A meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was held in the Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon on Thursday 9th February 2017 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: A Beevor, A Blackwell, S Gifford, W Hensley, P Kadewere, A Mackender-Lawrence, S McAdam, B Morrell, S Mulcahy, T Sanderson (Chairman) and R Valatka.

Absent: Councillor J Jacobs.

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors D Brown, J Dyne, S Dyne, T Forster, L George, S Hassell and B Manning. Apologies were also received from Shilpa Desai-Sakaldip, the Medway Centre Manager.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

54. PUBLIC ADDRESS

A Member indicated that they wished to speak. It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

Councillor Gifford addressed Members following the announcement of the Huntingdon Waitrose closing. With previous knowledge of Mothercare also closing, Councillor Gifford expressed concern over the sustainability of Huntingdon’s town centre. It was suggested that Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) be contacted to question what could be done to address the situation. The Chairman suggested that Sue Bedlow would be the contact to speak to. Councillor Gifford questioned whether rents were too high or there was another reason for retailers leaving the town. Another Member expressed further concerns about new retailers coming to the town in Chequers Court if the existing ones were struggling to survive. It was highlighted that Waitrose and Mothercare came under St Benedicts Court management and that the landlords would need to be contacted to discuss concerns.

Further concerns were raised regarding the loss of the Waitrose car park, where car parking was already an issue in the town.

The Chairman thanked Members for their input and it was proposed, seconded
55. **MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of the Leisure and Community Services Committee meeting held on 10th November 2016 (M4) had been circulated to Members before the meeting, the draft having received informal approval by the Chairman. It was therefore proposed, seconded and

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

56. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUB COMMITTEES**

In advance of the meeting, Members had been notified of publication of copies of the minutes of

i. The Media Sub Committee meetings held on 3rd November 2016 (M2) and 24th November 2016 (M3)

A Member questioned a missing surname of an external representative to the Media Sub Committee and the Clerk explained that this was unknown, but could be obtained and included.

ii. The Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee meeting held on 19th January 2017 (M3).

It was proposed, seconded and

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

57. **TOWN CLERK’S UPDATE**

The Town Clerk informed Members of the following updates:

- The transfer of the Cromwell Museum was hoped to be officially completed and signed off by the end of February 2017.
- After discussions with Godmanchester Town Council, it had been confirmed that the town was returning to represent on the Twinning Sub Committee, with a date to be finalised for a next meeting.
- The Town Clerk informed Members that the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) had been installed at Stukeley Meadows with the agreed sound proofing elements on the side panels. As agreed with Sutcliffe Play, the ground around the MUGA would be reinstated March 2017 when the weather was suitable for grass seed to be sown. In light of the wet weather conditions, the installation of the goal ends at Frenches Field would take place during March 2017.

*Clerk’s Note: Councillor Hensley arrived at the meeting.*

A Member questioned the status of the memorial bench for Former Town Clerk and Honorary Freeman of the Town, Ted Bocking. The Town Clerk advised that
the Ladybird seat had been delivered to the Town Council a number of months back, but that the delay was due to the College of Arms creating Huntingdon’s new Crest. Members were told that the College of Arms had been in touch to advise that following a correction, the Crest should be ready for March 2017.

The Member suggested that plans be put in place as soon as possible to be able to install the bench and present the Freedom Scroll to tie in with Ted’s anniversary on the 5th April.

58. **HEAD GROUNDSMAN**

The Head Groundsman provided the meeting with the following updates:

