

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
LEISURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall on Thursday 9th February 2023 at 7pm.

Present: Councillors A Blackwell; K Brockett; D Cole; C Doyle; S Gifford; B Luckham; A McAdam; S McAdam; A Norton; G Shiels; T Sanderson (Chairman) and P Pearce

Absent: M Baker

In Attendance: County Councillor Jonas King (via Zoom) and 2 members of the public

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors J Cole, M Kadewere, P Kadewere, P Kennington, S Sweek, and K Webb. Apologies were also noted from Paul Sweeney, BID Manager under item 48 on the agenda.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

42. PUBLIC ADDRESS

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

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

Councillor D Cole advised that members of the Muslim community had contacted him again regarding raised graves in the existing Primrose Lane Cemetery, and regarding the new Cemetery at Kings Ripton Road. Councillor Cole explained that the community was keen to find an agreeable resolution to meet the needs of the community with Muslim burials.

The Town Clerk explained that the Crematorium and Cemeteries Manager had investigated the request from the community at length, seeking national advice to ensure that Huntingdon Town Council's regulations were in line with current guidance. Members were told that the family in question had been offered potential solutions to their query, but that now was a good time to be looking at this, while the regulations for the new Cemetery at Kings Ripton Road were being set.

A Member suggested that if the solution to the issue was to offer the community raised, mounded graves, that this was something the Town Council could do with ease. The Town Clerk said that the issue with this was the ongoing maintenance and the standard of the cemetery if the maintenance of the mounds was down to individual families.

It was agreed that there was still some uncertainty over what was being requested by the community and that this could be investigated ahead of the regulations for the new Cemetery being set.

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

RESOLVED to reconvene the meeting.

43. **MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of the Leisure and Community Services Committee meeting held on 20th October 2022 (M3) had been circulated to Members before the meeting, the draft having received informal approval by the Chairman.

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

RESOLVED to approve the minutes which were duly signed by the Chairman.

44. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUB COMMITTEES**

Members had before them the minutes of the Media Sub Committee held on 17th November 2022 (M3) and 10th January 2023 (M4).

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

RESOLVED to receive, approve and adopt the recommendations contained within the minutes.

45. **HUNTINGDON IN BLOOM**

A verbal report was received from the Assistant Town Clerk on Huntingdon in Bloom, including the following updates:

1. It had been confirmed that Huntingdon In Bloom had been nominated for the 2023 Britain In Bloom competition. There were 10 entrants in the Large Town Category. There was a Huntingdon In Bloom Committee meeting scheduled for 16th February to run through plans for the town's entry to both Anglia and Britain In Bloom. It was noted that the news of being entered into Britain In Bloom was embargoed from local press until the RHS had made its formal announcement of the competition.
2. The 3D floral displays had been planned for the Summer – The Flying Scotsman to celebrate the centenary of the Flying Scotsman and a display at the Cannon Site for SatG's 2023 production of Much A Do About Nothing.
3. The Crown and Soldier project for the King's Coronation had been hugely popular with over 25 community groups involved. The Crowns and Soldiers would be delivered to the groups as of w/c 13th February 2023 and would be collected by 31st April ready for installation ahead of 6th May. One Crown had been allocated for the Town Council to decorate.
4. There would be two snowdrop planting sessions on the 7th/8th March, one in Bloomfield Park and one at the Coneygear Centre with community groups.
5. The Coneygear Community Garden had been a hive of activity with community planting sessions and the first monthly gardening club session on 7th February. An event was planned for Friday 14th April to mark National Gardening Day with workshops and garden trails for families.

