

MINUTES

Meeting: Devizes Area Board
Place: Online Meeting
Date: 14 September 2020
Start Time: 6.30 pm
Finish Time: 8.30 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

Tara Shannon Democratic Services Officer, Tel: 01225 718352 or (e-mail) tara.shannon@wiltshire.gov.uk

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In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Anna Cuthbert, Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Sue Evans, Cllr Richard Gamble, Cllr Simon Jacobs (Chairman), Cllr Laura Mayes (Vice-Chair) and Cllr Philip Whitehead

Wiltshire Council Officers

Dominic Argar (Assistant Multimedia Officer), Andrew Jack (Community Engagement Officer) and Tara Shannon (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Town and Parish Councillors

Devizes Town Council

Partners

Wiltshire Police
Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

Total in attendance: 34 in attendance and 15 watching the live stream

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
37	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed those present to the first virtual meeting of the Devizes Area Board and invited Members to introduce themselves.</p>
38	<p><u>Danny Kruger - Devizes MP</u></p> <p>The Chairman announced that unfortunately Danny Kruger MP had given late apologies to the meeting, due to a House of Commons debate which was happening that evening. However, Danny Kruger MP had recorded a video, which was played to the meeting.</p> <p>Comments from Danny Kruger MP included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devizes was a wonderful place that he was delighted to represent; • He had attended the Devizes Indie event, which was a great success, highlighting all the unique independent businesses in Devizes; • The pandemic was making life very difficult for people and businesses; • Devizes was well placed to benefit from the future economy of increased home based working and people being more focused on their community and local area; • Within government policy there was a great focus on towns and an increased focus on connectivity, including broadband connections and train stations. Plans for the Devizes Station were being developed which he fully supported; • Plans for the canal and Assize Court were very positive; • He felt Devizes was well placed to become one of the main tourism attraction for Wiltshire; • People were welcome to contact him to raise issues;
39	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julian Morgan, new headteacher of Devizes School • Oliver Price, Managing Partner of Wansbroughs Solicitors • Danny Kruger, Devizes MP
40	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 16 June 2020 were presented for consideration and it was;</p> <p>Resolved:</p>

	To approve and sign the minutes as a correct record.
41	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
42	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements</u></p> <p>The Chairman referred the meeting to two late announcement's that were published in the agenda supplement. These referred to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 and staying safe • Connect 5 – a mental health and wellbeing training programme, which was free of charge for community groups and individuals who had a role in supporting mental wellbeing. Those interested could contact kerri.lavendar@wiltshire.gov.uk for details. <p>There was also an announcement regarding the Area Board Boundary Review Consultation. Details of this could be found on pages 5-10 of the agenda and in agenda supplement 1.</p>
43	<p><u>Partner Updates</u></p> <p>Updates were received from the following Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire Police Acting Inspector Leighton Williams gave a brief update, Devizes Police had recently held their tasking briefing, which set priorities for the upcoming few weeks. Priorities included: Anti-social behaviour patrols; speed checks and beauty spot patrols. A community consultation event had taken place recently which was well attended and allowed the community to raise any concerns. The next community consultation event would be on 24 September between 9am and 11am in the Market Place in Devizes. Several drug warrants had recently been implemented. <p>The Chairman raised the issue of speeding and anti-social behaviour at Station Road car park, which the officer stated he would raise at their next tasking briefing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Station manager Phil People gave a brief update. The service was moving back into more business as usual. Recruitment was ongoing and positive action was being used to target more underrepresented sections of society, which seemed to be working well. Stations were working in a COVID safe manner, response had not changed but this meant that stations could not let in the general public. There had been an increase in road traffic collisions once lockdown eased. The force was proactive in trying to prevent these and used social media to try and push the road safety message.

- **Schools Update**

Mark Lacelles, headteacher of Dauntsey's gave a brief update. The situation regarding A level and GCSE results, caused by COVID, had been very difficult. It was hoped that things would be better next year. They had been concerned that international pupil numbers would drop at the school, but this had not been the case. The preparations to open the school had cost around £250,000 and ongoing costs were being accumulated weekly, so the pandemic was having a large effect. Sadly, the school had also had to close their facilities to outside clubs due to the pandemic.

Ralph Plummer, new headteacher of Lavington School gave a brief update. They had also experienced costs due to COVID, but it was positive to have students back at school and they had adapted well to precautions. A number of staff had been off self-isolating which could cause issues. Students were being taught in year group bubbles and teaching zones. Additional catering units had been deployed in order to maintain bubbles/zones. Additional buses had been added to routes to help transport pupils to school, which had caused a few congestion issues, these were being worked on. The school were preparing to teach remotely should that be required.

In response to questions it was stated that the satellite six form was working well, with 45 pupils on their site in the sixth form. The school had looked at staggered starts, however they had a lot of pupils arrive by coach, so this was driven by the logistics of transport.

It was stated that there had now been four outbreaks in Wiltshire Schools and there were concerns regarding the disruption of education. Lavington School had developed a remote working policy; the principles were in place and they were set up to deliver remote learning. Staff training had been increased in order to help with this.

It was clarified that while there had been outbreaks at Wiltshire Schools, none of these were the fault of the school. These were usually caused by 1 pupil testing positive and therefore the whole year group having to isolate.

Thanks was given to the schools for the quality of their communication during lockdown and the summer holidays. Feedback from pupils was that they were enjoying being back at school.

- **Devizes Town Council**

Simon Fisher, Town Clerk gave an update. They had worked closely with the team at St James Church on the community response to COVID. They had brought a lot of services in house over the summer, for

	<p>example open spaces management. They were looking at increasing biodiversity. The market had been kept open over the summer and was now thriving which was essential for Devizes. Plans for the Market Place could be discussed at a future area board meeting. The public were encouraged to contact Devizes Town Council with any comments or questions. They could be contacted by email on Enquiry@devizes-tc.gov.uk or phone on 01380 723333. Green Lane was another project that the Town Council had been working on. A new 3G pitch had been installed there and the facility was up and running.</p> <p>Cllr Mayes passed her thanks to Simon Fisher and the Devizes Town Council team for all the work undertaken in responding to COVID and setting up and running the community helpline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wiltshire YFC Steve Dewer of the 'Pop Up Youth Café' gave an update. The 'Pop Up Youth Café' did take place over the summer, with social distancing guidelines and COVID precautions in place. On average around 40-50 young people attended each day. Various activities were undertaken and youth workers present. Any youths struggling with issues could be paired with youth workers, for example from the Motiv8 team and there was a particular instance of a young person with serious issues who was helped and signposted to relevant services. So, it was felt to be a great success. Potterne Youth Club was still shut at present, although there was interest from the youth and the community in when it would open. It was not felt that it was appropriate to open it at the moment due to the possible mixing of young people from different school bubbles. Therefore, Steve was doing some detached work throughout Devizes and the surrounding areas to talk to young people within their settings. <p>In response to a question from the Chair, Reverend Keith Brindle stated that he was going to be meeting with the head of Devizes School to discuss St James' Church youth group. The situation was complicated at the moment due to COVID and most schools were not currently running activities/after school groups.</p> <p>Steve was thanked by Cllr Cuthbert for acting as a role model to vulnerable youngsters and for focusing on mental health.</p>
44	<p><u>Chris Welham, Chief Executive of Wadworth</u></p> <p>Chris Welham, Chief Executive of Wadworth gave a presentation to the meeting. The theme of which was Survive, Revive, Thrive.</p> <p>It was stated that things had been very tough due to COVID, but it was good that a lot of their pubs were now open again. Hospitality had been one of the first sectors to go into lockdown and one of the last to come out of it. Earlier in the year Wadworth had announced a strategy to build a new brewery, but that had</p>

