

The Guildhall  
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# Minutes

**Meeting of** : Community Services  
**Date** : 24 February 2025  
**Meeting held in** : The Guildhall, Salisbury  
**Commencing at** : 6.30pm

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Present:

Chair: C Corbin                      Vice Chair: C Stanway

Cllrs: J King, S Charleston, J Nettle and S Rideout

Officers: Andrew Hunt and Sarah Gregson

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## 1. Apologies:

Cllr A Hoque and Cllr T Corbin sent apologies.

## 2. Public Questions/Statement Time:

There were no questions or statements submitted by the public.

## 3. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

There were no questions or statements submitted by Councillors.

## 4. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the last meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 2 December 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

## 5. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr J Nettle declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Salisbury Pantry matter due to their role as a trustee of Safe and Supportive Salisbury.

## **6. Dispensations:**

No dispensations were requested.

## **7. Chairman's Announcements:**

The Chair, Cllr C Corbin, made the following announcement, 'Without wishing to steal Sarah's thunder with the full report later, but there have been some amazing community engagements since our last meeting the impact that the pantry has on those who need help, the clothing drive where old outgrown coats etc can be passed on to people who otherwise would go without is a great display of empathy and community spirit.

The way under Sarah's guidance the community connections with other groups and resident empowerment has been phenomenal. The community services department is one in the council which shouldn't have a surplus of funds but sometimes does it has continued to grow in delivery and meet within its means serving the many residents who engage with the services. Again, not wishing to steal our RFO's thunder either but with the clearer reporting which you will see later it is easy for any interested resident to see how and why delivering these services has helped to work with other established groups and empower residents to start new ones.

Now if I may take the liberty to stray into the murky waters of public toilets there is a misconception that all the market square toilets will close in March. This is not the case the disabled toilet was never going to close to the public. The recent/current issue we have had relates to the pump which serves all the toilets this failure was unexpected and would be necessary to ensure the disabled loo remains open and accessible.

I have asked a couple of questions of officers for clarity and if they wish they can answer now.

As you'll see financial decisions are never easy and often do not meet all residents or councillors' desires, at either SCC or Wilts level. It is fine to be challenged about political decisions but when those attacks become personal from members of the public or councillors it is not acceptable and becomes bullying, something we should all not tolerate. SCC has a budget which did get cross party support at F&G proposed and seconded by the opposition, so the budget has been set as a collective and each committee's budget forms part of the upcoming year a year which promises to be full of great community effort and aspirations for the city as a whole.

This may well be the last community services I serve as chair, but I would like to say that it has been an enjoyable experience and the interactions with residents and the staff at SCC have been largely positive. Hopefully I will return in May but if not, its been a pleasure, and I have many memories which are cherished.'

#### **8. Budget Monitoring Committee Reporting Schedule 2024/25:**

The committee received a budget monitoring report regarding from Head of Communities, Sarah Gregson. The Report for April to November 2024 detailed income and expenditure against budgeted amounts. The report shows no variances over £50,000 and outlines updates to cost centre structures for better transparency, The council discussed and it was:

##### **Resolved that:**

8.1. The Committee notes the financial position at the end of November.

8.2. The Committee Acknowledge the Council's current financial position.

#### **9. Communities Team Update:**

The committee received a communities teams update from Sarah Gregson, Head of Communities, the update outlines significant developments in community engagement and support.

Membership numbers have increased across various programs, with household members growing to 1,292 and active shoppers reaching 384. Key initiatives include the successful Great Salisbury Toy Drive, which distributed 306 toys worth £10,000, and the "Bring a Tin to Work" campaign that collected 73 crates of food. Additionally, the Community Café hosted numerous events like a Christmas dinner for 60 people and a Winter Clothing Event.

New activities were also launched in January 2025, such as a dementia group and a sign language course. The Friary Garden Project was highlighted as a community-driven initiative, focusing on developing a communal garden with the involvement of local residents and partners. These efforts demonstrate the council's commitment to fostering a supportive and active community environment.

The council discussed and it was:

##### **Resolved to:**

9.1 To note report

#### **10. Rent Reduction Policy Review Update:**

The committee received a report from Sarah Gregson, Head of Communities, on

the rent reduction policy, This report summarises amendments to a draft of the revised rent reduction policy, which were agreed upon during the Events Grants and Markets Committee meeting on January 27th.

The committee discussed and It was:

**Resolved that:**

10.1 Amendments to the policy draft are approved.

10.2. The policy draft is recommended to Full Council.

**Proposed by:** Cllr S Charleston

**Seconded by:** Cllr J Nettle

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**.

**11. Matters, if any, which by reason of special circumstances the Chairman, decides should be considered as a matter of urgency:**

None were raised.

There were 0 members of the public who presented, and no members of the press present.

The meeting closed at 19:15.