

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
LEISURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall on Thursday 7th October at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillors: A Beevor; A Blackwell; P Brown; J Cole; P Kadewere; P Kennington; T Sanderson; P Pearce; S Sweek and K Webb.

In attendance: Chairman of Sports Huntingdon Doug McIlwain.

Clerk's note: Items 16-17 were added to the agenda after it was issued with permission from the Chairman.

12. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors: M Baker; C Doyle; P Brown; S Gifford; M Kadewere; B Luckham; A McAdam and S McAdam.

13. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

14. **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

A Member of the public wished to speak. It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

The Chairman of, of Sports Huntingdon Doug McIlwain, was invited to address the meeting. Huntingdon Town Football Club now house 8 different teams and require more space to fit the criteria to play at a professional level. Mr McIlwain requested permission to install a hedgerow and fencing at Jubilee Park in addition to the installation of eight flood lights, which was approved by Members on the 24th January 2019. The hedge would be paid for by Sports Huntingdon and quoted for and installed by HTC was requested.

The Chairman asked for any questions or comments.

A Member queried how long the hedge would require to grow. It was advised that a fast-growing hedge would be planted. The Head Groundsman was better placed to answer this query.

A Member asked whether planning permission was required to install the fence and hedge. It was advised that planning permission was required and would be included with the application for the floodlights. A Hawthorne hedge would be planted behind the fence, so the fence could provide some protection from the

thorns.

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

RESOLVED to reconvene the meeting.

15. **MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of the Leisure and Community Services Committee meeting held on 5th August 2021 (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, and duly signed by the Chairman.

16. **COVID 19**

- i. Members were advised of the rising COVID rates in Huntingdonshire and were asked to discuss the cancellation of the official Christmas Lights Switch on, which occurs on stage to launch the Christmas Market. Concerns were shared on public safety, due to the numbers that congregate on the Market Square during this event. The Christmas Market would still go ahead as an outdoor event. No trader bookings were taken for inside the Town Hall. A 'soft' switch on of the Christmas lights would take place after their installation.

The Chairman asked Members for comments or questions.

A Member queried whether it was necessary as it was an outside event and whether HTC would restrict numbers for this event. It was advised that as the Market Square was a public space numbers could not be restricted. It was deemed a high-risk event due to the large numbers of crowds at the Switch on. If the switch on element was cancelled, it would allow for a more natural flow of visitors to the Market.

Members were advised that similar safety precautions were made for the Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade. For this event, numbers of community groups who participate in the parade were limited, to allow for distancing on the Market Square.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to cancel the Christmas Lights Switch on in favour of a 'soft' switch on, due to public safety.

- ii. Members were advised that the NHS was recommending virtual meetings in response to the rising COVID rates. Members were requested to consider calling an Extraordinary Town Council meeting to approve the reinstatement of virtual meetings for the safety of Councillors and staff.

Members spoke in support of virtual meetings. The Chairman called for a vote. There were two abstentions.

It was

RESOLVED to call an Extraordinary Town Council on 21st October 2021 meeting to discuss the reinstatement of virtual meetings.

17. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman requested nominations for the Vice Chairman of the Leisure & Community Services Committee for the local government year 2021-22. Cllr S Sweek was nominated, there were no further nominations. It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr S Sweek as Vice Chairman of the Leisure & Community Services Committee for the local government year 2021-22.

18. **JUBILEE PARK**

Members had before them a report from the Town Clerk on Jubilee Park, as discussed under item 14. The Chairman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. It was proposed seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the Jubilee Park report and all recommendations therein.

19. **HUNTINGDON IN BLOOM**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to give a verbal update on Huntingdon in Bloom.

