

## Chairman's Report 2015-2015 for the Community Well-being PDG

It was mainly business as usual this year with no particular excitements as the Grants Allocation Scheme has now bedded down and in the current situation of restraints organisations accept that there is only one way we are going with less money for all, but we are trying to temper this with fairness and alignment with our corporate priorities .

We commenced the year after the usual formalities with a presentation by Mr Mike Ball on behalf of the Devon Community Foundation on the work they undertake; made recommendations to Cabinet on the direction that the Community Engagement Strategy & Review should take and be reported back to this committee. The benefit manager updated us on the Local Welfare Assistance scheme, universal credit yet to be implemented by our area and members views were sort by Amy (Head of Communities & Governance) on what we felt constituted an older person for the purposes of a five year older persons strategy. This was evolving from the Ageing Well Committees' recommendations to Scrutiny. As you probably remember there was much discussion around the definition of older persons and we all disliked those patronising signs of stooping elderly people. Too close close to home for most.

The July meeting covered a report outlining the future Grant Allocation as the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 had marked the third and final year of the process to date. It was suggested that there should be a two yearly review and applicants should be divided into groups prioritising those giving essential services to our residents and also aligned with out strategic Council objectives. This was duly recommended to Cabinet. We were also updated on Leader Funding ( although we did not learn much at this point) The Head of Customer Services also updated us on Digital Transformation (an ongoing process) and how it linked in with our Customer Care Policy to be reviewed at a later date.

In September the Leisure Services Manager gave an overview of our centres which are holding up well, due to the effort put in by dedicated staff as the goal posts are always being moved. The Lords Meadow (LC) Crediton, which has had considerable development with more to come, has justified the investment and its painful rebirth. The Manager assures us it has been a worthwhile exercise . We recommended to Cabinet that the revised Customer Care Policy be approved and that financial Monitoring and Performance and risk be noted.

At the November Special Meeting to allocate grants for 15/16 we used Seed Fund money to reduce the CAB by only £2500 making a total allocation of £47,500. Initially it was felt justified to make a bigger cut as Mid Devon was perceived to be getting less from CAB than North Devon. However they to are undergoing changes with a district wide telephone advice line being rolled out . T & DCT and Crediton DCT had their grants cut by 5%. The amended seed fund was approved.

December's meeting included the noting of the ongoing financial monitoring and the budget for 14/15 and we recommended to Cabinet that the Anti Social Behaviour , Crime and Policing Act 2014 be adopted and that Delegated Authority be given to the Chief Executive to appoint Officers under the Act and to co-ordinate a consistent level of fines across all Devon Authorities. It is a sobering thought that things can only get harder in the future and at this point in the financial cycle we had a draft budget gap of £650K and nor would we know until the last minute what our formula grant would be for 15/16. The public consultation showed that the most valued services were firstly :- refuse/recycling .Secondly, open spaces and play areas and thirdly Enviromental Health. Those least valued were community grants, public conveniences ( strange as they are always concerned when they are closing) and Community Safety.

In January we had the first Presentations from our Grant funded Agencies, these were the GWC and CAB being the recipients of our largest amounts. GWC 15/16 £45K, CAB £47500. Both gave very

informative presentations justifying fully their need for our grants. We had wanted this for some time and have endorsed a future schedule to cover our remaining grantees in descending order of the amounts they receive. Budget Update and Performance Risk were duly noted and it was agreed that full review of the ongoing management and operation of the Town Centre CCTV takes place. The whole arrangement despite a great job being done with slender resources, seems to have come about in an adhoc manner .

We have one more meeting in March which will cover the usual financial monitoring etc. and another presentation by our Grant Recipients.

It only remains for me to thank all the officers for the work that they all contribute to this committee and out very patient Committee Clerk Julia and last but not least the members themselves.

Heather Bainbridge  
Committee Chairman