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Notice of Meeting

Maidenhead Town Forum

Councillors Gurch Singh (Chair), Helen Taylor (Vice-Chair), Clive Baskerville, Siân Martin, Joshua Reynolds, George Shaw and Kashmir Singh

Monday 13 May 2024 6.30 pm

Council Chamber - Town Hall - Maidenhead & on [RBWM YouTube](#)

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Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	-
2	Declarations of Interest To receive any declarations of interest.	3 - 4
3	Minutes The Forum are to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2024 as a true and accurate record.	5 - 16
4	Resident Update The Chair and Vice-Chair to highlight any updates of interest to residents.	Verbal Report
5	Men's Matters To receive a presentation on Men's Matters from Paul Samuels.	Verbal Report
6	Innovation Fund - Community Team To receive a presentation from Jesal Dhokia, Strategic Lead for Communities, and Sumayyah Zeib, Community Engagement Officer, on the Innovation Fund.	Verbal Report
7	The Autism Group To receive a presentation on The Autism Group charity from Becky Peates, Charity Manager.	Verbal Report
8	Resident Questions and Item Suggestions for Future Forums Residents and Forum attendees are invited to make suggestions on agenda items for future Forum meetings and ask any question that they may have.	-
9	Date and Location of Future Meetings To note that all future meetings to be held in-person at the Town Hall,	-

	<p>Maidenhead on the following dates at 6.30pm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 July 2024• 3 September 2024• 14 November 2024• 15 January 2025• 13 March 2025• 8 May 2025	
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By attending this meeting, participants are consenting to the audio & visual recording being permitted and acknowledge that this shall remain accessible in the public domain permanently.

Please contact Laurence Ellis, Laurence.Ellis@RBWM.gov.uk, with any special requests that you may have when attending this meeting.

Published: Wednesday 1 May 2024



MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Registerable Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

Any Member with concerns about the nature of their interest should consult the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Non-participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your DPIS (summary below, further details set out in Table 1 of the Members' Code of Conduct) you must disclose the interest, **not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room** unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a DPI.

Where you have a DPI on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet Member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

DPIS (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- *Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.*
- *Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses*
- *Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.*
- *Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the council.*
- *Any licence to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.*
- *Any tenancy where the landlord is the council, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest in the securities of.*
- *Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:*
 - a) *that body has a place of business or land in the area of the council, and*
 - b) *either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.*

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (summary below and as set out in Table 2 of the Members Code of Conduct), you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.** If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other Registerable Interests:

- a) any unpaid directorships
 - b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
 - c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Disclosure of Non- Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a DPI) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, or a body included under Other Registerable Interests in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer) you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or well-being of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2 (as set out above and in the Members' code of Conduct)

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other declarations

Members may wish to declare at the beginning of the meeting any other information they feel should be in the public domain in relation to an item on the agenda; such Member statements will be included in the minutes for transparency.

Agenda Item 3

MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

Wednesday 13 March 2024

Present: Councillors Gurch Singh (Chair), Clive Baskerville, Jack Douglas, Siân Martin, Joshua Reynolds, George Shaw and Kashmir Singh

Also in attendance: Grace Alderson, Malcolm Wood, Inspector Natasha Gidda and Sergeant Phil Collings

Also in attendance virtually: Claire Charalambous and Aleks Brown

Officers: Laurence Ellis and Robyn Bunyan

Officers in attendance virtually: Ben Crampin and Carolyn Richardson

Apologies for Absence

The Chair, Councillor G. Singh, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Forum members then introduced themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Taylor, Vice-Chair. Councillor Douglas stepped in to substitute her.

Declarations of Interest

Later on in the meeting, Councillor Douglas declared that he was a trustee at Maidenhead Community Centre and therefore knew the people behind Nature's Haven.

