



Buckinghamshire Council

High Wycombe Town Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 8 MARCH 2022 AT QVR HIGH WYCOMBE COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 9.06 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

A Alam, M Ayub, K Bates, L Clarke OBE, T Green, D Hayday, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain, M Knight, S Raja, N Thomas and J Wassell

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

J Caprio, L Vallis, D Harvey, F Mugari, A Sherwood, M Williams, J Shaw, M McCarthy, I Malik and J Ford

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: S Guy, O Hayday, Maz Hussain, N Rana, M Smith and K Wood.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR HIGH WYCOMBE AND PENN ROAD CEMETERY

A report was considered which requested that the current rules and regulations which were in place for the High Wycombe cemetery be revoked and that the new proposed regulations for both the High Wycombe and Penn Road Cemeteries be approved.

The report stated that the proposed new rules attached at (Appendix 1) to the report, were largely the same as those currently in place. The more significant changes were detailed in pages 11-12 of the report and included such matters as topple testing and memorial safety, ashes sanctums, child and baby grave sections and kerb sets particularly in relation to Muslim graves.

The presenting officer confirmed that the separate issue of 7 day burials would be discussed by the newly constituted Cemeteries sub group which was due to meet in the next week.

RESOLVED: That,

- (i) The Committee agreed with and recommended the revocation of the current rules and regulations in place for the High Wycombe Cemetery;
- (ii) The Committee agreed with and recommended for approval the proposed new rules and regulations for both High Wycombe and Penn Road Cemetery.

5 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

A joint presentation was conducted by Jacqueline Ford (Economic Development Manager, Buckinghamshire Council), Margaret McCarthy (Globe Business Park BID Manager) and Melanie Williams (CEO of HWBIDCo), to provide information regarding the ballot activities for two Business Improvement Districts (BID) that would take place during the summer within the High Wycombe Town area. One such BID that was to be proposed to be created was on the Cressex Business Park whilst HWBIDCo covering the town centre was a ballot to secure a third five-year term. Subject to successful yes votes at the ballots in July, both BIDs would begin from the 1 October 2022.

Following the presentation that set out information of key achievements for both BIDs and the focus of their business plans for 2022-2027, Members wholeheartedly agreed that the plans for both BIDs going forward would be of immense value and that these had the full support of Members of the Committee.

Cllr Green enquired as to how the public could be made more aware of the businesses operating from Cressex providing more opportunity to buy locally. It was confirmed by the presenting officer that work was underway to ensure that all businesses were recorded and maintained on an interactive map was being developed and this would be available for all to view on a new website for the business park.

Cllr Thomas asked regarding the work of the security guards and bouncers within the Pubwatch scheme within the HW bid, and the manner in which they dealt with customers which occasionally proved to be threatening. He emphasised that whilst anti-social behaviour would not be tolerated, this needed to be balanced with keeping all residents safe. The presenting officer stated that relevant training needs and requirements for such staff was being given.

Cllr Thomas also asked about the investing in employee's theme for Cressex and asked if this would include apprenticeships and other activities to help develop young people skill sets for the future. Margaret McCarthy stated that she worked as an Enterprise Advisor for Globe Business Park and that they would look to replicate this approach on Cressex so as to be able to engage the right stakeholders with the right businesses to enable this.

A further question related to the intention to provide any planned events within Cressex in light of the forthcoming Platinum Jubilee celebrations and Mayoral weigh in. This was seen to be an ideal opportunity to showcase the potential of Cressex Business Park and it was hoped that celebratory events could be brought together with the help of businesses and the Council. It was confirmed that the matter would be explored with the steering group as soon as possible.

A Member noted that HWBIDCo covered a small area of the town – but that it benefited a much bigger geography and was keen to see how messaging could be shared to encourage people from the wider town and neighbouring areas to promote the good things that were happening and encourage further footfall. Melanie Williams noted that would continue to be worked on under the My Wycombe communications planning.

RESOLVED: That the presenters be thanked for their useful updates and that the endorsement of both BIDs be recorded in the upcoming report to Cabinet.

6 CHILTERN RANGERS

John Shaw presented the latest updated information on the activities of the Chiltern Rangers. He commenced by thanking the Committee for the support he had received and confirmed that a new apprentice had been appointed and that an additional £2000 had been invested for training purposes. In addition, there had been an upswell of public support for the environment and this had resulted in approximately 4000 hours of volunteering work in the community. Members were requested to encourage all to volunteer as there was much work to be done.

Some of the work currently underway was outlined including the West Thorpe project and the installation of the land hedge at the cemetery. Reference was also made to the spring clean within the town centre on 25 and 26 March, along with the river improvement work. Participation was encouraged.

Mr Shaw also provided a brief update on the relocation to a new building at Abbey Barn South, whereby a new Community hub would be created on site, for the long term benefit of all.

RESOLVED: That Mr Shaw and his team be thanked for all the good work that was being undertaken.

7 Q3 SPECIAL EXPENSES BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

A report was submitted which outlined the Q3 revenue forecast position for 2021/22, and the impact on working balances at the year end for this Committee. It was reported that the net forecast outturn position for 2021/22 was £340k, a favourable variance of £26k against a total budget of £366k. This was detailed on page 35 of the agenda pack. Members were informed that the underspend was largely attributable to community grants as well as footway lighting, cemetery and war memorial offset slightly by a small overspend on allotments. Members attention was also drawn to the fact that based on current applications there was likely to be an underspend of approximately £13k in community grants. The CIL project allocations summary was also presented.

There was a discussion amongst Members on the need to improve grant disbursement as well as pace of CIL projects.'

Members were informed that a member of the grants team would attend future meetings to provide more detailed answers to questions raised. In addition, it was recommended that charities be consulted with as to the grants process, and that officers provide more specific detail via an information sheet regarding the organisations and the purposes for which they that

had been in receipt of any awarded grants.

RESOLVED: That,

- (i) The report be noted
- (ii) An officer from the grants team and the CIL team be asked to attend future meetings
- (iii) Further information regarding charities/organisations in receipt of funding be provided

8 MARLOW FILM STUDIO UPDATE

A presentation was conducted with regards to the emerging masterplan and vision for the development of the Marlow Film Studio, and how High Wycombe could play a central part. The plans would see a former landfill site developed into a world class film studio. The presenters highlighted to Members the benefits of the proposed development which was expected to create an opportunity to deliver new jobs, skills and apprenticeships in the area.

Members wholeheartedly welcomed the potential scale of the opportunities that would be created for the High Wycombe area.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted, and the presenters be thanked for the update.

9 WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Committee's work programme as circulated was noted.

A Member requested that an item on the Alternative Route Progress be included as soon as was possible.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The provisional date for the next meeting was Tuesday 21 June 2022