- That winter work had involved jobs such as fence painting, hedge cutting and general pruning.
- That tree work had been undertaken following an independent survey and that the team needed to remove several stumps in Bloomfield Park once the wet weather subsided. A Member questioned whether trees were being replaced and the Head Groundsman advised that a number of trees had been re planted already, with a plan in place to plant a number of trees across the town each year.
- That the team had responded to a vehicle colliding into a flower bed on the Ring Road (Castle Hills), making the area safe before rebuilding/extending the flower bed area ready for summer bedding.
- There was work to be completed at the Outdoor Bowls Club, putting up a fence/gate and installing disabled parking bays. This would be completed over the next few weeks.
- The summer bedding plugs would be delivered in March, to grow in time for the summer planting season.
- That work had commenced on one of the 2017 summer themed floral displays in conjunction with Shakespeare at the George. The theme was a ship wreck to tie in with the production of Pericles. Members were shown photographs of the display and were informed that through using recycled materials, the cost of the display was £0.
- That Godmanchester Cricket Club and CCC Stanton House had confirmed the renewal of grass cutting contracts, equating to £5,000 income.
- That Godmanchester Town Council grass cutting had been quoted for but a response was awaited.
- That 4 members of the team were going on grave digging training, enabling additional income to be generated through offering the service.
- That unfortunately vandalism and anti-social behaviour had occurred in Bloomfield Park and at the new Sallowbush Road play area. The vandalism at the play area meant that two steps on a piece of equipment needed to be replaced, which had been arranged with Sutcliffe Play.

Members expressed concerns about vandalism and anti-social behaviour, querying whether CCTV was able to capture any incidents. The Head Groundsman advised that there was an ongoing issue with drinking in Bloomfield Park, with the Cromwell Museum also reporting issues of litter, particularly beer cans being found at the rear of the building most mornings. Members agreed that CCTV options needed to be investigated and that Cambridgeshire Constabulary should be patrolling problem areas at prime times. One Member suggested that the Head Groundsman and his team take
photographs of littered, vandalised areas before clearing them up to forward onto the police, with another Member suggesting that the Crime Commissioner receive the reports too.

With no further comments or questions from Members, the Chairman thanked the Head Groundsman for his report and ongoing efforts and the updates were noted.

59. **MEDWAY COMMUNITY CENTRE/CONEGEAR PARK**

Members were referred to a report from the Medway Centre Manager, which outlined the activities at the centre, and at Coneygear Park.

In the absence of the Medway Centre Manager, the Town Clerk informed Members that a meeting of the Medway Centre Working Party had been scheduled for Monday 27th February at 5.30pm. Members of the Working Party had been notified of the date, with the meeting being called to discuss the status of the new community centre.

A Member queried the appendix to the Medway Centre’s report, showing usage of the Centre for regular and one off bookings. It was suggested that Friday and Saturday evenings looked free and that slots could be filled with social events. Another Member suggested that with the Commemoration Hall closing for refurbishment, the Medway Centre should be looking at hosting several of the Hall’s functions. The Town Clerk advised that this was already the case.

With no further questions, the Chairman gave thanks to the Medway Centre Manager for the report and it was noted.

60. **HUNTINGDON IN BLOOM**

The Chairman referred Members to a report summarising the recent activities of Huntingdon In Bloom and passed over to the Deputy Town Clerk for an update.

The Deputy Town Clerk ran through the report, highlighting recent grant awards obtained, and further projects where grant funding would be applied for. It was noted that:

- The spending plan projects equating to £47,000 were now underway, with the MS Therapy Centre garden project being successfully completed.
- Shakespeare at the George was sponsoring the summer 3D floral display, Pericles for £500.
- Confirmation from Cambridgeshire County Council had been received to advise that a grant application for Huntingdon Youth Centre had been successful, awarding £700.
- Huntingdon In Bloom would be planting and maintaining the flower bed outside Oliver James solicitors in St Benedicts Court at a cost of £200 per season.
- Castle Hill House had confirmed that Huntingdon In Bloom could re-establish, plant and maintain the flower bed at the front of the building.
- Further projects had been identified, along with additional grant schemes and conversations were taking place with local stakeholders to progress.
One Member queried whether trees could be planted through the Neighbourhood Greens initiative, commenting that more were needed in the town and it was suggested that this could be investigated with the Head Groundsman, to fall in line with the Estates Services Team’s tree planting initiative.

The Chairman asked if there were any further questions and the report was noted with thanks.

61. **SPORTS HUB**

The Chairman handed over to the Town Clerk for a progress update on the introduction of a new Huntingdon Sports Hub.

