



**Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 3 October 2007 at 7 pm
The Council Community Rooms, Highworth**

Meeting chaired by Keith Smith

Present:

Keith Smith	Paul Newton-Smith	Tom Aherne	Peter Hinton
Joanne Cook	Claire Smith	Katy Frost	Kati Wood
Ann Lewis	Jo Clark		

Visitors:

Hannah Reynolds
Joan Webb (minutes)

1 Apologies

Ian Young Charles Coffin Sandra Rendall Shirley Colbeck Smith

Keith welcomed Hannah Reynolds and introduced her to the committee.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting were signed as a true record. Proposed by **PNS** and seconded by **PH**.

3 Matters arising

KS reported that he had received £80 from David Lane as petty cash.

4 Socio-economic profile

HR distributed presentation notes. The profile was based upon the 8 themes. She stressed the importance of obtaining the opinions of people and businesses in Highworth. She had looked at all the evidence available from SBC although there was very little on Highworth despite being plenty of information on Swindon. There was little difference between Swindon Borough Council and Swindon town. There was planning for a large expansion of housing and business on the east of Swindon with employers looking for technology skills, which encouraged people to move into the area. There was however little expansion for Highworth or Wroughton 13% of the borough population lived in rural wards with 73% of land being rural. However there was no rural or market study for Highworth. There was therefore a need for Highworth to be recognised and brought into the plan.

HR stated that Blackworth was a thriving industrial estate and any vacancies are quickly filled. There was a need for **HCPG** to find out what these businesses want. Perhaps SBC or HTC had already done a study on these businesses.

KW stated that in her opinion South Marston was also part of Highworth, as this was a thriving industrial estate and many Highworth people worked on this estate. **HR** felt that **HCPG** needed to look at the town's boundaries.

The strategic plan showed lack of facilities for young people with a high level of anti social behaviour rather than violent crime. The young also see themselves as victims.

The public transport was adequate during the day but less adequate of an evening. The public consultancy had suggested cycle links between Highworth and the east side of Swindon, but the committee could not see this transpiring. **KW** stated that although the No 7 was a profitable route it was the worst service for lateness and missed buses.

32% of Highworth's population were living alone with 16% being older people with a high percentage of people caring for them. 15% were lone parents. There was also a high cost of housing within Highworth. All figures were based on the 2001 Census which were the latest figures available.

HR urged the committee to get clarity on SBC housing strategies for Highworth. There was a tendency to build flats rather than housing. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) allocates money to strategies – Highworth does not have a strategy. There was therefore an urgent need to ensure Highworth is written into the SBC strategy. Under Section 106, developers agree to provide funding for facilities. Highworth needs to ensure that they get a share of the east Swindon development. 12,000 houses will be built on the east side of Swindon in the next 10 years and Highworth Town Council needs to be talking to SBC to ensure that Highworth receives some of this funding. SBC will listen to HTC rather than groups, therefore HCPG need to work in partnership with HTC to apply for funding.

HCPG can also deal with low cost projects ie Christmas lights, flowers, signs to show that “we care about this place”. On entering Highworth at the Fox roundabout HCPG could turn this into a “Britain in Bloom”/business sponsorship roundabout for very little money. The group need a vision and objectives – any projects then slot in under that.

HR showed the committee other town plans. It was useful to have a series of meetings concentrating on one particular issue ; seminars/workshops; local community breakfast for businesses; sport facilities for young people, youth groups/church. It was useful to put everything on the website and be transparent and send to HTC. She also stated that Inglesham had four times more information than Highworth has on a Swindon website. **HR** informed the committee that their first project should be the plan and then follow up with the research. There was no further need to continue consultations with the community. The plan must be the first priority.

PH thanked **HR** for her hard work on her report. **HCPG** will now set about drafting the action plan by the end of January with a view to launching in March. **KS** knew of contacts who may be able to assist in writing the action plan. **HR** stated she would be happy to help “at the end of a phone”. The committee agreed there was a need to include pubs and restaurants in the business section and other clubs and The Rec in the facilities section.

The committee thanked **HR** and she left the meeting at 8.30 pm

The committee agreed that a small group should meet to write the programme. **KS, JC, PH, PNS** all agreed to sit on that committee. A discussion then followed as to what could be included or removed from **HR**'s report. **KS** asked the committee to feedback any amendments to him as soon as possible in order to ensure the Action Plan was accurate.

5 Planned Christmas activities

Christmas Activities

KF had produced posters for 3 November 9 am to 1 pm to make Christmas decorations to hang on the Christmas Tree. These were being distributed to schools, playgroups and around the town. It was hoped that by getting children involved in decorating the Christmas Tree they would respect the tree more. These decorations will be hung on the tree on 30 November when the lights are switched on.

Mobile ice skating rink

The two day hire charge was £4,000 inclusive of VAT and provisionally booked for 30 November/1 December. **KS** informed the committee that permission had still not been granted by the Mayor as he was reluctant to close the High Street again. However there was no need for the High Street to be

closed. Volunteers would be needed to take money, part of the hire charge to the rink company included staff to supervise and issue skates. The committee discussed charging between £2/£3 per 20 minute session. The rink would be locked down over night for security.

6 Housing Information Fayre – 20.10.07, Westrop School

The committee will have a stand at the Fayre from 11 am – 3 pm. The Rec also had a stand. There would also be food/tea/activities for children/youth service plus information for Highworth Tenants.

7 Members information

KW informed the committee that councils have to listen to neighbourhoods and Highworth was in a strong position. There was an opportunity to become a role model and make SBC look strong.

KS had written to the Chief Executive SBC. **KS** was hoping to meet with Matt Gott but as yet did not have a date for this meeting.

JC suggested writing to parish councils and give them the opportunity to become part of HCPG.

AL informed the committee that she would not be able to attend the next meeting, however Gareth would attend in her place.

TA requested more petty cash.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm