

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

A meeting of the Huntingdon Town Council was held in the **MEDWAY CENTRE, MEDWAY ROAD, HUNTINGDON**, on Thursday 5th January 2012.

- Present: Councillors A Beevor; A Bish; A Blackwell; S Hassell; W Hensley; P Kadewere; A J Mackender-Lawrence (Town Mayor); C Mackender-Lawrence; S Mulcahy; and J Skerry.
- In attendance: County Councillor, Sir Peter Brown; Sue Bedlow; Katy Sismore; Dr Angela Owen Smith; Gail Anderson; and one member of the public.
- Absent: Councillors A Ellington & R Subhan.

The Mayor's Chaplain opened the proceedings with prayers. The Town Mayor welcomed everyone, wishing them a Happy New Year and highlighting the 2012 Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee as events to look forward to.

45. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Akthar; A Cole; T Forster; C Hyams; N Pauley; T Sanderson; and J Sarabia.

46. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Skerry declared a personal interest in item 5 of the agenda, by reason of his membership of the Board of Directors of Huntingdon Town Partnership.

47. **MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 27th October 2011 (M5) had been circulated in advance of the meeting, following their informal approval by the Town Mayor. It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED that these were a correct record they were duly signed by the Town Mayor

48. **PUBLIC ADDRESS/ADDRESS BY OTHER COUNCILLORS TO THE COUNCIL**

The Town Mayor proposed that the meeting adjourn in order to hear representations from members of the public and it was

RESOLVED so to do.

Sue Bedlow, Economic Development Officer for Huntingdonshire District Council, addressed the meeting on the subject of item 8, appointment of representation to the Business Improvement District Task Group.

Members heard that Ms Bedlow firmly believed that a Business Improvement District would be of benefit to Huntingdon and supported the initiative as an opportunity for local businesses within a defined area to determine priorities on which a proportion of business rates collected within that area might be spent. She explained that the Business Improvement District did not mean increased rates, but simply that a portion of existing rates collected by the District Council would be ring-fenced and used as funding for initiatives adopted in the Business Improvement District's Business Plan.

Members were advised that a BID offered potential for a whole range of advantages, such as improving the physical environment and helping businesses save money, by central procurement of essential services, such as insurance or safety initiatives. Insurance premiums could be reduced both as a result of economies of scale and also reduced risk. Whole town marketing would result in greater impact than the cumulative effect of lots of small individual business efforts. Waste disposal was another potential for shared initiative between the ratepayers in a Business Improvement District.

The Council heard that Huntingdon Town Partnership was leading on the project and that District Council was delighted to be lending the project financial, Officer & Member support. The purpose of a Task Group would be to develop the BID and the process would involve a baseline agreement on existing local service provision, ensuring that only services over and above the responsibility of the local authority were funded by it.

Sue Bedlow suggested that the Council's representative to the Task Group should be someone who was comfortable with the BID concept and able to act as an ambassador during its development.

Members asked questions about the rateable value threshold, which the meeting heard would be established by the BID Task Group. Asked how much revenue the BID was likely to raise, Sue Bedlow said this was estimated at 1.5% of rates raised locally, yielding £265,000 per year. A question was asked about the difference between Business Link and the Business Improvement District. And finally, Members heard that the funding of CCTV was traditionally a contentious issue for some BIDs and that there was already one known opponent to the funding of CCTV provision in Huntingdon, likely to be a BID partner.

Sue Bedlow was thanked for her comments and it was

RESOLVED to reconvene.

49. **HUNTINGDON TOWN PARTNERSHIP**

The Town Mayor welcomed Katy Sismore and Angela Owen Smith to the meeting and heard a presentation on the Town Partnership's activities during the year. Information was passed to the Town Clerk and Members at the meeting.

The Town Partnership representatives thanked the Council for ongoing financial support, as well as for partnership work on various local projects and initiatives.

A Member expressed the view that an audit was required on street furniture in the town centre and that some effort should be applied to removal of that which was redundant.

The Town Mayor proposed a vote of thanks for both the attendance of the Town Partnership representatives at the meeting, as well as the work of the Partnership in the interest of the town and it was

RESOLVED so to do.

50. **REPORTS FROM COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

County Councillor, Sir Peter Brown, addressed the meeting. Members were reminded that County Councillor Kadic had arranged a briefing for 26th January, at Stanton House, at 2.00pm. Members would be informed then about future development of the ring road, associated with the imminent West of Huntingdon Development.

Members heard the County Councillor's concern about traffic speed limits in the town centre and suggested combined support for a standard 20mph limit within the ring road in certain areas.

As Chairman of the Neighbourhood Panel, the County Councillor advised that the next meeting was planned for 7th February. A change in format was planned, with the meeting taking place between 10.00am and 12.00noon, at St Peters School, when young people were being encouraged to attend. Youth Town Council Members were also encouraged to attend.

With regard to the year ahead, the County Councillor considered that the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Torch Relay provided opportunities to promote the town and that a campaign for the return of a Tourist Information Office was required.

It was proposed that the County Councillor was thanked for his report and

RESOLVED so to do.

51. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

Copies of the minutes of the following meetings had been circulated in advance of the meeting and for each of these, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to receive, approve and adopt the recommendations therein:

- (i) Leisure & Community Services Committee of 10th November 2011 (M5)
- (i) Finance Committee of 28th July & 15th December 2011 (M3 & M6)
- (ii) Planning Committee of 24th November and 15th December 2011 (M3 & 4)
- (iii) Planning Applications Panel of 27th October, 10th & 24th November & 15th December 2011 (M12, 13, 14 & 15)

52. **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

A report before Members asked for the appointment of two representatives to the Business Improvement District Task Group and the Chairman clarified that since publication of the report, the recommendation had changed as a result of advice from the District Council, which was that only one representative was required.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Skerry as the Council's representative to the BID Task Group for the meeting planned for 12th January 2012, but to re-consider the matter at a future meeting, in the light of the change reported by the Chairman.

53. **MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES**

Members had before them a draft Calendar of meeting dates for the meetings of the Council and its main Committees for the ensuing twelve months.

A Member asked if consideration could be given to organisation of Planning Applications Panel to take place prior to main Committee meetings and it was agreed that this was possible. It was otherwise proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the schedule of meetings as presented.

54. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members heard about forthcoming Mayoral Charity Events, which were a Swing Band Evening, featuring RAF Wyton Band and the Mayor's Charity Ball, on 17th March 2012.

The Town Mayor also advised Members about an event to open the Regional College, which he would be attending with the Mayoress and that the High Sherriff would be hosted on a local visit to the town by the Town Mayor on Wednesday 11th January, at 9.30am, when a presentation had been arranged to take place at the Medway Centre, involving a number of local groups and organisations, before the High Sherriff was taken on a tour of the Town.

MAYOR