

FRIENDS OF HIGH TOWN
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING/GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MAY 12TH 2015

ATTENDEES: David Landau, Chairman
Maureen Allen
Simon Barrow
Lyn Bliss
Russell Cartwright
Wendi Childs
Kim Greig
Ryad Khodabocus
Andrew Malcolm, Local Councillor (High Town)
Luke Middleton
Saida Moujahid
Joan Samuel
Csaba Sipeki
Dan Warwick
Jeremy Williams
Lisa Wright

APOLOGIES: Peter Brooks, Jean Godden, Chris Grabham, Aysegal Gurbiz
Fiona Morton, Natalie?

1) ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:

David Landau confirmed that those attending had paid the annual membership fee of £2.00. This entitles members to vote on any issues and also covers any administrative costs.

2) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR

The Railway Tavern

Luton Council hoped to buy the land for combined housing/retail use. The retail aspect of the site would be one for discussion.

Morrison's Supermarket

A case had been put to the council to limit the number of hours the supermarket would be able to sell alcohol. This was not successful, although certain conditions had been imposed on the sale of alcohol. The supermarket said this was the first time it had encountered such restrictions.

Spring Clean-Up of the Area

This had been a successful event and had been done in collaboration with the Woodcraft organisation.

Fitness Equipment

New fitness equipment had been installed by the council in Bell's Close.

Social Issues

It was hoped to pursue the High Town allotment scheme when the new vicar is appointed to St Matthew's church.

DL had been involved in a small amount of meetings to discuss the problem of prostitution in the area.

The proposed involvement in the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme had had a slow start.

The council had monitored the speed of the traffic on certain roads and found some drivers were driving in excess of the 20 miles per hour limit. The council would be looking into this further in relation to the problem roads.

Your Say Your Way

DL said a special vote of thanks should be made to Lyn Bliss, who had put an excellent case for a dance event and the distribution of a newsletter in the High Town area. She had managed to secure £1500 in funding.

The Friends of High Town had 104 followers on Twitter and 156 likes on Facebook.

Marie Louise ? had had to stand down as Secretary of Friends of High Town and DL added a vote of thanks on FOHT's behalf for the work she had done.

3) Questions on the Chairman's Report

Andrew Malcolm asked how much was currently in the FOHT's funds. DL said that £723.53 had been remaining from the previous year, and an additional £50 had been collected in membership fees making the total approximately £773.53p.

Russell Cartright thanked the Chairman for the work he had done in the previous year. This was seconded by Riyad Khodabocus.

4/5) As neither the Secretary nor the Treasurer were able to be present there wasn't a report on these items.

6) Election of the Committee

It was unanimously agreed that David Landau should continue as Chairman.

Maureen Allen was proposed as Secretary by Wendi Childs, and this was seconded by RB. MA was elected into this role.

AM said that Fiona Morton had said she would be happy to be Treasurer. This was proposed by Lisa Wright and seconded by Dan Warwick. FM was confirmed as Treasurer.

Luke Middleton was elected Media and Marketing Officer after being proposed by DL and seconded by Csaba Sipeki.

GENERAL MEETING

1) DL said that the Welbeck Square project appeared to be on hold. AM mentioned the “Empty Shops” project, where certain wards in Luton were to be given funding to stop rows of shops closing and adding to the run down appearance of an area. AM said that High Town was one of four wards being considered for this scheme. He said that the funding would be evenly divided between the four wards. Joan Samuel said it would be good to persuade people to invest in the area, as public money was in short supply. The council could encourage such investment. DL said it would be good to have an enabling plan. For example, an improved entrance to High Town. Restrictions should apply to any developments in High Town so that they were in keeping with the local architecture. At present shops had done what they wished. DL said he would be having talks with Luton Heritage Forum. It was also suggested that Gemma Davies be contacted on this point. Some of the shop fronts in High Town Road did not conform to the rules governing the conservation of local shop fronts and architecture. JS asked if Morrison’s had been asked about this aspect of their shop front. DL said that their plans would have been in the planning application to the council.

2) High Town Festival

This was to take place on July 4th. Heather James would be providing information on stalls, and the next meeting to discuss this was to be held in the following week. It was intended to have a market atmosphere with stalls selling, amongst other things, jerk chicken, local honey, French Bread and Greek food. JS asked how the stalls would be arranged and DL said the part of High Town Road where the Festival would be taking place would be closed to traffic, with stalls arranged either side of the road. Kim Greig said that some of the local shops, such as the Mediterranean café, were also interested in having stalls in the road on the day.

3) Clean-Up of the Area

There was no date so far for the annual clean up of the area. This had been put on hold by the council as this usually included other parts of town. It was hoped to have something arranged in the High Town area, which AM suggested could be later in the year. The clean-up requires assistance from the council in disposing of all the rubbish which is collected, and LW suggested liaising with the council for a collection of the rubbish when the council vehicles were scheduled for weekend work. DL felt a clean-up was particularly needed in the Hitchin Road area, and also

near to Frederick Street. It was mentioned that the Community Payback scheme might also be able to help with this project.

ACTION: DL agreed to look into this.

4) Railway Tavern

DL and RC had had a meeting to discuss future plans for the Railway Tavern. RC thought the pub should remain and had suggested a National Lottery Business Enterprise Grant might be a way forward. RC was also going to contact CAMRA to discuss this. There were two pubs selling real ale in the area and he thought a third might add an extra appeal which CAMRA may take an interest in. AM said that as the council had limited funds the purchase of the Railway Tavern would have to be associated with a new housing project. RK said that as the area now had a lot of influence from the Middle East it might be an idea to open a Shisha bar. CS said it would make an excellent coffee bar. DL said that there was a successful fish and chip shop in Harpenden, Godfrey's, and he wondered if the owner could be persuaded to open a similar shop in Luton as there was no longer a fish and chip shop in the local area. It was agreed that further ideas would be looked into, but it must be borne in mind that any council funded development would also consist of housing. JS said that it was the annexe to the building which was in the main view of anyone leaving the railway station.

5) Any Other Business

RK suggested putting baskets of flowers along the street to brighten up the area. DL said the problem was that these would need watering and tending on a regular basis. Luke Middleton said that he would speak to the shop owners in the area about this. Shops in the town centre contributed to their own fund and they were able to put forward ideas to make their area more appealing, amongst their current plans was funding for more PCSOs.

Lyn Bliss raised her concerns about the proposed newsletter, which she said should be prepared and delivered to homes in the High Town area prior to the Festival in July. LM said he did have this in mind and would be speaking to LB on this point. KG also said that this matter had not been forgotten and she had several ideas for the forthcoming newsletter.

The Big Lunch

This nationwide community event was on June 7th and was being organized by Jeremy Williams and his wife. This was to be held in People's Park between 12.30 pm-3.30 pm and all would be welcome.

The Freeholder

DL said that the pub had closed after reopening for just three months. It was thought the problems were financial and that the music events planned by the pub could not go ahead because of the residential units in close proximity to the pub.

Hope Church Food Event

LM said that the next event was an African Food event.

The next meeting of FOHT would be on Tuesday, June 9th.