

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2021 AT 3.00PM**

- PRESENT:** Councillors Apel (Chairman), C Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Carter, Gershater, Lishman and Sharp
- EX-OFFICIO:** The Mayor (Councillor Plowman), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor J Hughes) and Councillor Scicluna (Chairman of Finance)
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk, Member Services Support Officer, Councillor Simon Oakley (West Sussex County Council), Liz Turner (Chairman – Friends of Ravenna, Paula Chatfield (Acting Chair - Chichester Tree Wardens)

**39. APOLOGIES AND RECORD OF ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received from Members of the Committee.

Apologies for absence were received from Graham Pound (Chairman - Friends of Valletta), Pam Bushby (Divisional Manager, Communities and Wellbeing – Chichester District Council), Jeanette Hockley (Operations Manager – Chichester BID) and Ash Pal (Chairman – Parklands Residents Association and Chichester Community Network).

Councillor Joy was absent from the meeting.

**40. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY ON 16 NOVEMBER 2020**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 16 November 2020, having been circulated; be approved and signed at a future date as a correct record.

**41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN MATTERS ARISING ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING**

The Mayor and Councillors Apel, Lishman and Sharp declared personal interests as Members of Chichester District Council.

**42. UPDATE FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Chairman noted that there were no updates on the following matters at this time:

- **Minute 30(c)** – Floral displays
- **Minute 30(d)** – Friendship link with Speyer, Germany
- **Minute 36** – Wireless internet connectivity in the City Centre

(a) **Minute 30(a)** – Chichester Tree Summit

Members were advised that, due to the ongoing pandemic restrictions, the need to maintain distancing and the restrictions on use of the Council House; it was not currently possible to arrange new dates for the Chichester Tree Summit.

Mrs Chatfield expressed the hope that an event of some kind could be arranged towards the autumn. She also suggested to Members that it might be possible to organise an online event for the landowners and other interested parties to discuss the issues as originally envisaged for the first part of the Tree Summit.

Councillor Sharp suggested that this format could allow for a wider participation from the areas around Chichester if that was felt to be appropriate.

(b) **Minute 30(f)** - Update on the ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic

The Mayor updated the Committee on what had been going on with regards to the vaccination programme in Chichester and the surrounding areas.

He expressed his disappointment that, to date, no site had been selected within the City itself despite organisations, including the City Council; making offers of space for this purpose. Members were advised that the initial vaccination sites would be GP practice group led and that sites at Selsey and Tangmere would be the first to be operational in the area.

The Mayor also expressed his concerns that the initial groups that the vaccine was being offered to were the elderly and vulnerable, many of whom had been sheltering for months and who were now being asked to make a long round trip to receive the vaccine.

The Committee was advised that, with the support of the Chief Executive of Chichester District Council, a dialogue had been set up with the local NHS commissioning group to ensure that communication would be more effective in the future. The Mayor informed Members that this dialogue included weekly meetings and that it was his hope that this would lead to patients and local residents being better informed about progress on the vaccination programme and help reassure them that things were going on in the background in this respect.

The Chairman informed the Committee that, during a conversation with a local GP, it was suggested that no offers of vaccination sites within the City had been made. She suggested that this indicated how confused communications in this area had become as she was personally aware of at least two sites that had made this offer.

The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that he and other City Council Officers had proactively contacted the NHS to offer the Council House and had discussed arrangements for a rapid turnaround of the building to make it available over Christmas.

The Town Clerk then suggested that the Chairman's comments should be passed to the NHS commissioning group to allow them to clarify this point in their communications. The Mayor agreed and commented that this would form part of the important feedback being passed back to the NHS to ensure they were properly informed about the thoughts and feelings of the people of Chichester.

Councillor Carter suggested that the Mayor's Hardship Fund might be a suitable source of assistance for those struggling to afford travelling to the current vaccination sites. The Mayor responded saying he was confident that the community of Chichester would find a way to help people in this situation. He also suggested that other significant hurdles to overcome would be asking people to travel in the first place after they had been isolating as well as the issues of distancing in the closed confines of whatever form of transport was involved.

Councillor C Hughes expressed concern that, when watching the news, many areas of the UK appeared to be far in advance of Chichester in their vaccination programmes and that the lack of real information from NHS Sussex was increasing the concerns of the residents of the City.

