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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROYSTON AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE HARDWICKE HALL, ROYSTON TOWN HALL, MELBOURN
ROAD, ROYSTON
ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH JUNE, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Tony Hunter (Chair), Councillor Gerald Morris (Vice-Chair), Ruth Brown, Adam Compton, Jean Green, Chris Hinchliff and Carol Stanier*

In Attendance: *Ashley Hawkins (Community Engagement Officer) and James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting Herts County Councillor Fiona Hill. There were no members of the public present.*

38 WELCOME

Audio recording – 1 minute 54 seconds

Councillor Tony Hunter welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and welcomed Councillor Chris Hinchliff to his first Area Committee meeting following his election in May and placed on record thanks to former Councillor Sarah Dingley.

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 59 seconds

There were no apologies for absence.

40 MINUTES - 8 MARCH 2022, 26 MAY 2022

Audio Recording – 3 minutes 05 seconds

Councillor Tony Hunter, as Chairman, proposed and Councillor Jean Green seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 8 March 2022 and 26 May 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

41 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 52 seconds

There was no other business notified.

42 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 57 seconds

- (1) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

43 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes 42 seconds

Councillor Hunter advised that there was no public participation at this meeting of the Committee.

44 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio recording – 4 minutes 48 seconds

The Chair invited the Community Engagement Officer to provide Members with an update on the work they had been doing, including:

- Detailed the grant funds available for the upcoming civic year.
- There had been no grant applications at this meeting as the potential grant applicants were helped to find funds from elsewhere and some groups did not meet the Committee criteria.
- The Royston Environment Group had been signposted onto Johnson Matthey, who were able to provide full funding for the event.
- Section 106 funds had been identified to support Royston Town Youth Football Club purchase new goalposts and for resurfacing at the Royston BMX track.
- Detailed future possible grant applications to be brought to the Committee.
- The bus shelter had been installed on Melbourn Street.
- Detailed the works talking place to explore the possibility of ramped access at Market Hill Car Park.
- Supported the Barkway Village Market, which had around 4000 visitors.
- 1300 units of hand sanitiser had been distributed to groups and organisations in Royston.
- He had supported other events in towns across the district.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Adam Compton
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Tony Hunter
- Councillor Carol Stanier
- Councillor Chris Hinchliff
- Herts County Councillor Fiona Hill

In response to a question from Councillor Adam Compton, the Community Engagement Officer advised that he had not explored parking levels in Royston, but this would be difficult given the free after 3pm parking scheme where tickets are not required. Councillor Ruth Brown noted that the BID were currently doing a footfall analysis in collaboration with partners and would collect evidence to specifically look at the efficacy of the free after 3pm scheme.

In response to a question from Councillor Ruth Brown, the Community Engagement Officer advised that the Scouts were looking at sites as possible new premises, but were finding it difficult to apply for grants because of the short term leases at possible venues.

Councillor Hunter proposed that the Committee place on record its thanks for the grants provided by local businesses, especially Johnson Matthey, who were supporting local good causes. Following a vote, this message of appreciation was approved by the Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Chris Hinchliff, Councillor Ruth Brown advised that the bridge over the A505 on the eastern side of Royston had been chosen as one of the

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projects by the Cambridge Consultation and there was cross-party agreement for this. This scheme would see the installation of a path for non-vehicular use, but would require a lot of funding and local engagement in the process.

County Councillor Fiona Hill advised there was a Zoom meeting regarding this to be held on the 7 July 2022 and requested the Community Engagement Officer circulate this for Members.

Councillor Hunter advised that money to support these works had been raised from town, district and county councils, section 106 funds and private businesses.

The Chair led a discussion around the future of Town Talks in Royston. The following Members took part in the discussion:

- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Adam Compton
- Herts County Councillor Fiona Hill
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Carol Stanier

Points raised in the discussion included:

- Themed Town Talks were generally considered the most appropriate.
- The turnout today had been better, but this was not necessarily a productive use of this time.
- Where there is public interest in a topic, then it would be sensible to hold a Town Talk to address this, but the Town Talk is not required prior to each area committee meeting.
- Possibility to explore the integration of the Town Talk and Committee meetings and whether Standing Orders could be suspended to support this.
- The start time could be later to ensure it does not impact or parents or commuters who want to attend, for whom 6.30pm may be unsuitable.
- It would not be suitable to move the Town Talk to the end of the Committee meeting as this would be too late to attract members of the public.
- Whether it would be possible to run a poll online to gather views from members of the public as to what should be discussed, as this may then encourage more to interact and attend. The options on this would need to be limited to avoid misuse of this function.

In response to the discussion the Committee, Member & Scrutiny Officer advised that it would not be possible under the Council Constitution for the Town Talk element to be merged with the Committee meeting, as public participants would have to register to speak prior to the meeting and this would not be suitable for the informal discussions at the Town Talks. He would need to explore whether Standing Orders can be suspended to allow for this.

