5. Councillor I Lockington asked if there was a specific area of Christchurch Park being considered for ASB. Inspector Partridge advised that work was being undertaken with park rangers to identify which areas were most vulnerable and looking at areas in the park where ASB was reported. Crime and drug related issues were often around the furthest entrance of the park, so work had been

dedicated towards exits and entrances however, it was important to note that although this was where most ASB was recorded, it did not mean that this was exactly where the crime was taking place.

7.6. Councillor Cook reassured residents that Councillors had a monthly meeting with the Police of which issues were raised and considered.

7.7. Councillor Gibbs thanked Suffolk Constabulary for their quick response to an incident at the weekend where a number of young people had been climbing scaffolding dangerously. Since then, discussion had taken place with the construction site to ensure the site was safe and not accessible.

7.8. A resident asked if Police had any powers with regards to cars parked across pavements affecting the ability for prams and wheelchairs to use the footpath. Inspector Partridge confirmed that parking enforcement did not sit with the Police and the only time they would interject was if a car was left in a dangerous manner. Councillor Kreidewolf clarified that obstruction on pavements was not the responsibility of the IBC Parking Enforcement team as this responsibility had not been delegated to the local authority.

7.9. Inspector Partridge noted that if there was an obstruction of the highway then the Police could intervene however, noted that enforcement wouldn't solve the problem and that the issue was with how streets had been designed, such as the use of bollards. Police would continue to enforce where they could, and Officers would be asked to consider this when on patrols.

7.10. It was discussed that parking in the area was an issue often raised and that a consultation had been considered by Government regarding parking on pavements however, no decision had been made as yet.

8. CAC/24/01 Area Committee Budget Update

8.1. Ms Leys, Assistant Director for Operations, reported that since the last meeting, the following Making a Difference (MAD) budget spends had been made:

- £150.70 – Eastern Angles Fundraising Equipment
- £290 – New Wolsey Theatre Suffolk Refugee Support Service

8.2. Ms Leys highlighted the following unspent budget items that would be returned to the Central Area Committee unallocated budget:

- £410 – unspent Venue Hire and Publicity Budget
- £744.30 – unspent Making a Difference funding

This would result in a starting unallocated budget of £16,154.30.

8.3. The Committee was asked to consider how much funding to allocate to establish a Making a Difference budget for 2024/25 and it was agreed that this budget should be set at £1,500.

Resolved:

that the Committee:

a) note the financial statement in Appendix 1 to the report;
b) note the return of unspent budgets to the main unallocated Central Area Committee budget as follows:

- **£410 Venue Hire [2023/24];**
- **£744.30 Making a Difference [2023/24];**

c) allocate £500 per ward, a total of £1,500, from the Central Area Committee budget to establish a Making a Difference (MAD) budget for 2024/25.

Reasons:
(a) to provide details of the amount of funds available to the Area Committee to deliver the priorities in its Action Plan;
(b) to release any Central Area Committee budget funding where there is no further expenditure anticipated;
(c) to allow the Central Area Committee to devolve up to 10% of its annual budget to support small scale community initiatvies.

9. CAC/24/02 Funding Request - Venue Hire and Publicity Budget

Resolved:

That the Central Area Committee allocate £400 from the Central Area Committee budget for costs associated with advertising and venue hire for the Central Area Committee for 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

10. CAC/24/03 Funding Request: Ipswich.love

10.1. Miranda Acres, Ipswich Love, presented the funding request which sought £500 from the Central Area Committee budget towards the expansion of its website's platform, to add further events and purchase marketing materials for further promotion of its services. It was noted that £500 was being requested from all five Area Committees as this was a web-based Ipswich wide site.

10.2. Ms Acres explained that the website had been running since January 2024. The aim of the website was to join up Ipswich as a whole and to raise positivity about the town. The platform was used to promote events taking place all over Ipswich and included information about Top Up shops, local fetes and other activities.

10.3. As well as promoting events, people were also invited to get in involved and write articles or love letters to the town, of which 60 had been published so far. Work was being undertaken with Ipswich Central to create a public display of all the love letters received to be presented as part of an exhibition.

10.4. Ms Acres confirmed that Ipswich.love was formed by volunteers and £6,000 had been spent towards creating and building the website using their own expertise. The funding requested would go towards publicity, marking materials and improving the website further.

10.5. Councillor Inga Lockington asked how money would be raised in the future. Ms Acres confirmed that the plan was to create merchandise which could be sold across the town and noted that this was not a commercial venture. Funding would be sought from private individuals and businesses as well as possible sponsorship opportunities. Currently, the group was self funded.

10.6. Ms Acres explained that although there were other event websites for Ipswich, these were concentrated on IBC and Ipswich Central events. Part of Ipswich.love's USP was to connect the town as a whole.

10.7. County Councillor Richards asked where the exhibition of love letters would be held. Ms Acres confirmed the exhibition would commence in November and would be displayed in Central Ipswich.

