HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL COMMITTEE 24 MARCH 2026

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Cllrs D Powell, S Potts, J Kenyon, P Andrews, D Toynbee, C Hornsey, E Foxton, B Proctor, R Owens, D Hobbs, S Boulter & J Milln

Officers: K Carpenter – Town Clerk & H Davies – Administration Assistant

C2025/26.99. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P Stevens, K Tillett, A Spencer, A Griffiths, J Carwardine and M Dykes

C2025/26.100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were made by Cllrs C Hornsey, R Owens and J Milln who all have allotment plots on HALG sites.

C2025/26.101. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Council received a summary from Sargent Reynolds from West Merica Police about the priorities for the city policing team over the next 12 months.

The themes are:

- **Shop Lifting –** there are two main aspects, addiction-based thefts and national organised crime groups who steal to order but West Merica have had a number of successes in this area through co-ordinated responses to track and intercept, supported by CCTV coverage.
- **Homelessness & Street Drinking –** this is being managed through controlled-displacements and community protection notices, which are used to help change behaviour. With young people and anti-social behaviour, they are focussing on the alpha male/female of the groups which means other young people then seek help interventions and change their behaviour.

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- **Hot Spot Initiative –** there are several specific areas which are defined by data that are the focus of additional policing attention. It's likely that next year this will change to a knife crime focus and will encompass the wider city centre.
- **Business Crime –** this is around international gangs, illegal immigrants often modern slavery and involves work with other agencies to tackle these types of crimes. This includes working with the Economic Crime Unit in Worcestershire to follow the money as shops are often a front but with repeat visits they are finding fewer illegal workers.

The discussion was then opened to Councillor questions: SP asked about dangerous cycling practices and who makes the decision to focus on knife crime when glasses being used as weapons is an issue? Sgt Reynolds added that the local policing teamwork in schools about cycling and that if they capture evidence ASB letters are issued, regarding the focus on knife crime this is set by the Home Office to all forces, although the perception and fear of knife crime is the issue.

This prompted more discussion about the difference between electric motorcycles and e-assist bikes and how this is enforced, but police are tied by laws and policy. JK spoke about the 100 bleed kits being given away within the city, how traffic police could offer a set of lights to cyclists which makes them safe and builds repour with young people, offering to email Sgt Reynolds regarding this lights project. He also mentioned the camps of rough sleepers near the medical centre.

BP spoke about the Youth Council and one of their themes is safety and were looking for projects to help with this feeling of being unsafe, he also mentioned that HCC funds projects. Sgt Reynolds spoke about a survey currently underway to understand where and why people don't feel safe.

DP thanked Sgt Reynolds for his attendance.

C2025/26.102. HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPERTY SERVICE TEAM PRESENTATION

Luke Merriman and Mike Griffths presented the appended information to the meeting, which detailed the advance preventative maintenance programme of works that would be undertaken during 2026/27 that would keep the building fully operational and ensure business continuity.

The intention is to work from the roof down to secure and ensure the building envelope is watertight; to install a new lift, begin the works on the dry rot and timber decay with the parlour being the first part of the investigation works. When the mechanical and electrical elements are being improved there may be a need for a partial decant. The boiler is currently working and will be part of the second phase of works.

They have been working with the Conservation Team on the programme of works, with the lift and dry rot surveys currently in the Invitation to Tender stage of the procurement process. The presentation also contains a timeline of the works over the next 12 months.

There were some discussions and the general feeling amongst councillors that it was good to hear that this project is moving, and some felt enthused by the presentation and support was offered to help see this project through. There were questions about carpets and window replacements and the procurement process and HCC's commitment to the Preston Model, which LM confirmed was being supported by Herefordshire Council and Hoople. BP added that although some disruption will happen, we can flex around this, and it will provide opportunities to update residents on progress of these works.

C2025/26.103. MINUTES

SP wanted the point of order he had made added to the minutes, DP than proposed that with this addition the minutes be approved as an accurate record of the meeting, this was seconded by EF and resolved with a vote of 9: 1 abstention.

It was RESOLVED To accept the minutes as a true representation of the Council Committee on the 27 January 2026 with this addition added.

C2025/26.104. FORMAT OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Town Clerk gave a brief overview of the format of the Parish Assembly to the meeting, BP asked if a page explaining the format, what will be happening etc could be shared with Councillors so they could publish this information on noticeboards, social media etc.

The Parish Assembly will be held on Friday 22 May 2026 at St Peter's Church from 3pm.

C2025/26.105. CLOSE HOUSE - ANNUAL FUNDING AWARD

DP proposed that the annual report and the funding be awarded to Close House, this was seconded by BP and resolved with a unanimous vote of Council.

RESOLVED To approve the annual funding award for Close House.

C2025/26.106. HEREFORD ALLOTMENT & LEISURE GARDENERS (HALG) - ANNUAL FUNDING AWARD

JK mentioned the good work of HALG and how well they managed the sites, BP noted it was HCC's only duty in providing allotments for residents. SP proposed that the report be accepted and the funding awarded, this was seconded by BP and resolved with a unanimous vote of Council

RESOLVED To approve the annual funding award for Hereford Allotment & Leisure Gardeners (HALG).

C2025/26.107. HEREFORD BID – ANNUAL FUNDING AWARD

DP proposed that the annual report and the funding be awarded to Hereford BID, this was seconded by CH and resolved with a unanimous vote of Council.

RESOLVED To approve the annual funding award for Hereford BID

C2025/26.108. MOTION FROM CLLR J KENYON – DUCK POND FENCE

JK proposed the motion presented in the agenda and advised that the fencing was in poor condition, he had consulted with Historic England before starting this renovation project. This was seconded by JM who also spoke about the vista into Castle Green and the enjoyment of this area by residents and visitors. BP proposed an amendment to the motion with the inclusion of the Environmental Improvement budget being used for this project, which was accepted by the proposer.

SB asked who was responsible for the duck pond and if we should be doing these works? JK responded that the area was unwanted and unloved for a long period by Herefordshire and if we restore it, we should add plaques to inform visitors. DP proposed a further amendment in that HCC plaques and the crest be added to the site following the improvement works that says who undertook the improvements and when it was completed, this amendment was also accepted by the proposer.

The motion now stands as:

"That the Council purchase the fencing and arrange for the fitting of new safe and secure fencing around the duck pond, included will be some repair work to a small section of a wall, which will allow for an access gate to be fitted with money being drawn from the Environmental Improvements budget for the works. Once completed these works will improve the area and ensure the safety of residents and children visiting the duck pond and the HCC crest and information plaques will be added to identify who undertook the improvements and when this was completed."

This motion was proposed by JK, seconded by JM and resolved with a unanimous vote of Council.

It was RESOLVED That the motion from Cllr Kenyon be carried and that HCC would purchase and arrange fitting of a new safe and secure fence around the duck pond.

C2025/26.109. LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

BP spoke about the Lengthman's Scheme, which is not something that historically HCC has engaged with, but there is a need to explore this scheme in more detail and decide if HCC and its residents would benefit from utilising this scheme to undertake small actions within the city to bring improvements.

BP proposed the following motion to allow the Finance Committee to work up the details of the scheme:

> *"That the city council agree the principle and delegate the final decision to proceed with this scheme, any plan of works and the advertising and appointment of a suitable contractor to the Finance Committee."*

This was seconded by DP and resolved with a unanimous vote of Council.

It was RESOLVED That the proposed motion from Cllr Proctor be carried regarding the final decision to proceed with the Lengthsman's Scheme.

C2025/26.110. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

DP proposed that the policies be approved on bloc, but SP had some concerns about the Mayor's Handbook and the section on the mayoral charities in particular the added advice, CH responded to his concerns that this was an advisory statement and did not preclude any charity being chosen. SP also commented on the Working from Home Policy and that the emphasis was on the TC to approve and did not constitute that WFH was a given or permanent position, there is a different mechanism for flexible working arrangements.

- Financial Reserves Policy – this was proposed by DP seconded by JK and resolved with a unanimous vote to approve.
- Mayor's Handbook - this was proposed by DP, seconded by JK and resolved with a vote of 11 with 1 abstention to approve.
- Junior Mayor's Handbook - this was proposed by DP, seconded by JK and resolved with a unanimous vote to approve.
- Working from Home Policy - this was proposed by DP, seconded by JK and resolved with a unanimous vote to approve.

It was RESOLVED To adopt all the presented polices on bloc.

C2025/26.111. RE-ADOPTION OF INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2026-27

The Council's Investment Strategy for the financial year 2026/27 was proposed by SP, seconded by JK and resolved with a unanimous vote to approve.

It was RESOLVED Unanimously to readopt Hereford City Council's Investment Strategy for 2026 – 27.

C2025/26.112. RE-APPROVAL OF HCC MANAGEMENT & FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

The Council's Management & Financial Risk Register Strategy for the financial year 2026/27 was proposed by SP, seconded by DH and resolved with a unanimous vote to approve.

It was RESOLVED To reapprove Hereford City Council's Management and Financial Risk Register Strategy for the financial year 2026/27.

C2025/26.113. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECT

SP proposed that Cllr C Hornsey be nominated as Mayor for the 2026/27 year, there were no further nominations. This proposal was seconded by JK and resolved with a vote of 11 with 1 abstention.

It was RESOLVED That Cllr C Hornsey be elected as Mayor in May 2026.

JK proposed that Cllr E Foxton be nominated as Deputy Mayor for the 2026/27 year, there were no further nominations. This proposal was seconded by JM and resolved with a unanimous vote of Council.

It was RESOLVED That Cllr E Foxton be elected as Deputy Mayor in May 2026.

C2025/26.114. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

DP thanked Cllrs Hornsey and Tillett for attending events on his behalf. He spoke about the visit to Midland Air Ambulance at Strensham, who have 4 helicopters but are only able to land one at Hereford Hospital, although they have asked for a pad to be added to the roof of the A&E expansion.

He spoke about the election of new mayors in Vierzon and Dillenburg wishing them every success and advising council that letters would be sent to them relaying our best wishes.

Monthly meetings are being held with the Police, and they are introducing a Police Cadet programme and that the Ride Along Scheme would be restarting.

C2025/26.115. FINANCE COMMITTEE – ANNUAL AWARDS

SP formally proposed that all these annual awards be moved to SLA's with the agreed timeframes, this was seconded by EF and resolved with a unanimous vote of council.

It was RESOLVED Unanimously to move these annual awards to Service Level Agreements

C2025/26.116. REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

To receive reports from members to those bodies that have requested representation from the City Council, only if there is information to feedback, and to consider appointing new representatives where these have been requested.

a. **Hereford in Bloom** - EF spoke briefly about the judging tour for 2026 which was in the planning stage with new locations being included.
b. **Close House** – BP spoke about the increase in young people using Close House and the pressures this has on staffing levels and costs. Close House are providing services in Ledbury, funded by Ledbury TC but also mentioned that this spend is not joined up and there could be potential for greater town and pc collaboration.
c. **Hereford Business Improvement District** – newsletter
d. **Stronger Towns Board** – BP spoke about the big projects, Shire Hall/Library & Museum/Art Gallery but no definitive time to start as the scope of works are being finalised with extended deadlines. JK asked if there was potential for any underspends to be reallocated, BP advised this is something that STB can do.
e. **Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Charity** – DT advised that the meeting was the following day and an update would be given at the next council meeting.
f. **Community Land Trust** – JM spoke about the garage building at town hall and its planned renovations, SP asked about the ownership and the use of the building for the mayoral car and the need to ensure the mayoral team were communicated with about this project. JM advised that the mayoral car was a significant asset but the garaging of this only accounted for about a quarter of the buildings space.
g. **Hereford Allotment & Leisure Gardeners** – JK spoke about the Big Bird and Big Bug watches suggesting that HALG should be encouraged to participate and that a letter from HCC would encourage this. DP asked if HALG could be encouraged to work with the local community in Redhill about the open space on the new Ross Road site, JK agreed to discuss this with HALG.
h. **Hereford Association of Local Councils** – SP spoke about the annual conference held on 21 March and the various topics covered, including devolution and the concerns around the neighbourhood governance units proposed within the bill which would be direct competition to the town and parish

council sector, he advised that a campaign pack would be issued by West Midland County Associations in the next few days and should be on the Council agenda for discussion. He also advised that the WMCA's had completed their emergency planning.

i. **Youth Council** – SP spoke briefly about the planned priorities of Youth Council over the next year which includes Safety for Young People**.** He also added that we need to reflect these priorities during budget setting during September/October.

C2025/26.117. TOWN CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS

The TC had no communications to advise on but did raise that some employees had concerns about escalating fuel costs, CH advised that the WFH policy could be used to support staff and their concerns during this period of uncertainty.

C2025/26.118. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

DP advised that this was his last formal meeting and wanted to thank all councillors for their support, their work over the last year and that he had found it a pleasure to work with them all and that they were a good but sometimes unruly mob of councillors.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 12 May 2026.

SIGNED .....

DATE .....

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:00.

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