6. The Town Council was looking into the installation of town centre summer/seasonal eco-friendly decorations made of sugar cane to brighten up the High Street and Chequers Court area to be funded via HDC's Vibrant Communities Fund.
7. There was a joint tree planting initiative with HTC and HDC on the 17th January where 40 trees were planted on Views Common.
8. Two oak trees were planted in Bloomfield Park on Monday 6th February in memory of the late HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.
9. RAF Alconbury had offered a volunteer group to assist with In Bloom projects across the town. There had been a site visit to Kings Ripton Court to look at their garden area as a possible project to work on with RAF Alconbury and Groundworks East.
10. The Parklet at Sainsbury's had been installed and planted up with sustainable planting. It had been very well used since its installation. A second Parklet was due to be installed at the Bus Station. The Parklets were funded by the Combined Authority.
11. A meeting took place with the Probation Service's Community Help team this to look at support with tasks such as allotment clearance and fence/railing painting.
12. A very positive meeting took place with Stephanie James from Wild About Huntingdon with the hope to work more closely together on several projects. Stephanie had kindly put the In Bloom Committee in touch with lots of contacts who we can partner with too.
13. The launch event of Huntingdon In Bloom would take place in early June to unveil the 3D floral displays – date to be confirmed.
14. Anglia In Bloom judging day would take place in July and Britain In Bloom judging would take place late July/early August.

A Member queried the cost of entering Britain In Bloom and the Town Clerk confirmed that there had been no cost due to Huntingdon being nominated by Anglia In Bloom. It was noted that the only potential cost for judging day would be transport for the judges on their tour of the town.

With no comments or questions, the updates were noted with thanks.

46. **CONEYGEAR CENTRE MANAGER UPDATE**

Members had before them a report from the Coneygear Centre Manager regarding recent activities at both the centre and Coneygear Park.

It was noted that support services at the centre, such as the Warm Hub were a lifeline for many vulnerable residents, and that the mental health project would further support residents in the town once up and running.

One Member questioned the renaming of the rooms at the Coneygear Centre and the Town Clerk explained that sustainable wooden plaques/signs were being investigated to fit in with the Town Council's environmental ethos. Once the signs had been sourced, there would be an event to unveil the new room names with the families invited of those who the rooms were being named after.

With no further comments or questions, the report was noted with thanks.

47. **HEAD GROUNDSMAN UPDATE**

The Head Groundsman had issued his apologies for the meeting and the Town Clerk read out the following updates on his behalf:

1. That 40 trees had been planted on Town Council land as a partnership project with Huntingdonshire District Council. 20 trees had been provided by the Town Council and 20 from the District Council.
2. That the Estates Services Team had moved across to the new Depot site on Sapley Road and that the old Depot on St Peter's Road just needed to be tidied and painted to smarten it up ahead of future use.
3. Grass cutting had started on the larger green spaces under the Town Council's responsibility such as the parks, fields and at the cemeteries.
4. Cricket games would be starting in late April 2023 and that ahead of this, a meeting would be taking place with the Cricket Club to agree the marking out of the Cricket Square.
5. Fence painting at various sites was ongoing.
6. Preparation for the summer bedding scheme was underway.
7. Some broken play equipment had been replaced at Jackson's Walk and Great Northern Street.
8. Painting of the Skate Park would commence in the next few weeks.
9. Pruning of shrubs had been completed ahead of nesting season.
10. That there was an issue with a tree in St Mary's Churchyard that neighbouring property owners were claiming was causing damage. Members were advised that this was being investigated and that there was a new Tree Officer at HDC to liaise with regarding the situation.

With no comments or questions, the updates were noted with thanks.

48. **BID MANAGER UPDATE**

In the absence of the BID Manager, the Assistant Town Clerk advised Members that the joint BID/HTC project of a town centre speaker system was progressing, and that funding had been confirmed from Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), to come from a Combined Authority funding stream. Installation would commence on receipt of approval from Cambridgeshire County Council for street light attachments and from landlords of affected buildings.

Members were advised that a joint funding application had been submitted to HDC for enhancements to the town centre, as well as an application for a new Visitor's Centre, to be located in the Commemoration Hall.

Finally, Members were reminded of the date for Pirate Day, which would be taking place on Saturday 8th July 2023. This event was being organised following the success of 2022's Dino Day, which was hugely popular. It was noted that the Town Hall would fly a pair of Jolly Roger flags from the Town Hall balcony for the event. Members expressed their excitement for the event.

