

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING 6 December 2022

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Mark Dykes and Councillors Andrews, Boulter, Carwardine, Foxton (part), Kenyon, Owens, Powell, Stevens, Tillett, Toynbee, Wilcox and Williams

Attending: Steve Kerry, Town Clerk and Becci O'Reilly, Administration and Events Manager

C2022/23.59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported apologies for absence from Councillors Milln, Oliver and Tyler.

C2022/23.60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

C2022/23.61 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

C2022/23.62 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that in minute C2022/23.55 the reference to a Councillor having to leave early should refer to Councillor Toynbee and not Tyler as stated. With that amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Kenyon and, with two abstentions,

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of 15 November 2022 be agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

C2022/23.63 BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

The Clerk reported that Borderlines had asked for a three year agreement to continue to provide the festival, on the basis of their grant application. The Community Development Committee had supported this, but to ensure funds were available when needed to secure next year's festival they had agreed a grant of £3,000 in the coming year, 2022/23, with a recommendation to this meeting for a further two year agreement worth a total of £6,000. It was

Proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED That Borderlines Film Festival be granted a two year service level agreement as set out in their application at a value of £3,000 per year for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

C2022/23.64 STRONGER TOWNS FUNDING AGREEMENT

Councillor Foxton apologised that she had to leave the meeting to deal with an urgent matter.

The Clerk reported that since Herefordshire Council had become the accountable body for all stronger towns fund projects they had been attempting to find a way to deliver finance to the various groups sponsoring projects without putting themselves at unacceptable risk if those groups should fail. As the City Council was already a constituted group he had been able to conclude a memorandum of understanding with Herefordshire which had enabled us to proceed to draw down the funds for the deposit on the buses without excessive delay. What

was now proposed was a formal funding agreement which would be used for all groups. As a matter of law, if the agreement was to be signed and sealed by the Council this would require a specific Council resolution to do so. The agreement was not exactly as we would have done it, but it was workable and the advice from the consultants was that it was fairly standard for this sort of project. It had been reviewed by the Project Delivery Group at several meetings.

It was noted that before the final version was signed the word “draft” and the repeated notation concerning source errors in numbering should be removed and a clean draft presented for signing.

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

RESOLVED That the Council accepts the proposed funding agreement for the Hereford Zipper project and authorises the Mayor to sign the document and the Clerk to witness that signature and apply the Council’s seal to it as soon as a clean version of the text is produced.

C2022/23.65 INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2022/23

The Administration and Events Manager introduced the annual report on investment strategy. The main points of the strategy had not changed since 2018 and the investment with the CCLA property fund was now back to pre-Covid values, or very close to it, and the deposit fund yields had risen. On advice from the accountant she had transferred £500,000 from the current account to the deposit account as this was now paying a useful rate as interest generally has risen. We would maintain a working balance in the current account and maximise the use of the deposit account to raise income next year.

Councillor Stevens reported that there had been a query about investments in Qatar which had been satisfactorily resolved; CCLA have confirmed they do not invest or hold any deposit funds in Middle Eastern banks. It was

Proposed by Councillor Tillett, seconded by Councillor Andrews and unanimously

RESOLVED That Council adopts the investment strategy as set out in the report.

C2022/23.66 HEREFORD APPLEFEST REPORT

The Administration and Events Manager presented the report which had been circulated by email and apologised that this had been delayed to await the footfall figures. She also showed a video of the lead singer of Doctor and the Medics making an impromptu and very powerful speech of thanks to the City Council for putting the event on, and stressing how unusual and important that was. The figures showed record levels of social media interest, some 750% higher than our average for hits, likes and positive comments. There had been hardly any negative comments, despite the event being very clearly badged as Council, which usually attracts some negativity, often about issues we have nothing to do with. There were opportunities to develop this event now it had got off to such a good start with continuing interest from partners and therefore it was suggested that Council commit to this for three years to allow it to be developed to its full potential.

In the debate that followed the following points were made. People likely to attach themselves to something successful and this event shows that we can, and did, deliver a big successful event in difficult times. This will attract more participants and possibly external funding going forward. The Council would not be eligible for most voluntary sector funding as local authorities are usually excluded. The BID have already agreed to commit the same as

they did this year to the event. It will take 2/3 of the events budget to run this event and this could be spread more evenly over more and smaller events, but there was concern that these would not have the same impact. Other large events such as the River Carnival had benefitted from having a three year funding agreement to give the stability and a good basis to seek external funding.

We could run the event for one more year ad hoc and see how well the second year goes, but this would not help get commitment from partners and potential funders as it might look as if we were not confident of our own event. The reserves held by the Council would enable us to fund new initiatives mid year if necessary, even if we committed our events budget to AppleFest and supporting the BID's Christmas programme.

Several members warmly endorsed the congratulation expressed by "The Doctor" to the Administration and Events Manager and her colleagues for putting on such a great event, especially since it was only decided to go for this in June. Normally an event of this size would be at least a year in the planning. Some matters such as the complex licensing issues that arose would be easier next year, especially if we agreed now to proceed and the more time that could be spent on developing the event the better it would be going forward.

The events budget had been set at £30,000 in 2020 but plans to use it had been abruptly curtailed because of Covid. The budget remained so there was no opportunity cost of other things not getting done if we agreed to continue with AppleFest. Here was an implication for workload which would be lessened by the amount of ground work done already to get the first event established, but resources could be found, including the possible apprenticeship that has been agreed, to enable this to be properly supported going forward. A number of possible external sponsors were identified to be followed up, although it was noted that Heineken who own the old Bulmers factory are no longer prioritising cider in their product range to the extent that they did. County independent producers were much smaller but might be more interested in getting involved. Once this matter is resolved the Mayor will be inviting all those who participated to come to the Parlour to be thanked for their efforts including the Hit Squad and the EPICS. It had been a remarkable team effort and many people deserved thanks.

It was then proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Stevens and with one abstention

RESOLVED

That Council agrees that Hereford AppleFest can achieve the benefits and opportunities set out in section 6; raising the profile of the City and the Council making High Town more vibrant and increasing spend.

That Council agrees that secured support for three years will allow the advantages mentioned in 6.4 so planning and promotional activities can begin immediately.

That Council agrees to using 2/3 of the annual events budget for Hereford AppleFest for three years – 2023 to 2025.

C2022/23.67 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Clerk reported that the interim internal audit report had been received and had raised no issues that needed to be brought to members' attention.

The report was noted.

At this point the Administration and Events Manager left the meeting.

C2022/23.68 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Carwardine and unanimously

RESOLVED That the press and public be excluded as the next item would require the disclosure of personal information about an identifiable person.

C2022/23.69 CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED AWARD OF FREEDOM OF THE CITY

After consideration in confidential session of the proposal it was proposed by Councillor Hey, seconded by Councillor Kenyon and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Clerk be authorised to contact the proposed recipient to see if they will accept the honour and if so to make the necessary arrangements for an award ceremony and the production of a scroll.

C2022/23.70 READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

As confidential business had been concluded, it was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Carwardine and unanimously

RESOLVED That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

C2022/23.71 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported he had attended the annual Hereford Cathedral choir carol service at Wellington Barracks which had been excellent. He had also enjoyed the Courtyard Theatre panto where his presence had been the subject of much comment from the Dame.

C2022/23.72 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

It was noted that the minutes of committees held since the last Council Meeting were not ready yet and would be reported to the January Council meeting.

a) Youth Council

Councillor Stevens asked if the Chair of the Youth Council Miss Darwood could be asked to contact him regarding the proposal to work with the Men's Mental Health Group as part of making mental health the focus of the Youth Conference in February. It was also confirmed that the Assembly Hall has been secured for that conference on February 18th.

C2022/23.73 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

a) Municipal Charities. Councillor Wilcox reported that the recent meeting had been mainly concerned with repairs and small works but that discussions were well advanced for acquiring eight new properties from another housing trust. There is also a new residents' handbook.

- b) **Twinning Association.** The Mayor had nothing to report. It was noted that without some new members this group might not be carrying on much longer. In the context of twinning, the Mayor was asked if he would contact our partners in Jaworzno to see if there was any help they needed in the light of the ongoing emergency in Ukraine.
- c) **Hereford in Bloom.** Councillor Boulter reported no issues to raise; the Christmas meal would be held shortly.
- d) **Close House.** Councillor Hey reported attending a board meeting two weeks ago and there are two new members one from Challenge Church in Hinton and one from Christian Life Centre in Edgar Street, both very keen. It was confirmed that we have two representatives (Councillors Hey and Kenyon) but if one is able to attend a meeting the other does not go. There had been no comments recently about the proposed Pool Bar near Close House, it was thought that this development might be some way off yet. It was also noted that the Chair of the Youth Council was now doing some administrative work at Close House. Finally, Ben Lea sends his thanks for the ongoing City Council funding for Close House.
- e) **Hereford City BID.** Councillor Stevens reminded members of the two emails he had circulated recently for information and that Hereford City Life will be coming through doors in Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, South Shropshire and part of Worcestershire very soon.
- f) **Stronger Towns Fund.** The order for three electric buses had been sent in, the project is underway.
- g) **Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Charity.** Nothing to report.
- h) **Youth Council.** Minutes of the last meeting had already been circulated with the agenda.
- i) **Community Land Trust.** Nothing to report.
- j) **Hereford Allotment and Leisure Gardeners.** Nothing to report.

C2022/23.74 TOWN CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk reported that the working group of members leading the discussions with Herefordshire Council about the asset transfer of the Town Hall had suggested adding a former Herefordshire Director Geoff Hughes and the Chief Officer of Encore, Cliff Woolard, to the team. This had been proposed in an email to members and no objections had been received so they would be asked to join us.

The Clerk also reported, in answer to a question, that the £50,000 held against the Cycle Track project for some years had been released as the organisation had received all the other necessary funding and approvals to start. Councillor Stevens asked members to thank Councillor Kenyon for his tenacity in supporting this from the original idea for a velodrome ten years ago through to the very promising project that had now gained funding. It has been a long haul but worthwhile.

The Clerk confirmed, in answer to another question that as far as he knew Junior Mayor-making was still planned for 16 January, one candidate had come forward and they seemed very suitable so it was likely the Youth Council would make an appointment.

C2022/23.75 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday January 24, 2023, at 6 pm in the Council Chamber.

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed and wished all present a Merry Christmas.

Signed

Date