

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Hereford
TUESDAY 31st JULY 2018 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: The Right Worshipful, the Mayor, Cllr Susan Boulter and Cllrs Bushkes, Butler, Chappell, Dykes, Edwards, Hey, Kenyon, Lloyd-Hayes, Michael, Stevens, Tawn and Tillett

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

C2018/2019.30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Baker, Mansell, Rone, and Wilcox.

C2018/2019.31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Tawn declared a non-pecuniary interest on behalf of his previous involvement with Hereford BID.

C2018/2019.32 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive any questions that may be put to the meeting by members of the public present.

A member of the public was present and put forward a statement and question to Council, as follows:

“The Hereford BID and City Life is failing Hereford due to bad management and poor strategy and, is not utilising the £1 million funds raised from rateable values. In light of these failures and following the appointment of a new Chairman and member of the Board, will the BID be more open and transparent in conducting their business in the future?”

The Town Clerk responded that neither he, nor Council members were qualified to answer that question, however, the next item on the agenda was a presentation from the Chairman of Hereford BID, who would be able to answer the points raised.

The Chairman then proposed, and it was agreed, **to bring forward agenda item number seven**, being a presentation from the Chairman of Hereford BID, Alison Rogers.

C2018/2019.36 HEREFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Alison Rogers thanked the Mayor for the invitation to speak at Council and introduced herself as the new Chairman of the Hereford Business Improvement District, having recently taken over the role from John Jones.

Her presentation covered the following points:

- **Background of HBID** - Set up in 2015 via ballot vote to all city businesses, asking if they wanted their own private, non-profit-making organisation.
- **Where HBID is today/main projects - Year 1, First project:** To increase footfall, now in year 4 of a 5-year project. Promoting various city events and activities

throughout the year, including visitors trail, hosting circus summer events with tents in Hightown, encouraging participation by children.

Year 2: 'City Life' website created to promote Hereford, not only as a shopping destination but also an interesting place to visit.

- Looking to produce an investors pack to encourage visitors to settle in Hereford.
- Each city business pays 1.2% of business rates as a levy to HBID.
- HBID provides footfall trends to local businesses alongside national comparisons, including shopping centres who run surveys.
- **Second project:** Investing in improving the Hereford experience - Adding floral hanging baskets/window boxes around city, employs 3 handypersons to keep floral baskets watered, maintained and generally help to enhance the city.
- **City cleaning aspect:** This has been misrepresented - HBID is not responsible for this service. Handypersons may sometimes repair broken benches. HBID purchased a gum removal machine from Hereford City Council. HBID works closely with strategic partners to ensure city is as clean as possible and provides gull-proof waste bags to businesses in city.
- **Safety and security:** An important element to keep city a safe place to be. Offers help to publicans, using a private platform for businesses to share information, in advance, if they have any concerns e.g. pickpockets, which can link with local police and CCTV operation.
- **Project 4:** 'Getting Here and Getting About' - Looking at signage around city. Working towards becoming a coach-friendly city, securing coach parking, drop-off points etc.
- **Project 5:** 'Bottom Line', Business Mentoring - Invested in free training for BID businesses. Low take up so far but will be more active project in future. Workshops held with local businesses to keep them informed. Parking Consultation Support - Regular meetings with City Council and Herefordshire Council's Parking Services.
- **Introduced 'Ferrous' project:** Showcased local blacksmithing for one week in Hightown (gave out brochures for members). Project then travelled around county, including Hay Festival, ending up at St Michael's Hospice gardens.
- Working alongside the Arts Council into 2019. Very good working relationships with all strategic partners.
- **Future aspirations:** To make Hereford a more vibrant place - HBID very open to suggestions. To improve openness and transparency, issues to be raised at next Board meeting. HBID's Accounts are published on their website.

Following the presentation, members' questions and comments covered the following:

- Impressed with gull-proof bags - City Council initiated idea but, HBID took on and claimed as theirs.
- Coach parking should have been sorted out - Will City Council and Herefordshire Council also be involved?
- There seems to be a lot of crossover - There's already an established 'watch' and general contact between local businesses and also three CCTV organisations in city.
- On the matter raised by the member of public – Which other council authorities does HBID use as comparators and do you have any figures?
- Felt there's been an element of disregard for Hereford City Council and more communication was needed from HBID.
- HCC contributed huge part of precept towards watering and maintaining planters around city, also paid 50% for gum removal machine - HBID provided three part-time staff.
- Suggested uncollected rubbish bags could have been hidden away.

