

7 JUL 2016

HEREFORDSHIRE MARKET TOWNS FORUM

Minutes of the Market Towns Forum meeting held on Wednesday 25th May 2016 commencing at 7:00pm at the HALC Offices, Berrows Building, Bath Street, Hereford.

Present: Cllr Fred Clark and Gary Swinford (Acting Clerk) Bromyard and Winslow Town Council
Cllrs Debbie Baker and Martin Eager, Ledbury Town Council
Cllrs Jenny Bartlett, Felicity Norman, Roger Pendleton and Paul Russell (Clerk) Leominster Town Council
Cllr David Ravenscroft, Ross-on-Wye Town Council
Cllr Bob Widdowson, Kington Town Council
Cllrs Charles Nicholls and Brian Wilcox, Hereford City Council
Dawne Shepherd, Acting Manager and Chris Brook, Citizens Advice Bureaux

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Cllr Norman was nominated and seconded. There being no other nominations Cllr Norman was formally elected as Chair.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Cllr Ravenscroft was nominated and seconded. There being no other nominations Cllr Ravenscroft was formally elected as Vice Chair.

3. OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

- Secretary: It was agreed to appoint Paul Russell.
- It was agreed that no other officers were required.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Morgan (HC), Ray Whitaker and Peter Andrews (Bromyard), and Sara Robinson (Clerk) Steve Kerry (Clerk) Bob Barnes (Ledbury), Karen Mitchell (Clerk – Ledbury).

5. NEW MEMBERS

New members were formally welcomed to the Forum. A brief overview of the aims and objectives of the Forum was provided.

The Forum had been set up to improve relationships and communications with the five market towns in Herefordshire. The Forum also acted as liaison with Herefordshire Council and invited the Leader/Deputy Leader and/or relevant Officers of Herefordshire Council to discuss specific items.

A request was made to all towns to input into items for the agenda. It was agreed that a regular update on the introduction of CIL be included.

6. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record.

7. MATTERS ARISING

It was requested that the S106 email be redistributed as some members had not received it.

8. UPDATE ON CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX

The Forum welcomed Dawne Shepherd, Acting Manager of Herefordshire CAB, and Chris Boot.

CAB Herefordshire would be closing in four weeks time as it was not sustainable in its present form and there was a lack of funding available. It still had some contracts in place, including the provision of money and benefits advice which would continue, but the main drop in service would be discontinued.

There was a possibility that a skeleton service could be continued in the short term and it was confirmed that CAB was still looking at ways to continue to deliver a service in the long term. There was a good pool of volunteers and a revised service may just include a telephone service.

The loss of funding had resulted in a cut back of back-up/support staff and training opportunities for volunteers. Although there were still volunteers in place the support was no longer going to be provided.

It was confirmed that some of the market towns had included funding allocations in their budgets for 2016/17 to help support the CAB service, provided there was a locally delivered service. Hereford, Ross and Ledbury had allocated £10,000 each and Leominster would be supportive. However, Bromyard and Winslow would probably not support a CAB service.

A number of options were discussed; including a video link service (East Yorkshire had published a report on this). It was noted that there was no statutory obligation for Principal Authorities to provide CAB type advice and services.

To provide a skeleton service would cost £90k but it would not be able to replace and train volunteers. One enquiry could produce 3-4 weeks of work and statistics suggested that one in every four calls became a case.

It was agreed to ask Martin Samuels to advise the Forum on how he was going to adapt WISH in the future.

The Forum thanked Dawne and Chris for their attendance.

9. HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Implications of recent judgments on the relationships between five year housing supply and planning policies – Bromyard and Winslow TC highlighted the fact that the Court of Appeal can now affect any policy that seeks to restrict housing development especially if the Planning Authority area does not have a five year land supply. In reality, without the level of land supply required it is now much harder to resist housing proposals. It was noted that Bromyard had successfully had an appeal for 120 houses dismissed.

10. PLANNING MATTERS

Hereford City Council was seeking the support of the market towns for having the conversion of houses to HMO's within the urban areas of the county brought under an Article Four direction. This would restrict permitted development rights and require owners to seek planning consent, and to consult with their local communities, before carrying out conversions. Hereford has had a rash of poorly carried out conversions within the permitted development limits, as well as retrospective planning approval for poor developments.

The Forum gave its general agreement to take the suggestion back to each Council and it was agreed to obtain Article 4 clarification from Charles Yarnold and Marc Willimont.

It was agreed to send out the paper produces by Hereford City Council to all Forum Members.

11. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

It was agreed to place the following items on the next agenda:

- Libraries and connected customer services
- Progress on asset transfers
- CIL update

The following guest speakers would be invited to the meeting on 27th July 2016:

- Natalia Silver (HC Libraries)
- Marc Willimont

Due to the length of the July agenda it was agreed to produce a timed agenda.

It was agreed to place Youth provision on the September agenda.

12. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

There were no items raised.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 27th July 2016 at Berrows Building at 7.00pm.

There being no other business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: