

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

An extra-ordinary meeting of Huntingdon Town Council was held on Thursday 1st September 2022 in Huntingdon Town Hall at 6.30pm.

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

Apologies: Councillors Baker; Shiels and Sweek

In Attendance: District Councillors Hunt and Shaw, Paul Sweeney, BID Huntingdon and 12 members of the public

34. WELCOME

The Town Mayor welcomed those in attendance. The Mayor invited the Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Jon Randall, to say a prayer.

35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Baker, Shiels and Sweek. The Town Clerk explained that due to Councillor Baker's ill health, a request had been made by him to submit his apologies from all Town Council business and meetings for an initial period of 2 months. Members passed their best wishes onto Councillor Baker and it was agreed that the apology period would be reviewed ahead of the 2 month period ending.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Doyle declared an interest under item 44 as a Director of the BID Board.

37. MINUTES

Members had before them the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 23rd June 2022 to recommend for approval. The Mayor asked Members if there were any questions or comments. With no comments or questions it was

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting which were duly signed by the Mayor.

38. BEST KEPT FRONT GARDEN COMPETITION

The Mayor welcomed residents from Huntingdon to the meeting who had entered the 2022 Best Kept Front Garden Competition. The Mayor explained that he had assisted with the judging and that the entries had been exceptional, given the challenge of the summer heatwave. The Mayor invited the winners of the competition taking 1st, 2nd and 3rd place to come forward and presented them

with their prizes. Members offered their collective congratulations to the winning entrants.

39. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

Members had before them copies of the following Committee meeting minutes for the recommendations to be approved:

- i) Finance Committee – 16th June 2022 (M1)
- ii) Leisure & Community Services Committee – 16th June (M1) and 4th August 2022 (M2)
- iii) Planning Committee – 9th June 2022 (M1)
- iv) Strategy and Corporate Plan Committee 2022 (M1)

The Mayor took each set of minutes in turn, asking Members if they had any comments or questions. One Member suggested a typographical amendment in the Finance Committee minutes relating to the Twinning Sub Committee, and with no further comments or questions, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations from the above-named Committee meetings.

40. **PUBLIC ADDRESS FROM COUNCILLORS OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO COUNCIL**

The Mayor asked Members and members of the public if they wished to address the meeting. Members and members of the public indicated that they wished to speak and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

A Member raised the issue of emails sent to all Councillors and requested that with future group communications, Members replied individually to the original reply, rather than replying to all. It was noted that receiving numerous responses to an original email caused confusion and difficulty in tracing the original message.

Another Member requested that two further organisations be added to the list of outside bodies for regular updates: Neighbourhood Watch and Sallowbush Park.

With no further comments from Members, the Mayor invited members of the public to speak.

Habib Rehman introduced himself to the meeting as the Chairman of Huntingdon Muslim Community and advised that he wished to discuss an ongoing issue regarding Muslim burial requirements Huntingdon cemeteries. Mr Rehman introduced Shabana Abbas to the meeting who explained the situation. Ms Abbas told the meeting that she had been in contact with the Town Council for some time regarding her late mother's burial and was dissatisfied at the lack of resolution. The Town Clerk gave Members an overview of the issue, explaining that the Crematorium and Cemeteries Manager had sought national advice on how to support Muslim burial requirements moving forward. It was noted that options had been offered to Ms Abbas regarding her late mother's grave in response to the requests made, including the placement of a sedum mat over the grave or the addition of a raised mound to clearly identify the grave space. Ms Abbas explained that part of the problem was the delays between receiving

communications, expressing that this was not acceptable. The Mayor thanked Mr Rehman and Ms Abbas for their time in coming to the meeting and confirmed that the situation would be investigated, with regular communication maintained.

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

RESOLVED to reconvene the meeting.

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

- i) County Cllr Sanderson informed Members that there was a budget gap at the County Council of £27, which was not positive news. Members were also told that the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) bidding process was being streamlined to make the process easier. Members were advised that the opening date for LHI applications would be in October 2022. Finally, Cllr Sanderson advised that a safety audit had started for the Hartford Road crossing and that work was due to commence imminently.
- ii) District Cllr Hunt reported that there was a shortfall with the District Council's budget. Members were told there had been no Committee meetings during August to report on and finally, Members were encouraged to make residents aware of the draft Master Plan for Huntingdon.
- iii) District Cllr P Kadewere informed Members that efforts were being made to run schemes to help residents cope with the cost-of-living crisis and that work was being undertaken with community groups to address equality via a consultation to find out what people want to be seeing in Huntingdon.
- iv) District Cllr Sanderson expanded on the update regarding support for the cost-of-living crisis, explaining that projects such as community hubs and warm hubs were being set up. It was mentioned that Huntingdon Library could be allocated as a local hub with opening hours extending. Finally, it was outlined that costs were due to rise for fees and charges.
- v) There was none.

42. **TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE**

The Town Clerk gave the following update:

- The CIL application for the Cricket Pavilion project had been deferred from the August round to October.
- The Anglia In Bloom Awards Ceremony was taking place on the 7th September and it was hoped that Huntingdon's efforts would be recognised.
- That Huntingdon's Draft Masterplan had been electronically circulated by HDC and that Members needed to review the document and make comment. It was suggested that HTC, BID and the Cromwell Museum could meet collectively to discuss the plan and put together respective comments.
- That following the earlier advice regarding Warm Hubs, the Coneygear Centre was already offering the facilities of the proposed Warm Hubs.
- That following a meeting with Neil Sloper from HDC, advice was given regarding the funding, and installation of adult changing facilities for the town. Members were told that consideration was needed to the best location for the facilities, with suggestions made for Malthouse Close Car Park, near to Shopmobility and the Bus Station.

With no further updates, the Mayor thanked the Town Clerk and asked Members if there were any questions. One Member raised concerns regarding the Draft Master Plan, referring to the proposed relocation of the Bus Station and for Malthouse Close Car Park to turn into housing.

43. **ROLLING PROGRAMME**

The Mayor referred Members to the Council's rolling programme, and civic events rolling programme. With no comments or questions, the contents of the rolling programmes were noted with thanks.

44. **REPRESENTATION TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Mayor asked Members if they had any updates to share as representatives to Outside Bodies. Several updates were given:

- i) Huntingdon Library – no meeting invitations had been received (S McAdam)
- ii) Huntingdonshire History Festival – the event had concluded at the end of July and had been extremely successful. Plans for a 2023 event were underway subject to Committee vacancies being filled (S McAdam)
- iii) Commemoration Hall – several updates were reported for the Hall including the growth of the Arts Café, the success of the ongoing events at the Hall, the Arts Alive programme was now a permanent feature at the Hall and there were plans in place for the introduction of a Visitors Centre to support tourism and promote the town as a destination (S McAdam)
- iv) Local History Society – no meeting invitations had been received (C Doyle)
- v) BID – the recent Dino Day event had attracted over 47,000 visitors to the town centre and had been a 'roaring' success (C Doyle)
- vi) St Johns Alms-houses – new boilers had been installed in the properties which the residents were extremely happy with. There were however concerns raised and disappointment regarding the land to the rear of the Alms-houses being barren for 3-4 due to lack of development progressing (S Gifford)
- vii) Commemoration Hall – in addition to the previous update, it was noted that there used to be 4 places for HTC representation on the board of Trustees but that due to the board being filled with other representation, it was recommended for the Town Council representation to reduce down to 2 (K Webb)
- viii) Huntingdon In Bloom – The launch of the 2022 Huntingdon In Bloom campaign had taken place in June, with the judging in July. Thanks were given to all involved in putting the campaign together and it was hoped that the results on the 7th September would be well received (K Webb)
- ix) Shopmobility – 2 online meetings had taken place and Shopmobility had formed part of the town centre trail for the Dino Day event (K Webb)
- x) Armed Forces Champion – contact was being made with associates and lots of events had been attended including

- Armed Forces Day, an event for Brampton RBL and Sea Sunday. It was noted that interaction with our local Armed Forces was really important and that consideration was needed as to how Huntingdon can support its veterans (K Webb)
- xi) Huntingdon Volunteer Centre – no meeting invitations or request for support/attendance had been received (P Pearce)
 - xii) CAB – the relationship between HTC and CAB was valuable, with regular interaction. The CAB had donated furniture to the Town Council and regularly contributed advice articles to Huntingdon magazine (P Pearce)
 - xiii) Cromwell Museum – it was reported to be a very busy summer for the Museum, with it's highest visitor numbers during July and August in a decade. Funding had been secured for the Learning and Communities Officer at the Museum for 2022 and 60% for 2023 and 2024. An application had been submitted to the Arts Council to digitalise the Cromwell Museum's collection and funding for a new part-time Projects Officer post was being investigated. This would enable a new collection database to be created which would be accessible worldwide. The Mural Museum along Literary Walk had been a huge success in collaboration with BID and recently, the Cromwell Museum Curator had appeared on the BBC's Bargain Hunt! Finally, the Museum would be celebrating its 60^t Anniversary with an event on 22nd October 2022 (P Pearce)
 - xiv) HBAC – no meeting invitations or request for support/attendance had been received but it was reported that HBAC was working alongside several stakeholders in the town to combat the ongoing anti-social behaviour in the town centre (P Kadewere)
 - xv) Hunts Forum - Hunts Forum was working with the County Council to run projects supporting the local community. Groups were encouraged to join Hunts Forum to benefit from the support available (P Kadewere)
 - xvi) CAPALC – it was noted that CAPALC offered excellent training sessions for Councillors (P Kadewere)

With no further reports, the Town Clerk concluded the updates by informing Members that the Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) had been in contact with the Town Council regarding the annual Battle of Britain Sunday Service to advise that sadly it was unable to take place this year. This was due to the unavailability of the RAF Wyton Band. In light of this, the Town Council had suggested that a short Wreath Laying Service take place on Thursday 15th September to mark Battle of Britain Day.

The Mayor thanked all Members for their updates.

