



## Minutes of Friends of High Town Tuesday 12th September 2017

**Attendees** David Landau (Chair), Kevin Poulton (Media & Marketing), Kim Greig, John Wright, David Alexander, Russell Cartwright, Nick Berg, Ian Breindig, Karen Brown, David Brown, Viki Salkin, Maureen Allen, Sam Willis, Cllr Maahwish Mirza, James Haridman (LBC Neighbourhood Enforcement), Duane 8014 (PCSO)

**1. Apologies** Lyn Bliss (Secretary), Cllr Andy Malcolm .

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

James Haridman introduced himself to group and briefly outlined his role, explaining his role is dedicated to the High Town ward and covers environmental issues such as littering and fly tipping. A little bit of anti-social such as drinking or begging, it can also touch on some trading standards issues such as garages and businesses using the public highway to fix or sell cars, or renting of drives for airport parking. It explained that there is an emphasis at the moment around waste in private gardens / private land.

He advised the ways to report things continue to be the council switch board 01582 546000, the council website, or via the fix my street app. All of these routes will ensure that things are correctly logged and should be tasked back out to officers within a 24/48 hrs timeframe.

James then took a number of questions

**What do Yellow Sticker on Fly Tipping Mean?** The stickers means the fly tip has been searched through for any evidence that may lead to a clue of origination, Names & Address etc. If any such clues are discovered then house visits take place. James had personally been involved in a number of such visits.

**How long have you been dedicated to High Town?** Whilst the Neighbourhood team have been in place for just under a year, the decision to dedicate some officers to particular wards is a new innovation that has been in place less than three months.

**How many penalty notices have been issued in High Town?** Not sure of the number in the ward, put over 600 penalty notices issued this year across Luton.

**Do you have any powers over HMO's?** No real powers, but if we see anything that needs to be discussed with other departments, we are encouraged to report it and liaise to see a solution. Sometime the HMO's may create an issue that is in our remit such as excess waste, an example of a property in Edward St was given, that meant Neighbourhood Enforcement could take some action.

The group thanked James for taking the time to attend the meeting this evening, and his work within the Ward.

Duane introduced himself and explained that though he was the PCSO that had been assigned Dallow Ward, the Community Police team welcomed the opportunity to meet with members of the public. He went onto to explain that a PCSO called Chloe would be dedicated to High Town, and that she would be attending meetings of the High Town Improvement Action Group. He explained that as community police they could get to know an area in greater detail and be a visible presence that may deter activities. He was also able to inform us that the High Town ward would be having a



dedicated Police Constable assigned. Both the PC and the PCSO would report into a Sergeant to help co-ordinate activities. A question arose around reporting for operation Meteor (Nuisance Bikes), advised to call 101. David Landau informed the group that reporting non-emergency crime within Bedfordshire could also be achieved on 01234 841212, this avoided a connection charge and bypassed some of the automated menu system.

**51 Berkeley Path.** The group was updated that a closure notice, was served on a property responsible for a lot of suspected anti-social activity, and it was noted that this property had been raised at the HTIAG Meeting.

The group thank Duane for taking the time to attend tonight's meeting.

### **3. Matters arising**

#### **a) Adoption of red phone box opposite station**

Red Phone box, slight delay in putting in the application as the person looking to set-up the CIC were moving house last month. Mr Shah is now communicating with us. Not likely to be any further updates on this project until the New Year.

#### **b) Other building works / planning applications**

i) *19 – 21 Burr St*, an email was sent to planning highlighting the proposed change to residential contravenes the Master plan. DA mentioned that Car Warehouse was operating a car sales lot at a property to the rear, which may also be utilising this land. **(Action DL)** to update meeting.

ii) *37 High Town Rd*, Official objection lodged, stating that whilst we recognise the need for further suitable housing, the group opposed this application on the grounds of the design, the conservation area, that this section of High Town Rd was a designated as District shopping. It was felt the space would be below the recommended requirements. Lastly it was highlighted that the new applications failed to address any of the issues raised by the case officer in previous applications. DA reminded the group that there was no directly controlled access currently to the rear of the property.

iii) *Kingham Way*, Group were informed the application to change use from commercial to residential had been rejected, and that eviction notices on the people currently residing in the property had been served.

#### **c) Conservation area**

i) *Satellite dishes and illuminated signs – Ongoing monitoring*, discussion around A-signs and shop signs above the shops took place. RC agreed to include this in his monitoring and discussions with LBC. **(Action RC)**

ii) Change of procedure on re-notification within a conservation area, DL has written to LBC Chief Executive, awaiting a response, **(Action DL)**



#### d) People's Park

i) DL is awaiting a response from LBC Parks Department regarding benches, Bins and closure of toilets details. It was noted by the group that offensive graffiti was now present on the changing rooms. **(Action DL to chase)**

ii) Tree replacement grant – no feedback from JW. SW agreed to follow up to get a status report, and copy of the grant application **(Action SW)**

iii) Toilet facilities –still awaiting a response from LBC to find out more details on how often and what times there was a problem. **(Action Cllr MM)**

#### e) Marshalling at Luton Half Marathon.

Runners: - 1 Confirmed (John ), and a another considering it.

Marshalls: - Please sign up on website or just drop KP an email, looking for a least ten, the sooner you can commit the better as it allows Signposts more time to plan. Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October, 08.30 start at the town hall. **(Action ALL)**

#### 4. New Items

##### a) New planning applications

i) 236 High Town Rd, retrospective planning permission granted for 8 studio flats. Cllr MM agreed to investigate. **(Action Cllr MM)**

#### 5. Feedback from other groups

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

**Edward Street**, 2 Success stories to report, 1<sup>st</sup> is the installation of a new community Bin, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> is testament to Maureen's persistence and formidable letter writing skills. The telephone box that we reported last month BT weren't prepared to move, has actually been removed. It is worth noting even after agreeing to remove a box the process can normally take up to 12 Months.

**Kingham Way**, The issue with regards emissions and noisy air con that was raised at the last FoHT meeting, was taken on board by LBC Enforcement officer, who will be investigating himself and submitting reports to the required other departments.

A further issue regarding a faded T-bar to prevent parking was raised and also taken on for investigation.

**Moulton Rise / Crescent Rise**. JH and Pete Savage had met prior to the meeting to discuss various issues around Moulton Rise / Crescent rise.

**Height of plants at Junctions**. An issue with the height of plants at Junction's was raised at the August meeting. High Town and Cobden Rd had been cut back, however Burr St and Kingston Rd onto High Town Rd hadn't. We have now managed to have the plants at Burr St cut down. Efforts will continue to be made regards all the planters in Kingston Rd. **(Action HTIAG)**

- i) Discussion around the rebuild of 80 High Town Rd, it was noted that no revised planning application has been submitted, the concern that it will be rebuilt as per the rejected application and retrospective planning permission sort was raised. The chair suggested



the group remain diligent and try to ensure that the building be returned to as close to the original as possible. **(Action ALL)**

- ii) 51 Berkeley Path had been addressed earlier in the meeting.

#### **b) Community Gardening Group**

i) 11 Volunteers had attended and dug out the barbs and prepared a raised bed around Burr St Car park, the plan is to plant fruit trees and herbs in October.

ii) Rebranding to Edible High Town, grant money has been secured from London Luton Airport Limited to continue the project of transforming the green spaces of High Town. Will now operate with Doris performing 'Gardening Duties' for 6 hours a week and Sam Willis as a co-ordinator for 4 hours a week.

Philippa Collier has stepped down as a contracted gardener but will continue on an ad-hoc voluntary basis. Friends of High Town would like to formally thank her for all of her efforts over the past year.

iii) KG gave an update on the progress made so far in clearing the land that will become the High Town Peace Garden. Thanks to Vauxhall volunteers and all the other individuals who helped clear the area, clean the back fence and prepare the area ready for the next stages of the peace poles being erected and the path laid. A community event is planned for Sept 16<sup>th</sup> for the creative painting of the fence, bulb planting and the laying of a pebble path.

#### **6. AOB**

KP informed the group that the committee has agreed to put into place a more structured process for FoHT expense claims. Quick overview is that a form has been produced, and expenses claims are requested to be put in between 1<sup>st</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of the month, with a commitment to pay them by the end of the same month. The procedure and form will be circulated and put up on the website. In the mean time anyone with outstanding expenses for this month can contact KP direct.

Discussion around parking on Kingston Rd / Ridgeway / Richmond Hill took place; particularly of concern was inconsiderate parking by some commercial vans, and the lack of space being left in the middle of the road for the bus to traverse. The group agreed to request an update for plans on double yellow lines that were agreed to be installed by LBC some time ago. Cllr MM advised that photos (containing number plates) be taken and passed onto the Cllrs and the Traffic enforcement team, that any illegal parking also be record with the police using 101. KP pointed out that parking on the pavement itself was regrettably not regarded as illegal within Luton. DL suggested he would write to the company that owned two of the vehicles that appeared to be persistent offenders to attempt to encourage more responsible parking. The question regarding what was considered adequate space between vehicles parked on both sides of the road arose. KP agreed to clarify.

It was agreed that the further discussion around the problem and possible actions be deferred to the HTIAG.

**(Action ALL, DL, KP, Cllr MM, HTIAG)**



## **7. Notices & information exchange**

16<sup>th</sup> September ~ Community Gardening Day (Peace Garden) 10am to 1pm

17<sup>th</sup> September ~ Luton Food bank is looking for volunteers at Wigmore Asda, to promote & encourage donations. Contact them directly.

**23<sup>rd</sup> September AM ~ YSYW at the Community Centre, 9.30am, Support our Fix it Day and ten other great projects.**

23<sup>rd</sup> September PM ~ Peace Walk 1.30pm to 5.30pm

28<sup>th</sup> September ~LBC Community Safety Team at High Town Methodist Church 6 pm

1<sup>st</sup> October ~ Hart Hill Residents Clean-up day 10.30am details on their website.

**2<sup>nd</sup> October ~ Door knocking for Clean-up event. Meet 6pm Old Bedford Rd / Clarendon Rd junction.**

**7<sup>th</sup> October is the Old Bedford Road Clean up event. 10am, 106 Old Bedford Rd.**

14<sup>th</sup> October Community Gardening (Planting) 10am

## **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday October 10th 7pm.