Minutes

The Chair asked for updates on the actions from the last meeting:

<u>ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u>	<u>UPDATE</u>
Ed Goose to report back on the Maidenhead Station Team's assessment once the Station Team had completed their assessment.	Ed Goose had left Great Western Railway. The answer was still pending.
A report to be sent to Cabinet to hand over the assets of the Forecourts Scheme.	After Laurence Ellis asked about this, Chris Joyce stated that Cabinet had already made a decision in regard to this, and thus it could not be changed.
Simon Lymn to check whether the traffic flow modelling was done before or after the closure of Broadway car park.	The answer was still pending.

Outstanding actions:

- **Maidenhead Station Team to share their assessment from the Station Team.**
- **Simon Lymn to check whether the traffic flow modelling was done before or after the closure of Broadway car park.**

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Resident Update

The Chair had no updates of interest for residents.

Thames Valley Police Update

Sergeant Philip Collings, Thames Valley Police (TVP), reported that TVP received emails raising the issue of e-scooters and cyclists in pedestrianised areas, particularly Maidenhead High Street. In response, TVP enacted positive action against the perpetrators. If the perpetrators were adults, they would be given a warning and recorded into the police system, followed by a fine if they repeated the offence. If the perpetrators were children, to avoid penalising the parents, under Sections 35 and 34, TVP could confiscate the property which was being used in an anti-social manner, with the child attending with their parents to pick up their personal property. Sergeant Philip Collings mentioned that TVP officers mixed up the times and days of the week when doing patrols to catch as many offenders as possible.

Inspector Natasha Gidda, Thames Valley Police (TVP), informed that the Neighbourhood Team's (and wider TVP) priorities were engaging with seldom-heard communities, such as focusing on hate crimes; violence against women and girls, working with TVP partners and charities; and youth engagement. In addition, TVP were also resolving issues with a problem-solving approach around Maidenhead, such as anti-social behaviour and shop lifting. With neighbourhood policing, TVP had been under-resourced in the last couple of years but had recently increased its staff as neighbourhood policing was a priority.

Councillor Baskerville asked when did the crack down on e-scooters start and how many were confiscated. Sergeant Philip Collings answered that crack down started at September 2023 as part of new PCSOs starting a community project, and that 5-to-6 e-scooters were temporarily confiscated. While some perpetrators got the message, some young people had to be dealt with by the Youth Offending Service and social services albeit with positive results.

Councillor Baskerville subsequently asked whether TVP patrolled in the outline areas away from the Town Centre. Sergeant Philip Collings replied that TVP, while aware of the scale, were focused at the moment with getting one area under control before hopefully expanding out once more officers were recruited.

Councillor Shaw asked the direction in confiscating e-scooters, namely whether it was based on danger or specific instances of use. Sergeant Philip Collings stated that it was primarily uses in pedestrianised areas, with a significant activity outside Nicholson's Shopping Centre and McDonald's.

Councillor Shaw then asked whether the crackdown in e-scooter usage in pedestrianised areas was part of an updated priorities list from Maidenhead South Police. Inspector Natasha Gidda replied that each area had their own set of priorities chosen by the community which would be added to TVP patrol plans, ensuring communities were being heard. Sergeant Phillip Collings summarised that PSCOs received priorities from TVP HQ to all neighbourhood officers while also asking communities on their priorities which would also be added.

When Councillor Shaw asked if this information would have been released on Maidenhead South Police website in February 2024, Sergeant Phillip Collings and Inspector Natasha Gidda said that they would check this.

Councillor Reynolds highlighted car crimes, namely the use of signal devices to target keyless crimes and trying to open car doors. Alongside buying faraday bags/boxes he asked what else

could residents do to protect their cars as well as what would be the best way to alert TVP of hotspots so that patrols could be stepped up. Sergeant Phillip Collings explained that faraday bags protect fob keys from having their signals cloned and thus potentially allow keyless cars to be stolen. He also advised that metal biscuit tins (with the lid on) could also prevent the mimicking of key signals.

