



WARWICK TOWN COUNCIL

ECONOMIC & TOURISM COMMITTEE

MINUTES

6.30pm

Thursday 2 June 2016

PRESENT:

Councillors, Mrs L Bolton, Mrs D da Cruz, R Eddy, G Guest (substitute), J Holland, and the Mayor (ex Officio)

Co-Opted members Mrs E Healey, Mrs C Hodgetts, Mrs S Butcher.

Also in attendance were: -

Inspector Lucy Sewel, Central Motorway Operational Patrol Unit

Chris Davenport, Traffic Manager for Transport & Highways, Warwickshire County Council

Paul Atkin, Highways England Service Provider Kier Highways

Pete Rouse, Police Traffic Manager

Chris Kitson, Safer Neighbourhood Police Representative

Mr Tony Gooch

Noel Butler Warwick District Councillor

Angela Warner Warwickshire County Councillor

Hannah Smith (Courier Newspaper)

16. Election of Chairman

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs C Cross and seconded by Councillor Mrs L Bolton that Councillor R Eddy be elected Chairman. No other nominations were received and it was;

RESOLVED: That Councillor R Eddy be elected Chairman of the Economic and Tourism Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Eddy took the Chair

17. Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were received on behalf of Councillors M Ashford, S Cross, Mrs M Grainger, R Mann, N Murphy

Mrs J Baldry, Mr L Bartlett and A Klein

18. Declarations of Interest

Councillor J Holland declared a non-pecuniary interest for item 10, Folk Festival.

There were no further notifications of any matters arising from the agenda on which Members might have an interest of personal or prejudicial nature.

19. Election of Deputy Chairman

It was proposed by Councillor C Cross and seconded by Councillor R Eddy that Councillor S Cross be elected Deputy Chairman. No other nominations were received and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor S Cross be elected Deputy Chairman of the Economic and Tourism Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

20. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2016 were signed by the Chairman.

21. M40 Road Closures, Strategic issues

The Chairman welcomed all who had responded to the Town Councils invitation to join the meeting in order to engage in further discussion concerning the recent transport and traffic difficulties in the Town due to traffic incidents on the M40 and the traffic control procedures in place.

A freedom of information request was made by Mr Tony Gooch to each different organisation concerned with this issue, and Mr Gooch was invited to open the discussion with his initial questions and potential outcomes going forward.

Each representative introduced themselves, outlined their role and the procedures presently in place should traffic need to be diverted from the Motorway network and how this was achieved.

Whilst acknowledging that procedures were in place and agreed diversion routes within all Highways Teams it was also acknowledged that communication had broken down with some teams not being contacted which resulted in significant traffic issues and gridlock which took many hours to clear.

It was reported that the teams had held an enquiry into this breakdown of communication the previous week and these issues were identified as well as an intention to reconsider different traffic schemes which had been previously dismissed.

It was outlined and acknowledged by the Members that the Police needed to be meticulous with Health & Safety, Crime Scene recording etc. and that Emergency Services involved had varying degrees of difficulty which could all caused delay, it was nonetheless a comprehensive introduction as to the full scope of the different groups involved with such incidents.

Councillors asked for consideration regarding;

- Diversion of HGV's into the Town which has a weight limit restriction and how these vehicles could be specifically diverted,
- Traffic Information and how it could be disseminated at earlier stages along the network
- Air Quality ramifications as Warwick is already over the levels of acceptable pollution limits
- Revisit diversion routes
- Damage caused to the towns bridges with the amount of traffic diverted through the Town.

It was acknowledged that further discussion and communication between the organisations and the Councils would be essential, particularly with the further consideration of the Local Plan and the traffic infrastructure needed for substantial housing growth and the impending difficulties with the creation of the High Speed Rail link HS2 into the County/District.

It was agreed by all Agencies that progress needed to be made and it was resolved that the Agencies in attendance would commit to meet regularly and agree to the **same staff** as liaison. The Council would submit suggestions and questions for consideration, with a view to a subsequent report back from the Liaison Group as to progress.

Police representative, Chris Kitson was able to report that locally our Safer Neighbourhood Police units had been successful in recent HGV surveillance and some 23 vehicles had been intercepted and given warnings about the weight restrictions; their employers had also been contacted as to ongoing ramifications of recurrence of the offense. They would look to continue to request this detail as and when time and resources were available.

The Chairman again thanked all for their attendance and time, and would look forward to our ongoing relationship.

ATC confirmed that the Council would be in contact with the suggestions/questions not only outlined at the meeting but also requested from Councils as a whole.

22. Parking on Church Street

Mr Lucas Vandershalk, a resident from Church Street attended the meeting and submitted his request that the waiting period for Church Street be reconsidered as parking was difficult for residents.

It was established that this issue had been submitted to the County Council who had had a meeting with residents on Church Street and whilst it had been previously considered had also been rejected.

It was also acknowledged that the parking restrictions across the Town were very varied and other areas were also facing difficulties such as St Johns where a petition had been started to address the parking restrictions opposite the shops. Also Tournament Fields, Weston Close, Charter Approach.

It was resolved to form a working group from the Town Council incorporating members with District Council & County Council affiliation and also Sue Butcher, Chairman of Warwick Chamber of Trade, to represent the business concerns in order to formulate observations and submit suggestions/questions to the County Parking Management team before the next deadline.

23. Visitor Information Centre

Manager Liz Healy submitted a short report which acknowledged the support from staff and volunteers who had rallied to cover the Sunday opening and illness cover.

The new visitor guide had been signed off and printed with some 10,000 copies going to Warwick castle to encourage footfall into the town.

The new visitor information website was reported as up and running and a request was made for members to scrutinise and feedback. visitwarwick.co.uk

The VIC would again be hosting artwork as part of the two week Open Studios event.

It was also reported that footfall was again down but sales were up in both retail and the selling of Warwick Castle tickets. A fuller report would be submitted at the next meeting.

24. Court House Usage

The Ballroom had had increased bookings with a number of Pilates classes which were very popular.

The trial run of the re-opening of the front door on Jury Street had proven to be popular and had made a positive impact for visitors to the information centre.

A brief discussion had been held between ATC and the County Registrars with a view to the creation of offering a joined up package for Weddings held a Pageant House then into the Ballroom. Report at the next meeting.

Footfall VIC Working Group

The group had identified the need for a dedicated role for marketing and business development of the Court House as an events space/ and community hub offering community focussed activities.

A job description for the role was outlined and submitted to the Committee and whilst it was agreed in principal it was not something that could be pursued at this moment as it was not included in this current year's budget.

It was also acknowledged that the Community Engagement consultation if successful would partly cover some of the aspects outlined and the results from that venture be monitored before any other consultant was brought in.

It was also hoped that the working group and community engagement officer would meet again with a view to address the retail side of the Visitor Information Centre.

25. Community Event Application

It was resolved to fully support the Application for £3000 towards the Warwick Words History Festival the theme this year was specifically Warwick History.

It was resolved that as the Thai Festival run by Warwick Rotary had made the decision to move to a more commercial basis in partnership with the Racecourse that it would be inappropriate to allocate any funding this year.

26. Town Centre Events

Confirmation of dates set out in the Agenda - Aviva women's Cycle Race- 16 June Cycle Tour through the Town and Armed Forces Day- 25 June 2016

Signed..... Date.....