	<p>now been placed on indefinite hold. Due to the lockdown the funds allocated to build the new brewery had become their working capital.</p> <p>It was explained that around £25 million in revenue had been lost due to COVID so Wadworth would be making a significant loss this year. This was quite common across the hospitality sector. They continued to brew during the lock down, but sales had been well down. Health and wellbeing had become a fundamental focus during the pandemic. Lock down had been difficult for their staff and for people in general. There had been an inspirational community response in Wiltshire.</p> <p>In order to survive when lock down was implemented Wadworth modelled events and strictly managed cashflows. Government support had been important to them, with 900 people furloughed, government grants claimed and senior team salaries reduced. On the implementation of lock down they cancelled all their tenants rent and even now rents were reduced for tenants. It was confirmed that the Shire horses used by Wadworth were safe and well and would hopefully be back in use soon.</p> <p>It was stated that sadly, Wadworth did have to make some redundancies in their breweries and offices. The company was restructured to rebuild. Pubs were running at reduced capacity due to social distancing, resulting in reduced cash flow. The trading environment was also impacted by consumer confidence. The company had spent a lot of time on their COVID protocol to ensure that their pubs were safe.</p> <p>The company was now moving from survival, to revival, in order to thrive. Restricted capacity due to social distancing was a concern, as they moved into Winter this may become more of an issue. The business was hoping to break even by the end of 2021. The current site needed significant investment, or they may need to move sites and would work with the Assize Court and Wharf plans. The flagship Bear hotel would be reopening on 17 September. The company would celebrate 150 years trading in 2025.</p> <p>Mr Welham thought that the next six months would be very tough. The company and hospitality industry needed a vaccine; proportionate media coverage; consumer faith; continued business rate holiday; the VAT cut on food and drink to be continued; local lockdown compensation and a headline cut on beer duty and general industry taxation.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Chris Welham for his positive presentation.</p>
45	<p><u>Jemma Brown, Devizes Indie</u></p> <p>Jemma Brown of OHM clothing gave an update on how Independent Devizes Businesses were dealing with the pandemic and recovery.</p>

Ms Brown stated that Devizes was a small town with a big heart facing the new world together. Recovery would be the headline for quite some time to come. Ms Brown owned an independent clothing shop which sold school uniforms. Devizes Indie was made up of independent business owners and the founders were herself, Justina Pettifer of The Healthy Life Company, Ida McConnell of Jackson McConnell and Giles Morgan of Kit Tags.

Ida McConnell had previously set up a website called www.indevizes.org.uk to highlight the independent retailers in Devizes. The group was backed by Devizes Town Council who had been very helpful. The group had put up large signs to say that Devizes was open and had set up Devizes indieDay, which was held on 5 September and was very successful.

It was stated that working together had been extremely helpful to these small, independent businesses. Since June the group had:

- Met with a cross party group of local politicians and Danny Kruger, Devizes MP;
- Surveyed retailers pre and post event to measure how they feel and what they need;
- Met with the Wiltshire Council Regeneration Officer;
- Promoted Devizes extensively on social media;
- Held the indieDay in town, engaging with retailers and the public in a COVID safe way and
- Supported young retailers slots on the Shambles on indieDay.

Devizes had a diverse array of independent shops. Over 65 independent shops took part in indieDay and it was a great success. The majority of those who took part said their takings were up 25-50% on indieDay.

Devizes Indie suggested they would like the following from Devizes Area Board:

- Support and recognition that their form of promotion worked;
- Rubber stamping that they were on board with the Devizes retailers and independents;
- Championing the 'Devizes Template' when networking and in the press;
- Financial support for training and workshops, volunteer training, and help with advertising costs such as branded gazebos for pop up events.

The Devizes Indie mantra was 'Devizes is Open!'

The Chairman thanked Ms Brown for her presentation and stated that the Area Board were behind independent retailers and all businesses and if they could help, they would.

Cllr Whitehead stated that he had worked with some Wiltshire Council officers on developing a brand they owned called the Wealth of Wiltshire (WOW), who were looking at putting local initiatives such as this within the WOW umbrella. The Chairman suggested that Devizes Indie could come back to the Area Board regularly to give updates.

