

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL**

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Monday 25 September 2017 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs C Green (Town Mayor)
S Beardshaw (Deputy Mayor) - (Cllr Beardshaw left the meeting at item FC88/17)
A Armytage
S Bateman
D Collins
E Collins
G Corry
F Earl
J Jones
P Matthews
B Newton
Dr I M Reay
T Ritchie
G Stevens
G Yearwood

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs J Mason, Town Clerk

3 member of the public

FC 80/17 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

FC 81/17 Declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.

Cllr F Earl declared a personal interest in item 85/17 2, because she was an exhibitor at the gallery;

Cllr P Matthews declared a personal interest in item 85/17 1, because he had had previous discussions with Heritage Hub project group members;

Cllr I Reay declared a personal interest in item 85/17 1, because he had previous discussions with the Heritage Hub project group members;

Cllr D Collins declared a personal interest in item 85/17 2, because the Hospice of St Francis is the charity selected for the Mayor of Dacorum's Charity Appeal 2017/18.

FC 82/17 Approval of the **minutes of the last meeting** held on 26 June 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and were duly signed as such by the Town Mayor.

FC 83/17 **Town Mayor's Communications**

- (i) Appointment of new Lord-Lieutenant for Hertfordshire with effect from 4 August 2017 (Mr Robert Voss CBD DL);
- (ii) NALC Chief Executive Bulletin 4 August 2017
- (iii) NALC Newsletter 5 September 2017
- (iv) CDA Herts (Community Development Action) Invitation to AGM at 5.30 pm on 5 October 2017 at County Hall.
- (v) NALC Annual Conference Notification, 30 -31 October 2017.
- (vi) Dacorum Highways Liaison Meeting 11 October 2017 18:30-20:30

FC 84/17 **Public Participation**

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders during the course of the meeting to allow any member of the public present to speak.

The Town Mayor suspended standing orders.

Mrs S Johnson spoke and advised that she had attended the meeting to express Berkhamsted Citizens' support for the funding application being made under item FC85/17 1.

The Town Mayor reinstated standing orders.

FC 85/17 **Funding and Grant Applications**

1. Berkhamsted Heritage Hub

- (i) To receive a short presentation from James Moir and Norman Groves entitled "A Heritage Hub for Berkhamsted?: Exploring the Options by Applying for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant".

The Town Mayor invited Mr Moir and Mr Groves to make their presentation. The paper circulated with the agenda is attached to these minutes and summarises the main points raised during the presentation. In essence the aim of the proposal to create a Heritage Hub is to open the Town's unique heritage to a wider audience in an innovative and ambitious manner. A network of places and people would be supported

by a central Hub co-ordinated by a Trust. Hopefully funding would be secured for a Heritage Lottery Fund resilience study (total cost £65,000) which would identify the best model to take forward. By pledging £3,500 towards this cost, the Town Council would demonstrate to HLF a high level of local support for the project. If the bid for resilience funding were to be successful, it was anticipated that an application for a large HLF grant would be submitted in 2019/20.

During the ensuing discussion it emerged that to date project group costs had been absorbed by the volunteers. Berkhamsted Castle would be a key location within the Hub and it was anticipated that the Town Council's demonstrable commitment to the project would enable English Heritage to trigger the commissioning of a crucial conservation management plan at the Castle. If the second floor space at the Town Hall were to be developed as the central Hub location, the capital cost would be in the region of £750,000.

- (ii) To consider the request made during the presentation that the Town Council provides £3,500 in partnership funding for a Heritage Lottery Fund resilience bid.

Cllr Matthews proposed, Cllr Yearwood seconded and, following a vote, it was

RESOLVED

that the £3,500 requested should be paid in full if the project group is successful in its Heritage Lottery Fund resilience bid.
(The result of the vote was 14 Councillors for the proposal and one against.)

The possibility of the project group submitting a minor grant application to the Town Council was also mooted.

2. Upstairs Gallery/ Way Inn – Open Door Berkhamsted

A request was considered for a grant of £900 towards a project being organised in collaboration with the Hospice of St Francis, exploring how art can help the bereaved to develop new relationships in their local community.

