

**HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL**  
**COUNCIL MEETING 27 September 2022**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Present:** The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Mark Dykes and Councillors Andrews, Carwardine, Foxton, Hey, Hornsey, Milln, Oliver, Owens, Tillett, Toynbee, Tyler, Wilcox and Williams

**In attendance:** Steve Kerry, Town Clerk

**C2022/23.30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Clerk reported apologies from Councillors Boulter, Kenyon and Stevens

**C2022/23.31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**C2022/23.32 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**C2022/23.33 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

**RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of council of 21 June 2022 be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.**

**C2022/23.34 HEREFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT – RECOMMENDATION FROM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The Mayor welcomed Mike Truelove, the BID Chief Executive to the meeting. Mr Truelove introduced the programme for Christmas events and recalled the previous presentation to the Community Development Committee. Rather than relying on year to year grants it would be helpful to have a three year agreement to provide some certainty about resources. He went on to explain the success of the Gift Card and how it works to support local businesses, with any business within the BID area able to join, many national chains and local traders have done so. To support late night shopping there would be concert type events and also roving entertainers such as jugglers. There has been a widespread leaflet drop, well beyond the county, to compete with attractions such as Shrewsbury, Worcester, and Gloucester. There would be family competitions with prizes to be held at, and collected from, the Tourist Information Centre to increase footfall there. Finally, Mr Truelove pointed out that although costs have risen significantly, the grant/SLA bid has not, as other sources of revenue have plugged the gap.

In answer to several question the following additional information was noted.

The balance held at the end of the last financial year would be largely used up as events were now taking place, the surplus had built up during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Late night shopping does still happen, but it is closer to Christmas than before, not late November, so the free parking had been used carefully and a couple of days had been held back for the spring. It was noted that at other Christmas markets Glühwein is a major attraction, and possibly in Hereford “Glühcider”. This would be looked into to see if there was a local provider.

It was felt that the Christmas programme is very good, and the flexibility around late shopping days and parking concessions was a wise adaptation to changing retail habits. About 150 establishments use the gift card, out of 450 BID members. A new business could always join if they were in the BID area but not in the suburbs. The planters do present a restricting factor in planning events and a lot of work had to be done to “shoehorn” everything in. This was part of the reason why the proposed Ferris wheel and a carousel had been dropped, the provider simply couldn’t fit his large plant in and still have safe access for fire, ambulance, etc. to High Town. Moving the planters was possible but cost £4,000 a time. The planning appeal around the semi-permanent coffee cart is ongoing and this too provides a constraint on available space. With all these constraints and legitimate access requirements, High Town is not actually a very large free space at all.

The Clerk reminded Council that the proposal for an SLA had been recommended by the Community Development Committee and the only thing preventing it from being unanimous was that one member had to abstain having declared a non-pecuniary interest.

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

**RESOLVED That the recommendation of the Community Development Committee of 28 June 2022 that the Council enters into a three year service level agreement with the Hereford Business Improvement District for £8,000 per year to support the Christmas programmes for 2022, 2023 and 2024 is agreed.**

#### **C2022/23.35 COMMUNITY HUBS – PRESENTATION**

The Mayor welcomed Amy Pitt from Herefordshire Council who introduced her colleague, Emily Lowe. The guests explained the purpose of Community Hubs which are intended not to be imposed top down with heavy proscription of what is to be provided and how, but to give space for communities themselves to improve people’s ability to engage with services by signposting and access to information. The scope, nature and size of hubs varies widely, and many are co-located in village halls, churches, or community centres. Venues with cafes are notably more popular than others. Across the County there are just over 100 hubs with 10 more coming online soon. Two officers at Herefordshire Council are engaged in developing and growing this network, again by supporting communities to do it themselves with some modest financial support and advice from the Council. This was only started in March 2021, so progress has been rapid.

Councillor Tyler who is the cabinet member for community services added that she was very proud of community hubs and felt they had made an important contribution to the ability of the community to help people find solutions to their own issues locally.

In answers to a series of questions the following additional information was noted.