Councillor Reynolds asked if this issue was a specific problem in Maidenhead compared to wider areas. Inspector Natasha Gidda replied that it was a nationwide sporadic problem rather than specific to an area. General crime prevention advice was generally published, such as through regular TV alerts. Sergeant Phillip Collings advised that it was vital to prevent cars from being taken as stolen cars were usually placed in metal shipping containers to be smuggled abroad which would then affect the car trackers.

When Councillor Reynolds asked whether TVP provided faraday bags or it was down to the residents, to which Sergeant Phillip Collings confirmed that it was the latter.

After appreciating TVP, particularly their increasing presence and crack down on anti-social behaviour and shop lifting, Robyn Bunyan, Maidenhead Town Manager, asked whether TVP were committed to keep a presence of PCSOs on the High Street after the Police Crime and Commissioner Election on 2 May 2024. Sergeant Phillip Collings reassured this.

Robyn Bunyan then informed that residents and business owners were appreciative of the crack down on e-scooters by TVP officers.

Councillor Martin asked if hate crimes were extended to social media. Inspector Natasha Gidda replied that hate crime on social media could be reported through an online form or the non-emergency 101 phone line.

Councillor Douglas asked for insight on the recruitment of PCSOs, namely whether there had been any struggles with recruiting. Inspector Natasha Gidda replied that TVP had a good retention rate with their PCSOs relative to other TVP areas. While there was an upcoming recruitment drive, other TVP areas were losing their PCSOs or struggled to fill vacancies, and thus new recruits may be allocated to other areas to fill the vacancies.

Councillor Shaw asked if there was any recommendation from TVP on residents parking obstructively on pavements or across driveways and then get belligerent if they were approached about this. Sergeant Phillip Collings replied that parking was only handled by the Council and TVP would get involved if it was a dangerous obstruction, such as blocking access to an emergency vehicle. If any resident became abusive, TVP could get involved under public order depending on what was being said and done.

Councillor Baskerville asked how many repetitive shoplifters were caught and had appeared before the magistrates' court and whether they were individuals or gangs. Inspector Natasha Gidda replied that she was uncertain of the exact number of offenders who went through the criminal justice system, though she sought to track and review this every three months to see where TVP were at. The top 10 shoplifters were career criminals whereby they would repeat the offence after they were released in prison, which led to TVP to look at other deterring methods. The top 10 shoplifters were also a mix of lone offenders as well as part of gangs.

Councillor Reynolds suggested that he (in his role as Cabinet Member for Communities) and TVP officers could walk around the Town Centre to discuss and observe some of the issues and consider what could be done to deter illegal and anti-social behaviour. Sergeant Phillip Collings and Inspector Natasha Gidda agreed to the suggestion.

The Chair asked about drink spiking and the protection of women at night, making reference to the 'Ask for Angela' and 'Ask for Annie' campaigns. Inspector Natasha Gidda explained that TVP's licencing officer had been conducting vulnerability training with clubs and hotel chains

and licences. The Town Centre Sergeants in Windsor were in the early stages of running an operation to target drink spiking which involved education in the different establishments.

The Chair appreciated the officers attending the Forum.

(Sergeant Philip Collings and Inspector Natasha Gidda left the meeting at 7:04pm)

St Cloud - Magnet Leisure Centre Development Update

Malcolm Wood, Project Director – Countryside Partnerships, and Grace Alderson, Senior Development Manager – Countryside Partnerships, gave a presentation explaining the overview on the project. Giving some background, the development had been going on for 4-to-5 years and Saint-Cloud Way was part of the Royal Borough Development Partnership (established in 2017).

Grace Alderson explained that the scheme was permitted in Summer 2022 and started with the removal of the footbridge over Saint-Cloud Way and then the demolition of the Magnet Leisure Centre. The development would consist of 434 homes spread across five development blocks. The development would be split into 2 phases with the southern blocks being developed first followed by the northern blocks. The key features were:

- The 434 homes would include 87 affordable homes for local people; meanwhile the 87 affordable homes would include 33 affordable rent homes and 54 shared ownership homes.
- There would be improved connectivity by utilising the Missing Links connection to encourage sustainable forms of transport. The former Saint-Cloud Way footbridge had been replaced by an accessible at grade crossing. There would also be improvements to the existing subway.
- A total of 346 parking spaces on the site, including electric car charging ports and a car club.
- The design of the site incorporated a range of outdoor immunity space with each household having private outdoor space (either a terrace or balcony), mixed tenure podium courtyard spaces, and an open space (including a children's play space).

