

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 6th November 2018

MINUTES OF MEETING

At the start of the meeting the Chair reminded all present of the fire evacuation procedure and that the meeting was being recorded to assist with taking the minutes.

PRESENT Councillors Bushkes, Butler, Edwards, Hey, Kenyon, Lloyd-Hayes, Rone, Stevens and Tillett

IN ATTENDANCE Steve Kerry (Town Clerk), Tracy Morriss (Deputy Town Clerk), Lesley Robinson (Administration, Finance and Information Officer)

CD2018/19.69 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Griffiths

CD2018/19.70 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

None

CD2018/19.71 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CD2018/19.72 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Stevens and

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of 18th September 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and be signed accordingly by the Chair.

CD2018/19.73 HEREFORDSHIRE CITIZENS' ADVICE

The Chair invited Geraint Thomas from Worcester CAB, who now run the service in Herefordshire to give a report. Mr Thomas thanked the City Council for its ongoing financial support which had enabled the service to be maintained after some serious financial issues in the past year. Work with charities supporting cancer patients, those in serious debt and access to specialist advice in Worcester was facilitated through a core team of volunteers doing initial assessments by phone, on line and through walk in visitors. To keep this running requires around ten volunteers. Opening hours for walk in visits were being maintained from 10-3 on Mondays and Wednesday so a physical presence in the city was being delivered. Statistics on the issues raised and the locations of clients showed a wide range of vital support being provided to citizens within the city, with a very substantial amount of money being recovered from debt management, welfare and benefits advice and access to local charities. This money was nearly all recycled into the local economy. Fund raising has included grants from local charities, Awards for All, Macmillan cancer support for ongoing and new projects. The future plan is to work with three day a week service access with phone and online back-up.

Members asked a number of questions after congratulating Mr Thomas on his informative and impressive presentation. In answers to questions it was noted that

the number of clients (885) takes into account repeat visits, it is the number of people helped. There is as yet no measurement of how many callers are veterans, but this could be looked into further. Volunteers have received training to update their skills in new benefit regulations and processes as the client demand is heavy in this area. Finally, Mr Thomas confirmed that he would be happy to share some anonymised success stories with the City Council website so people could see what good their money had achieved.

After hearing the presentation and receiving answers to their questions members considered approving the release of funds for this year's grant and confirming the budget line for next year to maintain the level of support.

It was proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Lloyd-Hayes and

RESOLVED

That the Committee accepts the report and congratulates Mr Thomas and the team on the service they are delivering to Herefords' citizens.

That the release of funds for this year is approved, and the Committee recommends that funding be maintained in the budget for 2019.

CD2018/19.74 HEREFORD IN BLOOM

This presentation was delivered by the Chair Kevin Knipe, the Treasurer Paul Hodges and the Publicity Officer George Thomas. Judgement had been received and Hereford is back in the Britain in Bloom Gold Standard, which was excellent news. This has required a huge effort not just on planting and watering but on litter picking, general cleaning up of the centre of the city, including polishing the bull statue, as the judges now looked far beyond simply "in bloom" issues but much more at how the whole package is presented to visitors to the city. Royal Horticultural Society statistics do show that a town or city winning a gold award sees some improvement in foot fall as a result of positive publicity.

Current projects include the hanging basket trees, ninety six individual baskets and ten three tier planters. Sustainable plants are being increasingly relied on to reduce ongoing costs. Watering remains a major call on the budget although costs have been reduced there and one very conscientious contractor is doing sterling work. Community volunteers including the Scouts and Community Payback through the Probation Service have been used, providing useful extra labour but requiring knowledgeable on-site supervision.

The effort remains heavily dependant on sponsorship which had suffered somewhat as a result of last year's problems with watering when poor contractor performance had led to plants dying and being replanted just before judging. There is major focus on community involvement, greening new areas, moving out of the traditional city centre and some roundabouts and making a sustainable impact across the city.