46	<p><u>Update from business community/Devizes economic recovery</u></p> <p>There were no further updates or questions from the Devizes business community.</p>
47	<p><u>Assize Court</u></p> <p>David Dawson, Director of Wiltshire Museum gave an update on the plans for Assize Court. It was stated that he was working closely with the Devizes Assize Court Trust of which Cllr Laura Mayes was a trustee.</p> <p>Purcell Architects were working on plans for Assize Court and there would be a consultation day on 19 September. The Assize Court Trust bought the building a couple of years ago and had done a lot of work to make it safe. Lots of the building could be restored. However, to make it fit the new use of housing the Wiltshire Museum changes would need to be made, such as an extension to the rear.</p> <p>Nile Philips, the lead architect for Purcell gave an update to the meeting on the plans. The building was in a pivotal location and a key aspect in the canal wharf area's regeneration. Many options had been worked through and one had emerged as fitting most of the requirements, slides of this were shown to the meeting. It was hoped that the portico at the front could be linked to the canal area so there was a central spine through the building which would house retail space and a café. The South side of the building would be dedicated to the museum.</p> <p>It was stated that the scheme would provide a welcoming central space which would be open to all, free of charge. The two courts would be retained and become lecture and event spaces as well as possibly housing an audio-visual display. There would also be a learning facility for school parties. The first floor would house the offices and staff/volunteer spaces. The basement would be retained so visitors could see where prisoners were once kept and how they were brought up into the dock.</p> <p>On Saturday 19 September there would be an exhibition showing the plans so that people could come along and give their views.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked David and Nile for their presentation.</p>
48	<p><u>Air Quality</u></p> <p>Cllr Richard Gamble gave an update on the last meeting of the Devizes Air Quality and Transport Strategy Group (AQTS) which had taken place remotely on 30 July 2020.</p> <p>It was stated that representatives from The Trust for Devizes, Sustainable Devizes and Devizes Town Council were present. Also present was the Wiltshire Council team leader for Environmental Control and Protection. Air</p>

	<p>Quality for Devizes was on a generally improving trend, even before the positive effects on air quality of the lock down. The group were however keen to find improvements that could be made.</p> <p>Cycle routes were mentioned, for example improving links from the Lay Wood area and Potterne to Devizes town. It was hoped that a special meeting regarding cycling could be held soon. Sustainable Devizes had undertaken a consultation on cycling. Good access by public transport, for example to the forthcoming NHS urgent care centre and the Devizes Gateway Railway station were also discussed.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Air Quality and Transport Strategy group would be held on 6 October 2020.</p>
49	<p><u>Health and Wellbeing Group</u></p> <p>Andrew Jack, Community Engagement Manager gave an update on the Health and Wellbeing Group. The group had been gearing up to hold two events, an active event at the Shambles and Market Place in May and a social event in October. However, due to COVID both events had been postponed indefinitely and might now have to take place in 2021.</p> <p>Albert Wooldridge gave an update on the Devizes Men’s Shed. The Men’s Shed had not been open since the first week in March. The Shed was small so as a result of social distancing you could only have 1 person present, in addition to the person in charge and the first aider. They also could not use the facilities of the care home. Therefore, the decision was taken to close the shed. It was hoped that the area board may be able to help the group with their new shed. Shed members were due to renew membership on 1 January 2021 and many would not do this if there was nowhere for them to go. The Chairman agreed that he would try to discover what was happening with the plans for the new shed and would go back to the group with an update.</p> <p>Cllr Laura Mayes gave an update regarding the COVID support group which was set up during lock down and ran until 1 August. The team wanted to build on the legacy as many volunteers wanted to continue volunteering. So, they were in the process of transferring the COVID support group to a group called Devizes Co. There were a bank of volunteers and people/organisations looking for volunteers so it was hoped these could be brought together in a flexible way.</p> <p>Cllr Peter Evans gave an update on Link. Link had been in operation in Devizes since 1993 and aimed to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged, elderly or infirm people by providing transport and ‘good neighbour’ services. They had been unable to provide transport due to COVID which was a great shame. They were looking to the time when they would be able to start operating again and were looking for volunteers. Cllr Evans requested that people call Link on 01380 721755 to volunteer.</p>

50	<p><u>Community Engagement Manager Update</u></p> <p>Andrew Jack, Community Engagement Manager gave a brief update. He had been unable to undertake much of his usual role due to COVID. He wanted to highlight that the Devizes Household Recycling Centre, Leisure Centre and Library were now open, although with restricted opening hours. Residents could check the Wiltshire Council website www.wiltshire.gov.uk for further details.</p>
51	<p><u>Open Floor</u></p> <p>There were no questions from the floor.</p> <p>Cllr Whitehead clarified a point made earlier regarding isolating. If you had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID you had to isolate for 14 days, even if you had a negative test result yourself.</p> <p>If you had felt ill yourself, had a negative test and had not been in contact with a person who had tested positive, you could then stop isolating.</p> <p>Andrew Jack reminded the meeting that there was still grant funding available and encouraged groups to apply. They could contact Andrew on andrew.jack@wiltshire.gov.uk.</p>
52	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>There were no urgent items.</p>
53	<p><u>Close</u></p> <p>The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and announced that the next meeting of the Devizes Area Board would take place on 16 November at 6.30pm.</p>