

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

HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET

ON 26th April 2022

Present: Town Cllrs: D Jones (Chair), T McMahon, K Wattingham, M Kennedy
CBC Cllrs: Cllr Hamill (Vice-Chair), Y Farrell, S Goodchild
Co-opted member: D Gibbons

CBC Officers: S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Officers: C Evans, Town Clerk
L Senior, Head of Democratic Services

Also in attendance: HRTC Cllr E Cooper
CBC Cllr T Stock, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing, Communities and Leisure
G Croxford, Community Engagement Manager, BRCC
B McBrearty, Community Connections Advisor, BRCC
I Berry, Assistant Director Assets, CBC
J Dickinson, Head of Leisure, CBC
Representative, Land Improvement Holdings

Apologies: CBC Cllr A Ryan
J Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services, CBC

Members of the public: 5

945 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from CBC Cllr A Ryan and J Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Service, CBC.

946 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

An update was requested on where Central Bedfordshire Council was with the land assessments and investigations on Windsor Drive.

Representatives of CBC were asked:

- What impact had there been on the recent Decorum Council temporary halt on any Development in the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Zone of Influence upon CBC planning applications?
- What were the timescales to have the new strategy in place?
- What impact would this have on the CBC planning and timescales for Windsor Drive?

QJT

A member of the Recycled Teenagers Group, raised concerns over the equipment that had been in storage at the centre, which was now unavailable to the group. A survey had been completed and alternative venues had been offered, however, these were deemed unsuitable.

947 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr McMahon declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as a former member of Craft and Coffee who had equipment stored in the library.

Cllr Wattingham declared an interest in the Memorial Hall as this had been mentioned as one of the unsuitable venues suggested for the Recycled Teenagers.

Cllr Farrell declared an interest in the Memorial Hall as this had been mentioned as one of the unsuitable venues suggested for the Recycled Teenagers.

948 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2022.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

949 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS: TIME 2 CONNECT

Gina Croxford, Community Engagement Manager, and Bex McBrearty, Community Connections Advisor of Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) were in attendance at the meeting to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.

Members were advised that Time 2 Connect continued to grow in Houghton Regis, it was open 5 days per week in the Cedar Room in Houghton Hall Park.

The weekly Café Connect was run on Tuesday afternoons enabling people to meet in a relaxed environment. A live sing-a-long session had been offered, with the intention of offering further sessions.

Members were advised a new directory of local services had been created for the wider community which could be viewed on the Time2Connect website:
<https://time2connect.org.uk/>

Members were advised that funding was due to end in 2023, however, they were confident that the budget would allow a continuation for a further few months.

Members expressed their preference for this service to continue for as long as possible.

950 LINMERE – THE FARMSTEAD

Q.J.
A representative from Land Improvement Holdings was in attendance at the meeting and advised members that the Farmstead was open, the hall was operational and the one of the units had been let out to a local business, with confirmed bookings for other local groups.

It was queried why the planned footpath, leading from the old part of the town to the new part, had not materialised. It was advised that this would be looked into and fed back.

951 HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT

Members were advised there were no updates on site investigations on Windsor Drive, however, information would be sought and fed back.

Members were advised of the following:

the Red House site had been decommissioned;

the Brook was almost complete with final snagging to be completed;

Ward member visits were being arranged to The Brook, members acknowledged previous arrangements for visits had been made and subsequently cancelled due to covid site safety issues.

Members requested information on the retail outlets planned for All Saints View.

Members were advised that the 2nd phase of All Saints View would affect the residents of Clarkes Way. The Town Council would be advised of the timings of the new phase of the development.

It was requested that feasibility be looked at regarding the pavement barriers during phase 2 of the development, as the current placement had adversely affected wheelchair users by forcing the use of an alternative, much further, route. A secondary barrier was suggested to create a protected walkway.

952 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report for information. The following points were highlighted:

Community Safety

Safer Communities and Partnerships Team

The Safer Neighbourhood Team had held various community events and Officers had conducted a walkabout around Parkside.

An action day had been held with high visibility patrols around the area.

Parking Enforcement

486 visits were conducted between 15th September and 31st December 2021 which resulted in 15 PCN's issued.

Leisure, Libraries and Countryside

The Have Your Say consultation and the statutory Planning consultation had been combined into a Statement of Community Involvement which also provided a response to the consultation comments.

2nd May a submission would be made to Planning at CBC.

May - 10th June: 2nd statutory Planning consultation

10th June DMC papers published

Chalk Pit

Work continued around the management plan and to resolve ongoing issues regarding the license.

Houghton Hall Park

A large number of events for families and individuals had been planned
Work on the Parks for People project had been completed with a final evaluation report pending.

Waste Collections

Garden waste collections resumed on 28th February 2022
New dog bins had been installed at Park Road North and Parkside Drive

Tree Planting Project

This financial year the Tree Planting Project had supported over 30 projects, 17,000 trees, and over a 1km of hedgerow

ECO Schools

The Sustainability Team worked with schools across the area, including Thornhill Primary School, to support the Eco-Schools Green Flag award process.

953 BEDFORD SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Iain Berry, Assistant Director Assets was in attendance at the meeting to provide an update on the consultation results on the future use of Bedford Square Community Centre.

Members were advised of the consideration of the executive report on 8th February. It was acknowledged that residents and users of Bedford Square were unhappy with the service received and inability to book rooms, and feedback was received that residents had felt the community use of the centre was being eradicated.

It was confirmed to members that a commitment had been made to meet with Houghton Regis Town Council and the college to engage and discuss feedback.

Concerns were raised that a CBC Scrutiny Committee's decision had been ignored resulting in the loss of community use of the Bedford Square Community Centre.

Members were reminded that at the Annual Towns meeting, it had been requested that Houghton Regis Town Council submit an official complaint through Central Bedfordshire Council's complaints procedures regarding the handling of the community centre, and if necessary, requested this be escalated to the Ombudsman.

Members requested that Central Bedfordshire Council gave consideration to reversing the decision of use of Bedford Square Community Centre.

954 TITHE FARM SPORTS PROVISION UPDATE

Q10.

Members received the agenda report as presented to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee on 15th November 2021.

Members were advised:

Planning

Planning permission has been secured.

Pavilion tender

The pavilion tender process has been concluded and a contractor had been appointed.

Project funding

CBC have advised that a substantial amount of additional s106 funding would be made available to this project, increasing this provision from £223,020 to £485,311.

955 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE TOWN PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Members of the Town Partnership Committee provided a verbal report on matters of relevance to Houghton Regis arising in particular from the Committee/s on which they serve.

Cllr Hamill advised members that he worked with CBC Cllrs and had been looking at parking schemes, Tithe Farm Road was due to be resurfaced and Drury Lane was to be resurfaced with new drainage, dates were not confirmed.

Co-opted member Mr Gibbons updated members that there had been replacement lighting agreed for under the canopies in Bedford Square.

Cllr Goodchild advised members that the Corporate Parenting Panel met on 17th February 2022, regarding Looked After Children, they received an update on Childrens' Adolescent Mental Health Services and the Health Passport. After a visit from Mark Riddell MBE to Central Bedfordshire Council, a suggested approach was to become a champions model, Cllr Goodchild has offered her time to support this.

A further meeting was held in April, at which the main point of focus was supporting young people in education.

Cllr Goodchild further advised members the Social Care Health and Housing met in February. The main points of discussion were the NHS vaccination programme, Primary care and proposals for an integrated care system.

Cllr Farrell acknowledged the positive work of the Community Safety Team who had been working with partners tackling crimes in the town and highlighted the encouraging impact this had had in the area.

Cllr McMahon requested that it be considered that the Town Council members work collaboratively with Central Bedfordshire Council members and share information and feedback from residents, enabling the deliverance of accurate information to residents.

956 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan.

Members expressed disappointment in the lack of attention to Houghton Regis in comparison to Dunstable regarding funding for road surfaces and pot-holes, it was suggested that there seemed to be a financial focus on certain towns.

Members were directed to the Highways Area Teams to address issues and receive feedback.

It was requested that Central Bedfordshire Council give consideration to providing updates on school places as to date the new school building in Bidwell West had yet to start.

957 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

Members were reminded of 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.

The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee.

For 2021/22 Mr David Gibbons had been a co-opted member of the committee.

Members were advised that a review of co-opted members would take place at the next Town Partnership Committee meeting.

958 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Members had been advised of the CBC process to determine further consideration, at CBC committee level, of items and issues.

Members of this committee were able to use this process to forward items for CBC's attention via the CBC Joint Committee Chair or CBC Joint Committee Vice Chair.

As such members were requested to identify and confirm if there are any requested items for CBC's attention.

It was confirmed that this item would remain on future Town Partnership Committee agendas.

It was clarified that it would be the Ward member, in the role of either Chair or Vice-Chair of this committee, to feed items through to CBC.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.00pm

DJJ.

^{18th October}
Dated this 19th day of July 2022

QJJ.

Q. J. Jones.
Chairman

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