

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 14th MARCH 2023 at 7.15pm**

Present: Cllrs Chant, Calver, Davidson, Ferguson, J Henderson, McLeod, Morrison (until 7.22pm), Powell, Richardson, Saunders, D Smith, G Smith and Todd

Clerk: Ms Lucy Ballard

Chairman: Cllr I Henderson

Also present: 4 members of the public (2 from outside of the parish), 0 members of the press and guest speakers Sharon Alexander, Insp. Aaron Homatopoulos and DS Vanessa Moss.

The Chairman welcomed members of the public and guest speakers.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Fay and Fowler

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Mrs Holbrook of Harwich & Kingsway ward proposed the minutes as a true record.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 28th April 2022 (previously circulated) be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

BRIEFING FROM SHARON ALEXANDER, CHIEF OFFICER, CVS TENDRING

Cllr Henderson welcomed and introduced Sharon Alexander (SA) to the meeting. He referred to CVST achieving 50 years' service and felt they should be congratulated. SA thanked members for welcoming her and presented the work of CVST, supported by a PowerPoint presentation and video. CVST was originally set up in 1973 by Clacton Urban District Council, and which is one of approximately 200 CVSs across the country. It was originally run solely by volunteers until 1990, when SA was appointed. They're planning lots of celebrations to mark their 50-year milestone. Their mission is to lead, support and develop the voluntary sector and in the early days, started a community transport service, which subsequently became Harwich Connexions. They also like to empower local people. SA said they do asset mapping to research voluntary groups that can support local residents. There are approximately 10,000 volunteers across the Tendring district and more than 50 community centres, church and village halls involved. They provide lots of opportunities to bring organisations together, and she referred to some of the initiatives organised by CVST (Community fair, network breakfast, Christmas markets). They also give out grants, which have averaged £23k per organisation.

Dovercourt and Harwich hub is a focal point for people to come together and volunteer. Activities include friendship café, weight management, IT, crafts and many others. SA referred to Beat the Street and Harwich was the best in the country. They promote cultural

awareness and another project they run is HILL (Healthier Independent Longer Lives), which is a Lottery funded project working with local residents. SA referred to a number of volunteering opportunities and asked councillors if they would be interested in volunteering their time if they could spare any. Their Resilience project helps keep people safe and well in the summer. In winter they've done door drops, targeting the most vulnerable in the community. They also given out small grants to organisations to assist with projects such as the 'slow cooker club'. They work with GP surgeries, through their Social Prescribing service, to assist those suffering with mental health issues.

SA referred to some statistics and case studies to demonstrate the work they've carried out. Finally, SA spoke about a resident who had received assistance from CVST's Social Prescribing service and the impact it had on their life.

SA handed out leaflets on the services provided by CVST and thanked HTC for the support given to help establish the Dovercourt and Harwich Hub.

The mayor invited questions or comments.

Cllr Davidson commended CVST and spoke of his involvement with them.

Cllr I Henderson referred to his time as an MP and the interest by ministers in the voluntary sector.

Cllr J Henderson thanked Sharon for all what CVST has done in the community.

Cllr I Henderson thanked Sharon for her attendance and presentation.

BRIEFING FROM INSP. AARON HOMATOPOULOS AND DS MOSS, TENDRING COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM

Cllr Henderson welcomed Insp. Homatopoulos (AH) and DS Moss (VM) to the meeting. AH introduced himself and DS Moss. AH gave a breakdown of criminal activity within the district, citing a 0.6% reduction in crime following a rise in the previous 6 months. There's an 8% drop in violent crime, 10% reduction in Domestic Abuse and 8% reduction in hate crime.

There has been an Increase in vehicle related crimes (theft of, from, or damage to vehicles) and shop lifting but antisocial behaviour is down 25% following a previous drop of 40%. Their priorities are priority offenders but there are none in Harwich. Local issues are motorbike offenders however a number of offenders have been caught. They're looking at working with the council to set up cameras locally and the Road Crime team is assisting with their initiatives. A 'Day of Action' will also be taking place during the school holidays, when they'll be concentrating on speeding etc. In summer, the Community Policing Team (CPT) will be doing Anti-social behaviour (ASB) patrols and targeting Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) hotspots, so extra resources will be brought in to assist with that. They're also tackling organised crime and drugs offenses and there's a lot of work ongoing.

The chairman thanked Insp. Homatopoulos and DS Moss for their time.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A resident wished to question the council, but it became apparent that he lived outside of the parish. The chair, out of courtesy, allowed him to ask one specific question on the level of cooperation between his parish (Ramsey & Parkeston) and Harwich Town Council. Cllr Davidson said he would happily address any issues raised if brought to him as chair of Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council. He referred to the noticeboard where the agendas are posted.

Cllr Ferguson said their meetings aren't well attended and want to encourage residents to come along and said they will promote this better. She confirmed there is a meeting next Monday.

Cllr G Smith said he does promote via social media the opportunity to come along to meetings if they have issues to raise with council.

Mrs Holbrook of Harwich & Kingsway ward wanted to know who did the planning for the proposed ironworks on the green, claiming many residents are not pleased with the initiative.

Cllr I Henderson read an extract from some correspondence with the planning officer at the district council. The proposed lettering is the final part of the Mayflower trail, which was delayed due to the pandemic. The letters won't take up significant space or take away from the recreational space already enjoyed by residents. It's intended as a photographic opportunity and tourist attraction. The finish is the same material as used elsewhere on the Mayflower Trail and is suitable for a coastal environment. He referred to the recent removal of several oak trees in the same area, and confirmed these were done so to prevent the growing root balls disturbing the sea defence. It is a separate issue and not related in any way to the aforementioned lettering project.

The application will be subject to consultation and the public and stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment in the usual way.

Mrs Holbrook referred to the removal of the oak trees and commented that they were removed without anyone knowing, after lots of time and money was spent planting them. Cllr I Henderson confirmed they were removed under the guidance of the Environment Agency and the trees are expected to be replaced as soon as possible, but with rowan species instead given the problems in sourcing oaks.

Cllr Calver pointed out that this is a TDC matter and the trees have been removed from TDC land by TDC.

Mrs Holbrook asked if there were any other appropriate places to site the aforementioned lettering.

Cllr I Henderson said the project was part of a bigger multi-agency project incorporating Mayflower 400 activities, which has attracted much interest. It is now the decision of Tendring District Council where the lettering is sited.

Sharon Alexander thanked the CPT for the statistics on criminal activity. CVST gets the crime reports and she'd noticed the increasing trend in vehicle-related crimes and wondered if there was a particular reason.

AH said it was a single offender who has since been caught. The offender was an opportunist looking for bank cards.

VM said the motivation was drugs.

Cllr D Smith congratulated the CPT on dealing with the motorbike issues.

Cllr I Henderson asked if it was the case that once they got a grip on one crime, that another increases. AH said it's often the same offenders finding different ways to commit their crimes. The criminals evolve and therefore the policing needs to evolve.

Cllr Calver commented on the honest and frank responses received from the current policing team and for that they should be congratulated.
The Chairman asked members to give a vote of thanks to invited guests. He also thanked everyone for attending and with no further questions, closed the meeting at 8.33pm

Cllr M Fowler
CHAIRMAN

DATE 23rd April 2024