

NOTES of MEETING

HEREFORDSHIRE MARKET TOWNS FORUM

19.00 hrs WEDNESDAY 25th JANUARY 2017

E7

23 FEB 2017

Representation as usual from:- Kington, Bromyard, Ross on Wye, Leominster, Ledbury and Hereford City Councils.

Representing Ledbury Town Council:- Cllrs Martin Eager & Bob Barnes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed after some discussion as to the Economic Master Plan presentation, but no changes made.

Matters arising included Paul Russell stating that he had still not received any replies from Yvonne Coleman or Marc Willimont inviting either/both to a future meeting to update S106 and CIL. It was agreed that this was an urgent issue that required redress and that Paul continued to get either or both to a future meeting.

It was reported that Cllr Peter McCaull had gratefully accepted the offer to be co-opted as an Honorary Member of the Forum shortly before his passing away.

CAB Presentation:

Dawne Sheppard & Mark Calvin gave an update of Herefordshire CAB services. CAB is now delivering a service via email, telephone or text messaging (most popular) operating out of the office provided by Herefordshire Council in the form of a 3 year grant valued at around £70k. Ross and Leominster town councils have provided free of charge accommodation which has allowed a face to face outreach service, the Hereford office is also available for face to face advice.

CAB is now looking to reach the wider community that currently cannot access these current service deliveries, ambitious plans that require further funding. Hereford CAB are in a Chameleon (sic) phase of adaption and change, new volunteers are being recruited and CAB is working with neighbouring Shropshire to help with training as well as undertaking a skills audit of the trustees board.

CAB is aware that they have limited fundraising skills and so are thinking of recruiting specialist trustees to help with fundraising and HR.

Current initiative is to get all residents of Herefordshire to contribute a couple of pounds every year and become 'Friends of CAB', also looking at Malvern Hills CAB for funding ideas, grant making bodies are also being talked too.

During the Q&A session following the presentation members expressed their doubts that a Friends of CAB scheme would raise any significant amount of money, and that the public perception that CAB is a government body must be redressed (CAB is a registered charity). Members were also in agreement that CAB should outsource their funding by using specialist funding bodies for funding initiatives to maintain the current service level.

The Market Towns (Ledbury excepted) last year have given CAB between £5k - £10k and had also allocated similar amounts this coming financial year to keep the service operational. Dawne Sheppard indicated that she will once again try and contact Ledbury Town Council in order to release allocated funding and hopefully secure future commitment, and maybe also provide outreach accommodation.

There was considerable debate as to whether the donated office accommodation from Herefordshire Council could be converted into cash funding, it was generally agreed after discussion that this was not practicable as at the end of the day CAB need a Hereford based office where current staff and volunteers are established, but this may not become an option as it rumoured that Herefordshire Council may prefer it that CAB were not in their building.

Current costs of running this core service were unavailable at the meeting but it was established that the current level of funding (donations & grants) would not allow the service to expand and improve on the outreach provision.

Dawne closed the presentation by stating that funding and costing reports were being prepared and will be delivered to the Market Towns in the next couple of months.

Members Updates:

Bob informed the meeting that LTC were preparing a structural review of the council, that excessive developments were planned for the town and the LTC was still under investigation with code of conduct complaints.

Bob also stated that due to the resignation of the Deputy Clerk, to bear this mind when contacting the council as responses will not also be as immediate as would normally be expected.

Ross on Wye's Neighbourhood Plan has stalled as Herefordshire Council is demanding a call for sites for an additional Primary School and more houses on top of the 900-1000 already identified, but HC are not working with Ross in identifying sites or carrying out environmental surveys.

Leominster's NP has also stalled due to additional work being requested from Herefordshire Council.

A long debate (nearly 25 minutes) over TRO's, residents parking, consultations and who pays.

Discussion also touched on council contractors doing work for Balfour Beatty (sub contracting) in order to progress medium priority tasks.

Questions were raised over the service level agreement and whether it allowed Balfour Beatty to charge for TRO consultations and make additional charges to Parish Councils in order that TRO's can be queue jumped.

The meeting was treated to several anecdotal recounts of various issues from several Market Towns re new road improvements, yellow lines, highway maintenance, residents parking orders etc.

It was suggested that the leader of Herefordshire Council should attend a future meeting to answer members concerns.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Next meeting Wednesday 29th March 2017