The Chair thanks the HiB team for their presentation and invited questions. In answer to questions it was noted that it was possible that if the BID is renewed after its ballot it might be possible to include some funding from that source to supplement the In Bloom effort. New sponsors are always needed, and some

roundabouts notably near the cemetery have not attracted sponsorship yet. Sponsorship does tend to be very site specific. The team have not yet capitalised on sponsorship for individual flower beds or “in memoriam” but that suggestion would be taken up.

At the end of the discussion the Chair thanked the In Bloom team for their effort, congratulated them on their once again winning the Gold Award and assured them of the Council’s continuing support.

CD2018/19.75 HEREFORD BID CHRISTMAS EVENTS

The Chair invited Mike Truelove the Operations Manager from Hereford BID to present his proposals. Mr Truelove reminded the meeting that discussion about how the City Council can do more to see events during the Christmas period in High Town and surrounding streets had begun the summer. Accordingly, he had put together a programme of activities with costs where available and this had been circulated to members the week before this meeting having been shown on the agenda as an item with a report to follow. The plan was for street entertainment with a Victorian street market theme. A humorous cockney duo along the lines of Chas and Dave would be hired with other mobile entertainers mingling with crowds on late night shopping days. Another idea is to create something close to the Ant and Dec sofa concept. At least two days of live music from around noon to 6 pm was planned and local bands were being contacted.

After hearing the presentation and expressing a variety of opinion on the extent to which the events should be focussed on High Town or more widely throughout the centre, members asked a number of questions to which the following points were made in answer.

As resources are tight the main effort this year is on activities and using social media for advertising rather than expensive leaflet drops. The request to the City Council was clarified as £3,200 for this year’s programme.

A number of members expressed their enthusiasm for the ideas and that the City Council should seek to support businesses in the city centre in this way.

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Rone and unanimously

RESOLVED That the City Council supports the proposed Christmas Programme by Hereford BID with a grant of £3,200.

CD2018/19.76 TOWN HALL EXHIBITION ROOM

On behalf of the author, Connor Powell, the Clerk presented a report detailing work done so far to draw local exhibitors to the room, following its debut event as a military museum while the Weeping Window exhibit was being shown at the cathedral. A further check will be made on whether the television now wall mounted has an accessible USB port which may make the equipment proposed unnecessary. Some work to measure the room to give potential exhibitors clarity about what they might be able to show, and a protocol for security for weekend opening agreed with

Herefordshire Council had already been put in place. It was suggested that if there were spare slots which seemed likely would be the case, that local artists could be contacted via the Art College to see if they wished to show their work. This was supported by members and will be built into the development of the room.

It was the proposed by Councillor Lloyd-Hayes, seconded by Councillor Stevens and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Committee thanks Connor Powell for a very clear report and notes the work done to promote the exhibition facility, approves the proposals to offer exhibition space to the listed groups/charities and mandates officers to continue to promote the use of space for historic, cultural and tourism promotions.

That the Committee supports (having checked the existing equipment) the addition of a connected device to the television so that exhibitors can play slideshows/DVD#s/videos and will support the addition of a small number of tables and chairs to the room.

That the Committee instructs the Clerk to pursue ongoing maintenance issues to improve the appearance of the room while longer term work to the frontage is completed.

That the Committee notes the agreement reached with Herefordshire Council about weekend and evening use of the space and that the Clerk looks into the insurance implications of groups wishing to exhibit their material without attendance in the room.

That in addition to any specific publicity about exhibitions the use of the room is annually reported to the Committee.

CD2018/19.77 HEREFORD COMMUNITY LED PLAN

The Clerk explained that Finance and Policy Committee was considering a suggestion for a significant increase in spending next year on street scene and the views of this Committee were sought on the need for that and what sort of projects could be brought forward. There had in the past been a dearth of information from Herefordshire about whole service areas, including details of current contracts, the possibility of those contracts being novated to the City, TUPE implications and current costs. At worst, sometimes the first the City Council knows of plan to move a service was when members of the public referred to Herefordshire Council reply that they had already been told the City Council had taken something over.