The application was reviewed and the Town Mayor asked Councillors to vote on the application. Thirteen voted for the proposal, one voted against and there was one abstention. It was therefore

RESOLVED

That a grant of £900 be paid to the Upstairs Gallery towards the project costs.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The following minutes were **received and adopted**:

FC 86/17 Town Planning Committee

Held on: 26 June 2017
 17 July 2017
 7 August 2017
 29 August 2017
 18 September 2017

Cllr Armytage, Chair of Town Planning, reviewed the above minutes and drew particular attention to key applications. It had been disappointing to note that despite representations made at DBC's Development Management Committee by residents and Cllr Armytage against application 4/01370/17/FUL, permission had been granted.

It was noted that a possible date for the Local Plan Working Group was 10 October 2017. However, DBC had advised that the consultation period was likely to be put back to enable it to consider the implications of HM Government's planning for housing consultation announced on 14 September. The original dates for the consultation period had been 18 October – 29 November and it would seem that these dates were likely to slip by at least three weeks. It was **agreed** that the DBC's James Doe should be asked to confirm the revised dates at the earliest opportunity and to ensure that the revised consultation period was not compromised by the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Action Town Clerk

It was proposed by Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Matthews and **agreed unanimously** that the Town Council's response to this important consultation should be ratified at Full Council. If the final date for comment, once known, did not facilitate this, then an extraordinary meeting of Full Council should be called for the purpose.

Action Town Clerk

In conclusion the Council thanked Cllr Armytage and his Committee members for the exemplary manner in which they undertook their demanding workload.

FC 87/17 Transport & Environment Committee

Held on: 21 August 2017

Cllr Beardshaw reviewed the minutes and gave an update on the various action points. In particular, she advised that the Castle Site Working Party had been rescheduled for 11 October 2017 at 4 pm. The discussions about replacement trees in the High Street continue to trundle on. DBC had been advised that Cllr Reay would contribute £1,950 towards the cost of digging tree pits from his HCC Localities budget (this would cover three pits) yet it was now suggested that the Town Council should perhaps contribute to overall project costs. DBC had further advised that the fencing around the Moor play area could not be

covered by DBC CIL monies but might be considered for s106 funding. This subject would be discussed further at the CIL Working Group meeting scheduled for 18 October 2017.

In conclusion Cllr Beardshaw reminded Councillors that in view of the volume of T & E business at present, an extraordinary meeting had been arranged for 16 October 2017.

Cllr Ritchie gave an update on the Parking Forum meeting held on 8 September with special reference to the Multi Storey Car Park project. To date, DBC had received three compliant tenders. The Parking Forum would be asking whether DBC would be willing to have Forum representatives present during the tender assessment process. Concerns remain about best practice, particularly in relation to the incomplete archaeological survey. This was now scheduled to form part of the build programme which could possibly lead to a delay in completion of the project.

FC 88/17 Finance & Policy Committee

- (i) Held on 11 September 2017

Cllr J Jones, who had chaired the meeting in Cllr Newton's absence, reviewed the minutes.

- (ii) HCC Highways Projects: **Parking in Bridgewater Road** (FP 70/17 refers) and the introduction of a new **20mph zone** (FP 71/17 refers).

The projects, which had been supported at T & E and F & P, were reviewed and discussed. The proposals to extend the commuter parking restrictions in Bridgewater Road were generally viewed favourably whilst the introduction of a 20 mph zone generated mixed views. Following a vote it was

RESOLVED

To make the necessary budgetary provision for the above projects in the current financial year, to include the creation of new expenditure account codes and the virement of funds from general reserves to cover the expenditure. This would result in additional expenditure in the current year of £2,350 for the Bridgewater Road project and £6,440 for the 20 mph zone project (total £8,790).

WORKING GROUPS

FC 89/17(a) CARP

The notes of the 13 September 2017 meeting were received and adopted.

Cllr Armytage was pleased to report that Emily Nicholas of the Canal and River Trust had attended the meeting. She had accompanied members of the group on a canal side walk on 21 September and a number of action points had been agreed.

FC 89/17(b) Youth Town Council

Although this item had not been on the agenda, Cllr Armytage was pleased to advise that following the appointment of Penny Perry as the new project manager at the Swan Youth Project, a meeting of the YTC had been arranged for 3 October 2017.

FC 90/17 Allotment Management Team

- (i) The minutes of the meeting held on 22 August 2017 were received and adopted.
- (ii) It was noted that the AMT has recommended that there be no increase in rent or water rates. Cllr Newton, Chair of the AMT, hoped that increases in future would be linked to inflation on an annual basis. The Council concurred with this view.

FC 91/17 CIL Working Group

It was noted that a meeting had been arranged for 18 October 2017 to consider projects to be funded using the Town Council's CIL monies.

FC 92/17 Representation on outside bodies and Joint Committees

Bourne's Educational Foundation and Salter Education Foundation

It was **RESOLVED** that Mrs S Johnson be nominated as Trustee (FC 77/17 (ii) refers).

FC 93/17 Alan Dickman Bequest

- (i) It was noted that the first award had now been made to a student from Ashlyns School who, following success in her A levels, has just started studying pharmacology at the University of Manchester. The Town Mayor attended the school's award ceremony on 15 September and presented the award;
- (ii) Revised guidance notes and application form (FP 50/17 (i) refers) will be circulated within the next two weeks.

FC 94/17 Councillor Allowances/Expenses Policy

The new Councillor Allowances/Expenses Policy circulated with the agenda was **received and approved**. The policy will be reviewed at Full Council in September 2020 or as required by changes in legislation or associated regulations.

Signed..... Date.....

+Full Council Meeting: 25 September 2017

Briefing Paper

A Heritage Hub for Berkhamsted? : Exploring the Options by Applying for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant

Giles Clark and Norman Groves spoke at the Town Meeting on 30 March. Since then the Heritage Hub Project Group, which first met in summer 2016, has moved from strength to strength and we now have an opportunity to make a real leap forward.

This is by way of an update on why we need a Hub, what form it might take, and requesting £3500 from the Town Council to provide partnership funding to release a Heritage Resilience Grant of £65,000 from the Heritage Lottery fund.

ASSETS

Berkhamsted: An Attractive and Nationally Significant History

This is a great town with pre-Christian and Roman roots, a national link to the Conquest, historic schools, places of worship, industrial legacies from the canal, rail and woodworking industries, and a beautiful, fought for countryside. The town has been the home of famous kings, queens and princes, of soldiers (the Black Prince and the longbow men, the Inns of Court Regiment) and literary heroes from Chaucer to William Cowper to Graham Greene. Many key heritage places, such as the Castle, St Peters Church, Town Hall, Court House, Baptist Chapel, Rectory Lane Cemetery, Berkhamsted School and Ashlyns, the Rex, and listed buildings such as 173 High Street, the Crown and the Swan survive as well as many ancillary structures and landscape legacies, such as the WWI trenches on the Common.

There are so many stories to tell and moments to envisage:

- a Bronze age family splashing in the River Bulbourne
- a Roman legionnaire surveying their newly taken land
- a small group of Augustinian brethren arriving at the Ashridge monastery
- the first day the archers practicing on Butts Meadow heard they were going to Agincourt
- a carriage clapping along the freshly surfaced turnpike
- newly born birds at Dwights pheasantry
- a barge taking a load of rags out from London, through the new locks
- the first train hauling excited locals faster than they had ever moved before
- the first schoolgirls arriving at the newly built Bourne school

Large but hidden collections.

Thousands of documents, images and artefacts are held by the Dacorum Heritage Trust (DHT) in its professionally run store behind the Civic Centre. This has Accredited Museum status and is funded by DBC. DHT provides valued resources for schools, an archive of articles, an enquiry service, and mounts displays and exhibitions around the borough. There are also many local items held by County and national museums, local arts and leisure societies, and other bodies in town (e.g Berkhamsted School), quite apart from many local collections in private hands.

Nucleus of committed people.

The Heritage Hub Project Group is gathering momentum with representatives from the following organisations:

The Local History Society, founded in 1950, operates the Visitor room in the Castle. It runs a talks programme, Heritage Open Days, its own facebook site, annual Chronicle, special exhibitions such as the Alderney Tapestry, an education programme with local schools, and publishes research.

Berkhamsted and District Archaeological Society mounts its popular talks programme, and runs professional standard site excavations.

Both societies own large collections - some 40,000 items - of potential exhibits, housed in the DHT Store.

The Friends of St Peters have recently secured £907,000 of Parks for People Lottery Funding to transform Rectory Lane Cemetery into a beautiful new open space.

Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust has overseen the restoration over the last 30 yrs of the building which is now a vibrant and heavily used community facility.

Each of these groups engages with their membership (collectively totalling around 500) and visitors/users.

BUT

- information on heritage is very disjointed with many gaps
- blue plaques give little information, and many more places show the town's fascinating past
- access to many sites is poor
- The Castle used to be a central attraction with regular fetes, pageants, events, and we know the Town Council have been spearheading efforts to make it connect with the Town again
- public access to the DHT store is severely restricted.
- audience research has revealed that local understanding of the town's heritage, especially among the increasing number of new arrivals and the young, is poor. For most people, finding out about the town's heritage appears impenetrable.
- tourists get off at the station to see the Norman Castle, with its tiny visitor room. They may well ask what other heritage experiences the town has to offer but disappointed, get back on the train.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Castle - possible acquisition of field and the commissioning of a full management plan
- Town Hall - possible new central exhibition space
- enormous and varied collections held by BLHMS and others
- transformation of the cemetery into a beautiful and informative public space.
- places with a role to play: the Bourne School, Court House, Civic Centre, the Rex, Ashridge
- organisations with a role to play: The Northchurch Society, the Library, Friends of St Peters and St Marys, Berkhamsted Citizens Association, WEA, Berkhamsted School, clubs and societies, businesses.... and of course the Town Council.
- people with a role to play: many talented people with a huge skill bank drawn in the town including private collectors who research, collect and investigate.
- three varied focus groups have given outstanding insight and support for the concept.
- schools' history providers have been interviewed and are enthusiastic;
- interest in a website and other social media to signpost, interlink and inform, providing access to collections and research.
- immense market in London and Midlands who can easily access town by rail, to be drawn by a coherent set of attractions and activities.
- co-ordinated publicity embracing audiences already targeted by organisations and businesses (eg English Heritage, Canal and River Trust, the Rex, Ashridge)
- scope for much better heritage trails around town, provision of 'at-site' information and staging powerful events and activities.

VISION

The vision of the Heritage Hub Project Group is to open up the heritage of the town to a much wider audience, including children and visitors, by developing a well-managed, active, cohesive and sustainable network, linking heritage places, organisations and people and supported by a central hub, part digital, part physical space, all co-ordinated under a new governing trust.

Network activities would invigorate a greater understanding of the town's heritage; boost local pride and engagement and promote the town as a meaningful tourist destination. Significantly, it would expand the numbers and demographic range of people interested and engaged in heritage, including their own family and personal histories, and to further their knowledge and skills.

Larger places in the network would be venues for heritage events; smaller places might have heritage panels or displays. Many places might be trail stops or performance areas - Butts Meadow, an inn yard, the towpath.

The Hub itself would act as the focal point for heritage-related information, would tell the story of the town's development, and mount changing themed exhibitions drawn from the collections held in store. It would be a venue for activities, the starting point for trails, and a sign-post to the network. Its virtual arm would give improved online access to information and to the hidden collections.

OUTCOMES

The Heritage Lottery Fund crucially wants to see quantified outcomes for three separate categories - outcomes for heritage, outcomes for people, and outcomes for communities. Through the Resilience Fund bid, we will assemble the evidence to show that the Network and Hub would:

- ensure that the heritage of Berkhamsted will be better managed, in better condition, better identified and recorded.
- introduce a wider range of people, including families, young adults and children, to participate in conserving, interpreting and enjoying the town's rich heritage.
- enhance the resilience of our heritage organisations by developing new skills and engaging more volunteers.
- position Berkhamsted as a heritage destination for tourists, improving spend per head.
- co-ordinate research into local histories and act as a gateway for sharing information.

HOW?

We are applying under the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage Fund to undertake a Feasibility Study to arrive at the best model for delivering the Network and Hub. This would provide the information required to make a significant capital bid to the HLF in 2019.

We visited the Heritage Lottery in Cambridge in April to discuss these ideas and received a favourable green light to submit an application.

The work undertaken during the grant would enable us, with the aid of appropriate expertise, to build the vision, thorough consultations with a very wide variety of local people, and other organisations as well as investigations.

The Resilient Heritage Fund work would:

- map existing heritage provision in the Town
- bring together work on audiences and opportunities for attracting new ones
- test the concept of the Network and Hub as a holistic model for enhancing interpretation
- explore the spatial options for both the Hub and Network
- assess collections and needs
- advise on, and help deliver, governance and skills training
- deliver a draft business plan to illustrate sustainability

BLHMS as the lead body is now preparing a bid, which if approved in 2018 would pay for the consultants to carry out the above. During this one-year period all relevant local organisations would be engaged with the scheme. If the final report after 12 months was successful, and showed good feasibility and support by the town, then a larger grant application to HLF would be made to pay for the implementation in say 2019/20.

PROPOSAL

We are asking the Town Council to support this opportunity to lever HLF investment of £65,000 by contributing £3500 towards the feasibility study.