

Feith Chooses Steering Group

Notes from Meeting on 17 July 2023

Time line

Abigail has just noticed that the Face to face voting event is on the weekend she has had booked (for a long time) to go away (20th January) – can the date be changed? Agreed that 13th January would be too early, but 27th January could be OK in terms of Council time to process votes, Awards Night & payments etc.

But - This would mean reviewing the overall voting period. We had originally agreed to give (nearly) 3 weeks, with the Voting day at the start of it, closing at midnight on 8th Feb., hoping for a count of the online votes on 9th Feb.), followed by Awards Night sometime in week beginning 12 Feb.

We could only stick to this overall time period IF:

- We keep the face to face day as the start point but only give (slightly less than) 2 weeks online voting from then
OR
- We open the online voting on 20th January (or 22nd?) and give 3 weeks, but with the face to face voting event in the middle of the period.

It also leaves less time for counting the card votes, for which we need Council supervision (Chris Highcock) and a room booked at the library. But there ought to be enough time for this between 27th January and 9 February?

ACTION – Jade will email Don, Jack, Bruce to see if they are OK with revised date of 27th January.

ACTION – Jade will liaise with Rob Levick re availability of Community Centre on 27th, and check re costs of Community Centre overall

ACTION – SG needs to discuss the implications of this in conjunction with the discussion and plans re paper based voting in libraries (see below)

ACTION – *only once the dates are finalised* – Jade will contact Chris Highcock re council support for vote count.

Budget

Jade has spoken to Andrew Field about budget for funding LC but he has given no clear answer, seems reluctant to commit anything to writing. He has suggested coming to meet again with Steering Group. Unclear what info he might need from us on top of what he already knows, and people likely to be away over next few weeks so not ideal to meet at the moment – but we need answers back by 16th August at the latest.

ACTION – Sally will email Andrew Field on behalf of SG, outlining main points.

Costs – Agreed that if trying to keep costs down to a minimum, we could:

Lose – costs of Royal Mail envelopes for postal voting; the creche at face to face day (little used), free food

But would have to

Keep – lamp-post wraps; banners; hire of tables and chairs, cost of Community Centre?; update of graphic design; wrist bands, voting cards, printing; labels etc. Also supply basic tea, coffee, biscuits?

Additional fund-raising could also be considered.

ACTION – Sally will contact Andrew Field Ltd. (hirer out of tables and chairs) to try to get a quote for costs. (Caroline's records of how many to hire is lost. Minimum 30 tables and 60 chairs?)

Paper-based Votes issue

Importance of paper-based voting is to offer an alternative to people who are digitally excluded - this still holds good as a principle, even if there is a face to face day (as often people are also unable to make that day).

Agreed that postal votes are not worth doing again - **assuming that the face to face voting day takes place** – as there were very few posted via Royal Mail, last year. Agreed that paper based votes only work if the voting station is 'staffed' by someone from SG who engages with voters. This is labour intensive, for SG members. Agreed that votes collected in Utilita, Wee Memory Hub and OotB were few and not worth the effort. If collecting votes via a ballot box, this should only be in the 2 libraries. That would be easier to 'staff' with LC volunteers – not spread so thin.

Problem is that this would theoretically offer people THREE opportunities to vote. But we were planning on offering only TWO (online and face to face day). Is this acceptable? The only way round this would be to only offer paper based voting in libraries AFTER the face to face voting day – which would have been OK if voting day was on 20th January at the very start of the voting period, but is not OK if it is held on the 27th, in the middle of the voting period, as it only leaves from 29 January – 8 February for voting. **Also, it means that** SG volunteers would be tied up staffing the library vote in the same week as they would be needed for the card vote count

Discussed – helping someone in person to vote online is not the same as letting people take a paper form and read it through fully in their own time. One volunteer transferring the content of someone's paper vote into an online vote on site (just after they've left the library) is not best practice – there should be at least 2 people present to counter check. But that may be a possible model to aim for. (Because - bear in mind that counting up all the paper-based votes afterwards is time and labour intensive. Best practice (at least three people present at all times – 1 to read out, 1 to enter into database and 1 to monitor) will still need to be maintained.)

So – not a straightforward decision

ACTION - Agreed to discuss again with more people present

Agreed to have feedback survey / themes vote stall at next face to face voting event.

ACTION – SG need to start designing a simple form for this. We will need to offer a few sample Themes as choices, alongside 'None' and 'free text' box(es) for people to suggest their own. (Unlikely that people will be able to think up much 'on the spot'...?)

Agreed to have a 'Children's Vote' again – under 8 year olds to vote for best stall (using card votes in separate ballot box)

ACTION – Susan will contact Debbie Douglas asap, and ask her to organise this again as previously.

Support for Applicants

Suggested having an afternoon, split into 2 sessions. 1pm – 4pm (for those coming as part of their work day) and 5pm – 8 pm?

ACTION – Susan will contact the Head at Norton Park asap, to try to identify a day in September.

Caroline's Leaving do

Jade still doesn't have a date for this. Agreed that LC SG would like to participate in a general Council event (rather than having a separate event) in order to demonstrate to all our immense respect and gratefulness for her work.

ACTION – Susan will tell people her bank details so they can pay her back for the painting she bought for Caroline £20 each? (Douglas and /Sally have paid, so far.)