

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 13 June 2017

Time: 7.00 - 8.40 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A R Green
(in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M Asif, Ms A Baughan, H Bull, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M Clarke, R Farmer, M Hanif, M A Hashmi, A E Hill, M Hussain JP, A Hussain, M E Knight, B E Pearce, S K Raja, N J B Teesdale and Ms J D Wassell,

ALSO PRESENT:

John Shaw

Chiltern Rangers CIC

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Maz Hussain, Councillor S Graham, Councillor M Davy and Councillor R Raja.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 7 March 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

4 CHILTERN RANGERS UPDATE

John Shaw, Managing Director of Chiltern Rangers, provided the Committee with an update detailing the achievements of Chiltern Rangers over the last year. These included:

- A number of projects had been undertaken in the area engaging with a wide range of community groups.
- It was noted that work in the community had successfully continued with 10,000 volunteering hours delivered over the past 12 months on a range of projects around the district.
- The Young Roots project had been delivered with Wycombe Youth Action, funded by the National Lottery, HWBIDCo, Red Kite and Thames Valley Housing. The project aimed to engage 500 young people but had doubled

the numbers during the 18 months since it started, with 965 young people engaged in the projects, as well as 445 adults and 63 under 11s.

- Partnership working involved the fire and ambulance services.
- Work had been undertaken with Wycombe District Council to improve the River Wye.
- Over £56,000 worth of volunteering work had been undertaken over the past year.
- Chiltern Rangers had recently been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2017.
- Future project work would include working with the Chilterns Conversation Board. There would be 16 projects as part of a five year lottery funded plan, with five projects in the Wycombe District area.

It was noted that there was an open invite for groups to work with Chiltern Rangers. Members were also invited to attend a celebration taking place on 7 July, 12pm-3pm to celebrate the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

In response to Member queries it was noted that work on Deangarden Wood could not begin until the sale of the site was completed. Regarding Spearing Road it was noted that communities and the Council would need to work together to deal with fly tipping in the area.

The Committee expressed support for the work being carried out by Chiltern Rangers and congratulated John and his team on winning The Queens Award for Voluntary Services 2017.

5 MARKET UPDATE

The Committee welcomed Charles Brocklehurst, Major Projects and Estates Executive to the meeting, who gave an update on the High Wycombe Market.

In advance of the meeting, all Members of the Committee were invited to submit questions so answers could be prepared prior to the meeting. Questions were received from one Committee member and responses from the market operator had been circulated. These included information on financial stability, trading trends, customer demand, market publicity, success of the street food court and future aims.

The Committee were informed that specific problems for traders included the amount of discount stores on the high street that had resulted in intense competition for traders. Also the high street looked in need of repair as some of the cobbles were loose and could be hazardous in some areas. It was noted that street food was very successful and future plans were to improve the layout and seating in the food court area.

In response to Members queries the following was reported:

- The Council would not consider taking over the management of the market.
- It was noted that footfall in the Eden shopping centre was fashion orientated and these customers would not usually use the market.

- Discussions would be undertaken with the market operator regarding relocating any food stalls that cause fumes to enter banks or shops on the high street.
- The market operator had offered gazebos to traders as a purchase or rental arrangement. Not all traders had taken up the offer as they preferred to use to older style frames. Any reported issues with the gazebos would be taken to the market operator for investigation.
- Regular meetings were held with the market operator and officers were aware of pitch fees.
- Regular traders paid for a pitch in advance and casual traders paid on the day and were offered any pitch available.
- Future involvement of a BIDCo and a more active role in the promotion of the market would be welcomed
- The correct disposal of waste products from the food stalls would be taken to the market operator for investigation and that this was being dealt with correctly.
- Due to emergency access issues market stalls were not allowed in the centre of the high street.
- Children's free entertainment being offered on the high street was being considered.
- There were no current plans for the Chiltern Shopping centre as an agreement could not be made with the current owners.
- Investigations would be undertaken with Buckinghamshire County Council regarding signage for the Charter Market.

The Chairman thanked the Major Projects and Estates Executive for attending the meeting and answering questions.

6 UPDATE ON CEMETERY SECURITY

The Committee considered a report which outlined proposed security measures at the Cemetery. There had been resident concern about suspected incidents of vandalism at the Cemetery and residents had presented a petition to the Council in October 2016 seeking 24/7 CCTV coverage.

Alternative measures were considered as 24/7 CCTV covering the whole site was an expensive option and would fundamentally affect the Cemetery in negative ways. It was reported that a site visit had been undertaken and the Committee was offered a number of potential actions for consideration.

