



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, High Street, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2HG
01428 654305 / town.clerk@haslemeretc.org

Minutes of the Haslemere Town Council Meeting held at 7pm on
Thursday 20 July 2023. The meeting was held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, High Street,
Haslemere, GU27 2HG

Mayor	*Cllr Davidson
Deputy Mayor	*Cllr Matthes
Councillors	Arrick, *Aslam, Banfield, *Bayliss, *Bridge, *Carroll, *Carter, *Keen, Leach, *Miller, *Nicholson, *Robini, *Waters, *Weatherburn, *Weldon

* present

The meeting was clerked by the Deputy Town Clerk, Pippa Auger and minuted by Jo Cork. Cllr Julian Spence (WBC), Cllr David Harmer (Surrey CC), Chris Grimes, Melanie Odell (Sports Haslemere), Phillipa Secretan (SCC), Philip Elisha, Cllr Zoe Barker-Lomax (WBC) 4 members of Swallows Trampolining Club, David Round and Georgia Hase from Haslemere Herald were also in attendance.

Prior to the meeting Cllr Davidson held a minute's silence for former Mayor, Michael Barnes who sadly passed away, the Council sends condolences to his family.

53/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED: Apologies are accepted from Cllrs Arrick, Banfield and Leach who are on holiday.

54/23 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Cllr Carter disclosed an ORI interest as Chair of Governors at Woolmer Hill School and will not be commenting on agenda item 6 The Edge Leisure Centre.

55/23 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held 18th May are approved.

56/23 REPRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Surrey County Councillor David Harmer spoke about the need for a public building serving Beacon Hill and Hindhead, to include one-to-one meeting space, or an overspill from Grayshott surgery. Manor Mead, Tilford Road has recently become available for acquisition and Cllr Harmer hopes that Haslemere Town Council, with the help of a 'Your Fund Surrey' grant, might consider acquiring it.

Cllr Robini fully supports the idea; it will greatly benefit the community.

Cllr Waters agrees the idea has promise but costs need exploring, how sustainable will it be?

Cllr Carter stated that the surgery is overwhelmed with clients and with proposed new developments, the need for more confidential space is needed.

53/23 REPRESENTATIONS BY EXTERNAL BODIES

Chris Grimes from Sport Haslemere both made a representation strongly supporting the future of the Edge Leisure Centre which are appended to these minutes.

Melanie Odell also from Sport Haslemere pleaded with Councillors to support the retention of the Edge and to act as a unified body to lobby SCC and WBC to ensure the continued use of this community facility.

54/23 THE EDGE LEISURE CENTRE

It is apparent that despite meetings between SCC, WBC and Woolmer Hill School a resolution has yet to be found with the future of the Edge still hanging in the balance. What can HTC do?

Councillors were all in agreement that the Edge must remain a community asset as it is clear from comments made that it benefits many community groups and is the only centre in the area that facilitates disabled sports.

Richard Lewis, founder of the trampolining club said that they are also a small business and as employers the closure has resulted in the loss of staff. It is difficult for Swallows to find an alternative venue as a height clearance of 8 metres is required. East Hants Council have been approached for CIL funding and are receptive.

Waverley Borough Councillor Zoe Barker-Lomax stated an agreement for WBC to continue managing the centre for the next 2 years has been agreed in principle and the issue now is financial and the management fees of approx. £130k cannot be met by one organisation. Could funding be split? Could HTC provide any funding at all.

RESOLVED:

It was proposed that the Deputy Clerk write to both SCC and WBC regretting WBC's withdrawal from the Edge, disappointment regarding lack of communication and misinformation, urging SCC & WBC to ensure the Edge is open to all by October and offering to facilitate a meeting with all interested parties to enable a speedy resolution.

20:01 Cllr Carter Left the meeting.

55/23 MAYOR'S UPDATE

The previously circulated update from the Mayor was noted.

20:03 Cllr Carter returned.

56/23 FINANCIAL MATTERS

RESOLVED: The schedule of payments as detailed in the Cashbook printouts for months 2 and 3 and any variances in the Council's accounts, including reported overspends and variances in the Council's accounts are approved. Summary Income and Expenditure is noted.

57/23 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The CIL finance schedule as of 7 July 2023 was noted.

58/23 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. Committees with delegated decision making:

- Planning & Highways 22nd May, 22nd June, 13th July
- Staffing 23rd June
- Grants 3rd July

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings, where committees hold delegated decision-making powers, are noted.

2. Committees with no delegated decision making:

- Amenities 8th June
- Infrastructure and CiL 13th July
- Finance and Governance 20th June
- CBEC 6th June

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings where committees do not hold delegating decision-making powers and any recommendations therein be adopted.

RESOLVED

That the recommendation from the Grants committee that £500 is awarded to Sport Haslemere from the Community Fund to fund a bursary for the 'Create a Star' Scheme is approved.

59/23 STRATEGY WORKING PARTY

Cllr Robini requested that Councillors forward their recommendations to enable the Strategy working party to produce the final draft.

RESOLVED: That the Strategy working party produces a final draft Strategy for adoption at September Full Council, councillors to forward any suggestions to Cllr Robini.

60/23 HASLEMERE AND LYNCHMERE WORKING PARTY

Cllr Bayliss spoke about the need for cross border issues to be discussed, Cllr Davidson will join future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the setting up of a working party to meet with Councillors from Lynchmere Parish Council and discuss/move on issues and opportunities is approved. It is suggested that the working party meet two - four times a year.

61/23 PATHWAYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

Cllr Matthes gave an overview of Pathways and what it has historically been used for and will set up an open morning for Councillors to come and view the space and invite recommendations for future use.

RESOLVED: That the Council does not take over a lease for the pavilion, given the costs involved, but that Cllr Matthes and the Town Clerk are delegated to make a decision regarding keeping it on current terms if a decision has to be made before next Full Council.

Meeting finished at 20:32

Signed.....
Chairman of Meeting

Date.....

PRESENTATION: CHRIS GRIMES – SPORTS HASLEMERE

ON BEHALF OF SPORT HASLEMERE I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE TOWN COUNCIL ON THE IMPORTANT TOPIC OF THE FUTURE OF THE EDGE AND ITS USE FOR COMMUNITY PURPOSES. I AM SURE ALL OF THE COUNCILLORS WILL BE AWARE OF THE CONCERNS OF THE LOCAL POPULATION AND WILL HAVE SEEN THE CONSIDERABLE PRESS COVERAGE IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

FIRST SOME HISTORY. THIS IS A FACILITY BUILT BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF HASLEMERE THANKS TO THE STERLING WORK OF THE LATE NICK CHILTON AND THE LATE ERIC THOMSON WHO HAVE OVER MANY YEARS DONE SO MUCH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT IN HASLEMERE. IT WAS OPENED IN THE YEAR 2000 AT A COST OF £2.2M OF WHICH SPORT ENGLAND LOTTERY FUNDS OF £1.7M WAS THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR. MUCH OF THE BALANCE WAS RAISED BY LOCAL SUBSCRIPTION AND DONATIONS BY THE HASLEMERE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

UNTIL 1ST JULY THE BUILDING WAS USED BY A LARGE VARIETY OF CLUBS AND FOR SOME OF THESE THERE ARE SIMPLY NO ALTERNATIVE PERMANENT LOCATIONS FOR THEM LOCALLY. THIS INCLUDES SWALLOWS TRAMPOLINING CLUB; BUGS NETBALL CLUB; THE WALKING FOOTBALL CLUB; THE ROLLER BLADING CLUB AND THE CEREBRAL PALSY FRAME FOOTBALLERS. IN ADDITION, RACHEL MORRIS MBE A DOUBLE OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL WINNER IN DISABLED SPORT HAS ALSO HAD TO SUSPEND HER ACTIVITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED AND DISABLED CHILDREN AS SHE IS WHOLLY DEPENDANT ON THE EDGE TO BE ABLE TO DELIVER THE PROGRAMME.

WE HAVE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS TRIED TO GET ASSURANCES ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE EDGE AND HAVE RECEIVED ASSURANCES ON MANY OCCASIONS - NONE OF WHICH HAVE COME TO FRUITION. THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY BROKEN PROMISES AND COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN A DISGRACE. WE FIRST HEARD ABOUT THE POSSIBLE PROBLEMS BACK IN FEBRUARY WHEN WE WERE APPROACHED BY THE HERALD WHO TOLD US THEY HAD HEARD A RUMOUR THAT THE EDGE WOULD BE CLOSING. I WROTE TO WBC ABOUT THE LACK OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE LOCAL SPORTS COUNCIL AND RECEIVED A WRITTEN APOLOGY AND AN ASSURANCE THAT WE WOULD BE CONSULTED DURING THE PROCESS FOLLOWING THE DECISION TO GIVE UP THE LEASE OF THE BUILDING RETURNING IT TO SCC. THAT PROMISE HAS NEVER BEEN FULFILLED

WE CONTINUED TO HAVE CONCERNS AND CALLED A SPECIAL MEETING OF OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON 17 APRIL ATTENDED BY PAUL FOLLOWS THE LEADER OF WBC AND JOHN ROBINI THE LOCAL COUNCILLOR. AT THAT MEETING WE WERE GIVEN 2 ASSURANCES BY PAUL FOLLOWS - FIRST THAT THE EDGE WOULD NOT CLOSE FOR COMMUNITY USE AND SECOND THAT WBC WOULD PROVIDE TRANSITIONAL FUNDING FOR A 2 YEAR PERIOD TO ASSIST WITH THE CHANGE OVER. AFTER THE MEETING PAUL AND I EXCHANGED E MAILS AND HE SAID IT WAS HIS PLEASURE TO ATTEND OUR MEETING AND HE HOPED IT WOULD BE A FORERUNNER FOR CLOSER WORKING BETWEEN SH AND WBC. JOHN ROBINI AT THE TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING ASSURED ALL PRESENT THAT THE EDGE WOULD NOT CLOSE AND AGAIN HAS REPEATED THAT ASSURANCE IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH SWALLOWS TRAMPOLINING CLUB. ALL OF THESE PROMISES HAVE COME TO NOTHING LEAVING EVERYBODY COMPLETELY FRUSTRATED.

ALL OF THE CLUBS WERE GIVEN LESS THAN ONE WEEK'S NOTICE THAT THE EDGE WOULD CLOSE ON 1ST JULY - COMMUNICATIONS FROM WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL WERE QUITE FRANKLY APPALLING. HENCE MY OPEN LETTER TO THE LEADERS OF WAVERLEY AND SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL ON 1ST JULY OFFERING TO HOST A MEETING WHERE ALL PARTIES COULD SIT DOWN TOGETHER AND CLARIFY THE FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS - REGRETTABLY TO DATE I HAVE RECEIVED NO RESPONSE.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MODERN LIFE AND WHAT THE CLUBS NEED IS AN ASSURANCE THAT THE EDGE WILL RE-OPEN - THEY NEED CERTAINTY TO ENABLE THEM TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. IF THE CLUBS FOLD DUE TO LACK OF CERTAINTY THAT WILL DO UNTOLD HARM TO MANY ATHLETES SOME DISABLED, SOME WITH HUGE POTENTIAL FOR THE FUTURE AND SOME JUST

DENIED ACCESS TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR CHOSEN SPORT. INCLUDED IN THIS LIST ARE YOUNG ATHLETES WHO HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED CREATE A STAR AWARDS FORM SPORT HASLEMERE AS THEY HAVE INTERNATIONAL POTENTIAL IN THEIR CHOSEN SPORT. IT ALSO INCLUDES THREE ROLLER BLADERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY IN FRANCE REPRESENTING GB AT THE WORLD ROLLER BLADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

THE CONCERNS OF THE LOCAL POPULATION ARE EVIDENCED BY THE SUPPORT FOR OUR RECENT PUBLIC PETITION ENTITLED "PROTECT THE EDGE" WHICH HAS HUGE LOCAL SUPPORT WITH OVER 2,700 SIGNATORIES WHICH I FORMALLY PRESENTED TO WBC AT THEIR MEETING THIS TUESDAY. I AM TOLD THAT PETITION WILL NOW BE CONSIDERED BY THEIR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE BUT THAT DOES NOT MEET UNTIL SEPTEMBER - MUCH TOO LATE TO BE OF ANY PRACTICAL BENEFIT IN SOLVING THE URGENT PROBLEM FACING OUR CLUBS.

I RAISED A FORMAL QUESTION AT THE WBC COUNCIL MEETING ON TUESDAY BUT COULD GET NO ASSURANCE FOR THE FUTURE COMMUNITY USE OF THE EDGE. WE NOW FEEL WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A POLITICAL FOOTBALL BETWEEN THE 2 COUNCILS WITH WBC OFFICERS GIVING US ONE VERSION AND SCC A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. AGAIN, MY LETTER TO THE 2 LEADERS ASKED FOR A MEETING TO GET ALL PARTIES AROUND THE TABLE TOGETHER TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE ISSUES - AS I SAID EARLIER I HAVE HAD NO RESPONSE.

WE ARE NOW AT A MAJOR TIPPING POINT WITH WHAT TO US SEEMS TO BE A LACK OF URGENCY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ESTATES AT SCC THAT THE PROSPECTS OF THE EDGE REOPENING FOR COMMUNITY USE WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS ARE EXTREMELY SLIM AND TO THIS END SCC HAS OFFERED WBC THE CHANCE TO TAKE BACK THE LEASE OF THE BUILDING FOR A 2 YEAR PERIOD. MANY OF THE CLUBS WERE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE WBC MEETING ON TUESDAY AND WERE CONTINUALLY GIVEN ASSURANCES BY COUNCILLORS THAT THE EDGE WOULD REOPEN SHORTLY AND IT IS ESSENTIAL THIS IS CONFIRMED URGENTLY

I WROTE TO PAUL FOLLOWS YESTERDAY SETTING OUT WHY WBC SHOULD TAKE UP THE OFFER TO RENEW THE LEASE FOR 2 YEARS AND HOW FUNDS COULD BE RAISED BY MAKING THE EDGE A CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE FOR DISABLED ATHLETES AT THE SAME TIME AS MAKING IT AVAILABLE FOR EXISTING COMMUNITY USERS AND THE SCHOOL. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT WBC WILL TAKE UP THIS OPTION AS THERE APPEARS TO BE NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE ON THE TABLE TO GET CONTINUED COMMUNITY USE OF THE EDGE. A LONG DELAY BEFORE IT IS REOPENED WILL BE DEVASTATING FOR THE CLUBS WHO WILL HAVE TO CEASE TO OPERATE AND WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT BE ABLE TO RESTART IN THE FUTURE

HENCE MY APPEAL TO HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL TO TAKE UP THE BATON AND LOBBY FOR AN URGENT RESOLUTION SO THAT THE EDGE CAN REOPEN FOR COMMUNITY USE BY NO LATER THAN 1ST OCTOBER. THIS IS NOT FOR ME; NOT FOR SPORT HASLEMERE BUT FOR THE CLUBS; THE ATHLETES AND THE POPULATION OF HASLEMERE WHICH YOU ALL SERVE