

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
LEISURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall on Thursday 4th August 2022.

Present: Councillors A Blackwell; K Brockett; J Cole; D Cole; C Doyle; S Gifford; M Kadewere; P Kadewere; P Kennington; B Luckham; A McAdam; S McAdam; A Norton; T Sanderson (Chairman); P Pearce; S Sweek and K Webb.

Absent: M Baker.

12. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor G Shiels.

13. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr A Norton declared an interest in Item 25 – Building Assets as a member of St John Ambulance.

14. **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

Members of the public indicated that they wished to speak, and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

Graham and Sarah Wilkinson from Spotlight Productions informed Members that Spotlight were required to move out of their current storage facility for costumes and scenery, and requested support with finding an alternative. Spotlight currently paid a peppercorn rent to Urban & Civic for storage, but would be prepared to pay for an alternative. It was noted a storage unit would not be suitable due to damp. Members suggested contacting RAF Wyton and RAF Alconbury to see if they had a suitable space. It was requested that anyone with ideas or useful contacts get in touch with Spotlight.

Stephanie James addressed Members regarding Item 23 – Sallowbush Road Land, and requested that the Council considered registering the remaining strip of land at Sallowbush Road as Public Amenity Land to protect it from being built on in the future. County Cllr Jonas King supported this request, and added that Hotel Chocolat had also not kept to agreements regarding hedges, bird boxes and lighting. County Cllr King also noted it was good to see discussion of replacement land for the Sallowbush dog walking area on the agenda.

A Member noted that the land could be registered as Public Amenity Land by anyone. The Town Clerk clarified that registering the land through Fields In Trust offered better protection, and this would need to be done by the land owner.

A Member asked that the Council considered repairing the outdoor fountain at the Town Hall, and noted it was important for drinking water to be accessible as summer temperatures continued to rise. The Town Clerk explained that Cllr Hufford had raised this during her time on the Council, and that funds had been put into the budget for this. It was also suggested that the Council approach Anglian Water to see if they would be willing to support the refurbishment.

The same Member also raised an objection to the proposed removal of a tree in the All Saints Church churchyard due to damage to the wall, and requested that the wall be relocated if possible. It was pointed out that as a Council with a reputation for being eco-friendly, HTC should be protecting trees. It was explained that as far as the Office were aware, the tree was damaging the wall of the church itself so would not be able to be moved, but this would be clarified.

Members voiced their support for registering the Sallowbush Road land as Public Amenity Land, and also noted the importance of consulting the community before decisions on how land would be used in the future. Members also noted that they would like to see facilities such as seating installed to create a community area.

With no further comments or questions, it was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to reconvene the meeting.

15. **MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of the Leisure and Community Services Committee meeting held on 16th June 2022 (M1) had been circulated to Members before the meeting, the draft having received informal approval by the Chairman.

It was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

16. **RECOMMENDATION OF SUB COMMITTEES**

Members had before them the minutes of the Media Sub Committee held on 7th July 2022 (M1).

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to receive, approve and adopt the recommendations contained therein.

Cllr Sanderson noted that he was listed as absent on these minutes, but was not a member of the Media Sub-Committee.

17. **HUNTINGDON IN BLOOM**

The Assistant Town Clerk gave an update on Huntingdon In Bloom:

- Judging for the Huntingdon In Bloom entry took place on 20th July which had gone well, and informal positive feedback had been given. The results would be announced at the awards ceremony on 7th September, which representatives from the committee and community groups would be invited to attend.
- Entries additional special award and virtual categories had also been submitted.
- Huntingdon In Bloom Facebook and Instagram pages had been set up to share In Bloom activities and updates.
- £25,000 had been secured to install parklets at Sainsburys and the Bus Station. They were expected to be completed in Autumn 2022. A Member asked if they were temporary or permanent, and it was explained they were permanent.
- Plans were in place for In Bloom projects with some local schools in the upcoming school term.
- The landscaping at the Coneygear RHS garden was completed, and ready for the planting by Arit Anderson, which would hopefully take place during August. Planting with the schools and community groups would then take place in September.

A Member asked if the newly installed planting around the train station would be maintained. It was explained HTC had previously enquired about managing the planting, but it was managed by a national contractor for the first 12 months. The Assistant Town Clerk noted that Huntingdon In Bloom had previously worked on some planting at the Train Station, and would contact them about future work.

18. **CONEYGEAR CENTRE MANAGER UPDATE**

The Assistant Town Clerk provided Members with an update from the Coneygear Centre Manager:

- The volunteers' residential trip to Grafham Water had been agreed, with funding being provided by the Police Commissioner & Youth Fund, Godmanchester Food Bank, Rotary Club of Huntingdon Cromwell, and Huntingdon Rotary.
- Cases of COVID-19 among staff, volunteers and service users at the centre had been increasing.
- The National Lottery application to refurbish the Snack Shack had been unsuccessful, and alternative options were being investigated.
- Sound panels were currently being installed in the Hall and Meeting Room.
- Referrals for the summer snack shack project had increased considerably, with 72 families referred for support each week. This figure was continuing to rise.
- The Coneygear Community Day (previously the Coneygear Gala) would take place on 4th September 2022. Any Members available to help at the event were asked to contact the Centre Manager.
- Issues with the Snack Shack accounts were still ongoing, so the Snack Shack money would be ringfenced in the HCAP account, to allow the

Community Café to open in September 2022. It was intended that the café would open on Tuesday and Thursday to coincide with the library and internet suite.

19. **HEAD GROUNDSMAN UPDATE**

The Town Clerk provided Members with an update from the Head Groundsman:

- The Estates Team had started hedge cutting along Coneygear Road and would then be cutting hedges along other footpaths.
- Planning had begun for the 2023 summer planting, and it was intended to use plants better suited for the increasing temperatures.
- Some members of staff were on leave due to the school holidays.
- Grass cutting had been stopped due to the dry weather.
- The newly planted trees were being watered twice a week, but were still struggling in the heat.
- The Deputy Head Groundsman had returned to work.
- The winter bedding would be planted earlier than usual due to the summer bedding dying off earlier due to the heat.
- Tree and hedge planting was planned for the autumn.
- It was requested that budget be allocated for a replacement ride on mower in the upcoming year.

A Member noted that a resident had requested that hedge cutting was delayed until later in the year to allow the fruit in the hedges to be picked, as they were currently being cut before the fruit was ripe.

It was also noted that the saplings planted at Coneygear Park by a community group appeared to have died. It was acknowledged that the trees were struggling in the heat even with watering twice a week.

20. **BID MANAGER UPDATE**

Paul Sweeney, the BID Huntingdon Manager, provided Members with an update on BID activities for 2022:

- The issues with the street drinkers on the Market Square were ongoing. Members of the group gathering regularly had been issued with Community Protection Warnings (CPW) through the police and Huntingdonshire District Council. If the CPWs were not followed, Community Protection Notices (CPN) would be issued. These would need to be enforced by the police. Any incidents should continue to be reported to the police.
- The dinosaur day event in July had attracted record numbers of people to the Town Centre. The BID Manager thanked Members for their support.
- The new murals at Literary Walk and Newtons Court had been completed. It was hoped they would help to engage the younger generations in the town's heritage. More murals were also being planned.
- A supervised trick or treating event in the town centre was being planned for Halloween 2022.
- It was noted that after the Christmas Market and lights switch on, there was not much going on in the town centre in the lead up to Christmas, so activities including a snow globe, snow machine and choir performances

were being planned.

- The cost of installing speakers in the High Street was being investigated. This would allow music to be played and could also be used for events such as the Remembrance Parade.
- Welcome packs for new residents were being produced and would be given out to Estate Agents. It was suggested that a copy of the Huntingdon magazine could be included with these packs.
- The ballot for BID to continue was upcoming. Businesses would receive ballot forms from 17th August, and the results would be announced on 16th September. BID's 5-year business plan was available online. Members were encouraged to support BID, and share the work they did, but were asked not to engage in discussions about the ballot on social media or attempt to change the mind of anyone voting against BID.

A Member asked if there were any plans to redo the mural at the back of the Commemoration Hall. It was explained that discussions were taking place with the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association to arrange a mural with artists from each of the twinned towns

A Member asked if murals would be added on the other walls at Literary Walk. It was explained that some of the walls could not be painted as they were Listed, but it was intended to paint the wall at the side of the vape shop.

21. **STUKELEY MEADOWS TRIM TRAIL**

Members had before them 2 quotes for new equipment at the Stukeley Meadows trim trail. It was noted a 3rd quote was still to arrive. Members felt that the quotes were extremely high and questioned the need for the new equipment. It was suggested that the nearby MUGA and skate park, and the play areas at the front of Stukeley Meadows, were used more than the trim trail.

Members asked if refurbishment of the existing equipment was possible, and it was explained this was not possible due to the condition and age of the wood.

It was noted that residents should be consulted to find out what equipment was wanted before any decisions were made. It was suggested that the schools should also be involved to find out what equipment the children would like to use.

A Member questioned if the current equipment was still safe to use. It was explained that the Estates Team carried out regular safety checks on all the equipment, and an annual RoSPA inspection was also done. The last RoSPA inspection had highly recommended that the trim trail be addressed.

It was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED that the Leisure Development Sub-Committee would meet to compile options to present to residents during public consultation.

22. **MONTHLY SATURDAY MARKET SQUARE EVENT**

Members had before them a report regarding the introduction of a monthly market event on the Market Square. It was explained that the Council had been approached by a contractor interested in setting up a monthly farmers/craft market. Members were asked to consider whether to invest in working with the

contractor, or run the events in-house in collaboration with HDC and BID.

The first event was proposed to take place in October, as the months following Christmas were often difficult for markets as many people had less disposable income.

Members felt positively about the idea of the monthly event, and felt it would help to boost the existing Saturday market, as well as increasing footfall to the town centre. It was noted that staff workloads were already very high, so it would be sensible to trial working with the contractor. It was also pointed out that the Council could consider managing the event in-house in the future.

It was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the running of a monthly event on the Market Square, and

RESOLVED to outsource the management of the event to the market contractor for a trial period of 3 months, starting in October 2022.

The Town Clerk informed Members that at a meeting with HDC, the idea of introducing evening markets had been suggested for summer 2023.

23. **SALLOWBUSH LAND**

Members had before them a report regarding possible replacement land for the Sallowbush dog walking area. Members welcomed the proposal for the replacement area and noted that residents should be consulted on requirements for the area.

Concerns were raised over the cost of fencing the area. As the quote for fencing had not yet been received, Members were reluctant to commit to the project without knowing the cost. A concern was also raised over taking the money from general reserves.

It was questioned if HTC would be expected to adopt the entirety of the land rather than just the highlighted area. It was noted that although HDC had offered to transfer the whole stretch of land, there had been no indication during the discussions that there was no longer the option to adopt just the highlighted area.

It was suggested that HTC reach out to Hotel Chocolat to see if they would contribute towards the cost. Members were also advised that part of the existing fence would be incorporated which would reduce the amount of new fencing to be purchased.

Members supported the project, but noted that a decision could not be made until costs were known. It was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve in principle the transfer of land from HDC to HTC for the replacement dog walking area, subject to the cost of fencing, and,

RESOLVED to refer the project to the Finance Committee for further discussion on where funding for the project would be taken from.

1 Member abstained

24. HUNTINGDON MASTER PLAN

Ahead of the meeting, Members had received a presentation from the HDC Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager to give an overview of HDC's upcoming Market Town Master Plan. The plan would be published in the following weeks, and HDC would then return to present the plan to Members in full.

25. BUILDING ASSETS

- a) Members were advised that the Scouts and Sea Cadets had expressed interest in the St Peters Road depot building. Additionally, St John Ambulance had advised that their building was currently underutilised and could accommodate another group.

HTC had been approached regarding taking on the Archdeacon's Library building. Members had also expressed interest in purchasing 111 High Street (previously Poundland).

Members were asked to consider options for how they intended to utilise these sites in the future. It was noted that the upcoming HDC Huntingdon Market Plan may also include options for these sites.

- b) The Town Clerk informed Members that a meeting had taken place with HDC, and the transfer of assets from HDC to the Town Council had been discussed. Members were asked to consider which spaces they would be interested in taking on, and what they intended to do with them.

It was noted it was important to consider the cost implication and resources required for the maintenance of any additional sites.

- c) Members discussed forming a Working Group to undertake the review of assets. It was suggested that this could be discussed by the Leisure Development Sub Committee, but Members felt a separate group should be set up. It was noted that Members who were also District Councillors should not sit on this Working Group to avoid a conflict of interest. It was then

RESOLVED to form a Working Group. An email would be sent to Members to assign membership to the group and schedule a meeting.

26. LHI BIDS 2023/24

Members were asked to make recommendations for Local Highway Improvement bids to be submitted for consideration for 2023/24. The following ideas were put forward:

- Speed reduction measures in American Lane
- Footpath installation on the corner of Coneygear Road and Sapley Road
- Speed bumps between Pennington Road and Sapley Road
- Pedestrian crossing between Sallowbush Road and Redwongs Way
- Bollards to prevent vehicles turning at Wertheim Way
- Speed bumps at Lake Way

Members also highlighted several areas that required double yellow lines. The

Town Clerk informed Members that HTC had been asked to submit a list of roads requiring double yellow lines to HDC as part of the Civil Parking Enforcement coming in the following year. Therefore, the Local Highway Improvements bids should be used for other projects.

27. **CRICKET PAVILION UPDATE**

Members were advised that a meeting had taken place with Huntingdon Cricket Club to discuss progress on the cricket pavilion project.

A meeting had also taken place with HDC to discuss CIL funding for the project. The pavilion met many of the requirements for CIL funding, and an application would be submitted in August.

St Peters School had also indicated that they intended to install a new all seasons hockey pitch, and would be interested in using the changing facilities in the new pavilion.

A Member questioned if there were any plans to improve facilities for women's football in Huntingdon. It was noted that Coneygear Park was currently used for women's football. HDC had also indicated that they intended to invest in the facilities at Sapley Park to accommodate this.

28. **CONEYGEAR CENTRE – ROOM NAMING**

Members had previously discussed room names at the Coneygear Centre prior to its opening. It had been suggested that the meeting rooms at the centre should be named after 2 former mayors: Jim Lomax and Beryl Robertson, and former Town Clerk Ted Bocking. It was noted that the former mayors' families should be consulted before naming the rooms.

It was also noted that the plaque for former mayor George Beevor had been recovered from the Medway Centre building and would be presented to Ann Beevor.

29. **TOWN SIGNAGE**

The new link road at the Views Common had provided an additional entrance to Huntingdon, and it was intended to install a town sign to match the others around the town. It was noted that the company that had provided the existing signs were no longer operating, so the new sign would need to be designed to match the existing ones as much as possible. The cost of this was currently high due to the supply of metal needed for the sign.

30. **DATE & AGENDA OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was noted as 20th October 2022.

CHAIRMAN

Action Points
Leisure Development Sub Committee meeting to be called to discuss Stukeley Meadows trim trail.
Contact the Farmer's Market contractor regarding setting up the monthly Saturday market event.
Add an agenda item for the Sallowbush Road dog walking area at the next Finance Committee meeting.
Email Members regarding set up of a working group to discuss the potential transfer of assets from HDC to HTC.
Speak to Coneygear Centre Manager regarding naming of meeting rooms