

FRIENDS OF HIGH TOWN  
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING  
HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2016

1. Attendees:       David Landau, Chairman  
                       Maureen Allen, Secretary  
                       Fiona Morton, Treasurer  
                       Luke Middleton, Media and Marketing Officer  
                       David Alexander  
                       Nick Berg  
                       Russell Cartwright  
                       Philippa Collier  
                       Chris Grabham  
                       Kim Grieg  
                       Andrew Malcolm, Local Councillor  
                       Pete Savage  
                       Ezley Whyte  
                       Jeremy Williams
  
2. Apologies:   Lyn Bliss, Anthea Cowen, John French, Gail Dearing, Ryad Khodabocus, Saida el Moujahid, Maahwish Mirza, Csaba Sipeki
  
3. Minutes of the last meeting
  
4. Matters Arising
  - a) Funding Applications:
    - i) Transition Luton – Community Green Space Gardener  
 Luke Middleton said that there had been a successful application to Near Neighbours for a grant which would enable the employment of a gardener, until the end of March, to work on and maintain the community green spaces in High Town. There would also be an educational element and it was hoped to recruit volunteers from across High Town with the intention of this becoming a long-term project. The position would be advertised on the FoHT website and on social media. Philippa Collier said that there should be consultation with the Parks Department to ensure that work did not begin on areas which had already been earmarked for work by them. Andy Malcolm said it might be possible that some projects could be done with the collaboration of the Parks Department, but said that it had to be ensured that it is a requirement of anyone taking up the position that they had to liaise with the Parks Department before work began on any of the green spaces.
  
    - ii) FoHT – “High Town’s Got Talent”  
 An application had been made to the participatory budgeting scheme, Your Say Your Way, for “High Town’s Got Talent”, which had come fourth out of the nine contenders. The application had been for £1,250, and the competition now needed to be organised. After looking at the availability of venues, David Landau and LM had made a provisional booking for Saturday, December 17th, at the High Town Community Sports and Arts Centre. It had

been thought it would be good to tie this event in with the Christmas spirit, and it was intended to get a group of people together to help with the organisation. Jeremy Williams, Fiona Morton and Chris Grabham all said they would be willing to get involved. David Landau said it was his intention to be available at Hope Church every Tuesday from 9.30 a.m. to deal with matters concerning FoHT, and LM would also be there whenever possible. He appreciated that everyone would be working to a tight deadline, but it would still be possible to make this a successful event. He would be looking at the equipment on offer at HCSAC to see if it would be adequate. FM said that word of the competition should be circulated to the local clubs, etc.

### iii) High Town Team Noticeboards

The successful application for funding for this had been presented by LM at the Your Say Your Way funding event. It was intended to replace the two noticeboards in High Town Road, one of which was outside St Matthews School and the other outside The Railway Tavern. It was intended to take this forward with the High Town Team and it had been hoped that NOAH would help with the work on the noticeboards, but this was uncertain. PC said that the organisation “Men in Sheds” might be good to approach, as they did a lot of work for charity. DL said there might be other community groups which could also be approached.

### iv) High Town Improvement Action Group – Litter Pickers/Neighbourhood Agreement publicity

The application from the Group to Your Say Your Way had been worked on by Emma Colclough, with some assistance from Maureen Allen, and PC had written the presentation and spoken on behalf of the Group. Funding had been allocated to the Group, which had come joint first out of the nine contenders. The intention of the Group was to make High Town a better and cleaner place. It was hoped that more people could be encouraged to join. Gail Dearing, and one of her neighbours, had enquired about joining in with this initiative with the intention of cleaning-up Reginald Street. DL had also had a conversation with one of his neighbours about a clean-up of Kingston Road. It would be excellent, when the equipment had been purchased and was ready for use, to look at loaning out the equipment and getting involved in cleaning those areas. PC said that she thought that when people saw action of this sort being taken it might have a knock-on effect.

