

MEETING:	Penistone Area Council
DATE:	Thursday, 10 February 2022
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Penistone Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Barnard (Chair), Lowe-Flello and Wilson

29 **Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests**

No Members declared an interest in any item on the agenda.

30 **Minutes of the Penistone Area Council meeting held on 2nd December, 2021 (Pac.10.2.2022/2)**

The Area Council received the minutes from the previous meeting held on 2nd December, 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Penistone Area Council meeting held on 2nd December, 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

31 **Notes from the Penistone Ward Alliance held on 9th December, 2021 (Pac.10.2.2022/3)**

The meeting received the notes from the Penistone Ward Alliance held on 9th December, 2021.

RESOLVED that the notes from the Penistone Ward Alliance held on 9th December, 2021 be received.

32 **Clean, Green and Tidy Service - Twiggs Grounds Maintenance Year 2 Update - John and Wendy Twigg**

Wendy Twigg and John Twigg from Twiggs Grounds Maintenance were welcomed to the meeting to give an overview of performance and work carried out for the 2021/2022 contract period.

Members heard how it had been a difficult year due to a number of changes in restrictions as a result of the Covid pandemic, staffing changes and difficulties with recruitment, but that the Team had worked hard in adapting to all the changes in order to provide a continuous service and help out when volunteer groups had the need to isolate.

An overview of the services provided was given including flexing the service in order to provide support to other strained Barnsley MBC core services and of work undertaken and the groups and organisations engaged. The tool bank initiative was being used by a number of families and volunteers who were more dependent and

self sufficient in disposing of any rubbish collected themselves, this was evident from the 533 bags that had been requested with only 79 requested for pickup.

Members questioned as to whose responsibility it would be for the purple rubbish bag collections and were informed that this was mostly the responsibility of Neighbourhood Services but that Twiggs and volunteers themselves were also collecting and disposing of bags.

Sites had been maintained whilst volunteers had been isolating to avoid undoing the work achieved and support to keep those relationships and people positive by way of a phone call, email or visiting to chat through a window. A Plant Swap initiative had begun in order to link groups during isolation and a Christmas Tree competition supported by the Spar in Penistone.

An update was provided on the progress made with Team Greenmoor, HB+ and Royd Community Gardens as an example of the variety of work that volunteer Groups had carried out in their communities during the year and continued to do so with support and guidance from Twiggs.

Engagements with a number of businesses had taken place and members were informed that support had once again commenced with some Schools as they started to open up due to restrictions lifting.

Members were informed that Twiggs had made a number of environmental pledges including the widespread use of electric tools which were lighter to use, had no petrol fumes and were easier to maintain. Some vans had been fitted with battery chargers in order to charge the tools whilst travelling from one place to the next. A paperless system had been created in order to record and produce instant reports once a job had been completed. Green waste had been reintroduced, where possible, to put it back into the environment as opposed to disposing of it at a tip site.

The use of a herbicide free solution for controlling unwanted vegetation called Frontline Foam was introduced to members who were informed of the multiple uses and benefits it could give in a variety of areas such as kids playgrounds, weeds, algae and chewing gum. This was a product that could be used unrestricted in all territories reducing the use of glyphosate products in the environment.

A new apprentice had joined the Team following the resignation of the previous apprentice. Members heard how there were 7 apprentices in total in the Team on a rotational programme around the different areas in order to gain the most work experience in all aspects and areas of work carried out.

Staff training days had taken place in partnership with Oakwell Training Ltd and included manual handling, working at heights, needle stick awareness and blood born viruses, Health and Safety, Emergency First Aid and Mental Health Awareness. Members were informed that training had been set up independently during the pandemic as courses had continually been cancelled or rescheduled, and so in order to aid staff training in a timely manner Oakwell Training Ltd was created to carry out accredited in house training and to create specific packages and programmes on subjects such as How to use Power Tools Safely.

An update was provided on the work carried out on the Take a Seat campaign. A number of benches that had been earmarked for 'badging up' needed restoration and the general areas around them tidying up. Further work needed to be carried out to identify additional benches to aid the campaign.

In the independent household statistics, 32 adult volunteers and 13 young volunteers had been engaged along with 29 households receiving support.

In terms of volunteer engagement statistics, members heard that there were 459 sustained adult volunteers and 54 new ones but that the biggest increase had been seen in the young volunteers with 14 sustained volunteers and 40 new ones. In total there were 567 volunteers which had resulted in 831 volunteer hours being accrued and a financial return of £11,384.70.

Members enquired as to whether a monthly or weekly report could be circulated informing people of where work was scheduled to be carried out in their areas in order for people to take part or see what was happening in the future. They were informed that due to Covid measures and restrictions this hadn't been possible as Twiggs led events were unable to take place and smaller volunteer group meetings needed to be maintained and manageable in numbers. However, it was indicated that once all restrictions were lifted this would be reinstated and a calendar of scheduled events could be circulated either on a fortnightly or monthly basis.

Members raised the issue around planting trees and informed Wendy and John Twigg that if they identified an area that trees could be planted, then these could be funded from the Council as part of its commitment to plant 10,000 trees by 2023. They also enquired as to whether a project to plant some Christmas trees in the community could be created in order to have a future supply in place of commercially buying in expensive trees on an annual basis.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation and hard work undertaken by Twiggs Grounds Maintenance in improving the area.

33 Report on the Use of Ward Alliance Funds (Pac.10.2.2022/6)

Members received the report, noting its contents. The Area Council Manager drew particular attention to the £10,000 allocated to the Schools Out Fund which had received an application for a February Half Term Cricket Camp leaving a total of £7820 for further applications. Members were informed that a number of applications were expected in for the Easter holidays.

Members enquired as to whether the remaining funds had a deadline for being spent, they were informed that there was no deadline and could be carried forward as a Schools Out Funding pot or merged back into the Ward Alliance main budget.

Members noted that £11,768 remained in the Ward Alliance funds.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

34 Quarter 3 Performance Update Report (Pac.10.2.2022/7)

The Area Council Manager provided Members with an overview of Performance for Quarter 3 and all contracted Services.

Members attention was drawn to the comparison chart for the years 2020/21 to 2021/22 showing a positive upward trend in numbers confirming that things were moving forward and Groups were once again starting up and work with volunteers was more active.

Attention was brought to the significant increase in numbers for the quarter for residents and young people receiving advice and support, this was due to the inclusion of one of the young people projects that included providing advice to young people, whereas in previous quarters it had only included the CAB, Age UK and DIAL offers.

Twiggs numbers were exceeding their targets with working with groups, businesses and also with schools as things started to open up once more.

Lot 1 of the Supporting Vulnerable and Isolated Older People's grant, which had previously been extended had, amongst other things, provided one to one support for 26 existing service users and 23 had been offered information and advice.

The number of Community Car journeys had increased and had seen a move from just health visits to some leisure and educational visits. Intergenerational links had been welcomed with Thurlstone Primary school who had made 50 Christmas cards and donated 32 items of biscuits and chocolates which were given to Age UK to distribute to elderly residents. A number of activities had taken place over the Christmas period with Christmas lunch at Wortley Golf Club, visits to the Penistone Paramount and Cannon Hall.

Lot 2 had seen groups becoming active once again such as the Dementia Café at Penistone Leisure Centre which was making good progress. Particular attention was brought to the Penistone Men in Sheds group who had been helping Penistone Theatre Group out with set design and building, Age UK had used this as an opportunity to advertise in order to attract more people to join the men in sheds project.

Work had been undertaken around health immobility and healthy bones activities had been carried out in Thurgoland in conjunction with other health and leisure supporters. The Singing Group was doing well as well as the Tai Chi classes in Penistone which had been well attended.

Lot 3 had created a network which was being diverted and integrated into the larger age friendly agenda across Barnsley. A number of Berneslai Homes tenants bungalows had been fitted with solar panels in Oxspring had been identified and included in a battery storage project which was a collaboration between Berneslai Homes and Energise Barnsley, in order to produce a report to show what a difference it could make to households.

The Take a Seat Campaign continued to work with Twiggs in order to identify further benches to be included within the scheme. Age UK had looked at initiatives around helping older people with improved transport in rural areas and fed their findings into the consultation and review in conjunction with the South Yorkshire Mayor.

DIAL had received a significant number of people accessing their service with £115,000 of benefits claims supported with the majority being for Personal Independent Payments. DIAL had been working in conjunction with Public Health in order to carry out safe and well checks which had revealed a high incidence of loneliness. DIAL had hoped to commence face to face meetings in Penistone Town Hall but this had been delayed due to the Omicron variant, a date was yet to be agreed when this would commence.

