



Wokingham Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1AS
Tel: 0118 978 3185 www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk
Town Clerk: K. Hughes

This Council Meeting is open to the Public and Press
Please notify the Officer or Chair if you wish to record the meeting

14th January 2025

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Arts & Culture Committee** to be held in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** at **7.30pm** on **Monday 20th January 2025** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the agenda below.

Yours sincerely

K Hughes
Town Clerk

Contact Officer: Gemma Cumming, Arts & Culture Officer
Direct line: 0118 974 0889 Email: gcumming@wokingham-tc.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive any declaration of interests from Members on the business about to be transacted.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC

The Chair to answer questions raised by members of the Council or public.

This is an opportunity for the people of Wokingham to ask questions of, and make comments to, the Town Council. Members of the public are requested to restrict their questions and comments to three minutes. Questions which are not answered at this meeting will be answered in writing to the person asking the question. To ensure an informed response, please send your questions to the Town Clerk at least three working days prior to the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and resolve upon the Minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of this Committee held on 4th November 2024 (pages 17082 to 17085), copy attached, as a true and correct record.

5 MONITORING REPORT

To receive and consider the Monitoring Report dated 14th January 2025 (copy attached).

6 COMMITTEE BUDGET

To receive and consider the Committee's budget dated to 31st December 2024 (copy attached).

7 CHRISTMAS MUSIC

To receive and consider the suggestion by Civic for Arts & Culture to take on the Christmas Music event. (copy attached)

8 DRESSING THE CHRISTMAS TREE

To consider a report on the recent Dressing the Christmas Tree event. (copy attached)

9 SCIENCE WITH SCHOOLS

To consider a report on the recent Science with Schools event. (copy attached)

10 COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a) To receive information items raised by members.
- b) Identify any specific items for marketing purposes.

Arts & Culture Committee: Cllrs Barrie Callender (Chair), Susan Cornish, Philip Cunnington, Alexandra Domingue (Vice Chair), Alexandra Fraser, Matteo Fumagalli, Maria Gee, Alwyn Jones and Morag Malvern.

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, all persons attending this meeting are hereby notified that this meeting will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is that it acts as an aide-memoir in assisting the clerk of the meeting in the compilation of minutes. The recordings are held in a secure location and deleted once it has been resolved that the minutes are a true and correct record.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014, persons attending this meeting may make their own recordings of the proceedings subject to the Council's Policy on Filming, Recording & Reporting on Council and Committee Meetings (copy available on request).

04th November 2024

Minutes of the proceedings of the **Arts and Culture Committee** meeting held on this day in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19.30 to 21:41

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr B Callender

Councillors: P Cunnington, A Domingue, A Fraser, M Fumagalli, M Gee, A Jones, M Malvern and R Comber (the Mayor).

IN ATTENDANCE

Arts and Culture Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were apologies for absence from Cllr S Cornish.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

There were no questions from members of the council or public.

ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr A Domingue and seconded by Cllr P Cunnington and it was

**RESOLVED
30944**

that the Minutes of Arts and Culture Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2024 (pages 17040 to 17042), copy attached, be received as a true and correct record. A vote was taken, which was 6 in favour.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 29th October was received and considered.

Human Library

The application was filled in in September we are now awaiting results of the application.

Book Festival Feedback from 7 – 11 year olds

Still to get feedback from School Councils and relevant councillors. Extend where possible to English leads and/or school librarians. Will be used to inform future years.

Sunny Saturdays Working Party

To be discussed under Agenda Item 10.

Painting Utility Cabinets

To be discussed under Agenda Item 8.

Diwali/Visakhi Celebration

To be discussed under Agenda Item 8.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Changes to Dressing the Christmas Tree

To be discussed under Agenda Item 12

PA System for the Council

Cllr Cunnington gave a verbal update on the work he had been doing to source possible suitable options for a PA system for the Council. The choice and options had proved more extensive than he had anticipated and would like further clarification on potential uses before making any suggestions. It was noted we would need to include the Town Clerk as any budget request was now too late to go through A&C via normal budget setting and the usage of such a system would also be beyond just A&C usage.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Scoring System

To be discussed under Agenda Item: 7

Cllrs Fraser and Fumagalli joined the meeting.

COMMITTEE BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

The Arts and Culture Committee's budget dated to 30th September 2024 was received.

