

# Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

06 March 2019



**Present:** Claire Morgan (CM - Chair), Anthony Roche (AR), Ian Couper (IC), Kerry Shorrocks (KS), Rebecca Webb (RW), Laura Bignell (LB), Dee Levett (DL), Sue Collett (SC), , Ben Glover (BG), Emma Jellis (EJ), Christina Corr (CC), Vic Godfrey (VG - IT Updates), Caitlin Bruce (CB - notes)

**Circulation:** Global

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## 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Scholes, Sue Collette, Debbie Hiscock, James Watson and Hannah Sweetman.

## 2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Previous Minutes were agreed.

- The desks and chairs were cleaned but there was still dust on top of cupboards etc. IC to look in to how often they are cleaned.
- The windows have not been cleaned inside or out in a while. IC to look in to how often they are cleaned.
- Snack Vending machines will be refilled more regularly with a Friday refill for employees working in Careline over the weekend
- The drinks vending machine is coming to the end of it's life but we are looking to replace it
- Please report any air-conditioning issues to property services and they will be looked in to
- Report cleaning boxes when they are empty and property services will refill them
- Currently looking at desk space options - where people can and can't move to and how much upheaval there would be if we move people
- Aware of antisocial behaviour of both multi-story car park next to District Council Offices and the car park in Hitchin, currently trying to coordinate parking enforcement and property services to record as much as they can to get the police to take notice. If you see any antisocial behaviour please report to the police. The area is covered

by CCTV so will consider a sign being put up in the bike shed in an attempt of deter antisocial behaviour

### **3. NHDC Update**

KS: Human Resources has been working on contracts and contract updates & renewals. There have been some reductions in prices. Occupational health is currently provided through a shared framework with Hertfordshire County Council and a company called Optum – we will continue with their arrangements which include appointments with people who are off sick or at work and need some extra help, they also offer advice to managers and help make adjustments for new employees.

The wider wallet discount scheme will continue to be used and they will begin to provide vouchers for long service and retirement awards.

Childcare vouchers are being run down by the government as the new free childcare scheme is being offered – people who have been receiving the vouchers will continue to do so, wider wallet will help provide these.

The employee assistance programme (EAP), a service that is free to all staff, will now include councillors on the new contract – this is a service that offers confidential advice and includes members of your family.

AR: Those who were present at the staff briefing will know that the new organisational values have been agreed and will be rolled out immediately.

The museum should be fully open and operational by June.

There will be a special council meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> March looking at 2 potential bids for the future high streets fund – one for Hitchin and one for Letchworth: there can only be one bid and the council will choose which one to put through. There is no guarantee either will be awarded the money as it is a national fund.

Elections on the horizon – we are currently only planning for the district election, it is unknown if there will be a European election, general election or a referendum at some point. We will need volunteers for polling stations etc. so if SCF representatives could spread the word it would be appreciated.

### **4. IT Update (VG)**

There have been some speed issues on the network over the last few months. An order was placed yesterday to buy some new hardware that will help balance the network and make it a lot more efficient.

Meeting rooms – We are looking to move the larger screens in rooms 1 and 2 (on each floor) to make them lower, this has already been done on floor 5. Also considering smaller screens in the smaller rooms – VG looking at costs. The screens would not be wasted as there is potential for them to be used at Hitchin Town Hall

IT work has started work at Hitchin Town Hall, the CCTV and Wi-Fi has been put back in. there is an ongoing project for speakers in the hall.

NHDC passed annual security accreditation for the cabinet office which included a penetration test – this doesn't mean we can't get cyber attacked because cyber attacks are often caused by internal staff so be careful with the links you are clicking on.

IT have started to work with the elections team for the May elections.

We have had our quarterly disaster recovery (DR) rehearsal last week and it passed. We will continue to do this every quarter.

There is a bit more work to do out in Buntingford – with conference units in rooms, there should now be conference units in District Council Office meeting rooms.

There is now a hearing loop inside the council chamber – signs showing this will go up by next week.

There are trials currently being carried out on PDF editing software.

We are starting to look at bringing in the next generation of tablets – they will come with biometric – this mean you will be able to use a thumb print or eyesight recognition password.

There are ongoing issues with the HR SAP system but IT are continuing to work on this to find a resolution.

- Issue around email security was raised – an email was received with the sender claiming to be Lynda Needham. Although it was caught in the spam filter and obviously fraudulent it remains important to address and make employees aware of
- Question about publicising of the use of smart phone apps instead of tokens to log in to the IT system at home. VG Response: the tokens are not being completely phased out because not everyone will have a smart phone. The asset team will now begin to contact colleagues who are still using the tokens to inform them about the app.
- There was a query about when the IT work would be finished at Hitchin Town Hall. VG Response: We are still at phase one so there is no definite timescale yet

## **5. Employee Queries**

- Query regarding lists of first aiders on notice boards on each floor. Action: first aid phone number to be posted on notice boards

## **6. Chair for Next Meeting – Christina Corr**