

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE**

HELD

Tuesday 21st July 2020

Present: Town Cllrs: D Abbott, D Jones (Vice Chair), K Wattingham and
Vacancy
CBC Cllrs: A Ryan (Chair), Y Farrell, S Goodchild
CBC Officers: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Officers: Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

Also in Attendance: Tracey McMahon – HRTC Councillor
Awais Younis - CBC Safer Neighbourhood Team Leader
Rev. David Skinner – The Churches Group
John Gelder - Community Action Bedfordshire
David Gibbons – Co-opted member (joined 7.14pm)

Apologies: CBC Cllr: Cllr Hamill
Members of the public: 2

848 ELECTION OF CHAIR

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members are invited to elect a chair for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

Nominee: Cllr Ryan Nominated by: Cllr S Goodchild
Seconded by: Cllr Jones

On being put to the vote Cllr Ryan was elected as Chair of Town Partnership Committee for the municipal year.

849 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members are invited to elect a vice chair for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

Nominee: Cllr Jones Nominated by: Cllr Goodchild
Seconded by: Cllr Ryan

On being put to the vote Cllr Jones was elected as Vice-Chair of Town Partnership Committee for the municipal year.

850 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Hamill.

Members agreed to move item 11 forward, to be discussed after questions from the public.

851 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public queried a parish report showing s106 allocations and queried why none of the £7.7m funds received for Bidwell West had been allocated to the chalk pit.

It was advised that prior to this meeting the same question had been raised with Cllr Goodchild and Cllr Ryan. The Principle Planning Officer had been contacted and had confirmed that arrangements for s106 funding for the maintenance of the Quarry had been secured.

852 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION *(Moved from item 11)*

Members were invited to consider whether they would like to explore the possibility of seeking to co-opt local stakeholders onto the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee. In this regard the Terms of Reference for the Committee state:

Co-option

1. To support engagement with local stakeholders the Town Joint Committee can co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member will be able to engage fully in all discussions but will not have any voting rights. Co-opted members can be removed from the Town Joint Committee. Decision making around removals can either be taken by the whole Town Joint committee or by joint agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, depending on each Town Joint Committee's preference.
2. The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee

Members were advised that an application to co-opt had been received.

Members discussed the value of Co-opting members from local representative groups and agreed to Co-opt David Gibbons onto the Town Partnership Committee.

Members welcomed Mr Gibbons to the Town Partnership Committee.

853 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Goodchild declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8, HRN1 Community Building, accordingly, did not participate in any discussion relating to this item.

854 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2020.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

855 HOUGHTON CHALK PIT

Awais Yunis, Safer Neighbourhood Team Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council, was in attendance to update members on issues relating to Houghton Regis Chalk Pit.

Members were advised that the footpath was closed for maintenance and would reopen once works were completed.

Legal advice had been sought regarding Health & Safety concerns. A Problem-Solving Group had been formed and a meeting held, Central Bedfordshire Council, Police, representatives from Central Bedfordshire Council partners and a Highways Officer were in attendance and discussed the wide range of issues surrounding the quarry.

Members were advised that letters had been sent to local residents urging the reporting of issues and anti-social behavior and to report vehicle registration details in order vehicle owners to be contacted.

Members were advised that the Managing Agent had been contacted and had subsequently passed on concerns to the landowners.

A site visit was being arranged with the Directors, date to be confirmed, whereby representatives from Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedfordshire Police and Houghton Regis Town Council would be in attendance.

Members were advised that Bedfordshire Police were arranging a resident information sharing group to enable residents to join and discuss their concerns.

Members were advised that members of the public were unable to join the Problem-Solving Group, however, a follow up resident engagement session would be held to enable residents to share their concerns.

856 HRN2 COMMUNITY BUILDING

Members received a verbal update from Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Rev Skinner was in attendance at the meeting to respond to any queries members may have.

Members were advised that Rev. Skinner had met with Town Council representatives and ward councillors to share the draft document. It was intended to develop a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and thriving community building.

An invitation was extended to councillors to visit Bromley by Bow, Finchampstead and Youthscape, Luton to glean a vision of similar community buildings.

Members were advised that the document had now been finalised and submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised that the health situation may impact the timeline of development of the community building.

857 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS

In October 2019 the Committee received a report from CBC on a new approach by CBC to improve health and wellbeing in Houghton Regis.