A Member raised the issue of anti-social behaviour on the Market Square and advised Members that although the problems were ongoing, a multi-agency approach was working tirelessly to address the issues and the individuals causing problems across the town centre. It was hoped that recent efforts from the police and HDC would see a reduction in the group size and that this would continue to reduce as further action was taken.

With no further comments or questions, the updates were noted with thanks.

49. **BEVAN CLOSE AND MARYLAND AVENUE PLAY AREAS**

Members had before them draft consultation letters for the future use of and plans at Bevan Close and Maryland Avenue play areas. Members were advised that if approved, the letters would be issued to neighbouring residents the following week and the consultation period would run for 6 weeks.

Members were reminded of the context for the consultation, that the play areas were currently owned and managed by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) but that there might be an opportunity for the Town Council to lease the play areas to replace the existing pieces of play equipment to enhance the spaces. It was noted that the consultation letters were important to ascertain whether the play areas were valued by neighbouring residents and if there was demand for the spaces to continue in their current form.

Members questioned whether there would be a commuted sum from HDC to cover the replacement of the equipment, or if the Town Council had existing play equipment in stock that could be used. The Chairman explained that until the outcome of the consultation was evaluated, there would be no commitment from the Town Council, and that only if there was a positive response to the proposals would there be a conversation with HDC about funding for the improvements. It was noted that the Town Council didn't have a stock of existing play equipment to be used as items were refurbished and replaced on a rotation system across the Town Council's existing play areas. The Chairman highlighted that there was £1.1m s106 funding held by HDC, which needed to be allocated, so it was suggested that this could fund any new equipment.

With no further comments or questions, Members noted the consultation letters with thanks and were advised that an update would be provided at the conclusion of the 6-week consultation period.

50. **FUSION**

The Chairman advised Members that in the absence of a Fusion representative at the meeting, a brief overview of progress for the proposed new Fusion building could be given.

Members were told that an Expression of Interest (EOI) had been submitted by Fusion to the National Youth Council but that with no official closing date, it was unclear as to when a response would be received.

The Chairman advised that he had met with Fusion at Coneygear Park at the proposed location for the new building and that rough calculations meant the total size of the new facility, including a car park would be 36m x 33m.

Members were further advised that a drop in event was planned to take place at the Coneygear Centre on Saturday 4th March for members of the public to hear more about the project plans and to ask questions of Fusion representatives.

One Member suggested that a site visit to the proposed location would be helpful to understand the scale of scope of the project, which would assist in responding to residents' questions and/or concerns. The Town Clerk explained that this could be arranged for any interested Members as the proposed site hadn't been visibly marked out.

Members had further discussion on the suitability of Coneygear Park for a new community building, and the Town Clerk reminded all present that the decision to proceed in principle

subject to public consultation had been made collectively by the Council and that Members needed to be mindful of this to avoid the potential of bringing the Council into disrepute.

Members moved on to discuss whether the proposed building would be in permanent use as a youth building and the Town Clerk advised that approaches had been made by other community groups to utilise the building alongside Fusion, which could be explored, should the project progress.

The Chairman reminded Members that at the present time, funding had not been secured for the building and that the project wasn't even at the stage of submitting a planning application. Members were encouraged to attend and tell residents about the drop-in session on 4th March so that any queries and concerns could be addressed by Fusion. It was suggested that Fusion could then be invited to provide an update to a future Town Council meeting after 4th March 2023.

With no further comments or questions, the update was noted.

51. **ALL SAINTS' CHURCH TREE CONSULTATION**

Members had before them a report that outlined the feedback from the recent All Saints' Church tree removal consultation.

The Town Clerk explained that Members would be seeing more reports of this style, following public consultation processes, to analyse and evaluate feedback and make informed decisions that considered residents' views and wishes.

Members discussed the proposed ideas for replacing the felled tree and after suggestions of replacing the tree with a Yew tree, Flowering Cherry tree and British fruit trees it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to replace the felled tree to the rear of All Saints' Church with a Yew tree and a Flowering Cherry tree.

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

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 13th April 2023 at the Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon.