

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 6th July 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Paul Stevens and Councillors Boulter (Chair), Hey, Hornsey, Kenyon, Oliver, Owens, Wilcox and Williams

Attending Steve Kerry, Town Clerk, Becci O'Reilly Events and Administration Manager (part)

CD2021/22.13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Carwardine and Tyler.

CD2021/22.14 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

CD2021/22.15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CD2021/22.16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meetings of 30th March 2021 and 19th April 2021 be agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

It was proposed by Councillor Hornsey, seconded by Councillor Williams and unanimously

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of 7th June 2021 be agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

CD2021/22.17 GRANT APPLICATION MELODY DANCE SCHOOL

As the grant application is for an event at Hinton Community Centre, Councillor Kenyon declared an interest as Chair of the Trustees at Hinton and left the meeting.

Nicky Willetts from Melody Dance School entered the meeting and was asked to introduce the application. It is for children to be able to learn expressive dance during the school holidays and to provide refreshments and packed lunches for them. The project focuses on fitness and movement as well as artistic development, and the lunches are essential to support lower income families during the holidays when school meals are not available. It is aimed at groups from 5 to 15 years of age.

A number of questions were raised by members and in answers the following points were noted:

There is as yet only one quote from a local provider for the lunches, they will see if this can be reduced. The project is for one year initially, but if it is successful they will seek to continue. The school have not applied to Herefordshire Council through Talk Community although this might be a future plan.

Publicity is ready for social media and there will be full acknowledgement of the City Council's support of the application if approved. There will also be advertising at the Kindle Centre and through both council's websites. In future year schools will be contacted directly too.

The sound system at Hinton is not good enough for what they need to do which is why it features in the application.

Numbers are pitched at 120 for the lunches, they could take some more than that and have a reserve list in case anyone cancels or just doesn't turn up. There isn't time in the school holidays to run an extra week for the reserves though. Classes are between 16 and 25. The teachers are existing dance teachers who will be working additional hours through the holidays to make this work.

Nicky Willetts then left the meeting and discussion continued. Some members were concerned that the group hadn't approached Fit and Fed and Herefordshire Council and didn't seem to be well informed about their funding options. If they want to carry on after this year, such options should definitely be considered. It was noted that although the sound system is obviously for dancing the sport equipment is part of the package as they need to work on the children's posture, strength and co-ordination as part of the teaching. £800 for the hours required is a competitive rate for a qualified dance teacher.

It was the proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hey and unanimously

RESOLVED To award Melody Dance School a grant of £2,710.32 with the proviso that they continue to test the local market for a cheaper offer for the packed lunches.

At the conclusion of this item Councillor Kenyon returned to the meeting and Becci O'Reilly left.

CD2021/22.18 THE DUCK POND, CANTILUPE STREET

The Clerk introduced his report explaining that he was proposing to approach two different matters: the short-term work to resolve algae using bacteria and aerators, and the longer term issue of a fountain which would both improve aeration further but also be a decorative feature. As the pond was in fact the residual castle moat it was a scheduled ancient monument and a consent process would have to be gone through before its appearance could be altered. Before embarking on that the Clerk suggested a test of local opinion to see if the fountain was wanted by a majority.

Councillor Kenyon suggested the City Council needs to take a lead on this as the Herefordshire Cabinet member is over-worked, we might need consent for aerators too and they are essential. One thing that is clear, in current opinion, is that the pond looks awful with a huge bloom of algae. Asking people about a fountain is a good idea as long as we get on with the algae clearance.

Other members noted how the pond used to be a focal point for children and had been a very attractive feature of the city. If we are to have a fountain it would be important to try and get something solar powered, so our solution was completely green. We could also plant oxygenating plants to assist with the clearance of algae. It was important that in any consultation we did not over-promise and that we made it clear that the fountain, which could be quite modest, would have to go through a process for gaining permission and that would take time, and might ultimately be unsuccessful. It was noted that Castle House Hotel

had confirmed they would be willing to pay for power to the aerators as clearing the pond would improve the view from their terrace.

It was then proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Clerk works with officers of Herefordshire Council to achieve the restoration of flow and aeration of the water in the pond.

That the Clerk contacts Castle House Hotel to confirm in writing their willingness to provide power for the aerators at their expense.

That the Council carries out a survey of public opinion to see if there is an appetite for a fountain before commencing any formal design or planning application work.

CD2021/22.19 ALLOTMENTS SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT UPDATE

The Clerk reported he had sent the draft SLA approved at the last meeting of the Committee to the Society for comments and had so far received none. The trustees only meet every couple of months. He suggested that this be an item for the September meeting of the Committee at which a final decision would be made, and that the Society be made aware of this.

Councillor Kenyon, who is working with the Clerk in the negotiations with the Society agreed with this approach and said the recent purchase of grounds maintenance equipment and the issue of the draft SLA had made it clear that the Council was prepared to back its new approach with investment and the atmosphere in discussions with the Society had been very positive so far.

The Committee noted the position.

CD2021/22.20 CITY EVENTS AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON

The Clerk explained that event cancellation insurance is impossible to obtain at the moment and that the plan for Christmas lights would be for an open, free, event in mid-November, just as any winter peak in both flu and Covid was likely, and it was very possible that events such as this would be subject to so many restrictions that it would be impossible, or prohibitively expensive to hold. Whilst members generally agreed with this, it was noted that if things go better than expected it might be possible to organise a smaller event using local bands to play some festive live music just before the switch on. On any case, learning from last year it was important that the switch on happened at a fixed time and not as an extension of the final testing by the contractors.

CD2021/22.21 PERMANENT LIGHTING OF THE TOWN HALL

The Clerk corrected one part of the report. In fact, no formal permission had been sought from Herefordshire Council for the recent temporary lighting events but they had not objected. Indeed, recently Herefordshire had asked for one to be organised to thank the NHS, but withdrew their proposal when they were advised that hiring and installing a set of lights would cost £400-00. The proposal was to install a set of lights which would be LEDs controlled by a laptop which could programme any colour, or even combinations of colours. Although described as permanent, in planning terms these would be a de-mountable, and

therefore temporary fixture, like the microphones in the Council Chamber and so would not compromise the listed status of the building.

In discussion, most members saw the advantage of using the town hall as a focal point for events such as NHS Thank You Day. St John's (Ambulance) Day or commemorative occasions for war veterans or to support medical charities or the emergency services. However, Councillor Oliver was against the proposal as he felt that, at a time when the Council was seeking to address the climate emergency, lighting a public building, even with low wattage LED's, was the wrong thing to do.

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and by 7 votes to 1 with 1 abstention

RESOLVED That the Clerk is authorised to take the best quote and commission the installation of a set of multi-coloured capacity LED lights to enable periodic illumination of the town hall frontage at a price not exceeding £4,000.

CD2021/22.22 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER PARISH COUNCIL SURVEY

The Clerk drew this to members' attention and asked for suggested responses after the meeting. He would collate the majority views into an answer from the Council. It was agreed without a vote that this be sent to all members for their input to be collated. It was noted among members present that the safety of users of the night time economy and the increase in crime associated with the "county lines" drug trade was of widespread concern.

CD2021/22.23 SUPPORT FOR HEREFORDSHIRE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION

The request for support from the CCTV Manager at Herefordshire to assist her in obtaining vital continuation of funding after October 2021 from the Police and Crime Commissioner had been circulated with the agenda.

Several members spoke to support the retention of CCTV within the City and to express concern that policing would be the major casualty of any cessation of funding as emergency response officers rely heavily on it for evidence and for their own safety in managing incidents. Cameras also helped allay the fear of crime and made people feel safer especially at night.

It was also noted, as it has been before, that it would be greatly beneficial if the owners of private systems co-ordinated their control and surveillance facilities with those of the County Council to enable fully joined up coverage.

It was agreed without a vote that the City Council would fully support the CCTV Manager in her effort to retain funding.

CD2021/22.24 COMMUNITY PROTECTION OFFICER

The Clerk explained that after years of unexplained delay this had been given to David Hough the Herefordshire Council Enforcement and Trading Standards Manager who had made more progress in a few months than his colleagues had in eleven years. We now had a workable agreement and a proposal to start the service as envisaged by this Committee. The comments on the draft requiring some response had already been sent and were not likely to prove controversial, they were points of detail.

In discussion, members noted four points. Firstly, it needs to be absolutely clear that no redundancy related payments including pension or other liabilities would be the responsibility of the City Council. Secondly, the clause suggesting any surplus funds on cessation of the project could be used to make an agreed charitable donation was superfluous as the City Council would not agree to that and would insist on unspent funds being returned to it. Thirdly, there needs to be a clear statement of how the priorities identified by the City Council in its contacts with local residents could be used to prioritise the direction and nature of the work of the officer. Fourthly, there was also a query about the post title which perhaps could be a little more assertive, but the Clerk explained that this might be covered by statute; he would enquire.

There was also a discussion about whether the Council needed to seek legal advice before entering into the agreement or whether, as it was for a one year trial period, the Committee were confident that they understood the details and could come to a decision.

Finally, the Clerk explained that as this has taken so long there is no longer a provision for it within the staffing or street scene budgets. He therefore drew members' attention to the last item in the recommendations seeking a request from the Committee to Policy and Resources Committee for reserves to be used to fund this in this financial year. The Clerk was asked to ascertain where fines income goes. It is assumed to be a general revenue receipt but if there was a specific "pot" for community use that would be stated.

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Williams that the Council waits to take legal advice on the terms of the agreement before it is signed. On being put to the vote this was lost by 4 votes to 3 with 2 abstentions.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and by 6 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions

RESOLVED

That subject to resolution of the outstanding points noted (including those added by the Committee), the Committee authorises the Clerk to sign the agreement as drafted with as early an implementation date as is practicable.

That the Clerk places a report before Policy and Resources Committee on behalf of this Committee seeking virement of funds from reserves to cover the cost of implementing this project.

CD2021/22.25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

A half day would be organised for an open discussion on the future business plan for the Council within the Committee's remit.

Resolution of the Allotments Service Level Agreement (next routine meeting)

West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Survivors Support Centre – possible funding time

CD2021/22.26 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

19th July 2021 at 5 pm* (change of time agreed at this meeting) Grants agenda

21st September 2021 6 pm Routine agenda

(*It was subsequently agreed by the Chair to revert to a morning meeting to enable grant applicants who made arrangements to be able to attend to present their applications to do so.)

Signed

Date