SCORING SYSTEM DISCUSSION (Agenda Item 7)

The new version of the Scoring System was discussed in comparison to the previous one. The changes were noted with some trepidation about the reduction in qualitative criteria. The movement towards a narrative addition within reports to help inform Councillors when considering aim and event value was explained, and the Committee was reminded that they could weight the criteria to manage a disparity between the number of quantitative and qualitative criteria.

It was decided that the best way to measure attendance (considering the significantly different in scale events) was by percentage of maximum capacity.

It was noted that the scoring system was a piece of work that still had scope to be refined and still needed automating. Councillors were reminded that they still needed to consider weighting and using it would be the best way to identify improvements. It remains a tool to help guide discussion around events rather than as a hard measure.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER AND COUNCILLORS

FUTURE EVENTS (Agenda Item 8)

A report updating the Committee on the status of a number of proposed events was presented. The Committee were comfortable with updates to the Diwali event, which at this time was being investigated as an external project that might look for grant or other support from the Town Council. Councillors were keen to keep an eye on the event, especially if it were to be looking for Town Council support. The Arts and Culture Officer indicated that they were due to catch up with Cllr Jamthe and the Town Clerk about the concept and should the organising group request significant support, a request for additional Councillor support from Arts and Culture should be considered, which would ultimately be

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



the Town Clerk's decision. The Committee were keen for the Officer to continue to work with the organisation to help formulate the event.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

Cllr Comber asked about process for any other external groups who might be interested to share culture and create their own events. The Committee indicated that any group should consider how their event might align to Council values and that there were opportunities in the Cultural and Community Grant fund for financial support. The Arts and Culture Officer also noted that they, or the Town Clerk, are always happy to be contacted with ideas.

Work would also be continuing to look into the Painting Cabinets proposal.

The Committee considered the 2026 Lunar New Year recommendation. It was proposed by Cllr Fraser and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

**RESOLVED
30945**

to request from F&P an increase to the Lunar New Year budget in line with CPI for next financial year. The vote was 7 in favour with one abstention.

The Arts and Culture Officer's idea to explore extending the Tabletop Takeover to include a Teens only event in the Summer Holidays was discussed. It was proposed by Cllr Malvern and seconded by Cllr Domingue and it was

**RESOLVED
30946**

to commit time to exploring the concept further.

ACTION: ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICER

CHALK ABOUT IT (Agenda Item 9)

The Committee received and considered the Chalk About It report. The event was discussed thoroughly.

It was proposed by Cllr Callender and seconded by Cllr Fraser and it was

**RESOLVED
30947**

to no longer support this event. The vote was unanimous.

SUNNY SATURDAYS (Agenda Item 10)

The Committee received and considered the notes from the Sunny Saturdays Working Party Meeting and the report from the Arts and Culture Officer. It was proposed by Cllr Fumagalli and seconded by Cllr Cllr Cunningham and it was

**RESOLVED
30948**

to no longer support this event. The vote was unanimous.

The Committee agreed that the Working Party had completed it's task and was dissolved.

BOOK FESTIVAL (Agenda Item 11)

The report on this event was received and considered.

The Chair was able to announce that More Arts had offered, as part of their disbanding, a final donation to support the Book Festival Outreach in 2025. The Arts and Culture Officer reminded the Committee that if they wished for this to remain a sponsored part of the event that support would be needed to identify potential sponsors.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



**RESOLVED
30949**

It was proposed by Cllr Malvern and seconded by Cllr Comber and it was

to maintain the ticket price at £3 a seat and follow the suggestion by the Arts and Culture Officer to request to F&P to take the overall budget for the Book Festival down to £7000, which is to be made up of £3800 precept allocation, £1400 ticket income target and £1800 outreach sponsorship income target. The vote was 6 in favour with two abstentions.

DRESSING THE CHRISTMAS TREE FUTURE (Agenda Item 12)

The future of the event was considered. It was asked if there was scope to merge the event with the Winter Carnival to improve efficiency. Ultimately it was agreed that it was felt important to maintain a School's focused event and that the Winter Carnival was already complicated and very busy and this would add an element of complexity that would not be possible or beneficial for the experience of the students.

**RESOLVED
30950**

It was proposed by Cllr Callender and seconded by Cllr Domingue and it was

to request from F&P an increase to the budget to take it to £1900 total. A vote was taken with 7 in favour with one abstention.

It was agreed to continue to talk with the schools about the Dressing to see if anything would help inform future improvements to this event.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 10)

- a) Cllr Callender noted that he had been approached by a Reading arts institution and would visit to find out more in case there were opportunities to support the arts in Wokingham.
- b) There were no items for immediate marketing.

CHAIR

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Monitoring Report: Arts & Culture

Date: 14th January 2025

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
6 th Nov 23	Human Library (further investigation)	Arts and Culture Officer	April 2025	Application filled in in September. Now awaiting further contact.
15 th Jan 24	Book festival feedback from 7-11 age groups	Arts and Culture Officer and relevant committee members	Nov 2024	Feedback has been pursued but nothing coming back. Suggest feedback continues to be pursued as part of the normal feedback process but this item be removed from the report.
15 th July 24	Painting Utility Cabinets	A&C Officer	April 2025	Information and permissions being pursued.
2 nd Sept 24	PA system for Council	Cllr Cunnington	July 25	Suggestion went to F&P and moving through usual budget procedure. Suggest to remove this item as outside of A&C remit now.
2 nd Sept 24	Scoring System	Officers and Councillors	Jan 25	Scoring System complete for now barring work from Cllrs to automate the scoring system and consider any weighting. It should be considered a working document where suggestions for refinement come from using it for a while.
4 th Nov 24	Teens Tabletop	A&C Officer	September 2025	Usual partners for Tabletop are interested, Schools to be engaged with in early 2025.
4 th Nov 24	Outreach funding for Book Festival 2026	Officers and Councillors	October 25	We will not longer have Outreach funding for the Book Festival in 2026. Could all actioners consider options for possible sponsors for this activity in 2026.

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2024

Month No: 9

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	Transfer to/from EMR
304 Arts & Culture							
1159 Book Festival Income	3,291	5,676	3,600	(2,076)			
1164 Lunar New Year income	0	250	100	(150)			
1253 Fun Day Income	520	756	350	(406)			
1266 Board games income	274	228	1,000	772			
Arts & Culture :- Income	4,085	6,911	5,050	(1,861)			0
4329 Website Maintenance	0	474	0	(474)	129	(603)	
4341 Concert	60,602	67,353	67,245	(108)	50,743	(50,851)	
4343 PRS Licence	0	0	600	600		600	
4345 Book Festival	5,994	6,167	7,800	1,633	98	1,535	
4346 Human Library	0	0	250	250		250	
4388 Theatre in the Park	3,701	4,202	4,000	(202)		(202)	
4389 Board Games event	359	184	1,000	816		816	
4512 Sunny Saturdays	1,695	950	3,000	2,050		2,050	
4513 Dressing the Christmas Tree	1,602	1,550	1,350	(200)		(200)	
4526 Lunar New Year	8,332	1,766	11,950	10,184	9,194	990	
4527 Chalk about it	4,050	3,846	4,320	474		474	
4603 Fun Day	13,487	18,163	18,100	(63)	420	(483)	
4608 Virtual Museum Upgrade	4,439	0	0	0		0	
Arts & Culture :- Indirect Expenditure	104,261	104,656	119,615	14,959	60,584	(45,625)	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(100,176)	(97,745)	(114,565)	(16,820)			
6001 plus Transfer from EMR	1,481	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(98,695)	(97,745)					
Grand Totals:- Income	4,085	6,911	5,050	(1,861)			
Expenditure	104,261	104,656	119,615	14,959	60,584	(45,625)	
Net Income over Expenditure	(100,176)	(97,745)	(114,565)	(16,820)			
plus Transfer from EMR	1,481	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(98,695)	(97,745)					



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report ?/2024-25

To: A&C Committee
 Date: 26/11/2024
 Subject: Civic Suggestion to take on Christmas Music

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the suggestion from the Civic committee that Arts and Culture take on Christmas Music on the dissolution of More Arts.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Christmas Music event predates the formation of the Art and Culture Committee.
- 2.2 It was a Civic event where carols were sung and refreshments and mince pies were shared. The earliest recorded version of the event I could find has the REME band performing outside and then a small civic reception inside with a collection for the Mayor's Charity by Councillors and Honoraries.
- 2.3 It has traditionally been an event that has been for the older residents.
- 2.4 The event then fully moved inside by 2012. After the pandemic and with an acknowledgement that this event had grown beyond the capacity of Officers at this time of year it was decided to offer it to More Arts to organize.
- 2.5 As More Arts will no longer be in operation by December 2025 the Civic Committee were asked about the future of this event when considering next year budgeting. The suggestion of the Town Clerk to offer the event to the Mayor's Charity each year was passed over in favour of suggesting if Arts and Culture could run it.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 3.1 When this event was running in 2012 it was a reasonably simple event. Like many events it has grown more complicated over the last decade due to changes in H&S regulations, requirement to ticket it to manage numbers, and many changes to available performers.
- 3.2 Post the pandemic and with a shift to advertising the event online and needing to ticket in advance it has lost a number of its older attendees. Shifting the event to younger with families audience.
- 3.3 Resources are a challenge however. This would move the event back to requiring overtime from staff to manage the event on a Saturday. Moving it to A&C would also add an additional event where there isn't capacity to do one. The Christmas Music event is 5 days after Dressing the Christmas Tree and would fall within an already busy and difficult period.
- 3.4 December is a very challenging month to progress upcoming events. Almost all the professional organisations we work with are managing a busy Christmas events period and the voluntary organisations are volunteer led who are busy with personal Christmas preparations. Adding to workload at this time will protract planning and organization for Lunar

New Year and Spring Tabletop to their detriment and with a knock-on effect into Fun Day prep.

- 3.5 The planning of this event would happen on top of Book Festival and Autumn Tabletop and be simultaneous with Dressing the Christmas Tree's prep. Which is already stretched with the addition of marketing this event to the wider public.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the Committee does not accept the suggestion to run this event.
- 4.2 That the Committee accept the suggestion by the Town Clerk to offer this event date and format to the Mayor's Charity to run. It has always been an event that support the fundraising of the Mayor's Charity and should remain so. Councillors are reminded that Officer time on charitable projects should be minimized.

Gemma Cumming
Arts and Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 12/2024-25

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 9th December 2024

Subject: Dressing the Christmas Tree

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the 2024 Dressing the Christmas Tree and to look forward to the 2025 event.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Dressing the Christmas Tree is a long-standing event where the schools of the Town create and present handmade decorations to the Town Mayor at a weekday evening ceremony in the Market Place.
- 2.2 It predates the Arts and Culture Committee and was originally done by the Town Christmas Tree, then located in the larger area of the Market Place. With the moving of the tree to the smaller triangle area as part of the Market Place redevelopment the ceremony remained where it was, as it was necessary for audience safety to use the larger space.
- 2.3 Over the years it has been improved to ensure the schools work is highlighted without the backdrop of the tree and that performances and Mayor/MC are heard through the use of a PA system.
- 2.4 The event tends to last approximately 45 mins to an hour and is well loved by the schools.
- 2.5 The decorations are placed on the tree later that same week, as it requires a hi-lift to do this properly.

3 2024 EVENT

- 3.1 The Dressing was broadly the same as last year.
- 3.2 We had 14 town schools who made decorations. Four less than last year (last year was an exceptional number). It's unclear the exact reasons some schools couldn't attend, however a few were planning to attend but had to pull out due to lack of available staff.
- 3.3 As the event was by invitation to the local schools and thus has an excellent turnout, there is minimal need for marketing. However, in a desire to encourage attendance from the wider public the Committee requested to increase the marketing to promote it as an open event.
- 3.4 Marketing required some careful and clear phrasing to not accidentally encourage out of town schools to attend with extra decorations, encourage schools to not let the Officer know they were coming, or have additional decorations (without parameters being met) being delivered by residents.
- 3.5 The Arts and Culture Officer was also aware that there was no budget (due to known overspending on the event) to utilize paid methods of advertising nor were we used to adding it into the workflow at that time of year. As a result, the marketing was minimal, focused around social media and we plan to expand it year on year.

- 3.6 In a change to previous years, we swapped the choir for a brass band. This was well received by attendees although it didn't noticeably increase the number of attendees singing. The brass band, however, are far easier to hear over and through the audience than the choir would be.
- 3.7 We continued to make song choices with a mix of carols and festive songs. This was due to a suggestion to ensure the songs chosen are ones the children are more familiar with and enjoy.
- 3.8 We have requested feedback from the schools as it seemed a few had ideas on the night that might add to the event. We have also specifically asked about timings and contacts to discuss improving or extending the event to ensure it remains an event that focuses on the children as the heart of it. To date one school out of 14 have responded.
 - 3.8.1 Schools feedback noted the disinclination of the audience to sing along which was also picked up by councillors and staff. More singing took place around individuals who were already singing so if it were possible within budget to seed more of that that might encourage more singing.
 - 3.8.2 It was also suggested that there should be more councillors around in Christmas hats and that the Mayor was looking a little lonely on the stage. It would certainly be possible to add to the Mayoral party a little by asking the Deputy Mayor or a Past Mayor to join him should they be free.
 - 3.8.3 From Councillors it was asked if it were possible to ensure all schools stay for the whole duration. Sadly, it is not within our gift to require them to stay. Extra provision might encourage them to hang around a little longer but would be no guarantee and would increase workload and likely have a knock-on effect to budget. It is a weeknight (a school night!) in cold and often wet December.
 - 3.8.4 It was also asked if it were possible to have one or two school choirs on stage to sing with the Mayor. Functionally this is very challenging due to the shifting nature of the event, and to do properly would impact the budget significantly (due to the need for additional stage space, sound equipment etc.). We would also need to consider fairness and make the offer to all attending schools. It could be further discussed with the schools about desire and viability and look into the impact on the budget.
 - 3.8.5 Finally there was an idea about the Mayor giving a Christmas card back to the schools at the handover. This should be doable, the Arts and Culture Officer would just need to work with the Civic Officer around timings for when the Mayor's Christmas cards would be ready.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND OTHER COSTS

- 4.1 The allocated budget for this event is £1350. This covers the stage, structure for the decorations, Gazebos, barriers, lighting, PA System and sound engineering. It also covers the Hi-lift needed to put the decorations up. It has not changed in a number of years and, as previous reports have mentioned, overspent.
- 4.2 The total expenditure for the event was £1550. An overspend of £200.
- 4.3 An uplift, as requested by this Committee, is currently working through the budgeting process. This should allow to manage increasing costs with some funds being available to support marketing.
- 4.4 Overtime is also created through the Arts and Culture Officer and Mayor's Attendant supporting the set up, running and clear down of the event.
- 4.5 Volunteer support by Councillors is a necessity for the smooth running of the event and the safety of attendees.

5 NARRATIVE AND ALIGNMENT TO KEY PRINCIPLES

5.1 Being Sustainable:

- 5.2 Dressing the Tree is a low impact event. It uses on-site electrical power and doesn't directly produce large volumes of waste. The Scouts manage waste produced by their activities.
- 5.3 Schools are encouraged to produce decorations through recycling.
- 5.4 Assuming an audience of 500 and a spend of £1550, cost per Band D is 9p and per attendee £3.10.

5.5 Involving Everyone:

- 5.6 This event focuses on the local schools and we make reasonable adjustments where possible to support students of all types of school. We ensure that the more complex needs schools go first followed by schools with students from younger to older. We also requested a Councillor to act as advocate and specific support for the schools with more complex needs.
- 5.7 As this event is focused on children, song choice is made with them in mind. It also considers that this event is for students of diverse backgrounds, so a combination of fun carols and other holiday inspired songs is preferred. Reflecting Christmas as both a Christian and secular holiday.
- 5.8 This event achieves its desired demographic.

5.9 Fostering Town Pride

- 5.10 The local schools having an hand in the decorations on the main community tree is a source of pride. They are cheerful and fun and schools are keen to get involved.
- 5.11 There are not many events the Town Council undertakes where the tangible results of being involved are so apparent.

5.12 Enriching Community

- 5.13 This event supports creative activity within the local community
- 5.14 It attracts several hundred people, primarily there to support the children who made the decorations.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 No major changes to this event that will further impact budget.
- 6.2 For the Officer to consult with the schools on this event.

Gemma Cumming
Arts & Culture Officer



Wokingham Town Council

A&C Officer's Report 13/2024-25

To: Arts and Culture Committee

Date: 10th December 2024

Subject: Science with Schools

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the outcomes of the Science with Schools event that took place in November 2024.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This event was envisioned to be a brokerage project to engage schools with universities and industry, and expand knowledge on the range of STEM based careers there are. To frame STEM subjects wider than secondary learning and to engage with specialists who can bring a new light onto STEM subject matter.
- 2.2 The Holt and St Crispin's have taken up the offer for a number of years. Other schools have yet to respond to it or queries surrounding it.