45. **BID HUNTINGDON RENEWAL VOTE 2022-27**

Members discussed the renewal of Huntingdon BID, with all in agreement that as an organisation, it was a hugely valuable asset for the town centre. Members questioned whether they should receive more than one vote, i.e one vote for the Town Hall and another for the Cromwell Museum. The Mayor invited Paul Sweeney, BID Manager to advise and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

Paul Sweeney explained how the votes were based on rateable value, and how if the Cromwell Museum's rateable value was less than £5,000, it would not be eligible for a vote. The Mayor gave thanks to Paul and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to reconvene.

The Mayor asked if there were any further comments or questions, and it was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED to vote YES to renew BID Huntingdon for 2022-27.

46. **TRO FOR CHRISTIE DRIVE AND DEVOKE CLOSE**

The Mayor invited Councillor Sanderson to update Members on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Devoke Close and Christie Drive.

Councillor Sanderson advised Members that Devoke Close was located near to the local primary school and shops and that the area was not safe due to vehicular movement and excessive on-street parking. Members were told that Councillor Sanderson had met with residents to look at proposed plans for a TRO and that the order would need to be amended slightly from that discussed as part of the consultation. It was noted that at times, it was proving difficult for residents to access their own driveways and it was therefore proposed that there should be prohibited parking during school hours.

Members were advised that residents of Christie Drive had also been consulted with due to the issue of on-street parking. It was noted that although the proposal for restrictions were welcomed, these could be extended further to cover both sides of Woodlands.

Councillor Sanderson told Members that a formal response would be submitted to the County Council with the proposed restrictions for the areas in question.

Members thanked Councillor Sanderson and raised other areas of concern, including Haweswater in Stukeley Meadows and Priory Road. It was suggested that a TRO was required for these areas to restrict parking near to the junction of Priory Road and to extend an existing restriction on Haweswater to combat residents being unable to access their driveways due to on-street parking.

47. **MEETING TIMES**

The Mayor explained to Members that traditionally Council meetings had a start time of 7.00pm, but that this time had moved forward to earlier times of 6.00pm and 6.30pm in light of COVID-19 and meeting virtually from home. It was questioned as to whether the start time needed to revert back to 7.00pm, to allow Members time to get to the Town Hall after existing work commitments. Members debated the pros and cons to earlier and later start times for meetings, also discussing when Sub Committee meetings should take place so as not to cause disruption to main Committee meetings.

The Town Clerk explained that the start time of meetings was not an issue and that any Sub Committee meetings taking place on the same evening as a full

Committee meeting could take place in Court Room Two so that the full Committee meeting could commence at the allocated time, as long as it was quorate. It was noted that if the Committee meeting was not quorate, Members from the Sub Committee meeting would be asked to leave that meeting and join the full Committee meeting. It was suggested that if Sub Committee meetings took place on separate evenings to full Committee meetings, this would eradicate the risk of them running over, and it was agreed that having too many meetings on one evening made the length of the evening too long and topics of discussion rushed.

Finally, it was noted that the current Council administration was very efficient with meeting times, but if meetings started to become too long, there would have to be a time limit set.

48. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

- i) That the Coneygear Community Day was taking place on Sunday 4th September and Members were encouraged to attend and support the event.
- ii) That a list of charity dates and events would be announced in due course.
- iii) That the Mayor and the Council wished Teresa Gilman, Amenities Officer well ahead of the arrival of her baby boy, who was due at the beginning of October.
- iv) That at the recent visit to Wertheim, the Mayor of Wertheim had paid tribute to the late Malcolm Lyons for his work with twinning and presented a bronze plaque, which was presented to Malcolm's partner, Trish James at Twinning's Summer Tea.

49. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 10th November 2022

MAYOR

**Representatives to Outside Bodies
2022-23**

Organisation	2022-23 Councillor Representatives	
BID Huntingdon (1)	C Doyle	
Cromwell Museum Trust (1)	S Gifford	P Pearce
Hartford Conservation Group (1)	J Cole	
Friends of Coneygear Park (2)	J Cole	P Kennington
HBAC (Huntingdon Business Against Crime) (1)	P Kadewere	
Huntingdon Freeman's Charity (1)	B Luckham	
Huntingdon Commemoration Hall Charity (4)	K Webb	S McAdam
	S Sweek	A McAdam
Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association (1)	A Blackwell	
Huntingdon In Bloom (2)	S. Gifford	K. Webb
Islamic Prayer Centre (1)	J Cole	
St Johns' Almshouses Charities (2)	S. Gifford	A Blackwell
Hunts Volunteer Centre (1)	P Pearce	
Coneygear User Group (2)	A Blackwell	M Kadewere
Joint Town Devolution Group (2)	Mayor	Deputy Mayor
Library Support Group (1)	S McAdam	
History Festival Group (2)	C. Doyle	S McAdam
Shopmobility (2)	A Norton	K Webb
Local History Society (2)	C Doyle	P Kadewere
Fusion (1)	S Sweek	
Hunts Forum (2)	P Kadewere	
Armed Forces Champion	K Webb	