In response to the discussion the Community Engagement Officer advised that, although there were no grant applicants this time, there will be at future meetings and it is important they are not made to wait around unnecessarily to present their application.

Councillor Hunter, as Chairman, moved to a vote following the discussion on Town Talks and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Officers would explore possible options of how Town Talks and Area Committee meetings could improve to be more effective and accessible for public and Members, in line with the Council Constitution and Terms of Reference of the Committee.

The Community Engagement Officer provided Members with a brief background to the Councillor Surgeries and the Chair led a discussion around the future of these in Royston. The following Members took part in the discussion:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Adam Compton
- Councillor Tony Hunter
- Herts County Councillor Fiona Hill
- Councillor Carol Stanier

Points raised in the discussion included:

- Most people do not know what the surgeries are, demonstrated by the comments from people attending the Town Talk this evening. More regular attendance by Councillors and a regular set day each month would help to promote these sessions.
- It was important for Councillors to be visible to the public, even if there are no specific issues to be reported.
- Could explore a rota for this, with representatives from all areas, such as BID, town, district and county Councillors, Herts Police and the Therfield Heath Conservators.
- It was less likely that people from outside the town travel to the surgeries, so for the rural representatives only attending every other month would suffice.
- Having too many Councillors in attendance can be intimidating for members of the public and a rota system may help to ensure this does not happen.
- A fixed Saturday in the month would be most suitable and help to make it a more set, regular occurrence.
- Rather than a rota to have people attend, it may be best to send people away if there are too many in attendance. The rota will not necessarily be kept to and it would present further work for the Officer prior to the surgery.
- Where there is footfall there are people to talk to and this could be simply to promote the work the Council is doing in Royston and across the district.

Councillor Hunter, as Chairman, moved to a vote following the discussion on the future of Councillor Surgeries and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Royston Surgeries be reduced to once every two months on the second Saturday of the month, starting from the Surgery scheduled on Saturday 10 September 2022.

Councillor Hunter, as Chairman, moved to a vote on the work of the Community Engagement Officer and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee endorsed the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Royston.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Officer.
- (2) The Community Engagement Officer is seeking advice from the Committee on the best way forward with regards to future provision of Town Talk and Councillor Surgeries.
- (3) This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in January 2020.

- (4) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims of the Council Plan.

45 HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Audio recording – 52 minutes 15 seconds

Councillor Tony Hunter invited Herts County Councillor Fiona Hill to provide an update to the Committee, including:

- Potholes along the A505 had been repaired, foliage cleared and markings reinstated.
- The culvert works at Reed End between Therfield and Reed are to be programmed.
- The new speed indicator device on the A10 should be installed soon and the plan to move the indicator from London Road, Reed has been programmed but no date yet confirmed.
- New signage is due to be installed in Grange Bottom following issues with large vehicles.
- Road surface issues on Serby Avenue had been reported.
- Drainage works were completed in Blacksmiths Lane, Reed, Cambridge Road, Barkway, A10 London Road, Royston and Queens Road, Royston.
- Resurfacing had been carried out on the A10 Priory Lane, Barkway Street and London Road.
- Resurfacing works were planned including the roads; Melbourn Road, Priory Close King James Way and footpaths; Shaftesbury Way, Honeyway, Hunters Way, Serby Avenue, Parthia Close, Mill Road, Thackery Close, Victoria Crescent and Morton Street. Some work had been delayed due to the weather and will be re-programmed.
- Works planned on a crossover in Studlands Rise.
- Proposals were being explored for speed mitigation measures near the Community Centre on Burns Road. There have been a number of accidents and no mitigation is in place along this specific part of the road.
- Ramped access being explored for Market Hill.
- The aforementioned schemes are being funded through Locality Budget and the Integrated Works Programme.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Jean Green

In response to questions County Councillor Fiona Hill advised:

- As advised previously, culvert works to be programmed in Reed End.
- Soil, foliage, etc. constantly falls on the footpath and road and then the gullies become blocked again along Newmarket Road. Some of the area is under private ownership. It is believed that there is an agreement for the area to be improved if development goes ahead.

46 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 59 minutes 19 seconds

The Chair led a discussion on ward matters and outside organisations. The following issues were discussed:

Royston Town Twinning Association

Councillor Ruth Brown advised:

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- The Twinning AGM was taking place on the same night as this Committee meeting.
- The first trip arranged by the Twinning Association in 3 years took place in May and was very successful.

Royston First

Councillor Ruth Brown advised:

- The BID was looking to install hanging baskets on the High Street, but it has been difficult to figure out the responsible parties. This may not take place until next year as it was too late in the year to install hanging basket successfully.
- The BID had taken over the town boards (outside the Old Bull and on Angel Pavement) and would be advertising Royston events.
- There were plans being drawn up to expand the Christmas Lights Switch On event from 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chair