

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Community Services Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: Y Farrell Chairman  
P Burgess  
J Carroll  
T McMahon  
C Rollins  
A Slough  
C Slough (Substitute)

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &  
Amanda Samuels Community Services  
Administration Officer

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington

**12770 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Billington (Cllr C Slough substituted).

**12771 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12772 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**12773 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12774 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN**

Events Working Group 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024

Combatting Crime Working Group 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 17<sup>th</sup> January and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

**Resolved: To receive and approve the minutes detailed above.**

**12775 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE**

Following deliberations at the Town Council meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March (Minute 12756), Members were requested to provide preliminary feedback on the creation of a new Community Engagement Sub Committee. The proposed sub committee would monitor and review the Council's events and community activities. Members were provided with a draft Terms of Reference for discussion prior to going before the Town Council.

Members were informed that the sub committee would replace the Events Working Group and would be more encompassing by covering town-wide events rather than those solely led by Houghton Regis Town Council.

*The Community Services Manager joined the meeting via Teams to update Members on the boat trip which was in progress.*

The sub committee would not encompass the youth work element and would be clerked by the Civic and Events Manager, with the involvement of the Community Services Manager, as required, but not every meeting. It was proposed that meetings would take place every 2-3 months and would be in person. Members would steer officers on what they hoped to achieve, while officers would retain responsibility for the operational aspects.

It was highlighted that it would be possible to co-opt members and it would be possible for these to join for one specific event; however, co-opted members would not have voting rights. The sub committee would have the ability to create a working group; however, following Members' discussions, it was agreed to remove the ability to create a sub committee.

Following these discussions it was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be amended slightly before presentation to the Town Council.

**12776 THE MILLION HOURS FUND UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATION**

Members were informed that the application to the Million Hours Fund had been unsuccessful. Feedback had been requested regarding this decision but had not been forthcoming; however, applications had exceeded expectations which had resulted in a high number of unsuccessful applications. Members were advised that this decision would have no impact on the budget as the funds had been purely aspirational.

**12777 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members were reminded that at the March meeting of Town Council, the allocation of objectives to standing committees was approved (Minute 12755). Members were asked to consider prioritising a number of objectives for future consideration/delivery in the next four years. Any suggestions would form part of a live document that would be updated as these objectives were achieved, or new ones created.

Suggestions for immediate attention were:

- The pack for new arrivals to Houghton Regis should contain a document mapping places of town assets and available facilities.

- To improve the appearance of Bedford Square and make approaches to the landlord and Central Bedfordshire Council to this effect.
- For Houghton Regis to apply immediately for its own market licence. Markets could then be held in time for Christmas and be integrated with other planned events.

**Resolved: Approve the Community Services workplan and select a number of objectives for consideration/delivery in the next twelve months.**

## **12778 HOUGHTON REGIS SPORTS HALL**

At the March meeting of the Town Council, it was highlighted to Members that there was concern regarding the lack of indoor sports hall access in Houghton Regis (Minute 12749).

Members reiterated concerns that the proposed relocation to Houghton School would be detrimental to residents using the current facilities. Available hours for use would be significantly impacted by after school clubs, examinations and other school events. This was in contradiction of CBC's own leisure strategy which promised to provide 'equal or better' replacements.

Members discussed how the Town Council could best support the Houghton Regis Sports Hall users and suggestions included:

- To write to CBC in support of sports hall users
- To meet with the new CBC administration to highlight the local changes since the plans were put forward
- Mobilising local groups to voice their concerns about the proposed changes
- To propose continued use of the current sports hall rather than it remaining empty.

It was suggested that the feasibility of retaining the sports hall required further investigation. There had been a resolution at the Town Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January (Minute 12675) to look at the adoption of community assets and it was suggested that consideration be given to adding the sports hall to this list.

It was agreed that the Head of Environmental and Community Services would carry out further investigation to clarify the situation. They would then report back to the Committee and an appropriate plan of action could be made.

**Resolved: To consider what we, as a Town Council, can do to support the Houghton Regis Sports Hall users.**

## **12779 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES**

Members were presented with an update on recent youth and community work provided by Houghton Regis Town Council.

The recent knife-free event received positive feedback.

It was queried whether attendance numbers could be improved at youth facilities. Members were informed they would be presented with a breakdown of funding at the

next Community Services meeting by the Head of Environmental and Community Services. CBC funding for facilities would expire soon, with no guarantee that this would be continued, and the Youth Investment fund would also expire in May 2025. This would present the opportunity for Members to decide the future model for youth services and how they would like this to be funded. Future funding was also raised and whether self-delivery would be an option as opposed to external funding. Members could prioritise growth options in the budget, which would ideally include full-time youth workers, who could visit schools, and, additionally, to provide the team with a permanent site.

Members were informed that all three wards would be holding events in the coming months. All community events would form part of the proposed Community Engagement Sub Committee in the future, while the youth work aspect would remain separate.

The Youth Investment Fund allowed for a residential fund, which had been used for a 3-day sailing trip. The Sailing Trust had also provided a 50% bursary for this event. A camera had been purchased and would be used during the trip to produce a short video. This could then be used to promote the youth work to the Town Council and the Youth Investment Fund

## **12780 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Members were provided with the income and expenditure report, highlighting significant variances, for the Community Services Committee to date.

Grand income was slightly behind budget; however, the expenditure had balanced as expected. The year end would be in May, which provided time to produce a final version of the report.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.34pm**

**Dated this xx day of xxxxxxxx**

**Chairman**