



## **HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 17 OCTOBER 2023**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Present:** Councillor Cat Hornsey (Chair), and Councillors Adam Spencer, Sam Potts, Sue Boulter, Ben Proctor and Debbie Hobbs (part).

**In attendance:** Steve Kerry Town Clerk, Dave Tristram External Funding and Community Support Officer

#### **CD2023/24.75 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were noted from Councillor Griffiths for absence and Councillor Hobbs for lateness.

#### **CD2023/24.76 SUBSTITUTIONS**

None.

#### **CD2023/24.77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Boulter declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item on the Holmer allotment entrance as a member of HALG (but not a plot holder at the Holmer site).

Councillor Hobbs joined the meeting at this point.

#### **CD2023/24.78 PRESENTATION BY HEREFORD CITY CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PUBLIC ARTS INITIATIVES**

The Chair agreed to take this item early as external speakers were waiting on Zoom. At this point there was an objection to there being a presentation on the agenda, but the Chair continued with the business as published on the agenda.

Sarah Lee, the cultural lead for Herefordshire Council and Emma Price the Director of Studio Response introduced themselves. They explained the background to the presentation which is part of the Local Enterprise Partnership funded Community Arts element of the HCCI. They acknowledged that timescales are extremely tight with the money planned to be spent by March 2024, but that they hoped for an extension to at least 30 June which was more realistic. The Clerk and the Administration and Events Manager had been involved in some meetings recently and it was thought that this needed to be brought to members' attention as soon as possible. This had been very rushed, and members note with concern that there had been no contact before this and that an LEP extension is far from certain putting delivery in jeopardy.

Sarah went on to explain the concept of putting art at the entrances to the HCCI area, which roughly corresponds to the old city walls line but with an extension to that up the A49 towards the Courtyard and up Commercial Road towards the station. Some of the sites chosen such as the Herdsman Wall had been considered before and opposed on planning grounds, but they had liaised with planning and were confident this would be possible. Illustrations of possible art were shown, although it was stressed that no commissions have been given yet and no

designs have therefore been confirmed. In addition to the boundary plans illustrations were shown of passageways which could receive public art and for a scheme to use metal signs to identify the traditional crafts that used to be based in buildings using the existing brackets that remained in situ.

Coming from the very hurried work on this, a Public Arts Steering Group had been set up which the City Council had sent officers to, and this would continue beyond the life of this project as there was no such group in existence before. If the preferred sites for boundary and passageway works within the City could not be delivered there were some options for possible consideration if time permitted them to be developed.

In answer to a question regarding the impact of bright or illuminated art on people with various sensory perception issues such as autism, it was noted that this needed to be considered very carefully on a site by site basis and was not reflected in the illustrative designs in the presentation. This will be taken up before works are agreed at a site.

Based on the success of the City Council trails (sculpture, dinosaurs etc.) it was hoped to establish a number of community or public art trails within the city centre based on the works delivered under this programme. The presenters also illustrated their idea for a larger mobile sculpture to be moved from site to site and for outdoor visual displays as part of the wider programme.

The question was raised about the wants of repair on Nelson's column on Castle Green and the vexing issue of the King Offa statue being closed off from public view. There was some contingency funding in the scheme and Sarah agreed these two matters could be looked at in that context. It was also noted that acceptance of the art proposals by Herefordshire Council MUST imply acceptance of an ongoing maintenance and cleaning regime so that the capital investment was not wasted.

In considering the future involvement of the City Council Cllr Proctor suggested a digital means by which assets could be promoted. Sarah agreed this could be developed.

In answer to a question, members were told that there had been an open public consultation which had received around 100 responses. These included input from HCA, NMITE and the Youth Council. There was no clarity about whether either the City or County Members for Central Ward had been directly involved in this, or had made an input. There was no single focus for consultation and consideration of public art which was why the Steering Group had been set up. Consultation with the National Autism Society would take place as soon as possible.

Again, concern was registered about the late involvement of the City Council and the timetable imposed by the government. This had been made worse by the winding up of the LEP structure at the end of March and the great deal of time spent within Herefordshire Council discussing this matter before any consultation began with the City.

It was noted that the Steering Group wanted the City Council to be involved in the selection of art works and to this end it was proposed by Councillor Hobbs, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

**RESOLVED That Councillors Proctor and Stevens be nominated to represent the Committee at future meeting until such time as Council can elect permanent representatives and that officer support be supplied by the External Funding and Community Support Officer.**

#### **CD2023/24.79 LIST OF BLUE AND GREEN PLAQUES**

The Clerk explained that the system which held this information, Sprytar, had locked as it had not been used for some time and the supplier had not yet responded to several requests to get in touch regarding re-opening it. In the absence of any information he suggested that this be an item at the next meeting.

#### **CD2023/24.80 HEREFORD IN BLOOM**

The Clerk reported that at a previous meeting the Committee had resolved to recommend a grant of over £5,000 to enable works to take place to replace the soil and ballast in the large planters in the city centre. Bloom had been in touch to say the quotes had come in lower than expected and that they would be able to proceed with a grant of £5,000 from the Council and to find the remaining costs themselves. This would enable the work to be carried out sooner than otherwise would be possible. The first planter to be refurbished would be outside the Old House. As this was a variation on the original proposal it would be helpful if this could be agreed by the committee.

It was noted that the subsequent correspondence from Cllr Kenyon regarding the prices quoted had not led to a further quote.

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

**RESOLVED That the grant be amended to a small grant of £5,000 to Hereford in Bloom to support the costs of refurbishing the Old House planter.**

#### **CD2023/24.81 LITTER BIN INSTALLATION**

The Clerk explained that for some time, without any agreement or even consultation, BBLP have been advising anyone, including members of both councils, inquiring about bins that have been removed to contact the parish council for replacement. This had led to several people being advised that they were being misinformed and to get back to BBLP. It is clear that BBLP will act to remove a damaged or worn out bin but have no funds from Herefordshire Council to replace them. In addition, it seems that where there is evidence of private waste, i.e. items that should be in the domestic waste stream, ending up in street bins, BBLP will remove the bins with HC consent because of misuse. This then deprives the whole community of the bin, rather than taking enforcement action against the perpetrators. This is leading to a reduction in public waste bins which is causing concern to many councillors and their constituents. Arguably using City Council funds to improve this could be labelled as double taxation, but so could many of our initiatives – it is a matter for members to consider as to whether the public benefit of replacing the bins would be outweighed by a dispute about who should be paying for this.

Several members expressed concern at the way this is being handled and the consequent loss of amenity to the community, together with a concern that if the City Council were to replace the bins there must be an assurance that they will continue to be emptied regardless of wear, damage or complaints of private use. It would be unacceptable for the City Council to invest in capital assets for them to be removed shortly afterwards by Herefordshire Council or BBLP.

It was also noted that in some areas regular flooding had caused the metal bins to decay to the point they were useless and the sharp edges of rusted metal were a hazard.

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

**RESOLVED That the Clerk is authorised to start discussions with Herefordshire Council about the City Council funding the replacement of missing street litter bins, provided a satisfactory and binding assurance can be obtained that they will be serviced and emptied by Herefordshire for five years after replacement.**

#### **CD2023/24.82 GATE WIDENING AT THE HOLMER ALLOTMENT ENTRANCE**

Councillor Boulter reminded the meeting this was the item she had declared a non-pecuniary interest in.

The Clerk explained the history of attempts to improve the sight lines at the vehicle entrance to this site and the difficulties of getting Highways England to engage with the matter still less to agree to alterations to the junction with the A49. The Society had proposed a solution which required no works to the highway itself and contained the solution entirely within the allotment itself. As the Council was still the owner of the land (there was no long lease to HALG) it would be possible for us to commission the work and pay the invoice in full, making a full recovery of VAT and then invoicing HALG for their share. The HALG Treasurer had suggested a 2/3 to 1/3 split which seems a reasonable suggestion and was affordable within the funds set aside for allotment improvement works. The most recent quote from Truland Construction was competitive.

Councillor Stevens confirmed this was a particularly difficult vehicle exit with very poor site lines and the site plans made a lot of sense. Truland were a very local company being based in Holmer.

It was proposed by Councillor Hobbs, seconded by Councillor Steven and (with Councillor Boulter recording an abstention)

**RESOLVED That the Clerk is authorised to raise a purchase order for the work from Truland Construction Limited and to seek a 1/3 contribution from HALG, a sum of £3,650.**

#### **CD2023/24.83 REPORT FROM THE EXTERNAL FUNDING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER**

The EFCSO reported we have to date received 77 enquiries about possible grants in the year. We have twelve items ready for the next grants meeting which would be in the evening of 28 November. Based on current figures it looked as if we would spend about £148,000 on this activity against a budget of £150,000.

He would be attending a funding workshop with HVOSS where 98 people were expected. He suggested an end of year grant review to see if we wanted to make any changes to the processes, including a consideration of whether we should place a restriction on some organisations coming to us for grants every year or even more than once a year so as to better spread the benefits and to encourage new groups to get started. Members felt this would be a good item for a future meeting. More work is also needed to tell people what we do with their money generally (the wheel illustration developed by our former Tourism and Communications Manager was referenced) supported by some specific and illustrated case studies. This would be a part of the announcement following the February review.

He is also helping the Hinton Community Centre with their application for the Central Marches Counselling Service and advised members that the New Living Spaces fund is now open for bids and he has details of eligibility.

**CD2023/24.84 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Blue and Green Plaques when Sprytar information is available

Review of Grants Processes (February Meeting)

Publicity for Council Activities and Funding Support (February Meeting)

New Grant Applications (28 November 2023)

**CD2023/24.85 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

28 November 2023 at 6 pm (Grant Applications)

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Signed .....

Date .....