Anglia In Bloom:

- Huntingdon entered the virtual Anglia In Bloom competition, submitting projects in all categories.
- Huntingdon was involved with the judging of Anglia In Bloom entries, specifically for the Summer Bedding and Special Feature categories.
- The Anglia In Bloom Committee was meeting on Thursday 21st October in Huntingdon Town Hall to confirm all category winners ahead of communicating the results with all entrants.
- Huntingdon In Bloom would resume committee meetings in due course to start making plans for the 2022 entry. Projects would include:
 - New 3D floral displays and Shakespeare at the George.
 - The installation of new Cromwell street furniture in the town centre
 - The installation of the Covid memorial bench in All Saints' Churchyard
 - The installation of two town centre 'Parklets' – one outside Sainsbury's and one outside the Bus Station
 - Community litter picks with the Rotary Club
 - Bulb planting with Hunters Down Care Home
 - Additional improvements to the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital gardens
 - Best Kept competitions – Front Gardens and Allotments
 - Any other ideas put forward by the In Bloom Committee, Members and/or members of the public
- It is hoped that the 2022 competition would revert back to 'in person' judging.

Britain In Bloom:

- Huntingdon was shortlisted by Anglia In Bloom to be one of 5 towns in the region to enter the RHS National Community Awards. Over 70 entries were submitted nationally.
- The results of the competition would be announced on Friday 8th October.
- During the judging, Huntingdon was selected as one of 5 towns across the Country to be visited by the RHS Communities Team. Photographs were taken of several projects and groups in Huntingdon and the images would form part of the RHS' national marketing material for the forthcoming year.

20. CONEYGEAR MANAGER UPDATE

The Chairman invited the Coneygear Manager to give a verbal update. The Coneygear Centre was running at 80% capacity, some of the larger groups were not able to return due to COVID provisions. It was noted that some groups had not returned. Other updates included:

- Lateral flow testing was currently stationed in the car park on a Monday and Thursday. The Coneygear Centre was one of the busiest sites in the area, CCC had approached to reopen the lateral flow testing inside the Coneygear Centre, from the week commencing 1st November until the end of the year, on a Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.
- The library suite would reopen from November, as numbers can be easily controlled with a booking system.
- The outdoor space was very popular and visitors have really enjoyed the gardens.
- The SOPP project was going very well, a presentation of the successes was created to be presented at a CCC conference called 'Lets Talk about Loneliness in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough' on 13th October 2021.
- The Centre was not accepting social bookings at this time.

The Coneygear Centre Manager raised an issue with the lack of footpath on Buttsgrove Way between the bus stop and the Coneygear Centre. It was a hazard to older residents when visiting the centre and attempting to cross the busy road. Members had before them images of the area in question, Members were requested to consider whether to pursue the option of installing a footpath. Ownership of the area would have to be investigated. The Chairman asked for questions and comments.

Members discussed the installation of a footpath and agreed the area was unsafe for visitors to the Coneygear Centre. It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to further investigate the installation of a footpath on Buttsgrove Way between the bus stop and the Coneygear Centre.

A Member queried whether the lateral flow testing would disrupt the planned blood drives at the Centre. It was advised there would be no disruption to the blood drives.

A Member raised concerns on the acoustics within the Coneygear Centre, as they were unable to hear the Mayor Making Ceremony. It was advised that social distancing requirements made the room more echoing, as there was more room

for sound to reverberate.

Members noted their congratulations to the staff team who completed a fundraising walk for Alzheimer's UK.

21. **HEAD GROUNDSMAN UPDATE**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on behalf of the Head Groundsman.

- The Estates Services team completed 95% of hedge cutting of HTC and CCC land.
- Grass cutting of CCC land was completed. One more grass cut to HTC land was required, weather permitting.
- Winter planting to begin from the week commencing 11th October 2021.
- In the process of ordering plugs for summer bedding for next year.
- The team have completed several grave diggings over the last week weeks.
- Completed the landscaping at the new Crematorium site.
- Completed the overhaul of the Huntingdon Cricket pitch ready for next year.

22. **BEACH IN THE PARK**

Members had before them a report on Bloomfield Park. BID Huntingdon requested the hold a 'Beach in the Park' event for between 4-6 weeks in the park during the summer of 2022. Members were requested to consider the reports. The Chairman asked for comments or questions.

A Member asked how the sand would be cleared away at the end of the event.

Concerns were raised that there were no public facilities for visitors for this event. Concerns were also raised for hygiene reasons, for the sand would be in place for weeks and animals, such as cats, are known to use sand to cover their faeces, which would be very dangerous for children.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to decline BID's request to use Bloomfield Park for their Beach in the Park event.

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

The date of the next meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was noted as Thursday 2nd December 2021.

CHAIRMAN