



High Wycombe Town Committee agenda

Date: Tuesday 19 January 2021

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Via MS Teams

Membership:

K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M Asif, A Baughan, H Bull, L Clarke OBE, M Clarke, M Davy, R Farmer, S Graham, T Green, M Hanif, M Hashmi, D Hayday, A Hill, A Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain JP, M Knight, W Mallen, B Pearce, R Raja, S Raja (Chairman), D Shakespeare OBE, N Teesdale (Vice-Chairman) and J Wassell

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Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 Apologies for Absence	19:00	
2 Declaration of Interest		
3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on the 24 November		3 - 6

2020 to be confirmed as a correct record.

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|----------|---|--------------|----------------|
| 4 | Special Expenses Budget - To Follow
The Committee will receive a report to consider the Special Expenses Budget 2021/22.

Presenters:
Anne Begley, Interim Finance Business Partner
Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant
Ramesh Prashar, Head of Finance | 19:10 | |
| 5 | High Wycombe Market Update
The Committee will receive an update on the High Wycombe Market.

Presenter: Jacqueline Ford, Economic Development Officer | 19:30 | 7 - 12 |
| 6 | Chiltern Rangers Update
John Shaw to provide an update on the work of the Chiltern Rangers. | 19:50 | |
| 7 | Work Programme
To consider the work programme. | 20:10 | 13 - 14 |
| 8 | Date of Next Meeting
To note the date of the next meeting as 9 March 2021 at 7pm. | 20:15 | |

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For further information please contact: Jemma Durkan / Liz Hornby on 01494 421635 / 01494 421261, email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.



High Wycombe Town Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2020 IN VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE MS TEAMS, COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 8.55 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M Asif, A Baughan, L Clarke OBE, M Clarke, R Farmer, T Green, M Hanif, D Hayday, A Hill, A Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain, M Knight, W Mallen, B Pearce, R Raja, S Raja, N Teesdale and J Wassell

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

J Durkan

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Graham, Cllr M Hashmi and Cllr Mahboob Hussain JP.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Regarding the minutes of the previous meeting the following queries were raised:

- Regarding the grants allocation it was requested that a list be provided on the applications for grants as it was unknown who received these.
- Following a query it was confirmed that the Dunkirk Memorial on Castle Street was maintained under the Council and not Special Expenses.
- An update was requested regarding the motion to carry forwards the underspend to the next year's accounts.
- Regarding the Bull Lane Service Yard Gates an update was requested on the written response regarding the match funding from Travelodge. A Member suggested that the Council could pay for the gates, however the Chairman explained there were issues with access and rights of way, and work was being undertaken on this issue. It was noted that the waste team had done an excellent job of clearing fly tipping in the area. It was suggested that a working group could be created to support dealing with this issue.
- An update on costs for the Interpretation Boards and signposts for areas of interest around High Wycombe was requested.

- Regarding the Daws Hill development allotments a member commented that if these were on Abbey Barn South land then they would not be able to be used as allotments due to pollution issues.
- Regarding the motion to refer the need for more allotments to the Strategy Sites Planning Committee the Chairman confirmed that this was sent to Cllr Warren Whyte and a response had been received which would be circulated to the Committee.
- A breakdown regarding the income and outgoings from allotments retained by the contractor was requested.
- A working group meeting had taken place to consider the grants criteria review and small amendments would be made. This would be brought to a future Committee to consider the changes and agree the final amended criteria.
- It was noted that the working group membership had been established to consider the roles of the High Wycombe Town Committee and the Community Board, however a meeting had not yet taken place.

The Chairman noted a response would be requested on issues raised.

The minutes of the meeting of the meeting held on 22 September 2020 were agreed.

4 CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTS IN HIGH WYCOMBE

Penelope Tollitt, Director, Making Places Together and John Shaw, Chiltern Rangers, provided a presentation on climate change setting out evidence, consequences and actions that could be taken. Penelope noted that she believed this was a very urgent matter.

A number of charts and diagrams were provided in the presentation setting out the evidence and website links were provided for the source material. Penelope noted that after leaving the Council she reconnected with environmental issues and confirmed that she was Member of Institute of Environmental Sciences and a Chartered Environmentalist. She provided information on an initiative to support action against climate change, the '11th Hour Strike for the Climate'. Penelope provided a number of slides setting out evidence with regards to global warming, the effect on the planet, the economy and food and water shortages.

John provided information on the history and impact on the Chilterns and the chalk stream, specifically water usage from these streams. He noted that the impact of climate change was already visible in the Chilterns and water scarcity was an issue. Water resource needed to be protected and was one of the most important problems that needed to be considered. The Beech woodlands were also at risk due to climate change, and pest and diseases that thrive in a warmer climate. The chalk grasslands, rare areas of habitation which hosted various species of plants and butterflies, were declining and adding to the bio diversity crisis. Newly planted trees were helping to mitigate the crisis by linking habitats, creating hedgerows and protecting areas. All of these issues would need to be considered to protect against the threat of climate change. Urban spaces would also need to be used better for bio diversity in the town. It was suggested to act locally, make small changes, sharing of information and to save water at home where possible.

