



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 21 MARCH 2022 AT 3.00PM

- PRESENT:** Councillors Apel (Chairman), C Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Gershater and Lishman
- EX-OFFICIO:** The Mayor (Councillor J Hughes) and Councillor Scicluna (Chairman of Finance)
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Corfield, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Member Services Support Officer
Michael Bevis (Chairman - Friends of Chartres), Liz Turner (Chairman – Friends of Ravenna), Yvonne Thomson (CEO, UK Harvest), Steve Hill (Stakeholder and Partnership Lead, West Sussex County Highways)
- ATTENDING VIA ZOOM:** Councillors Carter and Sharp, Graham Pound (Chairman – Friends of Valletta), Paula Chatfield (Chichester Tree Wardens), a member of the press.

72. APOLOGIES AND RECORD OF ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Joy), Councillor Plowman, Ms Pam Bushby (Chichester District Council) and Ms Helen Marshall (Vice-Chair, Chichester BID)

73. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2021

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record.

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

Councillors Apel, Lishman and Sharp declared an interest as Members of Chichester District Council.

Councillor Sharp declared an interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council

Councillor Scicluna declared an interest as the City Council representative with the Friends of Chartres, Ravenna and Valletta.

At this point the Chairman took Agenda items 10 and 11.

75. UK HARVEST

The Chairman introduced Yvonne Thomson, CEO of UK Harvest.

The Committee was given a short visual presentation (slides included with these minutes) about UK Harvest, its background, the services it provides together with some supporting statistics.

Members thanked Ms Thomson for her interesting presentation.

In response to a question from Councillor Gershater, Ms Thomson assured Members that UK Harvest had a strong relationship with UK supermarket companies and was working with them to reduce food waste as much as possible. She also informed Members that UK Harvest had a good relationship with farmers so the produce they received was often fresher than that on supermarket shelves.

Councillor Sharp asked about the relationship between the Food Partnership and UK Harvest. She also asked about the UK Harvest pop-up pantries that had been set up around the city and whether there were plans for a pop-up pantry in south ward.

Ms Thomson advised Members that UK Harvest had been involved with the initial set up of the Food Partnership but that they had found that progress with the Food Partnership had been difficult with not enough action resulting from the discussions.

She also advised that the pop-up pantries were intended to help people get used to buying their own food and that she would be happy to discuss an additional pantry in City South but there would be the question of funding with UK Harvest needing to raise £1.25million per year to sustain its operations.

Councillor Sharp asked about the reason that there was currently no pop-up pantry in the south and gave examples of where pantries had been provided.

Ms Thomson responded that, where provision had been made, it had been other in areas of greatest perceived need and where organisations had approached UK Harvest and sought to work collaboratively with them on pantry provision.

Councillor Sharp advised that two schools in her area had expressed an interest and it was agreed that the appropriate contact details would be exchanged so that a dialogue could be started.

The Mayor informed Members that he had attended several events in his ward where food had been provided by UK Harvest and he expressed his thanks to them for their hard work in the community. This was supported by all Councillors.

The Chairman thanked Ms Thomson for her presentation.

76. COMMUNITY HIGHWAY PARTNERSHIPS

The Chairman introduced Steve Hill, Stakeholder and Partnership Lead, West Sussex County Highways.

Mr Hill gave a short oral presentation, outlining what Community Highway Partnerships were and how the City Council might want to get involved.

Members were advised that the scheme was part of the County Council's "Improving Local Places and Spaces" initiative which aimed to enable local communities to focus on local priorities over and above the wider provision from the County Council.

Members were further advised that the Community Highways Partnership enabled parish councils to enter in to a framework agreement with the County Council to allow them to focus on the needs of their local area – examples given included clearing pavement edges, tree maintenance or mowing verges more regularly.

Mr Hill also informed Members that the scheme allowed other, authorised organisations to undertake projects under the umbrella of the County Council's liability insurance.

He advised Members that the process was straight forward and started with a schedule of tasks and projects that the partner organisation wanted to undertake with the arrangement generally lasting two years but that this was not fixed.

Mr Hill informed Members that, once the schedule had been submitted, it would be reviewed by County Council Highways to assess suitability and so they could work with the Partner on the best way to proceed.

