

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **13 September 2018**

Title: **Chair of Lewes District Council's Civic Programme**

Report of: **Catherine Knight, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services**

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To consider (a) the Chair's 2017/18 civic programme and (b) the civic programme for the forthcoming year and budget provision.

Officer recommendation: To note the report.

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Information

- 1 The role of the Chair of the Council is as detailed in the Constitution:
- To Chair Council Meetings.
 - To focus his/her activities on the communities of the District (including communities of interest, as well as geographical ones) and, by focusing on the Council's priorities, strengthen links between those communities and the Council.
 - To act as an enabler and ambassador by arranging meetings between the Council and other parties for the benefit of the District.
 - To celebrate those people or groups in the District who do extraordinary things to help others in the community, and to recognise those whose everyday lives are a challenge but who succeed in spite of their difficulties.
 - To celebrate successes of partners involved in major projects with the Council, particularly projects steered by the voluntary sector.
 - To encourage activities that recognise and support staff.

2 Chair's engagements 2017/2018

2.1 During the year 2016/17, 62 engagements were carried out by the Chair (Councillor Stephen Gauntlett) and Vice-Chair (Councillor Linda Wallraven), excluding Council meetings. It is worth noting that it is not the volume of engagements that a Chair manages to attend or host during their year of office but the 'quality' of the engagements in terms of the local community that is important.

A 'quality' engagement is one which is in support of the Council's priorities and which takes place within the District. If the Chair is invited to attend an event hosted by a Mayor/Chairman of a neighbouring authority, unless the event is something that will enhance or support this Council's priorities and those of its residents, then the Chair is advised not to accept in an official capacity. He/she can of course attend if they wish but attendance is then financed by the Chair themselves.

2.2 One of the first events attended by the Chair was a Royal Visit by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester to Chailey Heritage Foundation for the official opening of Patchwork Farm on 14 June 2017.

2.3 The Chair's theme of office for 2017/18 was 'to encourage and affirm wildlife conservation throughout the District, particularly with young people'. Councillor Gauntlett attended a variety of engagements in order to develop this theme, such as the 'Marine and Clean' event at West Beach, Newhaven, the Lewes Railway Land Summer Festival, and a series of 'Greenhavens in the Biosphere' meetings. Following re-election as Chair in May 2018, Councillor Gauntlett plans to develop his theme further throughout 2018/19.

2.4 Lewes Heritage Open Days (held 6-9 September 2018) was once again supported by Lewes District Council, and the Chair hosted the launch event at Lewes House on 30 August 2018 and provided the welcome remarks. Guests at the launch event included the MP for Lewes, Maria Caulfield, and the Mayor of Lewes, Councillor Janet Baah.

2.5 In January 2018, Holocaust Memorial Day was marked in Lewes by events held at the Depot Cinema and Lewes Library, following the theme for the year, 'The Power of Words'. The events were organised by the Lewes Holocaust Memorial Day Group, and supported by Lewes District Council, Lewes Town Council, and the Depot Cinema.

The Mayor of Lewes for 2017/18, Councillor Michael Chartier, hosted a launch event at Lewes Town Hall on Friday 26 January, and this was followed by a film event entitled 'The Power of Testimony' at the Depot Cinema on Saturday 27 January at which the Chair provided the closing remarks. On Sunday 28 January, the film 'Cabaret', was shown, followed by the event 'The Power of Words' which featured Brecht songs and readings from the Holocaust and other genocides, with Klezmer music by 'Matzos'. An exhibition 'Refugees and Asylum Seekers' was displayed in the Studio Depot Cinema, along with the photos from the 2017 exhibition of refugees, 'How Can Life Go On?' by Jenny

Matthews.

The events were successful and very well-attended. Collections at the events raised £422.50 for three local refugee charities.

This was the fourth Holocaust Memorial event organised by the Lewes Holocaust Memorial Day Group. It is expected that the 2019 events, following the theme, 'Torn from Home' will also take place at the Depot Cinema.

- 2.6 One of the Chair's last events of the year celebrated the 'Unsung Heroes' of the District, and was held at Lewes House on 28 April 2018. Guests received drinks and a buffet lunch, and were entertained by a group of musicians called The Constance Owen Trio. The 19 Unsung Heroes were also presented with a framed certificate by Mr Bill Shelford, Deputy Lieutenant. Amongst those who received a certificate were three members of the Sea Cadets (nominated by Councillor Liz Boorman), three members of the Seaford Lifeguards (nominated by Councillor Linda Wallraven), members of HOMELINK (nominated by Joan Wignall, Chair of HOMELINK), and volunteers who run the local youth sail training group in Newhaven (nominated by Councillor Bill Giles).
- 2.7 The event was the fifth of its kind to be hosted by the Chair of Lewes District Council, and was once again a great success.
- 2.8 In 2017/18, the Chair hosted and attended events as diverse as award ceremonies, festivals, exhibitions, theatre productions, AGMs, remembrance events, and concerts.
- 2.9 19% of the Chair's engagements took place outside the boundaries of the District, all of which were in support of the Council's initiatives, and included the SERFCA awards ceremony in Worthing hosted by the Lord Lieutenants of Sussex, the 75th Anniversary of the Dieppe Raid Commemorations in Dieppe, Eastbourne Borough Council's Holocaust Memorial Day event, and the East Sussex Prayer Breakfast hosted by the High Sheriff in Uckfield.

3 Year 2018/19

- 3.1 Councillor Stephen Gauntlett's theme of office for 2018/19 continues to be 'to encourage and affirm wildlife conservation throughout the District, particularly with young people.'

It is not possible at this time to set out a detailed programme for the whole year; this has still to be determined. The following events will take place/or have taken place:

- The 76th Anniversary of the Dieppe Raid Commemorations, 18-19 August 2018.
- The annual bonfire night celebrations at Lewes House, 5 November 2018.
- Remembrance events to mark the conclusion of the First World War centenary, 11 November 2018.
- A film festival at the Depot Cinema to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, 26 January 2019.

- A 'Community Champions' event in April 2019.

4 Financial Appraisal

- 4.1 The total budget available to Councillor Gauntlett as Chair of the Council in the municipal year 2017/18 was £10,000. Total expenditure incurred was £7,878.64. As Councillor Gauntlett was re-elected as Chair in May 2018, the remaining budget can be utilised in the 2018/19 term of office, and any remaining can be donated to the Chair's chosen charities at the end of this term. The budget allocation for the Chair's 2018/19 term is £10,000.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

7 Equality analysis

This is a routine, procedural report with no potential for negative impacts.

Therefore, an Equality Analysis is not required.

8 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Chair's engagements 10 May 2017 – 2 May 2018