10.8. County Councillor Bridgeman complimented the website and asked if they knew how many people had visited it. It was confirmed that for local events, the website rated much higher for engagement than Facebook. This was because they could concentrate on Ipswich and use more search engine optimisation unlike the algorithms used by Facebook and Instagram.

Resolved:
That the Central Area Committee allocate £500 from the Central Area Committee budget to Ipswich.Love for the expansion of its website's platform.

Reason: to improve connectivity in Ipswich by celebrating and signposting to events, people and culture in Ipswich through its website and online community.

11. CAC/24/04 Funding Request: DanceEast

11.1. Bryony Hope and Lucy Bayliss, DanceEast, presented the funding request which sought £1,337.50 as contribution towards covering the costs of its Springboard Junior and Springboard Adults programmes, including outreach work.

11.2. DanceEast had been established for more than 40 years and over time the organisation had evolved. Outreach work represented a large part of their programme and work was undertaken with a number of different communities and organisations, such as the Dementia Cafes and East Anglian Children's Hospice, in a way where dance could enhance people's lives.

11.3. The funding application was specifically toward funding the Springboard Junior and Spingboard Adult programmes which were for children, young people and adults with learning difficulties. 19% of the population in Ipswich identified as disabled which included learning disabilities and the classes

helped to boost health, self-esteem and confidence, and was particularly aimed towards people who might be experiencing barriers to improving their physical health or being active. It was noted that being part of a class of people helped to connect others and provide a feeling of community.

11.4. Prior to the pandemic the springboard classes had been well attended however, numbers had fallen. It was hoped that by addressing this, it would help benefit those experiencing barriers around isolation greatly. Classes cost between £5-£6 and a bursary fund, which was criteria based, had been established to provide funded places for those who could not afford to attend.

11.5. Councillor Riley noted that some of the funding requested was also towards funding the workshops and asked about the long term sustainability of this. It was explained that a new fundraising strategy had been launched which would be looking at their approach to funding and considering ways the programme could be developed further for long term sustainability. Currently, they were continuing to undertake outreach work and increasing attendees.

11.6. Councillor I Lockington asked how the programme had been funded prior to the pandemic. It was explained that there was more money back then and that there had always been some form of subsidy for the classes however, costs were increasing. As a funded charity DanceEast was consistently identifying new and different ways of funding activities.

11.7. Councillor Jones asked how long the classes were held for. it was confirmed that each class was around an hour with socialisation before and after in the community building.

11.8. Councillor T Lockington suggested that a bid could be made to the local Parkinson's Branch for funding.

Resolved:

that the Central Area Committee allocate £1,337.50 from the Central Area Committee budget to DanceEast as contribution to cover the costs of its Springboard Junior and Springboard Adults programmes, including outreach work.

Reason: to provide a safe environment for disabled learners to participate in physical activity, socialise and meet new people.

12. CAC/24/05 Area Action Plan

12.1. Discussion took place around the priorities for the Area Action Plan. County Councillor Richards suggested that Living Environment and A Thriving Town Centre be added.

12.2. It was noted that applicants would be referred to the Area Action Plan to ensure that their application met the needs and were encouraged to include this as part of their application.

12.3. It was agreed that Living Environment be added and the rest remain the same as 2023/24.

Resolved:

that the following priorities be adopted as the priorities of the Central Area Committee Area Action Plan for 2024/25.

- **Domains of Deprivation: 'Crime', 'Education, Skills and Training', 'Health and Disability'**
- **Corporate Strategy: 'Promoting Community Wellbeing and Fairness in Ipswich'**

Reason: Priorities provide the basis of an action plan that will enable the Area Committee to clearly communicate its vision and priorities for the area and will help demonstrate how its budget is being allocated to deliver the priorities set for the area.

13. Chair's Update on Actions from Previous Meetings

13.1. The Chair reported that a question had been raised by a resident at the last meeting with regards to works to be done to the TPO on the Robinia Tree adjacent to the car park entrance of Westwood Court and why residents had received a letter on 18 January 2024 notifying them of works to be done under the provisional TPO when they hadn't yet received the notification of the TPO being made.

13.2. Clarification had been sought from the Planning Department who advised that there was an overlap of the process. As the applicant was ware of the provisional TPO they submitted a TALF application to do works to the trees. This was submitted before legal made the provisional TPO however, this was accepted as the Council knew that by the time the decision would be made on the TALF application, the provisional TPO would be in place. In any event, the provisional TPO provided the opportunity for residents to have their say on the application. The Planning & Development Committee had since considered the planning application and the TPO was confirmed as made.

14. Community Intelligence - Verbal Update from Councillors

14.1. Councillor Kreidewolf expressed frustration that the railings around civic drive roundabout which were removed a year ago had not been reinstated by Suffolk County Council although this was due to be completed by the end of August 2024.

14.2. County Councillor Bridgeman echoed Councillor Kreidewolf's sentiments and advised that he was still waiting for yellow lines to be installed at Upper Brook Street/Dogs Head Street and would keep chasing this.

15. Dates of Future Meetings

15.1. The Chair reported that the dates of future meetings were listed on the Agenda, with the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 30 October 2024 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.16 pm

Chair