

FRIENDS OF HIGH TOWN
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 9TH AUGUST 2016

1. Attendees: David Landau, Chairman
 Maureen Allen, Secretary
 Fiona Morton, Treasurer
 David Alexander
 Lyn Bliss
 Russell Cartwright
 Philippa Collier
 John French
 Chris Grabham
 Kim Greig
 Andrew Malcolm, Local Councillor
 Vicki Salkin
 Pete Savage
 Dan Warwick
 Ezley White
2. Apologies: Ryad Khodabocus, Luke Middleton, Saida el Moujahid, Csaba Sipeki, Sam Willis
3. Minutes of the last meeting
4. Matters Arising
- a) Guerrilla Gardening
 Kim Greig said that she, Luke Middleton and Sam Willis had met to discuss how to develop green space in the High Town area. It was hoped that the Near Neighbours scheme might provide funding for this. A few possible sites for the project had been identified. If funding were to be allocated by Near Neighbours, KG said that any funding received would have to go through the bank account of an established community group, and she hoped that the FoHT account could be used. It was thought it would be a good idea if someone with a knowledge of gardening could be employed for one day a week to head-up the proposed scheme, along with volunteers. This suggestion would be included in the proposal to Near Neighbours. David Landau asked the meeting if there were any objections to the FoHT bank account being used for this purpose, and there were no objections.
- b) Street Association
 KG said that the recent visit to a FoHT meeting by the Street Association organisers had been arranged as Street Association were national partners of the Near Neighbours scheme. KG said it was hoped to organise something similar in the High Town area, but there would be slight differences to the scheme which had been described by SA. Hope Church were interested in developing this idea, and they had a good knowledge of local issues. KG felt it important that anyone working on a similar scheme in the High Town area had good local knowledge. Philippa Collier, who had expressed her interest in starting such a scheme on the Paths Estate, asked how the matter might progress. KG said that funding could be provided

by Near Neighbours. KG would be discussing this further with Luke Middleton, who was based at Hope Church.

c) Luton Town Football Club development

DL said that he had had no joy in getting a response from the Club to the suggestion that a representative from the Club come to a FoHT meeting, or a general meeting, to discuss any concerns of High Town residents should planning permission be granted by LBC to build the new football ground at Power Court. He had previously had contact with the Vice-Chairman. John French said that he might be able to give DL some advice on approaching the Club.

d) Ice cream vans – dangerous parking

This concern had been raised in regard to the ice cream van which parked in Havelock Road, near to the children's playground in Bell's Close. DL had received a letter from Lisa Rowe, LBC, to say that the van had been given a licence to sell ice cream to park users, etc. and when the licence had been granted a car parking space had been allocated in the car park for the van to use. DL said that a suitable access point to the car park was needed for the ice cream van. As had been previously described, the current position of the van on the road was dangerous as it blocked the view for car drivers in Havelock Road. DL said that he would be contacting the Highways Department to discuss the provision of some kind of access for the ice cream van to enable parking in one of the park's car parking spaces.

e) Conservation Area

At the request of DL, Russell Cartwright, had conducted a survey on the number of satellite dishes in High Town Road. These are not allowed as High Town Road is a conservation area. JF asked what areas had been surveyed. RC said the survey had started at the Railway Tavern, including Station House, and had included The Freeholder, the Painter's Arms, and Havelock Road, up to the fish and chip shop. Also included had been Midland Road down towards Old Bedford Road, and down to Dudley Street. JF said that quite a few HMOs were in that area, and many of them had satellite dishes. DL said that LBC should write to all the properties RC had noted to tell the offenders, both commercial and residential, that satellite dishes were not allowed in the area.

5. Clean-up Day

LM had been organising this, but as he was currently on leave, there would not be an update. Lyn Bliss said that the date LM had put forward of mid-September would not fit in with the plans for an event at St Matthew's school, where the school would be involved in a clean-up near to the school, along with a competition based around litter. The Burglary Reduction Group had suggested there should be further dates designated for clean-ups and were applying to the "Your Say Your Way" scheme for funding to make this happen.

