

High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 5 March 2019

Time: 7.10 - 9.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Clarke
(in the Chair)

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Hanif and M A Hashmi

ALSO PRESENT:

Deputy Commander Graham Hadley

Thames Valley Police

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hashmi and Councillor Hanif.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 15 January 2019 be agreed as a correct records and signed by the Chairman.

39 POLICING UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Deputy Commander Graham Hadley of the Thames Valley Police to the meeting and invited him to provide the Committee with an update on policing matters within the area.

Members had provided a number of questions in advance of the meeting to DC Hadley for a response. The following main points were noted –

- There were one or two off the county line drug dealers in the District however this was statistically less than national figures. Enforcement had recently been undertaken with Operation Rowlock and a number of arrests had been made. A large volume of drugs and weapons had been taken off the streets.

- Additional funding provided by the government would include funding for the High Wycombe policing area.
- The police budget had decreased over the last 8 years and there had been a reduction of approximately 12 officers over this period. The Neighbourhood Police Officer numbers had remained the same.
- TVP were engaging with Wycombe District Council on a range of measures to increase capacity across the area. The street wardens would be working with the Neighbourhood Police team to provide extra capacity in the area.
- There were around 20 Special Constables working in the Wycombe area. It was noted that these were mainly seasonal due to student officers recruited from the University. There had been a Thames Valley wide initiative to recruit more Special Constables.
- Knife crime was up 16% nationally and in Wycombe it was up by 4%. To tackle knife crime it was reported that there were rapid arrests, recovery of weapons, knife amnesty, stop and search and education programmes.
- Officers have access to scanning wands to help search for weapons.
- TVP has a Community and Diversity Officer and ethnicity has not been raised to be an issue regarding knife crime.
- A key issue for the police was to use resources effectively.
- There would be Thames Valley wide programmes in schools as part of measures to deter knife crime.
- It was noted that the possession of knives and offensive weapons was a highly legislated area. Many people in society use knives for the purpose of work or domestically and legislative powers were used to deter them from being used on the street. Test purchases were also undertaken in shops to make sure businesses were selling knives lawfully.
- It was usual for children in schools to be searched for the possession of knives and other measures were used to educate and deter.
- It was reported that some knives in supermarkets were held in a locked area.
- Regarding the bus lane in the London Road; nine tickets had been issued to drivers using the bus lane, however members were concerned at this low number.
- It was suggested that the new unitary council could consider more cameras on roads with bus lanes and it was noted that enforcement was an issue.
- Regarding recent pub closures in the town centre it was reported that the police had not advised pubs to close and this had been due to social media discussions.

Members were advised to contact Deputy Commander Hadley if they had any further queries. The Chairman thanked Mr Hadley for his update.

40 SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM - COMMUNITY PROJECTS UPDATE

Elaine Jewell, Head of Community, provided a presentation which provided information on community projects currently being undertaken in the area. The following points were noted:

Cemetery

- The new cemetery would be known as Penn Road Cemetery as this would enable better navigation for satnav users to the address.
- The key features would include: a children's burial area, lawn burials and cremated remains options.
- It would be a tranquil area with biodiverse planting and local species.
- There was a budget of £1.67m.
- Two consultation events had been held.
- The works were due for completion early summer 2020; however the timetable for the build was dependent on the planning process.
- Car parking on the site was able to absorb additional vehicles if necessary.
- The building would be minimal with a small seating area, office space and toilet facilities.
- Planning had requested a tilt on the roof which would cost an additional £2000.
- The building was not intended to be onsite chapel.
- Electrical vehicle charging was a standard requirement and CCTV would be able to monitor if this facility was being regularly used by members of the public other than visitors to the cemetery.
- Taps, litter bins and a number of benches would be available for cemetery visitors.

Frogmoor

- Key success factors were to make Frogmoor welcoming, safe and attractive.
- The budget was £109k maximum.
- Consultation had included BIDCo and took account of the Dandara development.
- New curved benching would be installed.
- Bollards were also being installed to prevent parking.
- Damaged concrete would be replaced.
- Planting was not an option on the fountain area and redevelopment of the fountain was not part of the scheme.
- The expected completion date was 2019.
- The memorial bench plaques could be moved to a more permanent position.
- It was difficult to prevent mopeds from mounting the pavements in the area and enforcement would need to be considered.
- The scheme was to make Frogmoor a place where people feel welcome and long term plans for the area would be part of the redevelopment of the Chiltern Shopping Centre into residential units.
- Street wardens would help to make the space feel safe. There would be 3 full-time equivalent street wardens to discourage street drinkers and beggars and enforce the Public Spaces Protection Orders.
- Further joint working would be undertaken with BIDCo in the future.
- Soft under bench lighting was being considered.
- A maintenance schedule would be undertaken and the problem of pigeon droppings on benches would be built in.

Green Spaces Contract

- The current contract expires on 31 December 2019.
- There were a number of options including to bring in house or retender. However it would be difficult to bring in house due to staffing constraints.
- It would not be possible to extend the contract further.
- Consideration would also be given to the forthcoming Community Governance Reviews and the outcome of these.
- In March Cabinet will be asked to agree to procure a new contract to be coterminous with the contracts of Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council.

Rye Boat House Replacement

- The Town Committee had funded the feasibility work and this had been completed.
- General Fund Section 106 was paying for the replacement project.
- The current tenant's service was popular and the aim would be for boat hire to continue.
- The contractor would be dealing with the planning permission and the project is currently in the pre planning stages.
- The budget was c£300k.
- Included would be boat hire, café, modest indoor seating area and public toilet.
- There would not be an external door on the toilet but this would be open to the public while the café was open. The toilet would not be open 24 hours a day, however people would not have to make a purchase from the café to access the toilet. It would be the responsibility of the tenant to maintain the toilet.
- A mini golf course and table tennis could be considered.
- Outside seating would be available at the café.
- The Environment Agency had advised that weeds in the river were beneficial for the fish.
- The tenant would prefer construction to take place over the winter months however this was dependent on planning consent.
- There were public toilets available everyday by the car park on the Rye.

The Chairman thanked Elaine for her update.

41 RENAMING OF LIBRARY GARDENS

The Committee considered a report on renaming the Library Gardens to Memorial Gardens to mark the end of the World War One Centenary commemorations.

The Committee were informed that a member of the public had suggested the renaming as the library had closed over a decade ago and the gardens had existed before the library was built.

Members were concerned that renaming the gardens was not appropriate and they had always been known as the Library Gardens. It was noted that some areas and buildings keep their names long after the original building had gone.

A motion was put forward by Councillor Green to keep the name as Library Gardens, this was seconded by Cllr S Raja.

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Cllr R Raja to rename the gardens 'The Old Library Gardens', this was seconded by Cllr Pearce. A vote was taken on this motion which fell 11 against, 4 in favour.

A vote was taken to keep the name of the gardens as Library Gardens, this was carried 14 in favour, 1 against.

RESOLVED: That the name Library Gardens remains.

Members noted that this would be Elaine's last High Wycombe Town Committee as she was leaving Wycombe District Council. Members thanked Elaine for all her work in support of the Committee and wished her well for the future.

42 INFORMATION SHEETS

RESOLVED: That Information Sheet 01/2019 Q3 Budgetary Control Report be noted.

43 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's draft work programme looking ahead to November 2019 was presented for review.

Members requested that a market update be added to the work programme and requested that the market manager be invited to the next meeting.

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

44 URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Mrs J Durkan

Senior Democratic Services Officer

J Openshaw

District Solicitor

Ms E Jewell

Head of Community