

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
LEISURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall on Thursday 20th October 2022.

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

Absent: M Baker; C Doyle and S Sweek.

26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors M Baker, C Doyle and S Sweek.

27. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

28. **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

A Member indicated that they wished to speak, and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

Councillor J Cole informed members that a public meeting will be held in Hartford Village Hall on Tuesday 25th October from 7pm, to discuss the Huntingdon Master Plan.

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

RESOLVED to reconvene the meeting.

29. **MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of the Leisure and Community Services Committee meeting held on 4th August 2022 (M2) had been circulated to Members before the meeting, the draft having received informal approval by the Chairman.

The Town Clerk updated members on item 23 relating to Sallowbush Road. HTC are still awaiting the transfer of land from HDC.

It was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the minutes

30. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUB COMMITTEES**

Members had before them the minutes of the Media Sub Committee held on 7th July 2022 (M1) and the Leisure Development Sub Committee held on 29th September 2022 (M1).

The Town clerk gave an update on items arising from the Leisure Development subcommittee. The trim trail has been referred to the Finance committee for approval of costs. HTC are still awaiting a meeting with HDC to discuss future transfers of land from HDC and for approval of trim trail replacement.

It was proposed, seconded and

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

31. **HUNTINGDON IN BLOOM**

A verbal report was received from the Assistant Town Clerk on Huntingdon in Bloom.

- Judging took place on 20th July
- Awards Ceremony 7th September
 - Gold for large town category and joint overall category winner
 - Gold and overall category winner for best Local Authority Display
 - Gold for Queen's Jubilee category
 - Merit for All Saints' Closed Churchyard
 - Silver for Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
 - Silver for wildlife and conservation at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
 - Silver Gilt for King of the Belgians Public House
 - Mike Ames Award for Ann Colbert, former Huntingdon In Bloom Chair and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Gardens Head Volunteer
 - Overall winner for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital volunteers for the best display by a group or individual
- Judge's report received at Anglia In Bloom Seminar on 13th October, very complimentary of Huntingdon's entry with suggested areas for improvement
- First Huntingdon In Bloom Committee meeting for 2023 campaign took place 18th October
- Themes for 2023:
 - Celebrating the King's Coronation – working with local schools and groups to make coronation themed displays
 - Marking the 80th anniversary of the Nationalisation of British Rail with a Flying Scotsman display to link in with the speed record being broken
 - Shakespeare at the George's 2023 production
- Judging route for 2023 already confirmed to allow plenty of preparation time, locations include:
 - Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
 - Hinchingsbrooke Hospital
 - Bloomfield Park
 - Priory Road Cemetery
 - Coneygear Park
 - Bus Station Display
 - Town Centre – Market Square, Cromwell Museum and All Saints' Churchyard

- New social media pages were set up for Huntingdon In Bloom on Facebook and Instagram back in July thanks to the Council's new Communications Officer with regular content posted to increase following
- RHS Community Garden at Coneygear Park was officially opened to the public on Wednesday after a 2-day planting session last week with Arit Anderson. Waiting for the RHS to confirm how and when we can start spending the maintenance contribution to purchase an interpretation board, noticeboard, accessible tools and a tool safe
- New Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Garden areas to be refurbished with the support of HIB
- Wildflower and tree planting plans at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
- Parklets being created as we speak with completion date imminent. Planted with sustainable planting outside Sainsbury's and the Bus Station using artwork created as part of BID Huntingdon's new town map
- Other projects and partnership working ongoing with more ideas, groups and individuals always welcomed

32. **CONEYGEAR CENTRE MANAGER UPDATE**

A verbal report was received from the Coneygear Centre Manager

- Coneygear centre are running a volunteer event on 18th November from 11am – 3pm to recruit more volunteers both for Coneygear Centre and other local community groups.
- Café is not yet open due to issues relating to accessing the funding. Hopefully this will be resolved shortly. HCAP will run the café with volunteers.
- Coneygear is hoping to register as one of the HDC Warm Spaces Hubs, as already offering these services anyway. The library suite is open during the day, and there will be a new Homework Club set up with Fusion Projects for children. There is also the Coneygear Seniors group.
- There are half term autumnal children's events planned, and a Christmas event is planned for 21st December. Funding has been secured so that this event can be offered as a low cost event.
- It has been agreed that the Blood service will be using the centre on 26th December and 2nd January, as these are days when they particularly need additional support.
- Unfortunately, there have been a few incidents recently where hostile language has been used towards staff and volunteers at the centre. This has been escalated to Town Clerk.
- A new Communities Officer has been recruited and will start shortly.

33. **HEAD GROUNDSMAN UPDATE**

A verbal report was received from the Head Groundsman.

- The team have now completed the last of grass cutting for the year. This was delayed due to the change in weather. 90% of the winter bedding has now been planted.
- Maintenance on the play areas continues, although some areas have suffered recently due to vandalism. KGV Sapley road has been completed recently and work at the Coneygear is due, weather permitting.
- HTC have been donated 20 trees from Huntingdonshire District Council and have also ordered 20 more. These will be planted across the town.
- Maintenance of the allotments continues.
- The team are preparing for the build of the Christmas market and will be on hand throughout to assist.
- The Estates team have offered assistance to the Outdoor Bowls Club in maintaining their lawn and Maintenance of the cricket square at KGV St Peters continues. It was noted that

the quality of the cricket pitch has been positively received and that this is the result of several years of work to bring it up to a high standard.

- The Estates team have begun moving equipment from the old depot across to the new depot.
- The team are continuing to follow up on the work highlighted in the tree survey.

A member noted that there were cracks in the mounds at Coneygear park. This was likely due to the extreme weather over the summer, but maintenance would be required.

34. **BID MANAGER UPDATE**

The BID Manager sent their apologies, but a verbal report was provided by the Assistant Town Clerk.

- Information boards previously owned by HDC have now been taken over and replaced by new Huntingdon First branded boards.
- Work on an updated Town Map is in progress.
- An application and funding are in progress to install speakers along the high street.
- There will be a Halloween Trick or Treat trail taking place on Monday 31st October, on Huntingdon High Street.
- Work is ongoing to secure funding from CPCA for a visitor centre.

35. **CONEYGEAR CENTRE ROOM NAMES**

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to receive, approve and adopt the naming recommendations from the Leisure Development Sub Committee for the rooms in the Coneygear Centre.

The rooms were to be named after 2 former mayors: Jim Lomax and Beryl Robertson, and former Town Clerk Ted Bocking.

It was noted that Thelma Lomax, wife of Jim Lomax had been notified and was delighted. No contacts were available for Beryl Robertson, although it was believed that she had a daughter in Canada.

The Town clerk confirmed that the rooms would be named as the 'Surname' room, with a plaque and where possible a photo to accompany this.

36. **CRICKET PAVILLION**

The chairman gave a verbal update on the progress of the Cricket Pavilion project.

Funding was available through Department of Culture media and Sport (DCMS), but the project would need to include a youth element. Fusion Family and Youth Projects had been approached to join the project so that funding could be accessed but had raised concerns about the location of the pavilion not being ideal for their users. It was suggested it could instead be moved to St Peter's School, but Governors and County Council would need to be approached first, and new plans would need to be drawn up.

A member asked what would happen with the existing cricket pitch which as noted earlier is now at a very high standard and takes time to achieve. They also asked what the relationship would be with other users of the pavilion.

The chairman confirmed that Hunts Community Cancer Network (HCCN) would still be a primary user, but that funding was required to progress the project, which were depending on other users.

A member asked what the advantage is of moving to St Peters school as the current location is adjacent to the school already.

It was noted that footpath access to the current site needs to be improved.

The Town Clerk stated that there were issues relating to ownership of Spring Common, as some sections are owned by HDC and some by Huntingdon Freeman's Trust.

Cllr Norton raised a point regarding the use of the venue during school hours by adults, and any child protection implications this may have.

Cllr D Cole questioned whether it would be appropriate to use funding from SB land to benefit the school.

Cllr S McAdam asked if the current cricket pavilion land can be sold or built on.

Town Clerk confirmed that the land is protected via Fields in Trust and cannot be used for anything else, without appropriate compensation in other land, but no other sites were available within Huntingdon.

Cllr P Kadeware was noted that other youth organisations might be able to support this project and highlighted girls football. It was confirmed that Huntingdon Girls Football Club already meet at Coneygear park.

Cllr Pearce noted that the pavilion needs replacing, but that one users needs cannot override the requirements of other users, as residents and users want it where it is.

Town Clerk advised that the project would refocus on Cricket and the Cricket club may not want to move location as the quality of the grass is now so high.

Cllr P Kadeware noted that any future development should be in partnership with the school, but that the land and property should not transfer to the school.

37. **EVENTS**

A verbal update was received from the Assistant Town Clerk on the following events:

- i. National Police Memorial Day – Sunday 23rd October
 - a. 50 confirmed guests
 - b. Cadet Guard of Honour
 - c. Service in All Saints at 2.30pm followed by silence on Market Square and laying of floral tributes and reception in Town Hall
- ii. Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday – Friday 11th and Sunday 13th November

- a. 11th – Several Schools attending, low key event with silence and wreath laying, supported by RBL
 - b. 13th – Working in partnership with RAF Wyton, next planning meeting next week 26th October
 - c. Deadline for RSVPs was last week – RAF Wyton now putting Admin Order together with over 30 military and community groups being represented
 - d. Councillors and Civics to arrive at the Town Hall for 10.30am
- iii. Fayre on the Square – monthly Saturday event – Saturday 12th November and Saturday 10th December. Working with HDC and BID. All stalls for November filled, RBL in attendance for branch poppy collection as last day of Poppy Appeal. Entertainment organised by BID, HTC Estates Team setting up and taking down gazebos, HDC managing traders. Promotion started for the event this week. 10th December event to have Christmas focus
- iv. Huntingdon Christmas Market – Friday 25th – Sunday 27th November
- a. All traders now booked and confirmed
 - b. All community stall slots filled for Friday with limited availability Sunday
 - c. Christmas Lights being switched on Friday 25th November at 6.30pm by Jake Jarman, Olympic Gymnast gold medalist
 - d. Stage being managed by HCR104fm and Star Radio on the Friday
 - e. Stage performances full for Friday and filling up for rest of weekend, storytelling Sunday
- v. Christmas Saturdays – 3rd, 10th and 17th December
- a. Events in partnership with BID and HDC
 - b. Snow globes, Christmas princesses, balloon modelling, music bingo, facepainting – all free of charge activities to create a Christmas town trail
 - c. Promotion going live November 2022
- vi. Civic Sunday
- a. More details would follow at the next meeting, but this would likely now be moved to coincide with Huntingdonshire Day.
- vii. Coronation
- a. Coronation day is now confirmed for Saturday 6 May 2023. More plans were shaping up. It was suggested that instead of fireworks, a drone show could be considered.
- viii. Freedom Parade
- a. We have been approached to hold a Freedom parade before the 501st Wing are relocated, but this may be problematic due to a very busy events schedule. More details to follow.

38. **MASTER PLAN**

Cllr D Cole gave a verbal update on the Huntingdon Master Plan and his drafted response. He welcomed the idea of the plan but felt there were many missed opportunities as highlighted in his response.

Cllr Luckham raised concerns about the plans for 111 High Street and felt it was not ambitious enough. He stated that a food court option was a waste of use for the building and that small office space was needed on short term contracts, along with food options.

Cllr S McAdam raised concern about closing the ring road adjacent to Riverside Park, and the adverse impact this would have on traffic in and around the town centre. He highlighted the need for more active travel options due to an increased population in the area and stated that even if the bus station were to move out to a new hub by the train station, there would still need to be something available in the town centre. He questioned why the area of land between Edison Bell Way and the Almshouses was not included in the plans and added that we needed more than just housing to be included in any developments.

Cllr Gifford questioned the financial feasibility of the plans and questioned why the deadline was so tight.

Cllr S McAdam agreed that the plan sets a good vision and direction for the town, but that more consultation was needed.

Cllr Sanderson confirmed that HTC were due to receive a presentation from HDC regarding this, but that it had been cancelled. This was asked to be presented at the next full Town Council.

Cllr J Cole noted that areas such as Oxmoor had been identified, but there were no plans for improvement. The focus seemed to be solely on the town centre.

Cllr Brockett suggested that Cllr D Cole's response was very thorough and should be submitted to HDC on behalf of HTC. He highlighted that if the Huntingdon to Godmanchester bridge was closed, this would have an impact on many other stakeholders, and questioned what the plans were for the footbridge.

Cllr Gifford noted that regardless of the master plan, work was needed to improve and modernise the bus station now.

Cllr Sanderson commented that the introduction of the congestion charge in Cambridge may have an impact on other plans.

Cllr S McAdam noted that more needed to be done to improve signage on the high street, including building numbers.

The Town Clerk commented that Huntingdon was featured highly by Phil Spencer as a good value for money commuter town, but there was still a lack of interest from developers.

ACTION 38.1 – Communications Officer to meet with Cllr D Cole to draft formal response to Master plan

ACTION 38.2 – Representative from Huntingdonshire District Council to be invited to next Town Council to present on Huntingdon Master Plan

39. **DATE & AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 9th February 2023 at the Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon.