



South West Chilterns Community Board minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the South West Chilterns Community Board held on Wednesday 17 November 2021 in Via MS Teams, commencing at 6.30 pm and concluding at 8.45 pm.

Members present

D Barnes, A Collingwood, P Drayton, C Heap, D Johncock, S Kayani, N Marshall, Z Mohammed, J Towns, M Turner, D Watson, S Wilson, Fawley Meeting, Great Marlow Parish Council, Hambleden Parish Council, Ibstone Parish Council, Lane End Parish Council, Little Marlow Parish Council, Marlow Town Council, Marlow Bottom Parish Council and Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council

Others in attendance

A Nelms, A Saunders, M Bawley, C Burslem, C Metcalfe, J Bloomer, J Laker, O Elliott, P Batting, M Devlin, L Jeffries, K Farooqi, C Gray and M Harker OBE

Agenda Item

1 The Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Dominic Barnes welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Hector Sants Turville Parish Council, Pei Ling Harper Trading Standards, Geoff Peg, Dave Bull, Annie Roy Barker Marlow Bridge Rotary, Carney Bonner British Red Cross, Nahida Latif and Sophie Philips Red Kite Housing, Neil Dring Medmenham Parish Council, Paul Deriaz and Jodie Cayaye Hedsor Parish Council.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Notes of the last meeting

The Chairman confirmed that all the actions had been completed. The minutes of the meeting 7th July 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

5 Buckinghamshire Business First

The Chairman welcomed Philippa Batting Managing Director of Bucks Business First. The slides were appended to the minutes.

Philippa explained that Bucks Business First support the creation of jobs and growth

of the local economy with over 50 people working in partnership with the Council and local enterprise partnerships.

They were currently running a 'be your own boss' project in conjunction with the community boards across the County. The starting your own business courses ran for 2 days with 12 participants at a cost of £3000. 9 other community boards participated and currently there were 4 attendees and 8 places available for residents.

Philippa provided a statistical update and informed they were awaiting further information on the number of claimants due to the impact of the end of the furlough scheme. There was a higher number of claimants than usual however this was lower than the national average. The average amount for government backed loans during the pandemic was £49,000 with loan repayments due to start soon. Workplace travel was still 20-40% lower than precovid however, retail and recreational mobility was increasing.

It was reported there were 3400 businesses in the community board area the large majority were professional businesses with annual turnover of less than half a million and 10 employees or less.

The challenges for businesses was reported with issues discussed ranging from cashflow, the end of furlough scheme, planning for redundancies and the shift to agile working post pandemic. Furthermore, the costs due to Brexit and fuel shortages were also affecting businesses. Solutions to these issues were discussed including how to increase turnover and decrease overheads, upskilling those on furlough and implementing technology and investment.

Philippa presented project ideas Bucks Business First could provide support on including:

- A £9000 net zero project to help businesses which had been signed off by the economic and regeneration team at the Council.
- Promoting the birthplace of the Paralympics by providing a grant of £30,000 to help tourism by making businesses more accessible for visitors and residents through adaptations or more equipment.
- Visit Buckinghamshire a project to support businesses in the community board area to promote themselves with itineraries or tours.

The Chairman queried if this community board was the first Bucks Business First had spoken to with regard to the grants. Philippa advised 5 community boards have been consulted. The Chairman reiterated working groups would be interested in discussing initiatives.

6 Redcote Leisure

Charlie Metcalfe, Redcote Leisure, provided a presentation appended to the minutes.

Charlie explained he had started several businesses during the pandemic. The first

business was Total Lawn Care which provided grass cutting and lawn care, the business accelerated quickly. In April 2020 Charlie opened a Redcote Leisure franchise which was a micro camper conversion company. The success of the franchise model was discussed and how the company had to adapt to contact free selling in the second lockdown. Charlie then opened Thames Valley Camper Hire in 2021 with a business partner. A new workshop in Cuddington was opened with the aim of converting larger camper vans. Charlie reflected on opening the businesses during the pandemic and the flexible positive work life balance he achieved.

The Chairman thanked Charlie for his presentation and he was congratulated on his business achievements.

7 Rural Economy

The Chairman welcomed John Bloomer, local group secretary for National Farmers Union and Alex Nelms, Director at Kensham Farms to provide a presentation on the rural economy.

Alex introduced himself and advised Kensham Farms was located in Cadmore End covering 2000 acres predominantly farming cereals for bread making and was home for small businesses and an equestrian business.

John Bloomer was introduced and advised he was from the local National Farmers Union which represented 174 members in South Bucks. He advised he also had a rural insurance business in Marlow.

Alex informed the board he had a meeting with Cllr Collingwood and Cllr Zahir Mohammed about how the community board could help the rural economy. It was reported the NFU distribution list could be used to inform members and farms regarding community board grant funding. John advised the NFU was interested in funding opportunities and reiterated a clear vision was needed for the rural economy. It was reported grain prices were increasing which was positive for farmers however the grain quality had slightly decreased. The E10 fuel introduction produced more competition for farmers.

John discussed the issues facing farmers and the rural economy, these included.

- An increase in gas prices affected the cost of fertiliser which relied on natural gas causing the price to double.
- A lack of availability of CO₂ which was required for food manufacturing caused a delay in animal slaughter.
- A 43% gap in food production work force resulting from Brexit had pushed the cost of food up.
- A lack of HGV drivers meant grain or animals couldn't be hauled.
- Rising concerns the Environmental Land Management scheme had not been finalised by the government resulting in short term tenancies. As the subsidies were unclear tenancies were being limited to 3 years making it harder for farmers to invest for the future of their businesses.
- There were opportunities resulting from the pandemic including increased footfall at local farm shops. However, footfall was reduced due to customers

returning to supermarkets.

There was a question relating to setting aside land in local farming communities. It was explained this policy of paying farmers not to over farm was not common practise anymore. There was an environmental land management scheme which would look at rewilding land and it was discussed that short tenancies may be due to upcoming incentives for rewilding soon. Alex advised that grain prices were increasing so there was more incentive for farmers to use land for growing rather than rewilding. In addition, growing local was essential to reduce food miles and co2.

A query was raised over when future government funding plans will be decided. Alex advised Kensham Farms would be partaking in a sustainable farm incentive pilot. The generous EU funding would be removed by 2028 and it was reiterated the time from planting crops to selling was over a long period.

The idea of how net zero worked for businesses in relation to farms was discussed with Alex confirming Kensham Farm was currently net zero with farms generally auditing themselves. Further work was required in relation to livestock and the methane cycle. John confirmed the NFU had signed up to the net zero pledge for 2040.

There was a discussion on how the community board could support local farms and encourage residents to shop locally.

8 Formal Community Board Updates

Community Engagement Action Group

Cllr Carol Heap, Chairman of the action group gave a presentation which is appended to the minutes. The following points were highlighted:

- The group had re-engaged with existing groups from the covid recovery sub-group and new groups.
- The group had supported a number of local events including an interactive dementia experience to help make Marlow more dementia friendly.
- The group supported the Buckinghamshire older persons' action group which focused on engaging with older people after lockdown ended and more contacts for the community board were yielded.
- There was an increase focus on health and wellbeing in particularly to support younger people in board area.

Highways and Transport

Cllr Mark Turner, Chairman of the action group provided an update on highways and transport schemes:

- The following schemes were being considered by the action group: Speed restrictions for Medmenham, Fawley and Westhorpe interchange and Upper Hedsor Road. Yellow line applications, parking surveys to address traffic issues, active travel lines between Marlow, Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Slough and no waiting restrictions. The board was awaiting costings for these

proposals.

- Parking surveys would be conducted as there was an increase in verge parking. The group had liaised with Buckinghamshire Council to increase patrols and ticketing with particular focus on Lock Road and Claremont Gardens initially. In addition, there were discussions with the Parking Manager at Buckinghamshire Council to consider the financial impact of a 'park and stride' period of free parking during school drop off time in Dean Street Car Park Marlow and Wakeman Road, Bourne End.
- In relation to speeding the community board's MVAS system was to be loaned to parish councils for pre-approved sites and to the police for enforcement.
- An update on cycle routes was provided with Cllr's Wilson and Johncock plotting cycle routes through their respective wards. Cllrs Collingwood and Barnes were liaising with the Carrington Estate for their routes. It was advised Buckinghamshire Council's local cycling and walking implementation plan would be considered.
- In relation to public transport connectivity Great Western Railway would do a feasibility study into implementing a bus lay by close to Bourne End Railway Station.
- The group had contacted Buckinghamshire Council to request a new bus service from Lane End to Marlow as the current route serves High Wycombe making the travel time too long for residents to access key services.
- The group had been assisting Hambledon Church to obtain a superfast broadband connect and wifi 'collection plate'. Lane End ultrafast broadband had been approved by a contractor scheduled for spring 2022 and local residents were encouraged to take an interest.
- There would be an event in Spring 2022 to showcase electric vehicles with demonstrations and trials.

A member requested feedback on the car club and wireless charging in Liston Road car park. It was reported the scheme had been successful and was booked up with a point being trialled in Burnham too.

A query was raised on the approval of the Westhorpe interchange investment. There were no updates on this and the question would need to be raised outside of the meeting.

Environment and Climate Change

Cllr Neil Marshall presented the following updates on the environment and climate change projects:

- The Trinity Road quiet way was in the second phase of consultation. There had been a positive response with an increase in walking and cycling.
- The off street residential induction charging and electric vehicle hire were proving very popular.
- Marlow Energy Group were seeking to purchase a thermal image camera which had been endorsed by the Council ready for board approval. The camera would detect heat loss in buildings so owners could be advised how

to better insulate their buildings.

- There was a Parish ecology assessment underway in Marlow and there was a request for other parish councils to get in touch if interested.
- In relation to Eco Schooling, environmental education would be improved with the help of Chiltern Rangers.
- Spinfield School were working as part of the solar school initiative.
- The solar compacting waste bin would be placed on the edge of Globe Park.
- Plans for Releaf Marlow would be ready for board approval, there were 3 sites allocated including Happy Valley Marlow.

It was reported Little Marlow Parish Council were interested in the parish ecology assessment.

There was a question regarding uncovered cycle racks at Sir William Borlase School and which working group should the application to fund a cover be addressed. It was confirmed the environment working group should receive this.

Economic Regeneration and Development:

Cllr Alex Collingwood presented an update on economic regeneration and development:

- There was £25,000 set aside for the rural economy, which helped rural businesses diversification, improved public access, increased jobs and promoted shopping locally.
- In relation to town centres there was increased footfall and improved footways with the 'Build back better' fund. There was the idea of 'buddy benches' in Liston Court with the idea to deck some of the car park. The board supported local events with £5,000 provided to Marlow Town Council for the Christmas lights. Further funding was mentioned for Bourne End late night shopping event and the Chamber of Commerce events such as farmer's markets and comedy festival. There was the idea to replicate outdoor gyms across the community board area.
- There was a focus on Globe Park and Bourne End Business Park to improve the gully and access. There was a focus on making the business parks more desirable to encourage people to work outside of London.

There was a discussion regarding Globe Park Business Park being unoccupied and the impact of the pandemic on this. In addition, the Westhorpe Business Park was discussed and the impact of hybrid working on occupancy. It was reiterated any decisions relating to this would need to be taken at a higher level.

It was confirmed that Globe Park was 90% fully let with the lowest availability of stock on site in the past 10 years. As businesses were operating hybrid models this was seen as being encouraging.

9 Community Matters

The Chairman welcomed Lloyd Jeffries Service Director, Business Operations and the Community Board Liaison Officer. Lloyd's slides were appended to the minutes.

Lloyd explained the Proud of Bucks awards and advised on the community board's responsibility to promote the awards and put forward people to shortlist nominees and present the awards.

Lloyd updated the board on the Queens Platinum Jubilee and the formation of a sub-group to co-ordinate activities and civic and ceremonial duties. Activities were already underway including tree planting, project toolkits for schools and communities. The webpage was made live for more information. The board was encouraged to arrange events, exhibitions and tree planting events for the local community to attend.

It was advised the board could provide micro funding for community events which could include picnics, fetes, artist collaborations and history exhibitions to celebrate the jubilee. The optional funding streams and backing information was appended to the minutes.

A query was raised on when the Council's website would be updated so residents could request road closures for street parties. Lloyd agreed to circulate this to board members.

Action: Lloyd Jeffries

The Chairman asked for members of the board to disseminate the Queen's Jubilee information to all relevant groups. There was a suggestion that those who live alone or care homes could be targeted for inclusion.

It was reported no public questions had been received.

There was an update on consultations; the Trinity Road quiet way trial period ended on 27th October. The board decided to consult residents further via letters, with the view to make the quiet way permanent.

There was a query regarding a extending the Traffic Regulation Order for the quietway. The board advised this would need to be covered by the transport and strategies team.

The Community Board co-ordinator Makyla Devlin read out a petition received from residents of Barnards Hill and Terrington Hill Marlow. The Petitioner requested a slow sign or lower speed limit on the road due to speed concerns. The internal recommendations to the Board had asked for a speed limit assessment from Transport for Bucks for a slow marking on the road. It was reported in the meantime a Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign would be used in the area to capture speeding data courtesy of Marlow Town Council.

10 Topics for future consideration

Suggestions of topics for themed meetings or organisations who could come and speak to the CB were welcome and should be emailed to Makyla Devlin at

SWCCB@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

11 Date of next meeting

16th February 2022 6:30pm

Saturday 2nd April 2022 Community Engagement Event 10am-2pm Higginson Park,
Marlow