### b) High Town Litter Pick

LM said that, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, seventeen or eighteen people had met at High Town Methodist Church to give a couple of hours to help clean-up litter in the area. It had been a good morning and had covered a few areas. One local resident had expressed appreciation for what had been done. DL said that he had worked at the corner of Crescent Road and Crawley Green Road, which had lots of litter, likely to have been thrown from passing cars. He had noticed that church groups were based in the area and wondered if they might be approached to see if they wanted to get involved in keeping this area tidy. PC suggested that it would be good if any group working to clear litter had high visibility vests, not only as a safeguarding measure, but to publicise FoHT and what it was trying to achieve. It might encourage others to get involved. She also suggested having business cards. DL said that LM had already been looking at costings for business cards and this was in hand. CG suggested having a clean-up day once a month, and DL agreed that this might help in terms of publicity, but he was unsure if people could commit to doing a clean-up on a regular basis. He said this should be given a try and publicity for the regular event could be given on the new

noticeboards when they are completed. DL was to raise the suggestion of the high visibility jackets at the next committee meeting.

#### Flytipping

DL said that, following on from some Travellers being parked on Popes Meadow, there had been a huge amount of flytipping left on the site. A lot of the rubbish looked like items which members of the public had paid someone to remove from their homes. The council had cleared the items very quickly. The Luton News had published an article on the situation and had approached the FoHT committee members for a comment prior to publication. No member of the committee had responded to this request. The article had stated that no Travellers were ever prosecuted for flytipping, whereas ordinary members of the public were. DL said that any prosecutions had to be evidence based, and, even with CCTV, it could not always be proven. He said that AM had assured him that the rubbish would be cleared and that there may be CCTV evidence, which AM would be following up. Flytipping could be reported to the council via "Fix My Street", and phoning the Council, etc. The reporter said she would ask Hazel Simmons, the leader of the Council, to respond to the article in the Luton News.

#### c) Fatal Collision in High Town Road

DL had spoken to several shops in High Town Road and asked if they would be willing to have a collection box for Mr Chohan, who had lost his TV repair business as a result of the crash. Five shops had agreed to take the boxes. DL had also spoken to the owner of the Hair Connexions salon, which had also been affected as a result of the collision, and she had said that she would welcome the information that her shop was still open to customers being given publicity by FoHT. FM would be buying the collection boxes. Kim Greig said that Charnwood might be a good place to look for reasonably priced boxes. It was also hoped to start an on-line site for donations for Mr Chohan. LM/DL and FM to action this.

#### d) Luton Town Football Club development

The deadline for comments and objections to the proposed Luton Town Football Club development at Power Court had now passed, but there are likely to be further opportunities to express any opinions as the plans were for such a huge development. DL had made contact with the club about representatives coming to High Town to talk about the plans, most probably on a week day evening. Concern was raised that if the Community Centre was used to hold the meeting it might involve a large fee to hire the Centre. Russell Cartwright suggested the Club representatives might come to High Town when there was a scheduled FoHT meeting at the church hall. A date could be suggested to the Club after checking it did not clash with a match.

#### e) Ice Cream vans - dangerous parking

DL said that the Parks Department had been trying to contact the owner of the ice cream van so that he could be given a key to enable him to park in the appropriate place, but they had been unsuccessful in doing so. In terms of parking enforcement, the van should not be parked on a yellow line and parking enforcement have said that they will be doing extra patrols from Spring 2017, to check that the van is not parked in the wrong place. PC said that the last time she had seen the ice cream van it had been parked in the car park area. DL said that if this was the case it would mean that the van owner now had a key to the bollard and was able to be properly parked.

#### f) Conservation Area

RC had contacted the Planning Department with regard to the number of satellite dishes in High Town Road and they had replied that they would investigate the matter. They had added that, if the dishes had been in place for more than ten years, they would not be able to take action. DL suggested that RC check on Google Street View going back over the last five years to establish how long the dishes might have been in place. RC said he was not sure how the council could ensure the dishes were removed.

RC said that the large panels of illustrations/photographs of old High Town had been removed from the fencing surrounding The Railway Tavern during the course of the current work taking place there, and he wondered if these could be rescued. JW said he would enquire at the site, but wondered who the works would be returned to. FM suggested contacting SNAP on the matter.

#### g) High Town Methodist Church – path lighting

DL had looked into this following the concerns raised by PC that the lighting on the path was inadequate. The path was lit by the old yellow lights which did not give a good light. DL had contacted the Council's Lighting Department and they were going to find out if the lights were due for replacement by the new white lights which were more efficient. The council is phasing in the replacement of the old lights. AM said that the Council was intending to replace all the old lights with LED lighting and he thought that an area such as an alley way should be given priority.

#### 5. High Town Improvement Action Group

KG said that most of the Group's actions and news had already been covered in the meeting, but there had been more interest from local residents who wanted to get involved with the Group. The Council's new enforcement team, who would deal with flytipping, should be in place in about one month's time.

#### 6. High Town Voice meeting – feedback

This had been a meeting between FoHT and representatives of Hightown Community Sports and Arts Centre. DL said that he was able to report some interesting items from the meeting:

St Matthew's School would be holding a poster competition, and it was intended that this might be followed by a litter pick in People's Park, to which parents and children at the school would be invited. It was hoped that this would take place before Christmas.

Luton Town Football Club is funding a community football club in High Town which will be playing at People's Park. KG said that this had been publicised.

A youth club was to be held at the Hightown Community Sports and Arts Centre. This would involve recreation and sporting activities for 8-12 year olds. The money for this had been allocated at the Your Say Your Way event. St Matthew's School had also received funding for table tennis tables, which would be available to pupils and ex-pupils of the school.

#### 7. High Town Festival Meeting

St Matthew's School had expressed the wish for continued involvement in the Festival. DL asked if anyone knew of any business people who might be interested in sponsoring the

Festival, to enable the Festival to continue. AM said that more information on the Festival could be found on the website: [hightownfestival.org](http://hightownfestival.org).

#### 8. High Town Team meeting

AM gave an update on the High Town Masterplan. He said that things were looking positive. The Council owns two car parks on Taylor Street and was looking to bring forward a planning application for homes there as soon as possible. There are funds who have expressed interest in buying land for development. The government's Homes and Communities Agency has also shown an interest in being involved in the Masterplan.

It was thought it would be good to have some Christmas lights in High Town Road, and KG asked if Luton BID might be approached for help with funding for this. As Luton BID is financed by the shops in the town centre it was felt that they might not want to get involved with anything outside of their immediate area. PC asked if it was worth approaching a local electrical company to provide lighting. AM said the financing wouldn't only include the cost of the lights themselves, a generator would also be needed and people to put the lights in place. Action was postponed on this, as it was too complex and a permanent power source was could be supplied as part of the Masterplan works. It was also suggested that there could be a Christmas window competition for the shops in High Town Road, something that would be looked at in future years.

#### 9. Notices and information exchange:

##### a) Local property development

Dudley Street, the former Abacus House offices. The building had always had flats on the first and second floors, but the offices which had been on the ground floor were currently being converted into flats. The flats were already being marketed at £185,000.

The development on the site of the former Drill Hall, in Old Bedford Road, was due to be completed within the next month.

As part of the regeneration of the Paths Estate, the flats were being re-roofed and new bathrooms were being fitted.

In Wenlock Street there was the redevelopment of an existing building into one and two bedroom flats which would be available to rent.

b) There was to be a Quiz and Chips night at Hope Church on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>.

c) On Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, there would be a Community Safety Group meeting at High Town Methodist Church. This would be in relation to Operation Sentinel and other areas of concern, such as flytipping.

d) A Family Cooking Taster Session aimed at families and children was to be held on Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, at Luton Irish Forum in Hitchin Road.

FM mentioned the forthcoming "Around the Pound" cook book. This was being produced in association with Luton Food Bank, and recipes were needed for healthy and economical meals from ingredients which might be found in a food box from the Food Bank.

e) The Luton Half Marathon would be starting at 9.00 a.m., on Sunday, October 30th. It would be in the Wardown Park, Old Bedford Road areas, and would finish in the town centre. This would mean road closures for part of the day.

f) There would be fireworks in Pope's Meadow on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>.

KG mentioned that there was to be a new system for booking the hall at the High Town Methodist Church. She thought the scheduled meetings of FoHT would not be affected, but a new form to request the hall for meetings was being introduced.

#### 10. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting, will be held on Tuesday, November 8th, at 7.00 p.m. at High Town Methodist Church.