

**ACTION NOTES OF THE MEETING OF HALESOWEN NORTH AND
HALESOWEN SOUTH COMMUNITY FORUM**

Held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 19th March, 2014 at
Lapal Primary School, Priory Road, Halesowen

PRESENT:-

Councillor Hill (Chair),
Councillor Taylor (Vice Chair)
Councillors Bills and Mrs Shakespeare

Officers:-

S Beckett (Customer Services Manager, Lead Officer) and J Jablonski
(Democratic Services), both Directorate of Corporate Resources

together with ten members of the public

27. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of
Councillors Vickers and Woodall.

28. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

29. **LISTENING TO YOU: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL
RESIDENTS**

Local residents raised questions and made comments as set out below. These
issues will be referred to the relevant Directorate or appropriate body for a
response:-

- (a) A number of comments were made arising from Halesowen having been entered into the Royal Horticultural Society's "In Bloom" contest with the town being judged on Monday, 21st July, 2014 it was not generally known that less than half the judges marks were for floral displays. The majority of the marks were for community activities, environmental awareness and the condition of public spaces, street furniture and buildings etc. Interestingly what the Royal Horticultural Society are seeking could be a description of the intent of "Love your Community". It is understood that money may be available through Community Forums for town centre improvements and attention to the requests below would be appreciated to enhance Halesowen Town Centre and assist Halesowen In Bloom to achieve an award for the town –
- (i) Hobbs and Queenie shops – the previous Hobbs and Queenie shops have been an eyesore for too long and could deter businesses from setting up in Halesowen. No 27 Great Cornbow is in a disgraceful state, with the missing gutter and broken downpipe damaging the building fabric. The reason for the poor state of these buildings is understood but surely the Council have powers they could use to force repairs and redecoration and in the extreme there is compulsory purchase. It is appreciated that a quick solution cannot be achieved, but in the meantime the use of dummy window displays would improve the view in Somers Square.
 - (ii) Notice Board Great Cornbow – the mostly unused notice board by the steps to the previous Mayors parlour in Great Cornbow is rotting away due to lack of maintenance. Halesowen In Bloom would like to use this notice board to display information about "In Bloom" activities and if this can be agreed are prepared to renovate and repaint in the Halesowen colours of yellow and blue. A grant of about £40 to purchase new moulding and paint would be appreciated.
 - (iii) Shrub bed and a clock base bricks – replacement of bricks missing from the walls surrounding the renovated shrub bed at the top of Peckingham Street would be welcomed. The missing shaped bricks would cost about £100 and say 4 hours labour. Additionally, there are several spalled bricks, which need replacing, on the base of the clock at the junction of High Street and Hagley Street.
 - (iv) Painting of street furniture – there are many items of street furniture in the town that need repainting and perhaps this could be a task for an offenders group. The items concerned are, security camera bases – 2, lamppost outside Queens Head, electric power supply boxes – 2, bicycle supports in High Street and Peckingham Street, railings to shrub bed at top of Peckingham Street – top "spears" only? and railings at High Street car park.

- (v) Pavers – there are loose pavers in Somers Square close to start of Great Cornbow. There are “stand out” white pavers in Hagley Street (where Centro sign was removed?) that need to be replaced. There is a need to inspect all of the pedestrian areas and deal with paver imperfections. At this time priority could be given to the judging route, Queensway (opposite Church), High Street, Hagley Street, Peckingham Street and Great Cornbow. Cobbles are missing from the grass edging at the top of Great Cornbow.
- (vi) Somers Square – this major Halesowen feature is not looking its best as it needs a thorough clean to remove dirt and algae. Additionally it would be good if the built in lights could be repaired to shine again. Additionally, with cleaning, the steps leading to the previous Mayors parlour could be restored to a splendid feature. Halesowen In Bloom have a volunteer who is prepared to repair and re-varnish the handrail.
- (vii) Peckingham Street nameplate – the street nameplate at the top of Peckingham Street is defaced and replacement would be appreciated.
- (viii) Lampposts – Halesowen In Bloom is keen to have high level floral displays as they have more impact than displays at ground level. We have been told that it is not possible to utilise the existing lampposts as they were not designed for this use, tests have shown they are not strong enough to support the load and the lampposts are too old. It would be appreciated if a case could be prepared (perhaps these units are time expired?) to replace the lampposts in High Street, Hagley Street and Peckingham Street.

It was appreciated that not all the works could be done by 21st July, 2014, the day of judging, however it was considered that certain of the works could be undertaken.

Regarding the issue of monies available for town centre improvements it was AGREED that once the criteria was available this would be forwarded by the Lead Officer to Members and the questioner so that arrangements could possibly be put in hand before the next meeting of the forum to see what monies could be spent on the works indicated.

- (b) Question in respect of a new bus service (Number 22) on Howley Grange Road, which is a double decker. The frequency and weight of this bus is causing substantial damage to the road and also noise pollution. A weight restriction was requested and for repairs to be carried out on the damaged area.

30. WORKING WITH YOU – TOPICS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Councillor Bills referred to the background in respect of the disposal of Holt Farm Primary School and the difficulties that had been experienced with this. It was now reported that the appropriate consent had been given on 13th December, 2013 to the disposal of the site and that it was now on the market. It was considered that the site would possibly be acquired for residential development.

Councillor Hill referred to a forthcoming litter pick in Hope Street commencing at 1.00 pm.

31. AREA GRANTS

The Lead Officer reported on the two applications for funding from the Community Forum Local Area Grants Budget as set out in his report and on a further three applications that had been received following submission of the report.

In connection with the applications submitted members of the Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis were in attendance at the meeting and spoke in respect of the application received in respect of the Black Country Road Run to be held on 21st September, 2014. A member of the public also provided further details in respect of the application received from Dudley Arts Council in respect of the Black Country Festival to be held on 14th July and other events in connection with this throughout the month of July, 2014.

Arising from consideration of the five applications received it was

1. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND**

That the Director of Corporate Resources

- (1) Approve the application received from Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club in the sum of £2,170 only regarding road management costs for the Black Country Road Run, a charity fun run and road race to be held on 21st September, 2014.
- (2) Approve the application received from Coombeswood Canal Trust in the sum of £3,890 only toward the cost of appointing a Youth Worker and that he also be requested to inform the Canal Trust that this would be a one off payment and that they would need to seek alternative funding if the project was to be carried on in future years.

- (3) Approve the application received from Access in Dudley in the sum of £341.16 only, this Forum's contribution towards the provision of leaflets and promotional material, and that he also be requested to ask the organisation to provide feedback on what the money provided by this Forum and any other Forum was actually spent on.
 - (4) Refuse the application received from Manor Way Primary School as it was not considered an appropriate use for funding from the Community Forum given that there was not enough specific evidence of the usage for which the money would be put for community purposes as opposed to usage by the school.
 - 2. That consideration of the application received from Dudley Arts Council in respect of the Black Country Festival to be held throughout the month of July, 2014, be deferred pending the receipt of further information to be obtained by the Lead Officer from Dudley Arts Council as to specific events that would be held in Halesowen in the light of any funding to be provided.
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32. DATE, TIME AND VENUES OF NEXT MEETINGS

It was noted that, subject to Council approval in June, meetings of the Community Forum would be held on the following dates:-

24th June, 2nd September and 4th November, 2014

27th January and 17th March, 2015. All meetings to commence at 6.30 pm.

Arising from consideration of the dates it was suggested and agreed that two venues be used for future meetings of the Forum and, subject to their availability, meetings be held at either Olive Hill School or Leasowes School.

33. THANKS TO THE CHAIR

As this was the last meeting of the Forum in the current municipal year Members thanked the Chair for the able manner in which he had conducted meetings of the Forum.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm