

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ONLINE ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2021 (6.00pm-7.35pm)

712.	PRESENT: Councillors L Williscroft-Ferris, M Domingue, S Fairless-Aitken, D Kennedy, G O'Farrell and C Ponsford. Also present was Rachel Ladd and Jez Light from Hexham Community Partnership.
713.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors S Ball and A Smith.
714.	MINUTES of the meeting held on 15 July 2021, having been circulated, were AGREED.
715.	<p>MATTERS ARISING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. WEBSITE COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD (minute 703d and action log refers). It was noted this has been set up. b. SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY (minute 703d and action log refers). It was noted that Councillor Grennan has started work on this and that this is likely to be a working document supporting the existing social media policy. c. POVERTY PROOFING (minute 703e and action log refers). It was noted that Councillor Ponsford would be joining the meeting late so this was deferred. d. BELLMAN AUDITIONS (minute 703f and action log refers). It was noted that Councillor Ball had given his apologies so this was deferred. e. REMEMBRANCE DAY SUB-COMMITTEE (minute 705 and action log refers). It was noted a meeting had been held on 2 September and draft minutes were attached to the agenda. f. HEXHAM IN BLOOM RELATED MEETING ((minute 709 and action log refers). It was noted that Councillor O'Farrell would be joining the meeting late so this was deferred. g. SPEAKERS AT FULL COUNCIL (minute 710b and action log refers). It was noted three presentations had been made at the September meeting and, to date, two have been confirmed for both the October and November meetings. h. INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT (minute 710c and action log refers). It was noted this has been set up - @hexhamtowncouncil. i. BUDGET TRANSFER (minute 710f and action log refers). It was noted this had been noted by the F&GP Committee.
716.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: No declarations of interest were made.
717.	TOURISM STRATEGY: It was noted that the Tourism Information Centre in the library is not well signposted or used, there are no dedicated tourism staff and only a rack of leaflets. It was AGREED that improvements to the TIC should be in the Strategy. It was further

	<p>AGREED that the VisitHexham app should be promoted in nearby places such as at Hadrian's Wall and bus stations.</p>
718.	<p>HEXPRESS: It was noted that the final printed edition was distributed in early September as future editions will be digital although this will be kept under review.. It was AGREED to have updates in future issues with a rota of Councillors who wish to be involved on what they are working on. It was further AGREED to publish this as a blog on VisitHexham and HTC social media.</p>
719.	<p>UPDATE FROM HEXHAM COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: Jez Light advised that HCP is in the midst of planning Spook Night (2.00-9.00pm on Saturday 30 October) and the Christmas Market (Saturday 11 December). He also advised of the success of Animating Hexham, a pilot HSHAZ project and that the next HSHAZ event will be a lantern parade on 19 November. The Festival of flame and late night shopping event will follow the Christmas lights switch-on on 26 November and the events calendar for 2022 is quite full. One of these events will be beacons on 2 June for the Queen's jubilee with the opportunity for Hexham to be involved. Options relating to beacon types were discussed and more information will follow. It was also noted that the volunteer hub – TeamHexham will go live next week, giving opportunities in Hexham to match skills and interests.</p>
720.	<p>CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON EVENT: It was noted that the traditional event is for the Hexham Middle School Orchestra to play at the bandstand, for the event to be part sponsored by sweets donated by Listers Biscuit Box, a balloon entertainer, for Santa to listen to children's present requests while sweets and fruit are offered, and for the lights to be switched on from the bandstand at 5.00pm followed by the tree lights being switched on separately approximately five minutes later. In 2019 there were also hot drinks and mince pies sold by the Sele First School PTA. The Abbey usually provides free hot chocolate after the switch-on and has a Compliine Service of Light with handheld candles and the Abbey Choir at 6.00pm. The possibility of adding messages from the town twinning Mayors was discussed, together with where the tree should be sited this year, and if donations could be made for the Food Bank.</p>
721.	<p>COUNCILLORS' BADGES/CARDS: It was noted that badges are worn by Councillors at the Market stall but that business cards may also be useful. It was AGREED to research prices.</p>
722.	<p>QEHS FRESHERS FAIR: It was noted that the date of this is yet to be agreed but AGREED that two Councillors will attend to promote a youth forum.</p>
723.	<p>HEXHAM SALVATION ARMY COMMUNITY MISSION FACILITATOR REQUEST: It was noted that two Councillors are meeting with the Facilitator to talk about community needs.</p>

724.	HEXHAM IN BLOOM AND TOWN TWINNING UPDATES: It was noted that Hexham in Bloom is meeting next week, is planning a crown jewels theme for the jubilee, and is looking at more sustained planting and local suppliers. The possibility of assistance from the Hextol Foundation and inviting Em Emem, a French mosaic artist, to Hexham was also discussed. It was also noted that the Town Twinning Association's AGM was last week but there has been little activity due to Covid. The Association would like to pursue streets in Hexham named Noyon and Metzinger and the possibility of these names in flowerbeds was discussed.
725.	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: It was noted that exploring ways of working in partnership across the town had been raised by the Abbey Rector at a recent Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting and that it had been agreed to have a working party on this. As this, and also as the P&I Committee is pursuing setting up a Friends of Sele Park group, may be a CE Committee matter, it was noted a member of this Committee may wish to take leads on these matters instead.
726.	NEXT MEETING: It was AGREED that the next Committee meeting will be held online on Thursday 4 November 2021 at 6.00pm.

Action Log

Continue work on a social media strategy (minute 715b)	Councillor Grennan, Clerk and Admin Officer
Distribute poverty proofing document (minute 715c)	Councillor Ponsford
Progress the Bellman auditions (minute 715d)	Councillor Ball
Set up a Shared Google document for ideas on the TIC, etc relating to the Tourism Strategy (minute 717)	Clerk and Councillor Williscroft-Ferris
Consider a rota for Hexpress, etc blog (minute 718)	All Councillors
Talk to Town Twinning Committee re Christmas messages (minute 720)	Councillor Williscroft- Ferris
Have site visit re Christmas tree (minute 720)	Clerk/Jez Light
Research costs of business cards for all Councillors (minute 721)	Admin Officer
Advise of Freshers Fair date as soon as known (minute 722)	Clerk
Arrange meeting to discuss HinB plans with Operations Manager (minute 724)	Councillor O'Farrell
Liaise re possibility of mosaic artist, etc (minute 724)	Councillors O'Farrell and Williscroft-Ferris
To consider working in partnership and a Friends of Sele Park group (minute 725)	All Committee members

Chairman