PC suggested that Berkeley Path, Butterworth Path and Elgar Path should be included in the areas considered for a clean-up. Changes to the arrangements for the disposal of rubbish meant the area now suffered from a severe litter and rubbish problem. Pete Savage also asked that the Crescent Road area be included. The area did have its own community associations who could be approached to help. Ezley Whyte said that the Frederick Street area was also in need of some attention. He also asked about the street cleaning vehicles, which he said he had not seen in the area for a while. He asked if there was a time-table for this. Andrew Malcolm said the service was still operating and he would try and get a time-table. LB expressed her thanks to LBC for the way Peoples Park was cleaned each morning. She said during the evening/night people used the park for drinking, etc. and left a lot of mess

behind. Most of this was usually cleared by the Council in the early morning. Vicki Salkin suggested Harthill Drive be included in any future clean-ups as the area, which was very quiet, suffered from rubbish continually being dumped there. The suggested areas for a clean-up were to be discussed with LM when he returned from leave.

6. Your Say Your Way

DL said that LM had been asked to work on an application for YSYW funding. As it was hoped Near Neighbours would be providing funding for gardening projects in the area, another suggestion had been that an application be made for funding for the noticeboards which needed to be put up in High Town Road. Jeremy Williams had also suggested holding a “High Town’s Got Talent” competition, which the FoHT committee had thought would be a good idea in combination with a Christmas event. The dance event held in 2015 had been successful. LB said that NOAH had indicated that they would be willing to help with the noticeboards and any materials for these might be donated by companies in the area, such as Travis Perkins. It was thought a community event such as that suggested would be a good idea and it could be held either in the High Town Methodist church hall, or the High Town Community Sports and Arts Centre. LM to complete the application for funding.

7. Burglary Reduction Group Meeting

LB gave a short summary of the items discussed. It had been established that there were no rules on hours of work which govern businesses which are established in a residential street. It was only if the business continually worked unsocial hours that any complaint could be made to the Council.

A new enforcement team of six people was being trained by the Council to deal with the on-going problem of fly-tipping in the area. The team was due to start work in September. LB said that people were being encouraged to put up fencing in Musson’s Path to deter fly-tipping. McCurry’s had said that they would be interested in helping to provide fencing for this.

The children’s playground in Bell’s Close now had notices saying dogs were not allowed into the play area. A correction to the BRGM minutes was noted as the wrong name had been given for the playground.

8. High Town Team Meeting

DL said that there had been a visit from Wenta, which helps small businesses. Though they are based in Watford their help extends to a wider area. They are able to provide support in the Luton area with a grant of up to £1,000. DL said that if anyone knew of a small business which might need their support he would be happy to pass on contact details.

High Town Hats, which had always been meant to be a temporary project, was now going to close, and during August the shop was going to be the base for two “artists in residence”.

Work on Welbeck Square was due to start in August. (This was the area between the café and the TV repair shop).

Masterplan

Andy Malcolm said that the Masterplan for High Town was very close to being formally adopted. Some council officers were still to deliver their findings after the recent consultations. The plan would include the provision of private and social housing in the High

Town and Hitchin Road areas. One project, from the Hightown Housing Association, for houses and flats to be built in Charles Street had already been approved, along with another project in Brunswick Street. It was intended to encourage investment into the area in order to make it flourish. DL said that it had not been possible to further pursue the discussions with English Heritage as the Council's Conservation Officer had been on extended maternity leave. English Heritage had said any attempts to improve the High Town area also needed input from the Council. AM said that he understood that she would soon be returning to work.

9. High Town Festival Meeting

DL said that discussions had included changes to the stage area. Some shops had had stalls in High Town Road without prior permission. It would be good to encourage their involvement, but to ensure that they were aware of the permissions needed to have a stall at the Festival. It was hoped to have a clean-up of the area prior to the Festival and after it. Welbeck Square had looked a mess, which had not helped the events being held there. A week before the Festival it was intended to publicise the event as much as possible.

10. AOB

There was no other business for discussion.

11. Notices and Information Exchange

12. Date of the next FoHT meeting

The next meeting, will be held on Tuesday, September 13th, at 7.00 p.m. at High Town Methodist Church.