Members were informed that whilst the Penistone Area Council had earmarked further funding from 2022, the project had also benefited from additional funds from the Lottery and the BMBC Advice Line Fund, which together had provided 28 hours of advice line support per week. DIAL had also provided Well and Warm packs for vulnerable clients by accessing the Local Support Grant allocated for the Penistone area.

Members raised a query as to whether fuel poverty had begun to be a concern, but at the time of the meeting this had not been highlighted as a major issue but that it would be monitored.

A significant impact had been seen with the Supporting Young People Grant Fund projects. Ad Astra had been continuing its work in Penistone Grammar School with pre 16 pupils providing advice and support. However due to restrictions in school, the proposed delivery model had required adaptation due to difficulties in securing a private safe space for individual contact, peer support to a group of pupils and planned walk and talk sessions could not be delivered resulting in reduced outcomes. Plans were in place for the Grammar school to carry out a baseline assessment for pupils to express their needs in order to direct future work.

Penistone Grammar School had put in place plans for mental wellbeing sessions for the post-16 pupils. Due to the impacts of Covid it had been unable to deliver on some outcomes detailed on the proposal. However, the school had recruited a volunteer Counsellor from Leeds Beckett University to carry out mindfulness/low mood sessions to pupils alongside the Pastoral Headteacher, with hopes to engage a further volunteer student Counsellor in the future.

Penistone Girl Guiding had created a project to support young women through positive experiences and activities as part of a 'Challenge' Badge and local event. The number of young women participating in the Girl Guides in the Barnsley West area had slowly increased as a result of the project. An open invitation for the Barnsley West area was to take place and Kingswood Outdoor Centre on 26th March, 2022 with 200 places available.

Angel Voices had continued its success with 31 regular attendees. Work carried on to get out into villages after successfully holding a workshop in Cawthorne. Two performances had taken place in Penistone Church and Cawthorne Hall resulting in £736 pounds being raised from ticket sales and given back for restoration funds. Members noted that a positive impact on confidence in the young people coming forward and helping with a variety of mental health issues such as low self esteem and lack of confidence.

Members heard how one of the projects hoping to come forward for funding from the Schools Out Fund was from Angel Voices in order to hold workshops in the Easter Holidays in greenspaces outdoors.

An update was provided on Penistone Leisure Centre which had unfortunately been delayed with its projects and outcomes due to a number of reasons. However positive progress had been made by recruiting and training some volunteers in order to operate from February 2022 onwards. A further update would be provided at a future meeting.

Penistone FM was progressing well with 2 groups of people trained and working on Podcasts. Links had been established with Penistone Grammar School in order to widen the training out to further young people. A visit was to be planned in order to see the work being carried out.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

35 Working Together Fund - Citizen's Advice Bureau Debt Advice Service Update - David Andy

The Area Council Manager provided members with an update on the Working Together Fund – Citizen’s Advice Bureau Debt Advice Service from the period October 2020 to December 2021.

Members were informed that additional funding from the Hardship Fund had enabled an extension to the contract to March 2022.

Some background information was provided about the contract and how it had started as a trial in April 2019. The accredited, free and confidential sessions were held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month in Penistone Town Hall by Citizens Advice Bureau staff to provide help on a number of issues including support on debt, money management and benefits.

Sine the pandemic the service had been delivered via telephone and email provision in line with government guidelines. 150 clients had been assisted in the period from October, 2020 to December, 2021 and 306 clients from the beginning of the contract, which on average equated to 10 contacts per month. A total of 274 issues had been dealt with which was around 1.83 issues per client.

Although the contract dealt with mostly debts, clients had been aided in claiming £42,139 worth of welfare benefits making a total of £187,762 since the project began. £1,066,069 worth of debts had been managed culminating in a total of £1,136,084 since the start of the project.

Members heard how the return on investment per £1 was £4 in benefits and £105 in debts, however this was skewed by just one client that was helped with managing £1million.

The majority of enquiries made and dealt with revolved around debt, benefits including tax credits and universal credit, relationships and families, employment and housing.

Members received a breakdown of profile data in the year to date which included 49% of clients accessing the service presented with long term health conditions or disabilities and an even split on male and female clients had been seen. For housing types a varied pattern of people had been seen with 13% who owned their own home and 14% lived in private rented properties but with 59% who preferred not to say. The employment status showed a similar picture with 23% identified as full time/part time/self employed and 8% on sickness benefit but with 63% not recorded.