Councillor Lishman asked whether she was permitted to plant on and maintain a piece of public verge that adjoined her property.

Mr Hill advised that this was in line with the Community Verges initiative and would be permitted subject to an application for a planting licence.

In response to a question from Councillor Corfield, Mr Hill advised that, if the projects were undertaken through the partnership, they could encompass a wide range of works and not just maintenance.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hill for his presentation and suggested that the topic could be added to the agenda for future meetings.

Post meeting note:

More information about Community Highways Partnerships:

- <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure-recreation-and-community/supporting-local-communities/improving-local-places-and-spaces/>

After the meeting, Mr Hill provided the following information.

- Highways planting licence information
 - o <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-licences/planting-licence/>
- Contact email for questions
 - o active.communities@westsussex.gov.uk

The meeting returned to the published agenda order.

77. UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) **Minute 59(a) – Season of Culture/Culture Spark 2022**

No updates were received.

b) **Minute 59(b) – Events update – HRH Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee**

The Town Clerk advised Members that, while interest was being expressed by other organisations in participating, this was not currently translating in to actions.

He informed the Committee that Council Officers continued to work on the event with letters having been delivered to all businesses in the four main streets in the city centre, among other actions.

Members were further informed that they would be updated in due course.

In response to a question from Councillor Lishman, the Town Clerk advised that, in the event of the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II, consideration would need to be given about whether it was appropriate for the event to continue in a modified form, if at all, depending on the date on which the death occurred and any advice from Buckingham Palace.

- c) **Minute 59(d) – The Queens Green Canopy Champion Cities**
No updates were received.
- d) **Minute 59(e) – Appointment to outside body – Safer Sussex Task Force**
The Committee noted that no further updates had been received.

It was agreed that this item would not be included in future agendas.

- e) **Minute 59(f) – Appointment to outside body – Oxmarket Association Trustee**
The Town Clerk informed Members that he had contacted the Oxmarket as requested at the previous meeting and that he had been advised that the Oxmarket Association Trust board were still undergoing a review.

He agreed that he would follow up his previous email in late April and report back to the Committee.

- f) **Minute 67 – Queens Platinum Jubilee Commemorative Tree Planting**
The Town Clerk informed Members that the Mayor had been invited to plant a commemorative oak tree in the newly renamed Platinum Jubilee Park on the Whitehouse Farm development on 22 April 2022 and that this would be followed up by the installation of an interpretation board to commemorate the occasion.

He also informed Members that the Chichester Tree Wardens were planning to plant 70 trees across the city to celebrate the Jubilee.

Councillor Scicluna reported that the Property Manager was arranging for another tree to be planted in Jubilee Gardens and that species being considered were a flowering cherry, a London Plain, a cedar and an oak.

- g) **Minute 61 – Sussex Police Chief Big Data presentation**
The Mayor informed Members that he had attended the online Big Data presentation but that it had suffered from technical issues.

He further informed Members that, because of this, the presentation had been audio only and difficult to follow and that he did not feel any better informed as a result of attending.

- h) **Minute 68 - City Centre WiFi**
No update had been received from Councillor Plowman and this item was deferred to the next meeting.
- i) **Minute 70 – Chichester Railway Station**
No update had been received from Councillor Plowman and this item was deferred to the next meeting.

78. POLICING AND SECURITY IN THE CITY

- a) **Community Wardens update**
The Committee noted the Community Warden reports that had been circulated with the agenda.
- b) **Chichester BID Rangers update**
The Committee noted the Chichester BID Rangers report that had been circulated with the agenda.
- c) **West Sussex Police update**
The Committee noted that no report had been received.

Councillor Lishman raised concerns about the absence of a budget for the removal of graffiti around the city and that the increased presence of graffiti was having a serious effect on the look of the city centre.

Members agreed that this was becoming a significant problem and expressed disappointment that the District Council no longer provided the graffiti cleaning service that had previously been in place.

In response to comments from Councillor Scicluna, the Member Services Support Officer reminded Members that the Community Wardens had been provided with a small graffiti removal kit but that this was only intended for small areas of graffiti.

Councillor Scicluna reported that the District Council had informed one of her constituents that, if the graffiti was found on private property or buildings, it was the responsibility of the owners to have it removed.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Town Clerk advised that providing such a service was not within the resources of the City Council. He further advised that no approach had been received from the District Council for a financial contribution to continuing to provide a graffiti removal service.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that, while the City Council had a budget that could be used to assist with such issues, it was not able to commit to large scale, ongoing funding.

Referring to the District Council's "Chichester Vision" plan, Councillor Scicluna expressed the opinion that, while it was positive that the plan wanted to encourage people to visit Chichester; the lack of action on the graffiti issue would deter people from coming in to the city.

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

a) **Friends of Chartres**

The Chairman of the Friends of Chartres presented his report.

He thanked the Chairman of the Committee and advised Members that this would be his last meeting as Chairman as his year in office would be ending shortly and that he would be standing down at the upcoming Friends of Chartres AGM.

Councillors were informed that the Friends would be making their first visit to Chartres since the pandemic had started and that the members were looking forward to it having only been able to maintain the relationship by Zoom during the past two years.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked Mr Bevis for his contributions during his tenure as Chairman of the Friends of Chartres.

b) **Friends of Ravenna**

The Chairman of the Friends of Ravenna presented her report.

Members were advised that an invitation had been received to visit Ravenna in the autumn.

They were further advised that there were ongoing concerns about the disparity in the sizes of the two associations with Chichester Friends of Ravenna maintaining healthy membership numbers while the Ravenna Friends of Chichester struggled with low membership. It was felt that this might have a knock on effect with the number of Ravenna households that would be able to host Chichester members during their visits.

c) **Friends of Valletta**

Councillor Scicluna, as the City Council's representative with the Friends of Valletta, presented the report that had been sent by the Chairman of the Friends association.

Councillor Scicluna left the meeting.

80. **CHICHESTER TREE WARDENS**

Mrs Chatfield presented her report on behalf of the Chichester Tree Wardens.

She informed Members that the Tree Wardens had recently had a review of their activities and confirmed their three primary activities of promote, plant and protect where possible.

Mrs Chatfield reported that, since her last report, two Tree Wardens had resigned. One of these having decided to move on while the other had decided to retire.

She asked that a record of thanks be made in the minutes to Mr Brian Hopkins who had been a Tree Warden since the 1990s and had now decided to retire.

Members were informed that Mr Hopkins had been the original author of the Chichester Tree Trail and that he had recently updated the trail during the pandemic period.

Mrs Chatfield urged Members to look at the new Tree Trail which, due to lack of funding, was only available online (<https://www.treesinchi.org/chichester-tree-trail>)

The Committee was advised that the Tree Wardens had concerns about the current high speed cabling installation by City Fibre.

Mrs Chatfield informed Members that, if City Fibre decided to lay the trunking in the verges rather than under pavements, there would be a risk that future tree planting could be affected due to the need to avoid planting near the cabling.

She further informed Members that West Sussex County Highways had very little control over this work beyond when roads could be dug up and the quality of the reinstatement of the highways once the cables had been laid.

The Chairman suggested that concerned residents could raise the issues of using the verges with the installation teams with a view to discussing making minor cable route adjustments with them.

81. **FIRE SAFETY FRIENDS OF KURSK**

The Committee noted the report from the Fire Safety Friends of Kursk that had been circulated with the agenda.

82. **EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF HISTORIC TOWNS AND REGIONS**

The Chairman suggested that a representative of the Association be invited to speak to the Committee at their next meeting.

83. **CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION AT THE SUSSEX POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S FOCUS GROUP**

It was AGREED that Councillor Lishman would represent the City Council at the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Focus Group being held in Selsey on 18 May 2022 at 2.30pm.

84. PROPOSED SPEYER FRIENDSHIP LINK

The Town Clerk reported that he had received two proposed dates from Speyer for a visit to Chichester over the summer.

He informed the Committee that he would be discussing the visit with the incoming Mayor later in the week with a view to confirming the visit and starting the planning process.

The Town Clerk reported that Speyer had indicated they wanted a low key initial visit to discuss the way forward rather than attending large civic events.

Councillor Gershater advised Members that he felt that this was very positive news and, as a German speaker, offered to assist with the visit.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING (DISCRETIONARY GRANTS): MONDAY 11 APRIL 2022

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: MONDAY 6 JUNE 2022

The meeting closed at 3.50pm