

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich CO12 3DS

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF
HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, CHURCH STREET, HARWICH
on
TUESDAY 11th APRIL 2017 at 7.00pm**

- Present:** Cllrs Calver, Fay, Fowler, I Henderson, J Henderson, McLeod, C Powell, F Powell, Smith, Struth, Todd and Urwin
- Clerk:** Ms Lucy Ballard
- Chairman:** Cllr P Morrison
- Also present:** 3 members of the public, 1 member of the press, Heidi Foster, Leanne Thornton and Alison Mckinney from Tendring District Council, and David and Mandy Rose from the Grand Theatre of Lemmings

The Chairman welcomed Rebecca from the H&M Standard

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Ashley, B Brown and J Brown

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 12th April 2016 (previously circulated) be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Betty Holbrook, resident of East Ward, referred to the recent Harwich Haven Authority (HHA) meeting which she attended and mentioned they're one of the biggest operations in Harwich. She expressed her disappointment, annoyance and anger that no Harwich Town councillor was present at the meeting despite having been invited. She mentioned it was a very interesting meeting and much could've been learnt. Cllr Morrison said she was otherwise engaged on that evening, but she's attended several of their meetings in the past, as have other councillors. Cllr J Henderson said that often meetings do clash, and she was also otherwise engaged but mentioned that as a district councillor she recently attended a Tendring District Council (TDC) briefing at which HHA gave a presentation so was fully aware of the work they do and the operational aspect of the HHA. Cllr C Powell referred to the tour he and other members of Council attended in the latter part of last year, which gave a real insight into the operations of the HHA. Cllr I Henderson also attended the TDC briefing and having previously sat on the HHA Board, he is aware of how vital the work they do is, to the local economy. He reiterated the importance that members place on the HHA. Cllr Calver also mentioned that he'd attended the TDC briefing at which the HHA were present. Cllr Fowler confirmed she has a long-term relationship with the HHA and was very disappointed not to be able to attend but she said, at times, meetings do clash with those of both Harwich Town Council and TDC, but having attended the operations tour many times, she is also aware of what goes on there and what they do.

Dr Rogers, resident of East Central Ward, asked about the plans for the refurbishment of the Dovercourt skate park and said as he's not seen the specification, asked if it had been designed for all abilities and age groups and whether the overall design included seating for parents and/or spectators. Cllr J Henderson said there will be no arranged seating for spectators under the current proposals, but it could be looked into at a later date should further funding become available. She mentioned that the Council is making the actual install of the new skate park a priority and is awaiting the outcome of some recent bids, which should hopefully bridge the final gap in funding. Referring to the intended audience, she said if users can walk and use the equipment (i.e. skate board, bike, scooter etc.) then they will be able to use the skate park. Cllr I Henderson said the actual design was supported by existing users of the facility who worked with the design company to come up with a design based on what they wanted from the facility. They were an older age group, but it has been designed to accommodate all age and ability groups. He is aware that other locations have youth shelters but at present the Council is concentrating on getting the facility in place as there's not many free facilities locally to be enjoyed by the younger members of the community.

Dr Rogers asked about the proposals for the outdoor gym in Cliff Park and said he'd completed the online survey that was linked from the HTC website. He asked whether it was an HTC or TDC initiative. Cllr I Henderson said it was initially off the back of an Essex County Council (ECC) initiative, who were partially funding the project, but TDC will be delivering it and have appointed a Public Health Co-ordinator to assist with that. He believed that the Crime Prevention Panel originally brought the idea to the fore. And the proposals are designed to encourage healthy living and fits in nicely with the other existing play equipment in the Park and compliments 'Parkrun', which meets in the park. He said it was partially funded by ECC, but it's hoped the remaining funds may come from some TDC pot of money such as s106. Dr Rogers asked if the survey was only available online. The Clerk confirmed that HTC was only provided with an electronic link and not hard copies. Dr Rogers asked how many councillors have completed the survey. Those who had, raised their hand. Dr Rogers asked when and how will the results together with any implementation plans will be made public as he felt it strange that the sort of equipment one might want to be included, wasn't asked about. Cllr J Henderson said the results had been published in today's Gazette. It was further confirmed that the H&M Standard had published the outcome online today and it will feature in the paper this Friday. Cllr Morrison said outdoor gyms are being supplied in various places and those providers will have an idea of what is popular and probably use many of the same pieces all over. Cllr Fowler asked Dr Rogers to look on the TDC website to view the details of the survey responses. She said she welcomes that type of project in the area and she feels the survey could've been better, but that there was a long news report release on the TDC website which could be viewed. Cllr C Powell said the priority was to obtain agreement for the outdoor gym first then select the actual pieces of equipment.

Dr Rogers asked if there were any vacant allotment plots presently and whether the Council make them available at low cost to the needy. Cllr Todd confirmed that those in receipt of state pension receive a discount and that HTC has what he believes is the cheapest allotments in the country. He confirmed that to his knowledge the Council hasn't been approached by anyone asking for further discounts. He said currently there are around 6 allotments available but that the Clerk could confirm. Cllr I Henderson said if a request was made for further discounts, Council wouldn't dismiss giving it due consideration. Cllr Calver confirmed that a 5-rod plot including water would cost less than £20 per year. In comparison to Colchester, the water charges alone exceed this. He

confirmed the present discount for those in receipt of state pension is 50%, which will be reduced to 25% from next year, but in Colchester it's less than a 10% reduction. He said we need more investment in the allotments and the cost is holding us back.

Dr Rogers asked about the Council website feedback form. He said, having used the form, he wasn't sure whether it had been received because there was no send button. He continued to ask for further information on the effectiveness of the feedback form, how many times has it been used and what expectations the Council has for its use. Cllr Struth, having previously been a web designer, said her expectations would be that people might use the form to comment on things which are not working correctly on the site and suggestions for agenda items, however she expects it to be largely underused. The Clerk said there had been issues recently which were preventing the feedback/contact forms being received, but which have since been resolved. Cllr Urwin confirmed the send button is present as is an email address which people can use as an alternative.

Dr Rogers asked if there was an update on the efforts to address the pigeon mess in the High Street, uphill of the traffic lights, and asked what measures will be taken to prevent it from reoccurring. Cllr McLeod said the property owners need to be approached to put pigeon deterrents on their buildings. Cllr I Henderson said the issue was addressed when the matter was first raised but it's reoccurring. Cllr McLeod said he will be pursuing the matter.

*See addendum (approved at APM on 18th April 2018)

No further public questions were taken.

PRESENTATION FROM TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL – GRANGE ROAD COMMUNITY FUN DAY

Alison McKinney introduced herself and her colleagues. She gave a brief outline of their proposals for the Grange Road Community Fun Day which will be held on 9th August 11am-3pm. The initiative has come off the back of the Housing ASB Strategy and one of the aims of the strategy is to organise or get involved in a community event so it was decided to select that location following several reports of anti-social behaviour around that area recently. The event, which will be weather dependent, is a non-profit family event intended to foster community spirit and get residents involved in and making use of the services provided to them by TDC, as their landlords. It's free to attend and they want it to be a 'walk-to' event because parking is an issue and they don't want residents inconvenienced. They will invite the residents of Grange Road and Elizabeth Road, including both owner-occupiers and TDC tenants and will leaflet drop the surrounding streets (Fronks Road, Deanes Close etc.). They are looking at utilising the council-owned land behind Grange Road which has 3-4 access points, including vehicular access. TDC are struggling to gain interest with people and asked the Council for ideas or contacts for organisations who might wish to have a stall. So far, they have confirmed attendance from the Fire Brigade, Community Safety Partnership, Chelsea Football Club, the NHS, who will provide a marquee to give advice, and TDC's Open spaces and Recycling teams. Activities will be available for the kids to try and promote wildlife gardening. TDC's Engineering team will bring their JCB digger, the skate rink will bring an inflatable and ice-cream van, and the Rotary club, local dance troop and Harwich Judo club have also signed up. The Crooked Elms Residents Association will provide refreshments with any money raised going to their group. The team are seeking balloon sellers, face painters, a tombola and local charities that have leaflets which could be displayed. They are also after a PA system, gazebos, stalls and local bands. Essex Youth Bus have expressed an

interest as have the CVST. Cllr I Henderson suggested the London Bus Theatre Company might be a good contact because of their recent efforts to engage with youngsters in the area. Cllr F Powell suggested Harwich Sing might be interested. Cllr J Henderson suggested opening the peace garden for older residents to be able to sit during the day. Alison said there are some issue they need to overcome such as parking and space on the field, as well as some uneven ground. Cllr J Henderson referred to a previous smaller event of this nature at Churchill Court and thanked TDC for putting that on, as it really helped to break down barriers. She said it's really good work and should bring a lot of praise.

PRESENTATION FROM THE GRAND THEATRE OF LEMMINGS

Mandy Rose thanked the Council for their continued support throughout the previous 13 years that they've been organising the Children's Carnival, which have been extraordinarily successful events albeit last year when the weather had an adverse effect. Going forward, the GTL has decided to change the event to the Festival of Imagination, which will be a celebration of creativity in the local schools and will feature outdoor theatre, dance and music. They are hoping to have a marquee to shelter from inclement weather.

A couple of years ago the GTL formed the idea of using the heritage of the Tendring Coastline to help regenerate the local coastal towns. This involved working with local history groups and took 3 months to research and develop an activity plan. A film was produced about the journey and a lengthy document comparing and contrasting the different histories between the towns. This year, Essex County Council are taking it to the next stage. The project has raised £360k and will include a festival, schools project, conference and touring exhibition. The Harwich Society is expected to be closely involved.

They have raised money through the Heritage Lottery fund for a project that will lead into Mayflower 400 called Step on Board, which will take place across 5 Harwich schools and is designed to make young people aware and be proud of the rich coastal heritage and the town they live in. It's intended to create the experience of stepping on board the Mayflower using actors and a nautical structure. It's a hands-on learning experience that will happen in 3 phases. Children will discover about the Mayflower and learn the knowledge needed to survive on board. It will include a visit to Harwich town, looking into the history of Harwich, learning about how ships navigate the harbour and investigate the tides using a chip log. The third phase will be a day in school aboard the nautical structure, where they will hoist the mast, furl sails, dress in clothes and eat food from the time, and explore what it was like in the cramped conditions below deck.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.01pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE

Addendum to page 3 of the minutes

1. The Chairman asked Dr Rogers, of East Central Ward, why he didn't ask his questions at Full Council meetings, and his response which was that due to the Council's rules, he wasn't able to ask more than 1 question at a time.