Actions suggested for High Wycombe included: tree and wild flower planting, rewilding areas in the town such as Desborough Rec, electric car networks, off-road bike super networks and more allotments. It was suggested that a High Wycombe climate change action team could be created with the High Wycombe Town Committee and the Community Board using volunteers and to connect with individuals, schools and groups.

In response to a number of questions the following main points were noted:

- Concern was raised regarding the increase in the number of bonfires and people paving over gardens. It was noted that most gardens were unregulated in planning however education was preferred over regulation.
- The ability for people to act together would enable changes to be made.
- Education of children was suggested to enable change within individuals and families.
- Water leaks should be rectified.
- Developments should be designed to support the environment. Alternatives to car use and the benefits of using other types of transport should be considered.
- Consideration should be given to the future rather than looking at the mistakes in the past.
- Regulation, education and leading by example would be required to deal with climate change. It was recommended that the council should go paperless.
- Elected members should set the standard and show by example. It was suggested that members provide information on changes they have made to tackle climate change.
- An information stall could be provided in the town centre providing information. Projects could be undertaken with schools and groups through the Community Board funding. It was suggested that a working group be created to move this work forward.
- It was suggested that members could work with faith and community groups on projects to tackle climate change.
- Consideration would need to be given nationally regarding electrical distribution for electric vehicles as some infrastructure would be outdated.
- Local energy production such as solar panels could be considered.
- Community champions could be used to highlight issues.
- Cabinet Members had been difficult to contact with issues and it was important that members were supported on a local level.
- Local people needed to be supported to change.
- Woodland could regenerate without the need for additional planting and was able to regenerate naturally.
- There were issues with consumption rather than just population.
- Members supported the suggestion of setting up an action team.
- It was confirmed that the presentation would be circulated to members.

The Chairman thanked Penelope and John for their presentation.

5 CHILTERN RANGERS UPDATE

John Shaw, Chiltern Rangers provided a short update. He explained that the Rangers were still undertaking work during lockdown and their volunteering programme would be up and running soon. It was noted that 700 volunteers had given 2000 hours of their time since April 2020 and engaged with over a 1000 children on projects.

It was agreed that this item would be moved to the meeting in January so a full update could be provided.

6 SPECIAL EXPENSES Q2 2020/21

Ramesh Prashar, Finance Officer presented a report on the Special Expenses quarter two position for 2020/21. It was noted that at the end of September the figures were lower as the managerial charges and grounds maintenance charges had not yet been added. In total the under spend expected at year end was £5000.

Information regarding the vacant post of the cemetery manager and the opening date of the snowdrop cemetery was requested.

Regarding funds not used in the special expenses such as for Town Twinning, it was noted that this would become part of the under spend at year end. Funds would go into the working balances and reserves to be used at a later time.

The Chairman thanked Ramesh for the report.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's draft work programme looking ahead to March 2021 was present for review.

It was suggested that an item regarding action taken by members with regards to Climate Change be added to the work programme.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was incorrect on the agenda and confirmed to take place at 7.00pm on 19 January 2021.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.



High Wycombe Market

Author: Jacqueline Ford

Economic Development Officer, Economy, Growth and Regeneration

Date: 19th January 2021

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Overview

This paper is provided as an update to the High Wycombe market report presented in September 2020. It is focused on activities undertaken before and after the second lockdown in November. It also sets out the next steps with respect to strategic market management and the development of a Market Strategy for Buckinghamshire.

The advent of a second lockdown and changing tier system placement for Buckinghamshire has caused a challenge for all retail in the town and impacted on the market, bringing a return to a smaller 'essential goods' only offer. The Covid-19 changes have also impacted officer capacity and plans in some areas have been re-programmed.

Update

Reimagining our market place, branding and awareness raising

Quarterbridge advocate the need to curate our market with the broader offer in our town centre and to use the space currently designated for the market in a smarter way. It is noted that the street food section, although not popular with all demographics, has been the key driver that has sustained the market and encouraged footfall. This mirrors the positive experience that street food has achieved in animating markets elsewhere.

Through the autumn we have been working with Saunders to reimagine the physical market space and set the future direction for attracting niche and specialist traders to High Wycombe. This is an activity that takes time to embed and with Covid trading restrictions has been unsurprisingly been a bit stop start.

As part of reimagining the space we have divided the footprint into designated zones that can be branded and promoted separately to target attention and together as a whole:

The Guild: the undercroft of the Guildhall, playing on the term 'Guild' for crafted and artisan 'merchant products'.

The Square: the small area adjacent to the Guildhall in front of The Falcon. This has been used for artisan foods and handmade goods in the run up to Christmas but also has potential as a standalone small events space for buskers or story-telling events as run by the museum.

The Food Court: in front of Little Market House.

The Market: the traditional mixed market and fresh produce area on the High Street.

Speciality Markets

In December HWBIDCo arranged a Sunday specialist vegan market. Despite the weather and Tier 3 restrictions, this was well supported and successful. Feedback was positive and people have asked for this to be run again. In line with Quarterbridge recommendations about specialist markets, and experience elsewhere, we will continue to work with HWBIDCo, Saunders and others to develop a programme of speciality markets as Covid permits.

