

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Community Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

22nd July 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors: E Costello Chairman
P Burgess
Y Farrell
T McMahon
A Slough
C Slough

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

Other: J Carroll

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: E Cooper

12909 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooper.

12910 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12911 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12912 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chair for Community Services Committee for 2024/25.

Nominee: Cllr C Slough Proposed by: Cllr Farrell
Seconded by: Cllr A Slough

Nominee: Cllr McMahon Proposed by: Cllr Burgess
Seconded by: Cllr McMahon

A recorded vote was requested:

Those in favour of electing Cllr C Slough as Vice-Chair: 3

Those in favour of electing Cllr M McMahon as Vice-Chair: 2

Accordingly, Cllr C Slough was duly appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee.

12913 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2024

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 8th April 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12914 HRTC YOUTH SERVICES

Members were provided with an update on recent youth and community work.

- The Youth Council currently has 14 members. Some were expected to leave, but there was interest from younger people to start in September.
- The High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Bav Shah, enjoyed the #KnifeFreeHoughton event organised by the Youth Council.
- The Youth Café was still progressing well and had an enhanced experience at a restaurant.
- YIF funding supported a sailing residential trip, boxing sessions, and six weeks of scooter/BMX coaching sessions.
- Skate Jam took place on the 22nd of July.
- There were plans to arrange an enhanced session in Corby.
- A boxing session had taken place at Luton Town Boxing Club.
- Open access sessions have taken place at the Houghton Regis Baptist Church and Sandringham Community and Enterprise Hub.
- Multi-sports were scheduled over a 4-week period at Parkside Recreation Ground.
- A schedule of summer activities had been planned and promoted.
- The Later Living Group (LLG) was increasingly popular, and members requested that meetings be increased from one to two sessions per month.

Members questioned whether more graffiti events were planned or could be arranged. Officers agreed that this would be reviewed and, where possible, another graffiti session could be arranged, and potential sites for temporary graffiti walls would be identified. This would be followed up.

Members also questioned whether there were opportunities for the youth group and the LLG to participate in joint events. It was confirmed that intergenerational events had taken place, and officers raised concerns that timings could be an issue. However, this will be reviewed and followed up.

Members requested an update on the Shop Local initiative. Members were advised this would require continued engagement to rebuild relationships post-lockdown and to get shops involved. While Shop Local merchandise was included in the resident packs, further action would be needed to reinforce the message, as it has been over three years since restrictions were lifted. Officers will provide a written update at the next committee meeting.

12915 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Events Working Group	14th March '24 and 25th April '24
Combating Crime Working Group	20th March '24, 17th April '24 and 15th May '24.

A discussion followed regarding the purchase of electric bikes, and officers confirmed that the Combating Crime Working Group and, therefore, the parent committee members are awaiting further information from Bedfordshire Police before a formal decision can be made.

It was confirmed that the dates on page two of the signed Combating Crime Working Group minutes of 17th April 2024 were incorrect, and these would be corrected.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

12916 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT 2024/25

In accordance with the Committee's functions, a periodic review of its income and expenditures should be undertaken. Members were provided with the budget report for the Community Services Committee alongside the Budget Explanation.

12917 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members were provided with the income and expenditure report, with appropriate commentary, for the Community Services Committee to date. This was accurate as of 16th July 2024.

12918 THE DELIVERY OF YOUTH SERVICES FROM APRIL 2025

Members were advised that the YIF funding would end in March 2025, and this would have a significant impact on the provision of youth services. Post-funding, there were three options:

1. To revert to previous provision levels at a cost of approximately £10,000
2. To continue with what HRTC had been providing with YIF but remove the enhanced sessions, residential events and additional coaching. This would be budgeted at £50,000 in addition to the sum from option 1. Costs going forward should be planned as part of a 5-year programme.
3. Examine what YIF-funded events had proved most successful and look to enhance this. This would involve a restructure of the youth work team and would include a full-time qualified youth worker to manage future provision, including the line management of the two youth lead workers. The two lead youth workers would, in turn, manage the youth support workers. This would increase the capacity of the Community Services Manager and allow them to undertake more strategic work. It would also involve enhanced partnerships with schools, other youth service providers, stakeholders and CBC. This would allow four evening and two afternoon sessions a week. HRTC could also look to enhance delivery by seeking extra funding and recruiting an apprentice youth worker. This would have an impact on precept of £80,000.

It was agreed that more advertising, involvement with schools and engagement was needed to encourage participation in youth service events.

Members were informed that HRTC could circumvent some of the limitations imposed by funders by providing funding itself.

Members were encouraged to consider a longer-term plan for the delivery of youth work and were unanimously in favour of option 3

Resolved: It is recommended that Members consider option 3, as described within the report, to continue the future development of youth services in Houghton Regis Town Council and include it in the emerging budget for 25/26.

12919 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN

At its meeting on July 16, 2024, the Town Council endorsed the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan. In doing so, the Community Services Committee was allocated a number of small projects to be funded through general reserves.

The two projects that would be delivered first were:

- Improve the HRTC communications strategy
- Develop a plan to create community centres – in the town centre and all estates

To ensure a prompt commencement of these projects, Members were asked to delegate authority to the Head of Environmental & Community Services to deliver these projects in liaison with the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, who would agree on the required detail and scope.

Resolved: To delegate authority to the Head of Environmental & Community Services to deliver these projects in liaison with the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, who will agree on the required detail and scope

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.44 pm

Dated this 30th day of September 2024

Chairman