3 THE EVENT

- 3.1 There were no ongoing costs associated to this event.
- 3.2 As per last year the Arts and Culture Officer with Cllr Fumagalli and the schools to set up and run the event.
- 3.3 It remains very challenging to find a time that suits all schools. Schools stick to a set timetable and can't easily disrupt that. Both schools prefer to have this event during a normal science lesson and we continue to be fortunate that the attending schools have at least one time in the fortnightly schedule when they both have science at broadly the same time. Even so the timetables do not perfectly align so sessions can never be a full hour.
- 3.4 The schools also do not know what their timetable for September will look like until right at the end of the academic year or even not until September itself. This make scheduling speakers very challenging. They both however still wish to have the event in the Autumn Term.
- 3.5 The Holt and St Crispin's were involved in early conversations about what topics might be of most interest to their students. This year AI in biodiversity was one of the suggested topics.
- 3.6 Technological failures during the event were a challenge. Both schools had issues with their connections and their set ups. Neither are available to do a test directly with me in advance.
- 3.7 Many thanks to Cllr Domingue to step in as Master of Ceremonies to help introduce and direct the front facing aspect. Which left me free to try to fix and advise on technical aspects in the background and keep an eye on timing.
- 3.8 Cllr Fumagalli again organized the speakers. Speakers were more challenging to get hold of this year.

- Lin Wang is a Lecturer at QMUL. His research focuses on audio and visual signal processing, robotic perception and machine learning. He developed audio-visual signal processing and AI techniques for intelligent sound sensing and bioacoustics monitoring. He applied machine learning techniques to human activity and context recognition from wearable sensors. His presentation will focus on Intelligent sound sensing with AI.
- Alice De Schutter is an Investment Associate at Edaphon, a Belgian impact fund that supports sustainable agriculture and biodiversity projects globally. In her role, she identifies and evaluates new opportunities, focusing on both their environmental and financial aspects. Alice also researches environmental science, industry trends, and regulations to guide investment decisions. With a background in environmental engineering, she is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to projects that aim to make a meaningful difference for the planet.

4 FEEDBACK

- 4.1 The event was well received by all. Schools were grateful for the opportunity.
- 4.2 The digital session still seems to be the best option to work for having the same session in multiple schools and to increase choice in speakers.
- 4.3 It remains very difficult to coordinate a session between multiple secondary schools. The schools did not agree a date until return from summer holidays. That has an impact in agreeing speakers.
- 4.4 While the desire by the Committee to engage with the other Secondary schools serving the Town as catchment is positive, the reality is that the other schools are currently not interested and arranging around more timetables is going to be even more challenging.
- 4.5 The schools are also very challenging to contact with repeated chasing emails to arrange a suitable time and date. This year Science with Schools was much later than usual due to challenges in getting responses from schools and them getting double booked.
- 4.6 Cllr Fumagalli continues to take on the task of sourcing speakers. Every year this event has happened we have requested other Councillors to offer possible contacts for future events. Often with the result of some promise but no follow through. This event is predicated on the support of a singular Councillor with professional knowledge and contacts. The Arts and Culture Officer does not have the contacts, or understanding of the Science industry to easily source options, and is low on time to take on a task that would be so outside their experience. However this should also not fall to a single Councillor.
- 4.7 This event is not significantly complex compared to other events the Committee manage however for an event of this scale and output it does have surprising resource tied to it. Especially in chasing responses.

5 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE COUNCIL

5.1 Being Sustainable:

- 5.1.1 This is a very low impact event that is entirely online
- 5.1.2 Speakers come at no cost to us as this relies upon industry and academic provisions to offer speakers for such programmes as part of their paid employment. This does limit choice somewhat and it is unclear if this style of provision extends outside of STEM.

5.2 Involving Everyone:

- 5.2.1 This event aims to include a variety of speakers, across gender, ethnicity and career path/industry. It remains important to maintain diversity within this event.
- 5.2.2 The digital offer has the potential to reach students across the Town without having to travel, and include STEM based academics and industries around the country. However balancing this, using organizations that are local or well known does tend to make the session more grounded for the students.

5.3 Fostering Town Pride

5.3.1 Can engage with local scientists

5.4 Enriching Community

5.4.1 The only event of its kind in the Town that we are aware of. Although similar work may take place within school settings.

5.4.2 It has potential to inspire students about specific STEM topics and add depth to learning.

5.4.3 It has potential to be expanded to other schools although this may be very challenging logistically.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Consider if the Committee wishes to retain this activity

6.2 Should the Committee wish to retain the activity:
Consider if the Committee wish to suggest a focus for a future year that feeds into one of the key principles. Or remain content to leave that organizational level to the Officer in conversation with the schools.

6.3 Require more input from Councillors to offer support or contacts for finding future speakers.

Gemma Cumming
Arts & Culture Officer