

Minutes from the AGM of the HCPG Meeting held The Centre 12th October 2011

Present: The meeting was attended by approximately 11 people and was chaired by Keith Smith chairman of the HCPG. Keith Smith, Ken Saunders, Sara Olnier, Maureen Penny, Anthea Beaumont, Alison Durrant, Sandra Rendall, Paul Newton Smith

1. Apologies: Shirley Colbeck Smith, Helen Hunt, Nick Johnson and Phylis Reid
2. Minutes of 2010 AGM: Accepted and proposed PNS. Seconded MP
3. Matters Arising: Chairs Report for 2010 for website
4. Chair's Report: The chair gave a précis of the activities and achievements of the HCPG over the previous year covering, Progress so far and on-going projects. Attached
5. Financial Report: see attached
Accepted and Proposed by PNS seconded by AB
HCPG Account holds money for the Village Green and May Day. This is a service HCPG offers to those groups who don't have a constitution.
HTC holds a grant of £3500 for us
MP asked about accountability of accounts for Village Green
KeithS agreed that all accounts would be looked at in November at next strategy meeting, and these would be published on the website. Full accounts for 2012 AGM.
Phil Baker asked about future income. Not needed as self sufficient start up of Centre with £475 from Battle of Bands
6. Election of Strategy Group: Phil Baker to become a committee member
MP as a Highworth Town Councillor and current Mayor has stepped down as Vice Chair of HCPG as she feels there maybe conflict between HTC and HCPG. She feels at present she can do more good for the group whilst not being a member of HCPG. Huge thanks to MP for all her hard work.
Vice Chair to be nominated at next HCPG meeting on Wednesday 2nd November 2011.
7. Close:

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR AGM 2011

Introduction

Welcome everyone to the third annual meeting of HCPG.

The Vision

The original purpose of HCPG was to prepare a 20 year Vision for the town. This was completed in 2008. We were then charged by the people of the town to facilitate the 400+ projects the people of the town had suggested. The projects were divided into areas, but these areas do have considerable overlap.

1. Economic Development: generating wealth to enable the town to flourish
2. Culture and Heritage: celebrating Highworth's uniqueness
3. Transport
4. Environment
5. Quality of Life: enable current and future generations to enjoy an excellent quality of life

Progress so far: HCPG has been active in many ways – supporting groups right across the town.

- We supported HTC in the development of new play equipment at Northview.
- We are working with HTC in trying to develop a Skate Park and MUGA
- HAFFT – we worked with this group to help them finally achieve Fair Trade status for the town
- Windrush Village Green – this area has been successfully conserved as a village green in perpetuity, the first new one in Wiltshire. We continued to support them and help where we could. A second birthday celebration was held in July.
- May Day Market – our second market was another huge success, far beyond our own modest expectations. Another one is planned for next year.
- Highworth Library – we have continued to support the library at this difficult time. We send our best wishes to the Shirley who is currently off work. We are delighted that it has longer opening hours and we urge the people of Highworth to use it even more.
- Job Club continues to meet every Wednesday in the Library from 10am to 12pm. Huge thanks go to Sandra, who does a terrific job in internet searching. Thanks also to Richard Williams who has been a regular helper. I have not counted recently, but at least 80 people have been to see us over the past two and half years. You may have seen the article in the Link recently. My concern in these difficult times is that 38% of all JSA claimants are aged between 18 – 24 this is 10% higher than in Swindon and 8% higher than the national average. In conversation with the Youth Worker this does not take into account those young people who are not claiming any benefit (NEETs).

On-going Projects: At the first meeting of the Strategy Group in November 2010 it was agreed to limit ourselves to two projects, the Fox Roundabout and the proposed Community Centre at the old Northview School.

Fox Roundabout: This is probably one of the most frustrating projects imaginable. The idea was first adopted in May 2009. Since then we have gone round in ever decreasing circles eventually disappearing up our own feasibility study. The project that would initially cost around £2k, then soared to £40k, hovered around £20k, then sank to a fairly static £8k plus extras. We have had endless meetings with SBC where great promises were held out. All to no avail. SBC are currently conducting a feasibility study, which should come to fruition in the late Spring. But, do not hold your breath. Many thanks to our Vice – chair for sticking at it for so long.

The Community Centre: Members of the strategy group from HCPG set up a charity Highworth Community Association to run the centre. This means that in line with terms of reference we support organisations and do not run things ourselves. It was officially opened by Justin Tomlinson MP in June 2011. It currently enjoys increasing usage and is in line to cover its costs in the first year. It is not the place of this meeting to go into great detail, but suffice it to say that once again HCPG took on the role of facilitator at the request of the people of Highworth and is making good progress.

Other Matters: HCPG continues to be a member of both the Wiltshire Forum for Community Area Partnerships (WFCAP) and Action for Market Towns (AMT). In fact your chairman has been invited to attend the Annual Convention , today and tomorrow and has been given a bursary to do so. It is the intention of HCPG to enter the Community Centre for an award next year. The organisation has also continued to attend the Swindon Strategic Partnership and is also a participant in the SSP Monitoring Group.

The Strategy Group, in considering activities for the next twelve months are concerned that the Vision is now 3 years old and would benefit from an evaluation and possible revision. As the vision is now the official Town Plan it was felt appropriate to have the support of HTC before commencing the task. This has proved to be more contentious than expected with one councillor actively and vehemently opposing such a move. I hope the matter will be resolved at the next full council meeting.

You may not be aware but SBC have developed a new strategy called 'Stronger Together'. The purpose is and I quote:

This envisages a new relationship between the council, the wider public sector and local communities, based on collaboration, trust and engagement. A summary of our ambition for Stronger Together is contained in the July Council report. A key element of Stronger Together is the appointment of seven full time Locality Leads who will have a significant role to play. To give you a flavour of the importance we attach to these roles, I have set out here the role purpose:

To build a rich network of relationships based on trust and mutual respect, in order to:

Be the heart of the operating model, to see the whole picture, to feed in insight and understanding, to motivate action

Build capability, confidence and release potential and resources of communities

Build a relationship of trust within and between communities and between communities and the council and its partners

Act as a catalyst for local leadership to embody positive values and behaviours to influence the new way of working

Create new conversations to secure local engagement, identify early help required and create momentum on securing key strategic priorities (e.g. healthy living, resilient families)

Leverage new resources

Remove barriers that discourage people and communities getting involved with local services

Reduce isolation and dependency and build more cohesive communities.

Although invited, I was unable to participate in the recruitment process due to other commitments. However it is important we engage with our Locality Lead at an early stage, so that we can set out our

programme. We shall be part of an area that includes Stratton and Covingham. We should also bear in mind that with boundary changes our ward may no longer remain exclusively Highworth.

In Conclusion: Finally I would like to put on record my huge thank you to all the members of the Strategy Group, for their continued hard work and support over the year. Each one of them contributes to the Highworth Community in a different way, as well as supporting HCPG in its efforts. I am particularly delighted to report that this year 3 of our members have been elected on to the Town Council. It would be unfair to single anyone member out – because in their own way each member has made an enormous contribution, unstintingly, for the benefit of the community of Highworth. I am often amazed at their dedication to the enormous task we face, but always deeply grateful for the time and support they give..

Thank you for listening.

Keith Smith, Chairperson