



Minutes of Friends of High Town Tuesday 8th August 2017

Attendees David Landau (Chair), Lyn Bliss (Secretary), Kevin Poulton (Media & Marketing), David Alexander, Nick Berg, Ian Breindig, Matthew Catlin, Chris Grabham, Russell Cartwright, Lyn Bliss, Karen Brown, David Brown, Kim Greig, John Wright, Pete Savage, Cllr Andy Malcolm.

1. **Apologies** Fiona Morton (Treasurer), Maureen Allen, Ryad, Saida

2. **Minutes of last meeting** Agreed with no amendments

3. Matters arising

a) Treasurer's Annual Report – outstanding from AGM

KP had produced a spreadsheet for last financial year that balances. There had been problems as Fiona's computer had broken during the year. Thanks to FM and KP.

b) Adoption of red phone box opposite station

This is on land owned by Railway Tavern. The land was purchased about 6 years ago and there has been on/off development with an extension intended as a cafe. The downstairs of the original building is to be 2 shop units but are unoccupied. Upstairs has been changed from office use to residential and is now occupied. KP had contacted owner about the phone box, particularly as there is a couple who are interested in turning the phone box into a cafe but has had no reply.

Action KP will start the adoption process of the phone box.

c) Other building works / planning applications

i) Staircases and fire regulations in existing blocks of flats

No update from Cllr MM. Cllr AM explained there is no regulation about the number of staircases but there have been sprinklers in all blocks since 2010 which makes them very safe. The fire service has inspected all 6 tower blocks in Luton and will now start on smaller ones.

ii) 19-21 Burr Street – outline planning permission for block of flats – no objection sent yet

Action DL to write to say FoHT feel it should stay as commercial use

d) Conservation area

i) Satellite dishes and illuminated signs – Ongoing monitoring Action RC – LBC will only take action against some of those offending, targeting those with more than one.

ii) 94-96 High Town Rd – change of shop front application procedure – outstanding

Action DL

e) Donation to former TV and Video Repair shop proprietor

DL has handed over the cheque. The TV man was very grateful and asked us to let people know he is still running his business from home.

f) People's Park

i) Missing benches - 3 were destroyed but only 2 have been replaced. FoHT complained but no reply yet.

ii) Tree replacement grant – no feedback from JW.

There is a fir tree near Kingston Rd that has a small fence around it for protection when it was small.



This should be removed now. The issue of the diseased chestnut trees was raised. LBC are monitoring these and removing when necessary.

iii) Bins - that have been removed over the years have not been replaced. If there were bins by every bench that would reduce amount of litter dropped. This should be mentioned when chasing the response about benches. **Action DL**

iv) Green Flag – this was tied round bottom of pole and has now gone – Since meeting it has been replaced with 2017/2018 flag.

v) Toilet facilities – No responses from Cllr MM yet
Action Cllr MM to find out more details on how often and what times there was a problem.

g) **Take Away shops in radius of school**

KP reported that LBC has an aspiration in this regards, but as yet has no formal policy in place. If this concern is raised during the consultation process on an application for a new fast food outlet, the Council will currently weigh-up that concern alongside all other material considerations and the provisions of the local plan. The Health and Wellbeing Board has requested that new policies are developed for inclusion in the local plan. The best approach to tackle this request is currently being considered. The development of new policies for the local plan is subject to statutory public consultation.

Action KP to forward email he has received to Cllr AM to get feedback about policy for High Town plan.

h) **Repair Day**

Application has gone in to YSYW. We will have a chance to vote on morning of 23rd September.

New Items

a) **New planning applications**

i) 37 High Town Rd – to reduce shop by half and convert back into 1 bedroomed flat. This is the shop between Premier Convenience Store and Grandio Furnishings. Access would be from an alley from Cross Street. Original application was for 2 flats and was turned down. It was still felt that this was too small for a flat and that as the number of dwellings increase in High Town we will need more shop space not less.

Action DL to object on behalf of FOHT

ii) Kingham Way – to change use of a property from commercial to residential. This has been turned down several times. The entrance is too narrow. There are already some residential properties in Kingham Way.

Discussion followed about one of the businesses that has noisy air conditioning and also emits fluid and black particles at the end of the day. These issues should be raised at HTIAG. Next meeting Thu Sep 7th 9am High Town Community Centre.

Action HTIAG

5. Feedback from other groups

a) **HT Improvement Action Group (HTIAG)**

Philippa Collier has arranged a meeting with Andrew Champion from LBC about a number of issues to do with the regeneration project.



Still problems trying to get phone box removed from Edward St but the one from Moulton Rise has been successfully removed. (Tend to be used by drug dealers!)

A member of the enforcement team attended and will attend every meeting from now on.

b) High Town Voice

Noticeboard progress. Decided colours and wording, this is now on order, cost are double of that we were awarded at YSYW, with LBC picking up difference. Thanks to Heather for continuing to represent us and working to get High Town this result. A final install date has not yet been provided. Feedback on Festival particularly with regards to St Matthews School and the community centre, who both seemed pleased with the day.

Applications to YSYW, Community centre applying to get money for lights for their stage.

Discussion around Christmas decoration and activities, with it being suggested the local Christian Groups and Churches take the lead in organising activities.

Discussion around a uniformed looking High Street, and new skills with the Community Lead Development fund being a possible source for a project to develop wood working skills and a possible Model shop front / signage.

c) High Town Team

KP has been reworking the HighTownRoad.com website. It can continue for longer now in a cheaper format.

There were pictures available of the Master Plan and Welbeck Square proposals.

LBC plan to do some consultation Sep/Oct. They will have boards up showing the master plan.

There are going to be artists in residence in 2 of the local shops.

KP is looking into the possibility of having a street market.

6. Clean Up Day 30 July

Covered Moulton Rise area, Crescent Rd/Rise, Hart Hill Lane/Drive and Hartley Road. Streets not that bad as some areas have their own resident groups that clear them. 29 people turned up, about 10 from Signposts who came well equipped, were very experienced and worked very hard. Met at Hindu Temple. Some of these supported litter pick and also the Temple served refreshments at the end. Good networking event. Thanks to KP for all the organising. We had door knocked the week before but it hadn't produced any extra volunteers.

Another time we need to take brooms and dustpans. It has been suggested to maybe concentrate on gardening rather than litter picking.

Action KP to look at costs of brooms etc.

7. AOB

a) Peace Garden

LBC has given the space behind the kebab shop, running the length of the Methodist church to Near Neighbours and Council of Faiths as a peace garden. 12 schools have been involved with the plans for the area. The schools and other community groups are decorating totem poles that will be placed in the garden. Vauxhall are helping with a bug hotel and bird boxes. It was suggested that FoHT might like to decorate a totem pole. Ian was interested. We should try to stick to FoHT colours - orange black and white.

Action KG to arrange a day for doing this. **KP** to help publicise the day.



Vauxhall are doing some clean up days on the ground and will gradually erect all the poles and bird boxes and bug hotel. High Town gardeners will then get involved. LBC are supporting this project but it will be owned by the community.

b) Gardening project

Many plants have been taken from the beds by Burr St car park. The gardening project are dealing with this.

c) Luton half marathon and 10k run on Sun 29th October.

Signposts are marshalling this event and suggest FoHT might like to offer. They want each group marshalling to also have a runner. Lyn, Nick and Ian interested. To put out an appeal on email list for runners and marshals.

Action KP to follow up

Attention was drawn to the fact that the bus station cannot be accessed from Old Bedford Rd end during the run. We thought this was wrong.

Action Cllr AM to investigate

8. Notices & information exchange

a) Off road motorbikes

Operation Meteor is focussing on Stopsley at present. There is no meeting planned in High Town. The police have so many things to deal with it was felt it was unnecessary for them to meet with High Town residents on this issue at present as it had been a problem in the past but was a lot better at present

7. Date of next meeting Tuesday September 12th 7pm.