

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on WEDNESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2023

Present: Councillor M B Wyatt (Chairman)

Councillors M Burke, D Everitt, J Geary, J Legrys, J Windram and L Windram

In Attendance: Councillors S Sheahan (Observer), A Barker (Observer) and P Moulton (Observer)

Officers: Mr P Wheatley, Mr T Devonshire and Mr P Stone

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M French and J Page.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Wyatt declared a registerable interest in all items as the owner of two businesses in Coalville.

Councillor J Geary declared a registerable interest as the Council's representative for Coalville Town Football Club.

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor L Windram and

RESOLVED THAT:

Subject to amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

22. DRAFT 2024/25 COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES BUDGET

The Strategic Director of Resources presented the report.

A Member asked what the proposed Council Tax rise amounted to as a percentage and the Head of Finance advised that it was 7%. Officers then advised the Committee on the flexibility available to adjust rates, the impacts potential changes could have, and the place of Special Expenses within the budget setting process. Officers were also happy to clarify the nature of on-costs with a Member after the meeting.

A Member felt the public should be told about the oncost of providing services for Coalville Specials, in the February budget.

The Chairman sought clarification whether the contribution of local businesses to Coalville in Bloom was detailed in the budget. Officers agreed to follow this up outside of the meeting.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

23. 2023/24 EVENTS UPDATE

The Head of Property and Economic Regeneration presented the report.

Chairman's initials

A Member expressed concern with the increased expenditure on Christmas lights, to £34,000, and the fact that despite the investment there were still problems with them. In response, the Head of Property and Economic Regeneration advised that this figure included the storage and maintenance of the stock during the year. A sum of £4,000 was the figure spent on lights, which was not enough to solve all the problems in the stock which the Working Party was already aware of.

The Member felt that this indicated that the maintenance process was inadequate. The Chairman interjected and said that he had witnessed some of the contractors at work and was happy with them. Nevertheless, he felt a sub-group to examine the lights should be created, as the problem had been an ongoing one and needed resolving.

Members welcomed the Chairman's suggestion.

The Chairman suggested that the fair complemented the rest of the event. He also suggested next year there could be more child focused stalls. Overall, it was a busy event with broadly positive feedback.

Several Members expressed concern with the laser show, which they suggested had been underwhelming, as the Head of Property and Economic Regeneration had noted.

A Member said the event was pleasingly patronised although he was concerned with the parking provisions.

A Member asked who the contractor was for the lights. The Head of Property and Economic Regeneration advised that it was Field & Lawn, but local contractors were used in any repairs which were needed. Officers would investigate how issues with the lights could be resolved.

A Member asked what was the plan with the light columns which were predicted to fail in 2024. The Chairman said this was one of the issues he was proposing that a sub-group should tackle.

The Chairman said that there should be greater communication with regards to car parking at town centre events; furthermore, people should also be encouraged to walk where possible. The Head of Property and Economic Regeneration advised Members that it was a trade-off between using car parks for events and for parking; this would be examined in the future as to what the appropriate balance was. He added that an effort was made to communicate with the public.

A Member suggested that an approach should be made to Leicestershire County Council to utilise their site at Snibston in the future. The Head of Property and Economic Regeneration advised Members that this site had been identified as one to potentially use and would be considered again in the future.

A Member inquired whether the cost of the celebration of the fifty-year anniversary of North West Leicestershire District Council was coming solely out of Special Expenses budget. In response, Officers clarified that the whole budget for the celebration of the fifty-year anniversary of North West Leicestershire District Council would come from the General Fund. This would furthermore provide an opportunity, as the celebration would almost certainly take place in Coalville.

A Member sought clarification on precisely what the celebrations would be, and the Head of Property and Economic Regeneration advised that the details were still being worked through and would be discussed by the envisaged events working party. District-wide contributions would be solicited from Members.

A Member asked for the full balance sheets of every event to be presented to the Working Party and Officers were happy to provide that.

It was agreed that the Events sub-group meeting would be on 25 January 2024.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary seconded by Councillor L Windram, and

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The progress on the 2023/2024 events programme be noted.
- 2) The proposed Member Engagement for 2024/2025 events be noted.
- 3) That a sub-group to examine the Christmas lights situation be formed.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.15 pm