Members were advised that a series of meetings had taken place in quick succession with representatives from local sport clubs and their governing bodies, to look at the wants and needs of the clubs, along with requirements for individual club progression. The Town Clerk told Members that Sports England was keen to support the plans, with Living Sport and Huntingdonshire District Council also on board. It was suggested that once conversations had taken place with the remaining clubs and organisations, a formal presentation would be given to the Town Council.

A Member highlighted the importance for good ground drainage and the Town Clerk advised that this had already been discussed and addressed. Members were advised that as part of the project, the ground would be lifted to install ground source heat pumps and a large water tank for ground irrigation and stand pipes. When reinstating the ground, drainage would be addressed to ensure the facility was adequately prepared and sustainable for long term use and future expansion.

Another Member queried the status of collaborating with Alconbury Weald to provide a sports facility but the Town Clerk advised that the speed of progression was creating uncertainty and that the developers would have had to find additional land for a sports facility on top of the already designated areas for sport.

With no further comments or questions, the Chairman thanked the Town Clerk for the update.

62. **NORFOLK ROAD MEMORIAL**

The Chairman invited the Deputy Town Clerk to address Members regarding the forthcoming Norfolk Road Memorial.

Members were referred to a report, where the Deputy Town Clerk had highlighted the need for ownership and direction from the Council regarding the forthcoming 40-year anniversary of the Norfolk Road plane crash. Members were advised that the memorial had been steered by the former Events Sub Committee, which had since been disbanded, recommending that the group take back ownership and responsibility for making necessary arrangements ahead of the 3rd May 2017.
The Chairman thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for the update and it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to delegate responsibility of the memorial back to the former Events Sub Committee.

63. **PENSIONERS’ SUMMER TEA**

The Chairman referred Members to a report by the Administration Assistant regarding the annual Pensioners’ Summer Tea. The report required Members to decide whether to hold the event on the Market Square, under the cover of a marquee, or whether to locate the event at the Medway Centre.

The Administration Assistant had provided costings for both options, demonstrating that holding the event on the Market Square would be costlier, with the need to hire a marquee. A Member questioned whether Huntingdon Town Council owned a marquee and was advised that 8 small gazebos were owned, not a marquee of the scale required.

One Member questioned why the event couldn’t take place at the Town Hall and the Town Clerk explained that with the number of less able bodied guests, the Town Hall infrastructure and lift could not cope with the number of guests and their wheelchairs/mobility scooters needing to get from the ground floor to the second floor.

Members noted the cost difference with the different options and it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to hold the event at the Medway Centre.

64. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Chairman referred Members to a report by the Administration Assistant, providing an update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan, along with data analysis of feedback from community questionnaires.

The Chairman, in his capacity of the Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee Chairman explained to Members that a series of community engagement events had been scheduled across February and March 2017, ahead of planning policies being put together to compile a draft plan.

Members questioned the cost of the suggested Planning Consultant to help prepare the first draft of the plan, with preference made to only appoint a consultant for activities/expertise that couldn’t be provided in-house.

Another Member asked when the plan was likely to be completed and it was suggested that Autumn 2017 would see the completion of Huntingdon’s Neighbourhood Plan.

Finally, a Member from the Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee addressed the meeting and asked for support from fellow Members to attend the community engagement events, commenting that several events were yet to be ‘manned’.
Members noted the report with thanks.

65. **OUTDOOR BOWLS CLUB – SPENDING PLAN**

The Chairman advised Members that a S.106 Spending Plan had been successfully submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council to fund £16,500 of improvements at Huntingdon’s Outdoor Bowls Club, mainly for the introduction of accessible features and the purchase of a bowls green mower.

The Chairman explained that the club was keen to purchase the items ahead of the summer 2017 season, however, the release of funds would be delayed until the associated development was completed and S.106 allocation had been made.

Members were asked whether they would be happy to allow the purchase of items to come from Huntingdon Town Council reserves in advance of the funding being released and it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to recommend that the funding be granted to the Outdoor Bowls Club, with the decision ratified at the Finance Committee meeting on the 16th February 2017.

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

The date of the next meeting of the Leisure & Community Services Committee was noted as 30th March 2017.

**CHAIRMAN**