It was requested that the Council clarifies its policies on street furniture with the BID as their new direction signs were entirely out of keeping with the noticeboards and maps the City Council had put up at considerable expense some years ago. The meeting was reminded that the Councillor who represents the Council on the BID board had reported arguing for those on many occasions but he had been voted down. It was also noted that installation of the direction signs is a long way past due

and that the latest issue appears to be gaining permission from Herefordshire Council bearing in mind the need to take them down for the May Fair.

It was noted that there is very little use being made of the gum buster and glutton machines and perhaps some funds could be invested in supporting the BID to have more staff to get fuller use of this machinery.

It was noted that many street trees are in need of major works having overgrown their sites. The Clerk confirmed that discussions about King George's Park had identified more liability in that are alone than the Council could reasonably be expected to take on and addressing the whole of arboreal service across the city would be an enormously expensive and complex undertaking. In clarification of further questions it was noted that where there was local demand and a lack of resource to solve a specific problem, then the City could support Herefordshire's street tree effort through funding.

It was noted that in the past the City Council had funded road schemes on the periphery of Herefordshire's highway works programme to maximise local benefit and bring forward desirable works that didn't score enough in the assessment by Herefordshire to be included in their cash limited scope of works.

It was clarified that, while reliance on the consultation that led to the community led plan gives a very sound basis for decisions, it is not legally necessary, although it may be highly desirable to test every proposal for action through further public consultation. It is however necessary to know costs and risk before embarking on a new service or other activity.

Weeds on the highway pavement and other paths had caused a good deal of critical comment last year and the programme to deal with them appears to have been cut back - this was noted as an area for further enquiries to be made.

There was a considerable debate on the conflicting calls for a "can do" attitude and a willingness to break out of traditional siloes of responsibility on the one hand, and the need where possible to avoid asking the public to pay twice for the same service. In this context it is very important to understand the difference between taking on a service area entirely, supplementing the overall service for example buying extra street cleaning or grass cuts in parks or solving a very local issue for example the Highmore Street junction works. All are possible but need to be managed differently.

The Committee noted the additional funding proposed and will discuss again how best to maximise the Council's impact on the quality of the built and natural environment in the City. This would look at the key question, "What do we want the City to look like?" and also how we can work with Hereford in Bloom and other partners to achieve that look.

CD2018/19.78 PURCHASE OF STANDARD STREET SCENE ITEMS

The Clerk reminded the Committee that when ward budgets were abolished he was given discretion to approve items of up to £500-00 if there was a general community benefit, without having to refer every item to Committee for approval. A number of frequently requested items were over that limit. In order to avoid repetitive

decisions on standard items the report sought the authority of the Committee for the Clerk.

The First World War benches had proved extremely popular, several other parishes had contacted the Clerk to find out who supplied them and delivery was usually on time and consistent. A bespoke bench for Falklands veterans had been ordered and this too had been very well received.

On the map signs people were generally complimentary about the map itself, there had been a few issues with the machines jamming, usually reported as them running out when in fact dampness had caused a map to get stuck but regular cleaning out and replenishing had reduced that. There was a concern about the responsiveness of the company who are based in Lincoln.

The refusal of the cheque signatories to sign off payment at BBLP rates for litter bin replacement had been resolved by the discovery of a cheaper source via a lengthsman in another parish. This had been used successfully in Churchill Gardens.

It was suggested that the BID be informed of the intentions reflected in the first recommendation, and it was agreed to amend its wording to reflect that.

Following advice from the Clerk about the maps and noticeboards it was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Edwards and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk be given authority to order black metal noticeboards with gold finials and a curved top with the City Council name displayed from Cityscape Maps subject to a ward member's request, confirmation that a viable community group exists to take care of content refreshment and that the appropriate licenses have been granted by Herefordshire Council, subject to the company being able to provide a reasonable and timely installation and repair service.

That Hereford BID be reminded of the Council's view that a homogenous appearance of signs in the City was desirable.