Councillor Scicluna agreed with this sentiment and informed the Committee that she felt there was an air of confusion due to the lack of local information. She also stated that, as she personally had no transport, she would struggle to attend appointments at the initial vaccination sites. Councillor Scicluna also commented that it was her understanding that the Council House had been turned down as a potential site due to lack of parking.

The Mayor advised that he would shortly be publishing a new Mayor's Letter which he hoped would help start to plug the information gap.

The Chairman asked the Mayor whether, now that the Oxford-AstraZenica vaccine had been approved which required much less stringent storage conditions; it was his opinion that more sites could be deemed suitable.

Councillor Lishman, a Stagecoach employee, advised Members that, despite the lockdown, members of the public were still using public transport for reasons not permitted under the stay at home regulations. The Committee were informed that this was placing significant stress on the drivers and public transport staff as they felt that members of the public were not thinking about the safety of those staff when deciding to break the regulations. Members were further advised that this situation had meant she had now been given will writing information and that she and her colleagues had been advised to write letters to loved ones just in case.

The Chairman gave her best wishes and the Mayor asked Councillor Lishman to pass on the thoughts and support of the City Council to her colleagues. The Mayor also advised that he had written on behalf of the City Council to the NHS staff at St Richards Hospital to express the gratitude of the City for the hard work of those staff during difficult times.

- (c) **Minute 35** - Speeding around the City - including an update on the City Council purchase of a Speed Indicator Device.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that Mrs Chatfield had forwarded on the specification of the Speed Indicator Device (SID) that the City Council had agreed to purchase for use within the Chichester community. Mrs Chatfield was thanked for her assistance with this.

He also advised that discussions would be set up with West Sussex County Council Officers with regards to training and correct use of the SID. Members were informed that contact would also be made with residents groups who had already expressed an interest in using the SID in their areas.

Councillor C Hughes informed the Committee that, in the last couple of days, she had had to ask two individuals not to ride their bikes in the city centre. The Committee was also informed by Councillor C Hughes that she had witnessed an individual riding an electric scooter at speed through the city centre with a child balanced on the front.

Councillor Scicluna queried the legality of riding electric scooters in a public place. The Chairman suggested that the Community Warden for the city centre as well as the Police should be contacted to express the Committee's concerns. The Town Clerk informed Members that the Community Wardens did as much as they could and the Member Services Support Officer clarified that the Community Wardens had no statutory powers to stop these activities.

The Mayor agreed with the Chairman's suggestion and further suggested that questions should be asked about why these individuals were out and about given the pandemic lockdown that was in force. He also expressed the opinion that if enforcement was not applied then this behaviour would continue.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Member Services Support Officer advised the Committee that the use of electric scooters was not currently legal unless they had been hired from an authorised company for use in areas that had been specifically approved for this activity. This was confirmed by Councillor J Hughes who also advised that the scooters should only be used on the road in those approved areas and not on the pavements.

The Member Services Support Officer also advised that the Police had requested that issues such as antisocial behaviour and crime be reported. This would then begin to profile areas of concern and indicate where clusters were appearing that could warrant further attention being paid to discourage those behaviours.

#### 43. POLICING AND SECURITY IN THE CITY

##### (a) Community Wardens

The Chairman informed Members that Pam Bushby (Divisional Manager – Communities and Wellbeing, Chichester District Council) had been unable to attend the meeting on this occasion.

The Committee noted the reports that had been circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting.

Councillor J Hughes queried why reports from the Community Warden for the East of the City had not been presented for a couple of months and also why he had not been seen patrolling the area for an extended period.

**Post meeting note:** The absence of a report for City East due to the Warden having to take last minute leave is minuted in the Community Affairs Committee meeting minutes for 16 November 2020 (**Minute 31a refers**).

*From Pam Bushby:* [Pam Bushby] had advised that the Community Wardens concerned had produced a joint report; this revised format would be made clear in the future.

*continued*

As to patrolling this is subjective as Cllr Hughes may not have looked out at the right time when they were out an about but I have been encouraging all the Community wardens to be more visible in the lockdown period. I have also asked Jon and Carol to be more proactive in their areas and engage with the virtual coffee morning on the Swanfield estate and I will keep reminding them.

Councillor Lishman asked about support for the street homeless in Chichester during the current lockdown. She advised the Committee that Chichester District Council had indicated that they would not be providing the same support as the first lockdown when all the street homeless were accommodated in local hotels.