Since then Central Bedfordshire Council Public Health has commissioned Community Action Bedfordshire to deliver a community development project, called Time 2 Connect Houghton Regis. The project would use community mobilisation and asset-based approaches to engage and work with existing and new residents, communities and other stakeholders, in the growing town of Houghton Regis. The project commenced in May 2020 and would be delivered over the next three to five years. Members received a Stakeholder Briefing note which outlined the project.

John Gelder, Director, Community Action Bedfordshire was in attendance to outline the project to members and respond to any queries or comments.

Members were advised that this initiative was to reduce social isolation.

Members praised the local community for their support of each other during the Covid 19 pandemic. Concerns were raised regarding health inequalities across Houghton Regis. Members were advised the health inequalities would be a focus during the first year of CAB's work.

Members were advised that CAB was Linked in with volunteer groups and acknowledged their contributions in response to the Covid 19 crisis and was keen to use examples of good practice within the community.

Members requested that the Partnership Committee receive regular feedback from Community Action Bedfordshire, the frequency was to be confirmed.

858 PARTNERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members were invited to determine which council would provide the administration for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

Members agreed for the administration for the Town Partnership Committee to continue to be administered by Houghton Regis Town Council.

859 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

This agenda item was moved and discussed at minute number: 852

860 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members received the Partnership Committee workplan for information.

Members requested an update on the Kingsland feasibility study.

Members were advised that an update on the Kingsland feasibility study was unavailable for this meeting but it was hoped feedback would be available for the October meeting.

Members requested that this remain on the workplan.

861 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE TOWN PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Members of the Partnership Committee were invited to provide a verbal report on matters of relevance to Houghton Regis arising in particular from the Committee/s on which they served. It was suggested that reports be kept to 2 minutes to ensure committee time for other matters on the agenda.

Cllr Goodchild updated members on the committees she was a member of. Several meetings had been attended of Corporate Parenting Panel and Social Care and Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At the meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel and Social Care, members discussed providing language that cares, which was changing the way provisions talk about children in care. Available support for care leavers and care leavers views. Listening to children in care and how they have coped during Covid 19.

Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received reports / updates on:

- a performance update from the East of England Ambulance Trust
- the pressures on housing demands.
- the council's response to Covid 19 and how services were delivered during the crisis.

Cllr Ryan updated members on Children's Services Committee;

- A meeting had been attended where the topic of discussion was SEND.
- Members were advised that Ofsted had looked at Central Bedfordshire's SEND provision during November.
- HRA, in-school support, had assured Children's Services Committee that they would be prioritised to receive their annual reviews.
- Members were advised that 80% of Central Bedfordshire schools remained open during the Covid crisis to support communities and key workers.

- Tithe Farm Primary School and Nursery had provided food and services to the local community throughout the Covid 19 crisis.

Members requested that special thanks go to Deborah Pargeter, Head of Tithe Farm Primary School for her involvement and support of the community.

862 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report prior to the meeting which detailed the work of CBC during the pandemic in terms of maintaining service delivery and COVID-19 responses.

At the meeting in January 2020 reports on the following were requested, these were included in this report:

- The feasibility study for the Kingsland site
- The health hub
- Addressing health and wellbeing inequalities – see minute number 857.
- School places, as consideration may need to be given to bringing forward the building of an additional primary school

Members received a further overview of the Update Report.

- Covid 19 support had been offered by Central Bedfordshire Council to meet the needs of vulnerable residents in Houghton Regis, with the redirection of referrals from the Community Hub to local support groups such as Houghton Regis Helpers;
- Covid 19 local outbreak control plan and a Communications and engagement plan;
- Welfare provision and business grants had been administered;
- Discussion of the safe commencement of the reopening of Children's play areas;
- Extended Ward Councillor Grant Scheme with the additional funds of £1,000 to support Covid 19 restoration activities;
- Community asset grant scheme £25,00 match funded at 50%. The second bidding round closes 1st September;
- Cheering volunteering; acknowledgement of the support and volunteer efforts during Covid 19, but to also celebrate the day to day volunteering that goes on within the community.

Members requested special thanks go to Central Bedfordshire Council councillors for the community assets grants that had been awarded to Houghton Regis community groups.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm

Dated this 16th day of October 2020.

Chairman