That the Town Clerk be given authority to order commemorative benches in standard or bespoke designs from David Ogilvie Engineering subject to a ward member's request and the appropriate license being granted where necessary by Herefordshire Council before installation.

That the Town Clerk be given authority to order timber benches from Abergavenney Sawmill on the request of a ward member and subject to agreement for the management agency responsible for the site before installation.

That the Town Clerk be given authority to order steel litter bins in the existing standard green to replace or extend provision in the City, subject to a ward member's request, and the appropriate license or permission being in place from Herefordshire Council before installation takes place.

That all of these approvals be reviewed annually to ensure members remain satisfied as to quality of product and service and value for money.

That where the items installed are damaged, the Town Clerk is authorised to commission repairs either from the original suppliers or from local contractors whichever offers the most cost-effective solution.

That in the absence of the Town Clerk the Deputy Town Clerk is authorised to act on their behalf in all of these matters.

CD2018/19.79 ALLOTMENT WORKS

The Clerk explained that as part of getting ready for the transfer of the allotments to a long lease with the Society, a number of jobs had been identified as beyond the general run of grounds maintenance. These mainly involved works to boundary trees where they were growing through hedges, some trees on the plots themselves and a more significant job on the Holmer allotment to alleviate a persistent flooding issue.

In supporting the proposal Councillor Edwards asked that the Society be advised that these works are conditional on progress with the lease which had taken too long already.

It was then proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Stevens and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Committee agrees to the general works programme worked up by members and the Clerk in conjunction with HALGS and authorises the spending of up to £3,500 plus a contingency of £250-00 to make a total of £3,750 for the small works listed.

That the Committee authorises the Clerk to allocate the works to local contractors subject to quotations where possible with at least two quotations for comparison but if necessary to single quotations.

That the Committee accept that the market for the flood alleviation works to Holmer allotment has been adequately tested and authorises the Clerk to raise a purchase order to the one contractor who has returned a quotation to enable this to proceed as quickly as possible.

CD2018/19.80 THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL GRANT COMPLETION REPORT

There was considerable discussion about whether in the light of incomplete information available from the Three Choirs organisers it was appropriate to have this discussion now. There were clearly divided views on both the scale of the Council's support and the correct way and time to consider this. The review of spending by Finance and Policy Committee had thrown up the issue as had the debate about the Council's response to the decision to exclude the Gathering Wave from the programme and the subsequent decision of the Council to fund a separate event run by the Music Pool outside the festival period.

A proposal to defer was put forward but not voted on.

The discussion moved on to the question of funding, the usefulness of the Festival and its accessibility to residents of the City at the prices charged for tickets. It was noted that the festival undoubtedly provides a major boost to hotels, B&B

establishments in and around the city and restaurants but there is less clarity about its benefits outside that sector. There is very little information about where ticket purchasers come from.

After much discussion the Committee came to a view that any future funding should be tied to specific performance criteria in a bespoke Service Level Agreement funded through a grant which in turn could be funded over three years depending on the size of the award made.

In order to facilitate that more detailed discussion with the organisers when fuller information was available, and without prejudice to the eventual award to be made, it was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Rone and by six votes to one, with one abstention

RESOLVED That Finance and Policy Committee be recommended to move the sum of £8,000 from the Three Choirs reserve as an annual payment to support a grant of £24,000 in the festival year to the Community Grants budget and that a full grant application be considered on its merits within the grant assessment criteria.

CD2018/19.81 ARMED FORCES DAY 2019

The Deputy Town Clerk outlined the proposals for activities in support of Armed Forces Week and the specific Armed Forces Day in the county for 2019.

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Stevens and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Council supports the Armed Forces Day and that officers will work alongside the organising group to move the event forward.

CD2018/19.82 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Brief for Youth Council – interactive ideas and videos for the website

Cycle track update

CCTV control room visit feedback

Park equipment application (Holywell Gutter Lane)

CD2018/19.83 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 26th November 2018 Grants Meeting 10 am

Tuesday 11th December 2018 Main Agenda 6 pm

The meeting closed at 8:40 pm

Signed

Date