There is no detailed analysis of how much each hub is doing and as they are run by volunteers; it is important not to over-burden them with data demands or controls. There was a view in the Chamber that it would be better to develop and embed the existing hubs before trying to create new ones. Ms Pitt indicated that some development and possibly consolidation of facilities is likely “as we learn from experience of what works best.” She also alluded to the Wigan example where the programme has taken ten years to become fully established in all details, and in fact is still transforming.

Talk Community, the umbrella concept under which the hubs are being developed, grew out of Adult and Community Services and the next stage is to broaden it to include children’s and

family support services to enable communities to support themselves and leading to fewer calls on over-stretched statutory services. There are hubs in St Thomas Cantilupe and St Paul's Primary Schools. The Parish Summits had been better since Talk Community took them over and rural areas are seeing some improved service access as a result. It would be good to have a formal link to our Community Development Committee through a nominated officer on each council, this would improve shared data, for example there was lot of focus on Ukrainian refugees but there are many other refugee groups in the City and County.

It was felt that for all the progress made, there was still a lot of unclarity in the County about what the hubs were actually for and how they connected to everything else, especially the voluntary sector. The ethos is to enable communities to support themselves, or to know how to access help when it is needed and to streamline access and reduce the number of crisis calls when things are getting out of control. There is a clear distinction in role and working methods between a hub and the more professional services of a body like the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The discussion then broadened into the issue of defibrillators, about which there is still a great deal to do to establish reliable data on location and numbers of machines in the City, and the costs of doing anything to increase that provision. This would be a matter for further meetings of either Council or Community Development Committee.

Members noted the presentation and the Mayor and Councillor Tyler thanked Amy and Emily for a very helpful and thorough discussion.

#### **C2022/23.36 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Clerk formally reported the resignation of Councillor Kenyon from this committee and advised that Council could either elect a new member or decide to reduce the Committee by one.

There being no nominations for new member to be elected to join the Committee, it was Proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Andrews and unanimously

**RESOLVED That the Community Development Committee be reduced by one member.**

In answer to a question, the Clerk confirmed that Councillor Kenyon represents the Council to the HALG not the Committee. If members wished to change that, it would be appropriate to raise it under the Reports from Representatives to Outside Bodies item elsewhere on the agenda.

#### **C2022/23.37 HEREFORD APPLEFEST UPDATE**

The Clerk provided a brief update stating that the Administration and Events Manager and the Administration Officer had done a colossal amount of work to get through the various processes with Herefordshire Council, including licensing, public health, safety and emergency planning, etc. as well as bringing all the resources and players together. The event was imminent, and the programme would be delivered. He asked that anyone planning to come to the banquet who had not yet bought a ticket did so promptly to assist with planning this event. In answer to a question, he confirmed that the event would be scaled to mitigate any losses in the event of ticket sales not reaching the maximum and that the breakeven point had been brought down as a result.

## **C2022/23.38 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor reported that Three Choirs had been hugely successful, and that organisers and volunteers had given very good feedback. Following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II there had been a very good turnout for the Proclamation of King Charles III outside the cathedral. The Mayor was also reminded of the River Carnival and the community award we made there.

In answer to a question concerning the matter of street litter raised at the last meeting the Clerk and Mayor gave an account of subsequent meetings and discussions of a possible cleaning blitz to be organised to try and address the situation.

## **C2022/23.39 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

- a) **Community Development Committee 28 June and 11 July (Grants)** – noted with no questions.
- b) **Planning and Highways Committee 9 June, 7 July and 4 August** – noted with appreciation that the decision sheets were included which made the minutes much more informative. No questions.
- c) **Policy and Resources Committee 14 June** – noted with no questions.
- d) **Youth Council 20 June** – noted with no questions.