These included:

1. Additional fencing on the northern footpath side - £20,000.
2. Additional planning along the eastern and southern edges – existing maintenance budget as minimal cost.
3. Installation of locally recorded CCTV at the two main gateways and on the rear entrance to the Snowdrop Garden - £3,000.

4. Installation of higher gates at the Lodge, Office and Snowdrop entrances - £9,000
5. Permanent closure of the Hampden Road/Snowdrop entrance – no cost if combined with 4.

In response to Member queries it was noted that locally recorded CCTV was now being considered as this was a more affordable option, and cameras could be mounted on buildings in the Cemetery. CCTV recordings would be kept for 28 days and the cameras could begin to be installed once Cabinet had approved the funds.

The High Wycombe Town Committee considered the options and thanked the officers for looking in detail at the options available. The Committee agreed to support options 2, 3 and 5 as set out above. Members agreed that a further review should be undertaken in the Autumn, and that delegated authority should be granted to the Head of Community should there still be a necessity to also implement options 1 and 4 in the future. It was noted that a future report would be presented to the Town Committee on the review.

RESOLVED that it be recommend to Cabinet that:

- (i) options 2, 3 and 5 as set out in paragraph 11 of the report be agreed; and
- (ii) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community to implement options 1 and 4, should the need arise, following a review to be held in the Autumn 2017; to release up to a maximum of £32k from the Special Expenses Reserve.

7 RYE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Committee received a report which provided information on the outcome of a feasibility study undertaken to explore options to develop self-financing public toilets on the Rye.

A petition had been submitted three years previously that requested public toilets at the town end of the Rye. Following this petition the Town Committee funded feasibility work to investigate the provision of a second set of public toilets to serve the two play areas. Consultants were appointed to carry out the feasibility study and a range of options were provided.

- Toilets would only be financial sustainable as part of a café/visitor offer.
- To provide public toilets the café/visitor facility must be open all year round.
- To be sustainable on a daily basis throughout the year the café needs to be prominent and run by a commercial operator.
- Only the London Road would provide this prominence.
- An option to develop within the Pann Mill boundary would require agreement with the High Wycombe Society as this area is leased separately.

- A further option would be to locate the café and toilets on the Rye side behind Pann Mill, but this is in a flood zone, is less prominent and reduces potential income from passing trade.
- The boathouse does not have a sewage connection, is in a poor location so would not be sustainable all year round and has very limited opening times.

It was noted that in relation to planning policy a visitor centre on London Road would be a difficult location to build in as it had never previously been developed. The Committee noted that an alternative option would be to renew the boathouse and were informed that a staff toilet would be required, and subsequently a public toilet could be provided at this facility to be used when the boathouse was open. Other improvements at the Rye could include outdoor gym equipment, a new surfaced footpath, widening of the London road footpath for cycling, replacing trees and improved signage. It was also noted that the Pann Mill volunteers/High Wycombe Society were interested in developing a small visitor centre and staff only toilet at Pann Mill.

Members agreed that a visitor centre on the London Road would not be a feasible option but supported the refurbishment of the boathouse with an option of public toilets.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the report be noted and
- (ii) a visitor centre on the London Road would not be a feasible option but the refurbishment of the boathouse with an option of public toilets be supported.

8 AFFORDABLE FUNERALS

The Committee considered a report on information to be provided on the Council website offering advice for people seeking to have an affordable funeral.

It was noted that the average cost of a burial funeral in England is £4,136 and £6,000 in London. However it was possible for people to arrange their own burial and cremation services without the use of a funeral director. The Committee were informed that the Cemetery already accepted direct burials but did not publicise the option.

Members suggested that for people without internet access the information could be provided in Wycombe District Times and on Wycombe Sound.

RESOLVED: That the Council provide a page on their website setting out advice services for people seeking to have an affordable funeral.

9 INFORMATION SHEETS

RESOLVED: That Information Sheets 02/2017 Community Support Grants, 03/2017 Public Spaces protection Order to close footpath HWU/80/1 and 04/2017 Budgetary Control 2016/17 be noted.

10 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's draft work programme looking ahead to March 2018 was presented for review.

Members noted that a report providing an update on a Public Spaces Protection Order would be provided at the meeting in September.

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be noted and updated as above.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mrs J Durkan	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Mr I Hunt	Democratic Services Manager
Ms E Jewell	Head of Community
C Brocklehurst	Major Projects and Property Executive