- Passionate about creating and maintaining heritage signs around the city - HCC was not consulted about how and what money was to be spent on this or having any input to signage.
- Training is vital to businesses - HCC doing everything it can to help community businesses with their start up.
- Want to see the blacksmithing sculpture - Info on this should have been shared with HCC to help showcase sculpture around the city.
- Newer city paving not looking at clean as it was, concerned about general state of paving.
- Members echoed all comments previously made.
- Hopes HBID will explore running events for city's early evening and late-night economy - City should not just grind to a halt at 5pm - HCC previously helped to fund evening entertainers around the city, evening being as important as the day time economy.
- One HCC member, as an elected observer of HBID, highlighted:
 - Loss of income for HBID was due to increase in empty shops.
 - BBLP are neglecting their statutory duty to keep the city clean. This is the responsibility of Herefordshire Council, not HBID.
 - Rateable values have changed - Some businesses are now paying lower rates following appeal but, smaller businesses were not able to pursue that option.
 - He had met with several HBID members and knows a lot of people through his previous business in the city. He pledged to do his best to work with HBID and other city businesses with concerns.
- Concern about number of empty shops in city – What is HBID's strategy to get some shops filled? Do they have plans to make empty shops look more attractive?
- Suggestion that HBID could develop a booklet to be proactive in getting empty shops filled.

On the points raised by members, Alison Rogers responded as follows:

Under their project 'Bottom Line', social media offered some flexibility for improved communications. The project also included mentoring for businesses, which would replace previous training programmes and the remit had been agreed at the initial stages, therefore, HBID were unable to go back and change that.

The gull-proof waste bags were an excellent idea and did work but there was still a need to make sure the bags were collected. The 'Pub Watch' system also runs in the daytime and she was not sure which platforms run on it. She agreed with the comments about coach parking and assured members that HBID, would be liaising with some other partners to find out about more coach parking potential and applying for a coach parking agreement.

With regard to questions raised by the member of the public on financial aspects, she did not have that information and would need to ask HBID's Strategic Manager to provide it. In response to the reference to figures, she commented that those had been broadcast earlier on, e.g. the Freedom Church would have been a bid levy but, churches were now exempt. However, she would provide that information for the next meeting of HBID.

On issues with the watering of hanging baskets, she assured all that this would be organised properly going forwards. She had not been involved in consultations regarding the city's heritage signage so could not comment on that.

HBID do not have facilities to do deep-cleaning of city pavements and they were short staffed with one of their handypersons on sick leave, however, she had noted those concerns and would pass the comments down.

HBID was investigating the areas regarding early evening and late-night economy and whilst no information could be divulged yet, she affirmed that this aspect had already been recognised.

Some empty shops had been decorated with window vinyls, however, this does not help to rent them out to businesses, therefore, they are aiming to promote empty shops on HBID's website and also looking to get some assistance from Letting Agents with this issue.

In conclusion, Alison Rogers admitted that mistakes had been made by HBID, however, as a new appointee to HBID she stressed that they must be given a chance to address the issues. She further reiterated that HBID want to make Hereford a better city for everyone.

The Chairman thanked Alison Rogers for attending and she left the meeting.

C2018/2019.33 MINUTES

Members raised some queries and highlighted corrections to be made to the previous minutes, as follows:

Page 5 - Adopting the Code of Conduct: It was queried whether this should also include staff and the Clerk confirmed that the Code of Conduct applied to members of Hereford City Council only and the resolution would therefore remain as is.

Page 8 - Committee Membership: It was pointed that there were a number of vacancies on three of the Committees, which were not stated and should be shown, i.e. Community Development Committee: 2 vacancies, Finance and Policy Committee: 2 vacancies, Planning and Highways Committee: 3 vacancies. In response to a query, the Clerk confirmed that Cllr Mansell was still shown as a member on Planning and Highways Committee however, he would check with Cllr Mansell if he was continuing or stepping down from that role.

Page 9 - Representatives on Outside Bodies: Under Municipal Charities, an amendment was required to state **Cllr Boulter**, not Cllr Butler.

Under Three Choirs Festival, Cllr Chappell's name to be added, to show three representatives instead of two.

Five Outside Bodies were noted as missing and needed to be added to the list, i.e. New Hereford University Working Group, Close House, The Hereford BID Group, Magna Carta Committee and Hereford Area Plan.

It was then proposed by Cllr Edwards, seconded by Cllr Chappell and unanimously

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the City Council held on the 19th June 2018, with corrections made as stated above, be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Chairman.

C2018/2019.34 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION

The Mayor reported that she had received a letter from the Twinning Association's French President at Vierzon, who wanted to bring a team of ladies' rugby players on a visit to Hereford. The Mayor suggested that the Gloucester and Worcester ladies' teams could also be invited to join the visiting party and asked members to let the Mayor's Secretary know if they also wished to invite any other teams along.

The Mayor reminded members that she would be visiting Jaworzno in Poland on 30th September 2018, accompanied by her Consort, and also the Deputy Mayor; Cllr Hey, Cllr Lloyd-Hayes and the Deputy Town Clerk.

Finally, a Charity Ball would be held on 6th October 2018, in aid of the Mayor's two charities.

Cllr Lloyd-Hayes left the meeting at this point.

C2018/2019.35 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S MEMBERSHIP OF NALC/HALC

The Clerk confirmed that the complete report had been sent to members via email, and a hard copy was tabled for this meeting.

He informed members that it was for them to determine whether City Council should retain its membership in HALC and NALC or choose to leave. The City Council cannot be a member of just one of these organisations, therefore, must either hold membership of both or neither. He added that HALC, NALC and also SLCC are a primary source of technical information for Councillors and the Deputy Clerk is also a member of SLCC. The third section of the report looks at alternatives to HALC and NALC, for which there are none, however, there is an alternative for SLCC. The majority of members who had attended HALC/NALC training courses had found them to be useful and the Clerk suggested that if City Council decide to come out, then the money for membership fees could be put into a training package for City Council members. There is no provision for getting a refund of fees if pulling out of membership part-way through the year and it was now up to members to decide.

Members' questions and comments covered the following:

- On behalf of Cllr Lloyd-Hayes, Cllr Hey put forward that she was in favour of pulling out of HALC and NALC.
- Cllr Kenyon proposed and several members concurred that CC should leave HALC and NALC.
- Supportive of membership money being set aside for training purposes.
- Thanks to the Clerk for his review of HALC/NALC memberships and excellent report regarding Ledbury Town Council High Court judgement.
- Cllr Edwards proposed an amendment be added to the recommendation in that CC could retain membership of HALC and NALC for one more year, covering the first period of the new Council's four-year term (starting in May 2019) to give the new Council a fresh start with guidelines in place so they could determine if membership was providing CC with value for money.
- Concern is not about overall value for money - Relates more specifically to HALC's advice provided in regard to Ledbury Town Council and consequences of decisions made based on poor advice.
- No convincing argument either way had been put forward in debate to enable a member to decide, despite several colleagues stating they wished to withdraw from HALC/NALC.

- Some parish councils were not in HALC/NALC - They appeared to function satisfactorily.
- HALC is a framework of councils across Herefordshire - Councils can both help and learn from each other (In the past, CC had approached another parish council in Somerset).
- HALC framework is built on trust - Faith had been lost in whether any future advice provided would be accurate.
- Could CC seek advice from the local government association?

The Clerk responded that City Council was not eligible for membership of the local government association and added that Herefordshire Council's Monitoring Officer deals with all disciplinary matters. Whilst he noted Cllr Edwards' comments and amendment about retaining membership for a further year, members' views were weighted on the side of giving up our membership of HALC/NALC and City Council could always rejoin in future. City Council could consider setting up a different type of organisation if worried that information provided in the aforementioned legal matter was wrong and, it was felt that HALC should have known better than to advise Ledbury Council in that legal matter. There are six months left until City Council's membership runs out, which gives us time to see what happens across Herefordshire. Training for members could be provided by various sources, including the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Herefordshire Council and other external bodies.

Cllr Bushkes seconded Cllr Kenyon's proposal for City Council to leave HALC and NALC.

The Chairman asked if there was a seconder for Cllr Edwards' suggested amendment to the recommendation that HALC/NALC membership be retained for one more year. There was no seconder.

Members then voted on Cllr Kenyon's proposal: 9 in favour, 2 against

It was proposed by Cllr Kenyon, seconded by Cllr Bushkes and

RESOLVED:

That City Council gives up its membership of the National Association of Local Councils and the Herefordshire Associations of Local Councils with effect from 1st April 2019.

C2018/2019.36 HEREFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

This item was brought forward on the agenda to follow item number 3 - CD2018/2019.32 Public Participation.

C2018/2019.37 RELATIONSHIP WITH JAWORZNO

Members considered the circulated resolution paper in respect of City Council's intended commitment to establish a formal agreement and develop links with the city of Jaworzno in Poland.

The Mayor asked members if they were in favour of the resolution, which had been drawn up to be signed by the Mayor during the City Council's forthcoming civic party visit to Jaworzno.

Members' comments and questions covered the following:

- Very positive about CC visit to Jaworzno - Delegation includes Cllr Lloyd-Hayes who has fantastic tourism links - Jaworzno's President very keen to expand their tourism.
- Visit is all about developing forward links - A good opportunity to consider inviting the Scouts Commissioner and representative from Whitecross School on the trip to help form such links.
- City Council should show more intent to make things happen on this - Agreement paper not enough in itself.
- Suggestion that CC could approach other organisations, including the Scouts, to ask if they may want a formal 'friendship' letter taken to Jaworzno by the Mayor on their behalf.
- Whitecross school, as part of a project, want to form a link with a place somewhere in Poland - This could be pursued as a possible educational link.
- A social media link could be developed to expand on the formal link agreement.
- Wording used in the resolution paper, i.e. '...establishing a formal friendship agreement...' needs to be expanded - would prefer to see use of the word '**link**' rather than '**friendship**'.
- CC should have been more proactive on establishing link and put in some effort much sooner - It was embarrassing for this Council that the matter had taken so long to progress.

The Mayor reminded members that, at this stage, the item was only about agreeing the resolution to sign the proposed official paper in respect of forming a link going forwards. Any Councillors who wanted to join the delegation to Jaworzno could do so.

In response to the member's suggestion about exploring the possibility of including other Herefordshire organisations in a formal written agreement, the Mayor would put this forward to the President during her forthcoming visit.

The Mayor had received an email from the President which expressed how keen they were for a formal resolution to be in place to coincide with the Mayor's visit to Jaworzno. Cllr Kenyon suggested a video is produced involving short clips from various schools, scout and guide groups, youth groups, sports groups etc wishing to forge links with Poland which can be taken out to Jaworzno with the delegation. Cllr Hey added that an email had already been sent to Whitecross school about a view of forging a link with Poland.

The Town Clerk explained that the resolution paper had been deliberately worded in an open way to be broad enough to cover any link activity so that no possibilities were excluded.

Cllr Michael proposed a slight change to the wording on the agreement, to state, '*... the City Council declared its commitment to establishing a formal **link** agreement and to develop **that link** ...*'

It was proposed by Cllr Michael, seconded by Cllr Stevens and unanimously

RESOLVED:

That the resolution paper, in respect of City Council's intended commitment to establish a formal agreement and develop links with Jaworzno in Poland, be accepted by Council subject to an agreed change to the wording, to read as follows:

'At its meeting of 31st July 2018 held at the Town Hall the City Council declared its commitment to establishing a formal link agreement with the municipality of Jaworzno in Poland and to develop that link between the people of both cities for the benefit of both communities'.

C2018/2019.38 RISK ANALYSIS ANNUAL REVIEW

The Clerk reported that this was now just a technicality and Council as a whole needed to adopt the review, which had already gone through and been accepted by both Finance and Policy and Governance and Procedures Committees.

Cllr Michael agreed with the Clerk's recommendation and added that looking to the future, regarding the employment of staff and safety of employees, the Town Hall building has some CCTV coverage but there was none installed in the City Council's offices, which needed to be addressed. The Clerk replied that he would produce a report and recommendation on this for consideration at full Council.

It was then proposed by Cllr Michael, seconded by Cllr Tillett and unanimously

RESOLVED:

That Council accepts the reports approved by Governance and Procedures Committee on 3rd July 2018 and Finance and Policy Committee on 5th June 2018, as the combined risk analysis for Hereford City Council for 2018-2019.