Setting the ambition for a regular Sunday Market enables this to get in peoples diaries and becomes a standing activity for the town. Again, we are at the start of this journey and it will take time to develop this and embed.

Social media spreading the word

Saunders have taken a more proactive stance on social media with the new Market Manager reinvigorating the posts and messages. The organic reach of the market's Facebook page has grown. Positive messages have also been posted on the High Wycombe page and on Instagram – as new people are recognising the change in traders and offer and are letting others know of the positive changes that they have seen. The newer traders to High Wycombe – including the new local start-ups, are all active on social media and this has raised awareness and brought new footfall into the town and market as a result.

HWBIDCo ran a successful 'shop local' campaign over the festive period with a short video of independent shop keepers from across the town saying thank you and merry Christmas. Once the current Covid restrictions have been lifted we plan to use this medium to produce new collateral to share and introduce our established and new traders (see below) to a wider audience – we have some interesting stories to tell that may encourage other start-ups to give the market a go.

'Visit Wycombe'

HWBIDCo have been working with Wycombe Museum and other partners over the autumn and winter to develop a new 'Visit Wycombe' website. As part of this have developed a town brand and colour palette that will be used to ensure a coordinated look and feel to communications – and bring a clear identity for the town. Examples of this can be seen in the window of the former Burger King site on Frogmoor. The website will launch in the New Year and a key feature of this will be a new 'What's On' listing – where we can add specialist markets and other animations for the market space as arranged.

Creating new businesses

One of the benefits of our market, which is also acknowledged by Quarterbridge, is the low entry cost to trade for people who want to start up a new venture. Since the reopening of the market in July, we have seen five new local people make a start with a market stall: whether as a result of making things during lockdown, losing a job, taking a career change or have a job that is on pause due to Covid restrictions.

We have also been able to attract new art and craft stall holders and home-produced food traders. Alongside new more established traders, this has started to create an 'artisan' feel for part of the market space we are branding as 'The Guild'.

Street scene improvements

From October the streetscape has been improved with the York stone pavers being re-laid and the black top patching removed. This high-quality work has transformed the look and feel of the high street area. The barrier at the entrance to the High Street has also been fixed that will help stop non-essential through traffic on market days. This was noted by Quarterbridge as a key improvement that was needed – not only from a public safety perspective, but also to enhance the ambience and use of space for further seating and entertainment looking forward.

Market Strategy and future delivery options

At the September meeting of this Committee it was recognised that there is potential for a revitalised market offering in High Wycombe: focussing on more stalls, a diversity of offer and extended themed events and activities in the high street space. It was noted that this will not happen overnight and it will take time and a coordinated effort to return the market to a more viable asset and to encourage new traders to give the area a try. The potential that markets play as a seedbed for new business ideas to be trialled and developed was also noted – and this aspect is starting to bear fruit for High Wycombe and has introduced a diversity of offer for the town.

In September we reported that with the move to unitary, the Council has the opportunity to look strategically at the market offer across the whole of Buckinghamshire and consider management arrangements looking forward. There are a range of market delivery options in place that include a concession contract with a private company (High Wycombe), a trader cooperative approach (Amersham and Chesham) and in-house provision (Aylesbury).

The Quarterbridge report also suggests consideration of HWBIDCo as a market operative (although notes capacity and financial challenges with this) and the establishment of a community interest company. The Quarterbridge report will be used as part of the evidence base for the strategic market management element of the new Market Strategy. Work will start in the new financial year.

The concession contract for High Wycombe Market comes to an end in March 2021. Corporate Management Team have taken a decision to extend the concession contract for one year to enable this strategic work above to complete and the best delivery model for the market to be identified. This decision was taken alongside that to phased a reintroduction of pitch fees for traders.

The Local Economic Growth Team will continue to actively work with the market operators and other agencies as required to bring about changes to improve the current market offer as the strategic work is carried out and report back to this Committee as required.

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Buckinghamshire Council

HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

Work Programme – MARCH 2021 – JANUARY 2022

Title & Subject Matter	Meeting / Date to be taken	Contact Officer
<u>9 March 2021</u>		
HWBIDCo Update - TBC	9 March 2021	Jemma Durkan, Democratic Services
Q3 Budgetary Control Report	9 March 2021	Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant
<u>June 2021</u>		
Policing Update - TBC	June 21	Jemma Durkan, Democratic Services
Special Expenses Outturn 20/21	June 21	Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant
<u>September 2021</u>		
Q1 Budgetary Control Report	Sept 21	Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant
<u>November 2021</u>		
Chiltern Rangers Update	Nov 21	Jemma Durkan, Democratic Services
Q2 Budgetary Control Report	Nov 21	Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant
<u>January 2022</u>		
HWBIDCo Update	Jan 22	Jemma Durkan, Democratic Services
Special Expenses Budget 2022/2023	Jan 22	Tamsin Lloyd-James, Accountant

Meeting contact officer: Jemma Durkan, 01494 421635, jemma.durkan@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
 Work Programme Updated: 11 January 2021

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