

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

SOUTH SIDE WORKING PARTY

MONDAY 7 MARCH AT 1030 HOURS

Present: Councillors M Freeman
R Goodchild
V Harvey
S Jones
R Berry (substituting for F Kharawala)
T Morris
S Owen
A Dodwell
C Palmer (Vice Chair, Chaired meeting in
absence of Chair)

Also in attendance: V Cannon, Head of Cultural & Economic
Services
M Jahn, Committee Officer
Paul Brown, LBD AHS & Peppercorn Company

Members of the Public: 4

12/SSWP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor Kharawala substituted by Councillor Berry.

13/SSWP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor V Harvey declared a personal interest as a member of South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth and the Leighton Buzzard Society.

Councillor Palmer declared a personal interest as a member of the Leighton Buzzard Society and Leighton Buzzard and District Archaeology and History Society.

14/SSWP QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 MINUTES PER PERSON: 15 MINUTES TOTAL

Three members of the public from the Peppercorn Company and one from the LBD AHS attended the meeting to observe and support Paul Brown who reiterated that there would be a strong connection between the Arts and Heritage if their proposed building could go ahead. A question was raised from the Committee whether any response had been received from Central Bedfordshire

Council on what funding could be used, if available, for this project following the feasibility study to undertake architects drawings of the proposed building.

15/SSWP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Committee received the minutes of the South Side Working Party held on 7 February 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the South Side Working Party held on 7 February 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

(b) Minute reference 7/SSWP Central Bedfordshire Council Work Update including Cultural Activity – an analysis was needed of Arts facilities in the area as Central Bedfordshire Council undertook the first research and would be circulating dates for holding focus groups.

Minute reference 9/SSWP Stakeholders and 11/SSWP Land Owners – work on going and information still to be circulated and some may need to be requested from Central Bedfordshire Colleagues. It was believed a map existed showing the ownership of different parts of the Land and it was felt informal meetings should be set up to have personal conversations with each landowner separately. It was felt a list of questions initially would not be productive and an informal approach needed.

16/SSWP LEIGHTON BUZZARD AND DISTRICT ACHAEOLOGY & HISTORY SOCIETY (LBDAHS)

The group received an introduction to LBDAHS which outlined their aspirations and requirements for a heritage centre.

The lack of a permanent premises was a problem for the society as artefacts had to be stored at private houses and were not easily available for school use or visitors and residents of the town. The Society were compiling a directory of items but it was a concern what would happen to these artefacts if a permanent premises was not available. Members agreed a permanent Heritage & Cultural centre was the solution but this would be a long-term aspiration. A suggestion was made in the short term to use any empty premises in the town to display and exhibit items in a pop-up capacity.

The library had in previous years hosted exhibitions where school children could view artefacts but these were not permanent and the Society did not feel they had the manpower or enough volunteers to run this on a regular basis. Logistically it would be difficult and time consuming to set up, run and take down a pop up facility and a permanent Centre with permanent staff would be the solution. The Head of Cultural & Economic Services to follow this up with Assets at Central Bedfordshire Council to see if any buildings in the town centre were likely to become available as a temporary solution.

Members agreed there was a need to keep pursuing a centre to be built, possibly on land south of the High Street and if a potential property became available then the town council could liaise with the LBD AHS on suitability.

RESOLVED to thank LBD AHS for their attendance and to note the information.

17/SSWP LUTON CULTURAL TRUST (TO BE CONFIRMED)

The Luton Cultural Trust could not attend the meeting.

18/SSWP STAKEHOLDERS

A proposal was taken to the Policy & Finance Committee to consider funding towards the cost of the Peppercorn Company commissioning plans/architectural drawings for a facility to be potentially located on land south of the High Street. These plans were intended to augment the existing feasibility study from which the Peppercorn Company would make a presentation to Central Bedfordshire Council. Paul Brown, the Peppercorn Company re-iterated there had been no prior agreement with Central Bedfordshire Council to charge them a peppercorn rent for such premises. He felt that the architectural drawings and feasibility study were needed to enable a request to be taken to Central Bedfordshire Council. Paul Brown thanked the Town Council for their offer of £7,500 saying it was unexpected, but felt the timescale of 31 July 2022 would not be achievable.

It was felt that CBC needed to recommit to developing this land and members agreed that discussions were needed to move the process forward. A suggestion was made to invite The Director of Place and Communities, Central Bedfordshire Council, and the Portfolio holder for Regeneration to a future meeting to update the group about what CBC is doing to develop Land South of the High Street and advise how the two councils could work together to achieve this.

RESOLVED to note the informaton and invite that the representative of the Peppercorn Company to return to the Town Council if and when the offer of financial help as indicated, might be timely appropriate.

The meeting closed at 1216 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2022.

Chair

21 APRIL 2022