The Chairman responded that, through her contacts with Stone Pillow, she was aware that the majority of those street homeless who had been temporarily housed in March 2020 had been found longer term accommodation. She also advised that a very small number did not wish to engage with the support services and therefore remained unaccommodated. The Mayor confirmed the Chairman's comments.

The Mayor expressed hopes that, as the pandemic situation was brought under greater control, the issue of street homelessness would not return to the levels experienced prior to March 2020.

(b) Chichester BID Rangers report

The Member Services Support Officer briefly presented the report from Jeanette Hockley of Chichester BID, which had been circulated to Members; who had advised that she was unable to attend on this occasion.

He also confirmed, in response to a question from the Mayor at the meeting held on 16 November 2020; that the sudden spike in Ranger activity had been due to them distributing information to local businesses on behalf of BID.

Members were advised that the Member Services Support Officer would be happy to take any questions from the Committee and liaise with BID to get answers to those questions.

44. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF FRIENDS OF CHARTRES, RAVENNA AND VALLETTA

(a) Friends of Ravenna

Mrs Turner, as Chairman of the Friends of Ravenna, presented her report outlining the current activities of the Friends.

Mrs Turner advised that she did not have anything to add to the report but that the pandemic situation had highlighted the strength of the relationship between Chichester and Ravenna and that this connection was not just about visiting each other. The Friends had experienced increased email correspondence as well as enjoying successful Zoom meetings with more planned for the future.

Members were also advised that the Friends of Ravenna were very pleased with how well their membership numbers were improving. Mrs Turner informed the Committee that she felt that their website had been a strong factor in attracting these new members.

The Chairman asked about the current Covid19 situation in Ravenna. Mrs Turner informed the Committee that the situation was quite bad, with hospitals full and a stricter lockdown than the one being experienced in the UK.

(b) Friends of Valletta and Friends of Chartres

Councillor Scicluna spoke on behalf of the Friends of Valletta and the Friends of Chartres.

Members were informed that the situation with the Friends of Chartres was similar to the Friends of Ravenna with Zoom meetings, email communication and activities on Facebook. Councillors were advised that the Covid19 situation in France was also similar with high infections and a tight lockdown.

Councillor Scicluna told Members that, while no Zoom meetings had taken place with the Friends of Valletta, communications were very much alive between members of the associations.

She highlighted the differences between the Covid19 statistical reporting in Valletta and the UK and advised Members that she had continued to send out monthly newsletters, or Melitas, on behalf of the Friends of Valletta.

The Mayor and Councillor Scicluna also mentioned the effect the pandemic had had with the cancellation of the traditional Festival of Chichester gathering of the Friends Associations to listen to talks and enjoy food and drink from the respective countries.

Councillor Gershater commented that he looked forward to the time when Speyer, Germany, could be included in the Friends activities as the Friendship link between Speyer and Chichester developed.

The Mayor and Town Clerk confirmed that the link with Speyer would be progressed as soon as the pandemic situation permitted.

45. **CHICHESTER TREE WARDENS**

The Chairman asked Mrs Chatfield (Chichester Tree Wardens) to present a short verbal report to the Committee about the activities of the Tree Wardens.

Mrs Chatfield advised the Committee that, since the last Community Affairs Committee meeting held on the 16 November 2020, the Tree Wardens met once and that there were some housekeeping matters that were of interest to the Committee.

Members were informed that the Tree Wardens had now opened an account with the local credit union to enable them to undertake fundraising activities more easily.

Mrs Chatfield also informed Members that the new Trees Project Officer at Chichester District Council had already been in contact, that the Tree Wardens were finalising reporting to Trees for Cities regarding the recent grant funding and that West Sussex County Council had introduced a trees policy.

The Committee was advised that the Tree Council had put a stop to activities while Covid19 lockdown was in place despite some voluntary activities being permitted.

#### 46. DISCRETIONARY GRANTS WORKING GROUP

The Chairman referred the Committee to the notes from the meeting of the Discretionary Grants Working Group held on the 20 November 2020 that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor J Hughes commented that he felt the Working Group discussion had been very well put together and that he supported the outcomes proposed by the group.

The Mayor also voiced his support and informed Members that he felt that the Working Group discussion had been a very useful one and that he fully supported moving forward as proposed in the document.

Members were all supportive of the proposals and it was therefore RESOLVED that the Discretionary Grants process for 2020-2021 be revised in line with the recommendations from the Discretionary Grant Working Group as follows:

- Proposed to test the revised process for the Grants year 2021-22.
- One set of Discretionary Grant applications/assessments/awards per annum.
- Retain the Spring Grants round and cancel the Autumn round.
- Fully review and expand the current Grant guidelines and terms to ensure clarity for applicants and highlight the funding budget to allow transparency on the amounts available. Website to be updated.
- Limit applications to one off capital projects or where a limited and finite revenue expenditure is required in support of a specific project.
- Add the following to the information/application form:
  - o "Have you applied for funding elsewhere? If so, is this in the form of match funding or a speculative application in the event of no Grant being awarded by the City Council?"
  - o "Have you applied for a City Council Discretionary Grant in the last XXX years?"
  - o "Grants will not normally be made for sums in excess of £XXXX".
- Split the applicants in to two groups depending on the amount being asked for:
  - o Under £500
    - application and supporting paperwork requirements as per current process with enhanced guidelines.
    - applications assessed and decided in Committee with no requirement for organisations to attend.
  - o £500 or more
    - application and supporting paperwork requirements similar to current process with enhanced guidelines and also outlining the extended requirements for larger grants.
    - applicants to give short presentations to the Committee, and to answer questions; in support of their application in a similar style to the current New Homes Bonus process. All Member of the Council would be invited to attend the Committee's meeting in accordance with current practice

and, with the permission of the Chairman, to speak but not vote.

- Assess smaller grants first – remaining budget to be allocated to larger applications.
- Stronger requirement to publicise City Council funding on any publicity produced in connection with the projects being Grant funded.
- Review of written reports from organisations six months after Grant allocation to ensure funds are spent as expected.

47. CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION AT THE ALL PARISHES MEETING – 8 FEBRUARY 2021

The Chairman advised that, as she would be attending this meeting on behalf of Chichester District Council, a second person to represent the City Council with Councillor C Hughes would be needed.

After a short discussion, Councillor J Hughes agreed to be the second City Council representative at the All Parishes meeting being held on the 8 February 2021.

48. CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN AWAY DAY

The Chairman informed Members that, due to the current Covid19 lockdown restrictions there would be no possibility of holding this event and that it would not be suitable to hold it via Zoom.

The Town Clerk agreed and advised the Committee that he felt that the entire Business Plan process should be put on hold pending changes to working as the pandemic and lockdowns eased. He also advised that there was the possibility that West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council would be reviewing their discretionary functions in light of ongoing budget constraints and that the City Council's Business Plan might need to reflect any outcomes of discussions between the City Council and the other authorities in the future.

The Chairman noted the Town Clerk's comments and the Committee agreed to put the business plan discussions on hold until the situation became clearer in the future.

49. PEDESTRIAN FOOTPATH BETWEEN STORY ROAD AND NEW LIDL CARPARK

Councillor C Hughes opened the discussion by thanking the City Council Property Maintenance Officer, Stephen Holman, for clearing the debris shown in the photographs accompanying the agenda, and for laying a temporary surface of woodchip to help improve the condition of the path while a longer term solution was sought.

Councillor C Hughes advised the Committee of her concerns that any worsening of the weather would return the path to its former muddy condition. She also advised that this was an important and well used path by the local resident, a lot of whom were elderly and/or less mobile.

Members were informed that Councillor C Hughes, and her husband Councillor J Hughes, were regularly assisting people along the path because of the condition it was in.

The Town Clerk reported that the Property Manager had undertaken some research in to the path, including who should be responsible for its maintenance. Members were advised that Chichester District Council had responded to an enquiry and

stated that the path being discussed had not been included on the original plans and planning permission granted for the development of the new Lidl store and its carpark.

Members were further advised that the West Sussex County Council Rights of Way Officer would be visiting the site in the near future to assess the situation.

The Town Clerk also informed Members that, regardless of the ownership of the land where the path was situated, the City Council Property Manager would be willing to project manage the necessary works involved in putting a more permanent path in place.

The Town Clerk expressed concerns about the City Council finding funds for work that would not be taking place on City Council land and was not part of the statutory functions of the City Council. He did, however, express the opinion that the City Council could undertake the work on receipt of funds from external organisations or the landowners.

In response to a question from Councillor Scicluna, the Town Clerk advised that the rights of way map showed the new development and a footpath connected to the footbridge but that the path under discussion was not shown. He also advised that he hoped that the upcoming visit by the Rights of Way Officer would confirm ownership of the land and the access path being discussed.

Councillor C Hughes pointed out that footpath and cycle path signs had been erected to encourage use of the pathway regardless of whether it appeared on the West Sussex County Council Public Rights of Way (PROW) map or not.

The Mayor expressed his support for the work being undertaken to establish ownership of the path in order to be able to progress work to improve the access. He advised Members that, while it was not ideal in the current situation to commit funds on works that were not directly the responsibility of the City Council; it was, nevertheless public money which should be used on improvement works like this.

Councillor Simon Oakley (West Sussex County Council) advised Members that the situation regarding the ownership of the land could be complicated by the fact that the western end may be the responsibility of Hyde Housing Group and the eastern end being part of the Lidl site with the gap in the middle being unregistered land.

He further advised that this might mean that the Rights of Way Officer may not be able to grant permission for the installation of a new path along the entirety of the route being discussed because of the mixed responsibilities involved. Members were informed that, despite this, permission from the Rights of Way Officer would still be required to make any changes to the surface of the path.

Councillor Oakley reported that the path being discussed had been identified under Chichester District Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). He further reported that this would be discussed by the District Council at their meeting in March 2021 which could result in funding for a path improvement. Councillor Oakley cautioned Members that this would not be a fast solution to the issue under discussion.

Members were also informed by Councillor Oakley that there existed a relatively straightforward process for adding a path of this nature to unregistered land should the City Council decide to do so.

Mrs Chatfield advised the Committee that the tree line that the path cut through formed the old Chichester City boundary and that, despite the right of way signs

having been installed, the path itself appeared to have been missed off the West Sussex County Council PROW map.

The Mayor reminded Members that, when he opened the new Lidl store, they had indicated they would be willing to supply funds for local projects and he suggested that this might be a suitable project for such funding.

Councillor C Hughes advised the Committee that she was aware that a number of local residents had contact Lidl on this subject but that nothing had been forthcoming at this time.

The Town Clerk suggested that the Mayor should contact Lidl on behalf of the City and pursue the offer of project funding that had been made.

The Committee agreed with this suggestion and the Mayor was asked to write to Lidl requesting project funding to improve the path between the Lidl car park and Story Road.

50. PLANNED EVENTS FOR 2021 AND BEYOND – COVID19 CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that one of the main events to be discussed in 2021 would be the centenary of the war memorial in Litten Gardens. He advised that this may be possible by arranging a similar low key and appropriate event as had been arranged for the VJ Day anniversary in August 2020.

The Town Clerk advised that, due to Covid19 and the associated restrictions, there would be no possibility of arranging future events in the same way as events had been planned in the past.

Members were further advised that, going forward, all plans for events within Chichester had to be submitted to Chichester District Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG), which included representatives from Public Health West Sussex; for formal assessment against current safety guidelines and Covid19 restrictions before they could proceed.

The Town Clerk also highlighted that 2022 would see the platinum jubilee of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. He advised that, as this was still 18 months away, this would allow sufficient time to plan suitable events which could include a gala organised by the City Council, as well as a ceremony of thanksgiving and a possible event in Priory Park as had happened in 2012 for the diamond jubilee. It was emphasised that, with the new SAG requirement, early planning was even more important.

The Mayor informed Members that he felt that there was a need within the Chichester community to start to plan something to say thank you to all those who had stepped up and supported the community during the pandemic.

Members were advised that a preliminary title for such an event had been suggested as "Over the Rainbow".

The Mayor also advised that he had hoped to hold such an event earlier than 2022 but that, further to the Town Clerk's comments, this would not be possible. The Mayor expressed the firm belief that he felt that having something like this kind of event to plan for and think about would help the community feel more positive about the future and give them something to look forward to.

The Town Clerk agreed and went on to advise Members that, even looking six months ahead, there was no certainty that the vaccine would have been distributed widely enough to allow for larger public events to take place. He also advised that he thought the earliest possible time for such an event, notwithstanding the vaccine rollout and the time left for planning, would be autumn 2021 although his preference would be for no large events before 2022.

Councillor Carter suggested the possibility that a longer term memorial, possibly in the form of a memorial woods, would be a suitable gesture in light of the inability to hold large events.

The Mayor advised that Chichester District Council had suggested making 2022 a year of culture with appropriate events being arranged with the potential to create calendar clashes with any events planned by the City Council. He suggested that it would be a good idea to start planning City Council events sooner rather than later to try to avoid such clashes.

The Town Clerk informed Members that he had become aware of the Year of Culture plans through a local paper and had contacted the appropriate Officer at Chichester District Council on this point and also to emphasise both Councils would maintain two way communication particularly with event planning needing to start a long way in advance of the event itself.

The Chairman agreed that, realistically, large City Council events were unlikely to be viable until June or July 2022.

The Town Clerk also mentioned the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Royal British Legion in May 2021 as well as any arrangements that may be needed to be put in place for Remembrance Sunday in November.

The Town Clerk emphasised his earlier point about the need for early planning and coordination with Chichester District Council as well as agreeing with Councillor Carter that any event of gratitude for the community should be balanced with reflection on those that did not survive the Covid19 pandemic. He also suggested that, if the tree summit were to go ahead, there may be an opportunity to discuss the creation of a Covid19 memorial wood with the land owners in attendance as the City Council did not own a suitable piece of land for such a project.

The Mayor suggested the creation of a working party to plan and manage future events for the City Council.

The Town Clerk suggested that the Events Sub-Committee could be reformed as it would have more authority to act on behalf of the City Council as well as having the ability to co-opt non-Councillors to increase the breadth of skills available during the event planning.

The Town Clerk asked the Committee to delay reforming the Events Sub-Committee until after he had had a chance to discuss all the matters mentioned with the District Council.

The Chairman and Committee agreed with the Town Clerk. The creation of an Events Sub-Committee was therefore deferred to the next Community Affairs Committee meeting being held on 29 March 2021.

Comments from later in the meeting – raised hand missed at the time: Councillor Sharp mentioned that ChiCycle was in the process of planning small scale events including some centred around Centurion Way. She informed Members that she believed that smaller events would be more realistic in the near future.

Councillor Sharp also suggested that, as people who were furloughed or unable to work would have more time on their hands to work on physical items for use at future events. An example given was the recreation of the Chichester City gates that had been built as part of the 1911 Coronation celebrations.

#### 51. POSTAL DELIVERIES IN THE CHICHESTER AREA

The Chairman reported to Members that she had not received any post since 23 December 2020.

She informed Members that, further to a visit to the sorting office, she had been advised that a number of postal staff were either on sick leave with Covid19 or self-isolating after having been contacted by the Test and Trace app. This meant that the postal deliveries were short staffed and struggling to cope with the volume of mail currently being processed.

The Committee were further informed by the Chairman that she had been advised that some areas of the city were not currently covered by postal deliveries or, following the surge in online shopping, the Royal Mail were prioritising parcel deliveries over letters which sometimes meant that letters were not being delivered regularly.

The Chairman reported that, during her visit to the sorting office, she had raised concerns about vaccination appointment letters not going out for delivery with the potential for missed appointments and the possible knock on effects with people missing their vaccinations.

The Mayor agreed with this and expressed his concern about any delays to these appointment letters.

Councillors discussed the varying experiences with postal deliveries across the city with some stating deliveries were normal while others indicated problems being experienced personally or by people they knew. The Town Clerk commented that, in common with the issues discussed earlier about the NHS, better communication from Royal Mail outlining the problems with the post would have been useful.

The Chairman informed the Committee that each postman had their own area and they did not share workload out across staff in the event that other areas were short staffed.

Councillor Lishman expressed her support for postal workers. The Chairman agreed but reiterated her concerns about the vaccination letters.

Councillor Carter suggested that a request could be made to GP surgeries that follow up phone calls be made to try to ensure that appointments were not missed due to postal delays. The Mayor responded by informing Members that it was his understanding that the appointment letters were sent out centrally so, while the GPs were administering the vaccines, they would not necessarily be aware of whose letters were being sent out and when.

The Town Clerk and the Mayor agreed to raise this area of concern with the NHS during their next weekly liaison meeting.

52. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- Formation of an Events Sub-Committee
- Update on vaccination programme

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: MONDAY 29 MARCH 2021

The meeting closed at 4.28pm