C2018/2019.39 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members were asked to consider placing Councillor Butler on committees now that he is able to resume his duties.

It was proposed and agreed by all members that Cllr Butler takes up a place on all three committees currently having vacancies, i.e. Community Development, Finance and Policy, Planning and Highways.

C2018/2019.40 DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEES:

Members noted the draft minutes of the following committee meetings:

Community Development Committee: 12th June 2018

Governance & Procedures Committee: 3rd July 2018

Planning & Highways Committee: 28th June, 19th July 2018

Several queries were then raised by Councillors, as follows:

Community Development Committee - Grants Meeting:

The Clerk stated that the minutes of the Grants meeting on 23rd July, would follow for the next meeting of Council on 11th September.

Governance & Procedures Committee:

Cllr Tillett asked if nine was the correct number of members on this committee, as the attendance register showed ten members were present. The Clerk confirmed that nine members was correct, however, the Mayor was also present as an ex-officio member on all committees.

Cllr Tillet also pointed out that the minutes of the meeting of Planning and Highways Committee on 19th July, showed an incorrect name for the Civic Society's representative and the Deputy Clerk confirmed that the correct name was John Bothamley.

C2018/2019.41 REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Council received reports from members who represent the City Council on the following bodies:

- a) **Municipal Charities (x 2 Members) Cllrs Butler and Hey** - Nothing to report.
- b) **Herefordshire Market Towns Forum (x 1 Member - to attend ad hoc meetings) Cllr Wilcox** - Not present to report.
- c) **HALC Executive Committee (x 3 Members) Cllr Griffiths** (plus two outstanding vacancies) - Not present to report.
- d) **HALC Southern Area Meeting (x 2 Members) Cllr Griffiths** (plus one outstanding vacancy) - Not present to report.
- e) **The Enterprise Zone Stakeholder Group (x 1 Member) Cllr Griffiths** - Not present to report.
- f) **Three Choirs Festival (x 2 Members) Cllrs Bushkes and Lloyd-Hayes** – Cllr Bushkes attended the opening service on Saturday 28th July and praised the event.
- g) **Hereford Twinning Association** (x 1 Member who is always the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Hereford as President of the Twinning Association). Nothing further to report following the information in Mayors' Communications.
- h) **Hereford City Tourism Group (x 1 Member) Cllr Lloyd-Hayes** - Not present to report.
- i) **Hereford in Bloom (x 1 Member) Cllr Boulter** – Results of the HiB competition were due out in September. Mayor had attended a lunch engagement and was very pleased with how well it went in the community.
- j) **New Hereford University Working Group (x 2 Members) Cllrs Lloyd-Hayes and Stevens** – Cllr Stevens commented that it would be interesting to see how the (new university) will look after £3.4 million is spent on the development.
- k) **Close House (x 1 Member) Cllr Kenyon** - Nothing to report.
- l) **The BID group (x 1 Member) Cllr Tawn** - Nothing further to report following the earlier presentation by The BID.
- m) **Magna Carta Committee (x 1 Member) Cllr Lloyd-Hayes** - Not present to report.
- n) **Hereford Area Plan (x 2 Members) Cllrs Griffiths and Lloyd-Hayes** - Not present to report.

- o) **Community Land Trust (x 1 Member) Cllr Michael** – Received a lengthy email and introduction to CLT and is interested to see how this goes, being a new representative on the organisation.

With regard to an update on HAP, the Clerk urged members to look at the website and liaise with their colleagues on Planning and Highway Committee, as representatives for the respective areas, to get the best and most representative information on that key report.

C2018/2019.42 TOWN CLERK’S COMMUNICATIONS

Governance and Procedures Committee - Change of meeting date - A reminder (as previously emailed to members) that the next meeting of this committee would be held on **Tuesday 21st August 2018**.

SLCC training event – The Clerk recommended that any Councillors interested in attending this event could talk to the Deputy Town Clerk.

Broadband update – The Clerk awaited a quote and timescale on this from Herefordshire Council. This is ongoing but the in-house option seemed feasible as it looked likely that HC can meet City Council’s requirements.

C2018/2019.43 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 11th SEPTEMBER 2018, at 6 PM

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.32pm.

Signed

Dated