

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

24 February 2015

Present: Mayor P. Mann and Councillors V. Allan, K. Armitage, C. Biggs, R. Biggs, A. Canning, S. Hosford, T. James, G. Jones, S. Jones, T. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, A. Lyall, R. Potter, M. Rennie and D. Roberts

Apologies: Councillors D. Barrett, T. Harries, T. Loakes and D. Taylor

In attendance: Mark Tattersall, Artistic Director of Dorchester Arts

39. Declarations of Interest

Councillors V. Allan, S. Hosford and T. James declared non-pecuniary interests as members of Dorchester Arts.

40. Dorchester Arts and the Municipal Buildings

The meeting received a presentation from the Town Clerk and Mark Tattersall.

Mark Tattersall introduced Dorchester Arts and their history, finances, personnel, and future aspirations.

The Town Clerk then explained current usage levels at the building, how it would be used differently if Dorchester Arts were to move onto the site, the limited impact on current users, and also the potential to introduce more users from the current Dorchester Arts site at The Grove. He also covered steps being put in place to avoid a breakdown in relationship and the financial implications of a move to the Town Council. Mark Tattersall explained the significance of the bar and how it would be managed. Finally consideration was given to the need for a longer term plan for the building, recognising the development of infrastructure in the town.

Councillors asked questions regarding the Dorchester Arts wage bill, the lease on The Grove, the level of physical change likely within the building, car parking and the level of additional income likely to accrue from the arrangement, and answers were provided.

Members commented on the need to ensure that the primary aim of the building should be to meet the diverse needs of the community, rather than focus primarily on income generation, and recognised that Dorchester Arts and some of its participation events represented a strong fit with that aim. They expressed support for increasing the profile, audience base, and offer of Dorchester Arts, recognising that increased footfall could translate into additional usage by other groups in the long term. They also recognised that the three years occupation period represented an opportunity to give consideration to the long term use of the site, within the context of new community buildings planned for the town.

A concern was raised in relation to appropriate signage. A councillor raised concerns about the financial implications of the move, and clarification was provided. A concern was also raised about being seen to focus on this one aspect of arts provision in the town, and the decline in the use of the building as a wedding ceremony and wedding reception venue. A response was provided on this last point.

Noting the need to ensure that the relationship worked for both parties a councillor asked that financial reports and risk registers were shared regularly, and it was confirmed that this would remain the case.

Being proposed by Councillor R. Potter and seconded by Councillor V. Allan, it was

Resolved

That Dorchester Arts be invited to relocate their operational activity to the Municipal Buildings for a period of no less than 3 years, commencing May 2015, on terms to be finalised and fully documented by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, and the Chairmen of Policy and Management Committees

The Council rose at 8.20 pm.

Mayor