RESOLVED that thanks be given for the presentation and that its contents be noted.

36 Procurement and Financial Update (Pac.10.2.2022/8)

The item was introduced by the Area Council Manager who commenced by providing members with an update on the Supporting Vulnerable and Isolated Older Peoples Service. The procurement process for the service had commenced and the timeline would enable the new service to be in place by the middle of May 2022. Members were informed that a Grants Panel would be held around April//May time and requests for member representations would be forthcoming.

Members were reminded that £33,599 remained in the Penistone Area Council Working Together Fund and that the CAB Debt Advice Service funded by the Grant was to end in March 2022. Members views were sought as to whether CAB should be encouraged to submit a further grant application form. Members attention was drawn to a Welfare Services Review that was underway within the Council. If approved the Area Councils may not have the need to fund welfare services in the future, however there was no guarantee that this would be up and running in order to provide a continuous service once this contract came to an end in March 2022. Members were supportive of the encouragement of a further application with a view to organising an urgent Grant Panel in order to protect the continuity of the service.

The Working Together Grant Fund – Supporting Young People projects were all progressing well following a delayed start due to the pandemic.

Members were informed that the Clean, Green and Tidy Service was nearing the end of its second year of the contract and that a decision was required as to whether members were satisfied with the service provided and if so whether they wished to extend to the third and final year of the contract at a cost of £100,000.

Members raised concerns as to the visibility of the Maintenance Team over the past year but were informed that this had been due to the pandemic and that the Twiggs Grounds Maintenance Team had adapted to working in different ways and encouraging different activities within communities.

Members were informed that the cost of the contract funded the delivery of a service such as contributions towards staff time, tools and equipment, the funding for an apprentice, waste carriers licence along with other administration costs.

Members queried whether this service was also funded by the other Area Councils, they were informed that 5 out of the 6 Area Councils had contracts with Twiggs Grounds Maintenance but that each contract had a different ask and need and that each one had been agreed through a rigorous individual procurement process.

Members agreed to the contract extension for a year but with the ask of increased visibility and improved communications around a timetable of visits and events.

It was noted that an amendment to the Penistone Ward Alliance budget was required due to a further project being agreed following the report being published resulting in £7,820 being left in the budget.

Members noted that work continued on the Private Sector Housing Support Officer and would be presented at a future meeting of the Area Council.

Members attention was drawn to previous allocations of money from the budget for publications in the Penistone Living Magazine which had left a budget of £1,157 available to spend. Members expressed their interest in producing further publications in order to publicise work being carried out in the Penistone Area and wished to allocate a further £3,000 from the 2021/2022 budget.

An overview of the budget was provided. Following the approval of the additional £3,000 for the Penistone Living Magazine fund, the 2021/2022 financial year end total to be carried forward into the 2022/23 financial year was £41,904.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the update of contracts funded by the existing Supporting Isolated and Older People Grant Fund be noted and that the timelines for the procurement of a new service be noted;
- (ii) that the update and current financial position of the Penistone Working Together Fund be noted and that the encouragement for an application from the Citizen's Advice Bureau to continue to provide a debt advice service for the Penistone Area be agreed;
- (iii) that the update on ringfenced funds within the existing Working Together Fund to establish specific activities that will support young people in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic be received and noted;
- (iv) that the updates on the new Clean, Green and Tidy Contract started in April 2020 be noted and that approval be given to continue the service for a further 12 months to April, 2023 at a cost of £100,000 from the 2022/23 budget allocation;
- (v) that the Area Council Manager contact Twiggs Grounds Maintenance who would be requested to be more visible and provide communications to residents and elected members on work due to be undertaken;
- (vi) that the update on the Ward Alliance budget be noted;
- (vii) that the update on the proposals discussed to procure Private Sector Housing Support be noted;
- (viii) that the wish to continue to publicise the work of the Penistone Area Council and Ward Alliance via the Penistone Living publication be agreed and that approval be given for the allocation of £3,000 from within the 2021/22 budget for this purpose;

(ix) that the financial position for the 2021/22 budget, inclusive of decisions taken within the meeting, be noted.

37 Community Listening Report (Pac.10.2.2022/9)

The Area Council Manager drew members attention to the Community Listening Report. Members noted the contents and were informed that the report had been a useful exercise in order to provide an indication of what people's thoughts were and would be a useful aid to help forward plan for future projects.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Chair