## **C2022/23.40 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

- a) **Municipal Charities** – Councillor Hornsey reported that there are good plans for buying some more almshouses and that everything is going well in the organisation at present.
- b) **Three Choirs** – Councillor Foxton echoed the Mayor's view that the festival had been a huge success but that it had been an awful lot of work for herself and Councillor Hornsey. It had been very thoroughly led by Bruce Herriot and wherever possible unnecessary meetings had been cut out. The volunteers' party was a superb occasion and greatly appreciated. Councillor Hornsey added that there would be a wash up meeting to identify any points learnt before the event is formally handed over to Gloucester.
- c) **Hereford Twinning Association** – No report. The Mayor was asked if he could try and rekindle interest in twinning which had not yet bounced back from Covid isolation.
- d) **Hereford in Bloom** – A written report from Councillor Boulter was noted and all concerned were congratulated on the achievement of a gold award for the City.
- e) **Close House** – Councillor Hey reported that she had attended the recent Board meeting and as soon as it was cleared, she would circulate Ben Lea's report to that meeting. Much had been done to restart drop-in sessions and work with young people at risk of offending. The Stronger Towns Board were, perhaps somewhat belatedly, seeking two youth representatives between 18-21, older than most of our Youth Council, possibly two NMITE students could be recruited.
- f) **HBID** – Covered earlier on the agenda.
- g) **Stronger Towns Board** – Councillor Hey reported that board meetings are now fortnightly and project sponsor meeting monthly. Several projects were struggling to contain inflationary pressures within their fixed allocations of funds; this was not a major issue for the Zipper project. Rural Media are now proposing to purchase their existing office accommodation and

merge with Powerhouse which will require some adjustments to be talked through and approved by the government.

- h) **Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Charity** – Councillor Wilcox reported that work has begun to raise funds for two pastoral workers one on each side of the river to address growing needs and concerns among children at the school. He also apologised that he had to leave the meeting, and left at 7.40pm
- i) **Youth Council** – Councillor Powell reported no meetings due to school holidays. Councillor Hornsey reported on the successful launch of the debate club and gave details of the next venue.
- j) **Community Land Trust** – Written report presented by Councillor Milln.
- k) **Hereford Allotment and Leisure Gardeners** – Noted that the subsequent item “HALG” should be deleted as there was only one organisation to report on. In the absence of Councillor Kenyon, the Clerk reported that a proposal for an allotments grant is due to go to the next meeting of the Community Development Committee.

#### **C2022/23.41 TOWN CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Clerk advised members of the Herefordshire Council cabinet report which claims there is an agreement between the two councils that the City Council would accept the transfer of the Town Hall. It had been made abundantly clear at a recent meeting of ten city councillors with the cabinet member, the Leader and the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer of Herefordshire that this was not the case and taking on the burden of the reports and compliance backlog was out of all proportion to the City Council's resources. There had been considerable communication between himself and members of the City Council with Herefordshire to re-emphasise this point since the cabinet report appeared. He would attend the cabinet meeting to see how this was responded to.

The Clerk reported that after a lengthy delay for statutory undertakers to report to BBLP on their underground pipes and cables he had now received licenses for most of the proposed jubilee benches. He advised Councillor Owens that the Chatsworth Road location was hopeless, with web of phone and power cables under the site. He was however waiting for confirmation from Zzoomm who do not use normal procedures or working methods as to how we could avoid their cables. Once that is in place purchase orders would go to the contractor to get the benches in place. He paid tribute to the work of Fiona Miles at BBLP in getting this sorted.

The first tranche of Stronger Towns money had been released by the government so we could now move into the implementation of the Zipper project. A meeting of the working group would be called in the next couple of weeks to move things on.

The external auditor had given an unqualified report which meant they were satisfied with the Council's accounts and annual report. This would be formally reported through the Policy and Resources Committee in due course but was a cause for considerable pleasure to the officers involved.

Agendas were available for the next two meetings of the Community Development Committee to be collected at this meeting. The agenda for the postponed Climate and

Biodiversity Committee now being held on 4 October had gone out by email as it was quite short.

Finally, the Clerk reported that on behalf of the organisers of Three Choirs Alexis Patterson had written to say how pleased they were with the Council's support and that our sponsored event had gone well.

**C2022/23.42 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 6pm

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting at 8.15pm

Signed .....

Date .....