In terms of the construction timeline:

- Autumn 2022: Phase 1, start of development.
- Summer 2024: Private sales launch.
- Spring 2025: First private and affordable homes delivered.
- Autumn 2025: Affordable homes to be completed.
- Summer 2028: Phase 1 homes to be completed.

Grace Alderson also displayed some images on the progress of the development work.

Countryside Partnerships sought to work in the community and promoted social value during its development, which included:

- Ensuring regular contact and engagement with local stakeholders and local residents and neighbours,
- Quarterly construction newsletters were distributed to local residents to provide an update on construction progress,
- Local residents being invited to 'Meet the Builders' events and be given an opportunity to ask questions,
- Appointing a dedicated Community Liaison Officer, Kat Robinson, who oversaw the site and was on-hand to respond to any queries or concerns from residents,
- The construction team and subcontractors installing a new sandpit and help out with electrical works the nearby Beehive nursery,
- Rolling out a virtual work experience programme to local schools on the house building industry,
- Providing apprenticeship funding for local students.

Alongside the voluntary social engagement, Countryside Partnerships had Section 106 commitments which were agreed during the planning process which was then used to contribute towards improving the local area, totalling to £1.133 million. A couple of contributions – Off-Site Highway Contribution and Travel Plan Contribution – had already been paid for early on in the scheme.

Councillor Reynolds conveyed some resident comments on some of the contractors parking in residential roads and wondered whether Countryside Partnerships were aware of this and whether there were any mitigation methods. Malcolm Wood informed that a couple of complaints had been received since construction on contractor parking in residential areas. In response to this, Countryside Partnerships informed on-site workers during site inductions to not park on residential roads and encourage them to use sustainable transportation. He encouraged issues by residents to be raised with Countryside Partnerships so that they could deal with them.

Councillor Baskerville asked about Missing Links connection. Malcolm Wood explained that Missing Links was a Council initiative to promote cycling as well as make links between various cycle routes; for example, Countryside Partnerships sought to create a cycle route through the site and linked up to Kidwell's Park. Missing Links also sought to create safer cycling infrastructure.

Councillor Baskerville then asked about the outdoor space. Malcolm Wood stated that the open spaces included the main pedestrian areas which would be publicly accessible as well as be constantly maintained by a management company. There would also be some green spaces within the middle of the podium blocks which would be accessible for all residents of the scheme. Some residents would have a private garden, terrace or balcony. Parking would mostly be underground to provide further green and pedestrian space.

Councillor Douglas asked how the project would affect the lorries at Holmanleaze, Maidenhead Mosque and Ivy Leaf Club as it developed over time. Grace Alderson replied that Holmanleaze would remain accessible as the building works take place in the eastern part of the site. However, once construction of the eastern side was completed, construction access would be moved to the northern part of the site.

Councillor Douglas then asked for clarification on whether lorries would come into Kennet Road during the construction phase. Grace Alderson replied that the northern entrance. Malcolm Wood added that the movement of lorries were mostly related to the digging of the car park and thus sought to keep materials on site to minimise movements.

The Chair asked whether Countryside Partnerships were recruiting more students for work experience, apprentices or local staff. Grace Alderson replied that they were, saying that they were always looking for new opportunities. When asked by the Chair on how locals could find them, Grace Alderson replied that there were notice boards on site and a website with contact details.

The Chair then asked whether Countryside Partnerships were involved in the nearby Maidenhead Festival in Kidwells. Malcolm Wood answered that they were not attending a festival in 2024 despite having attended the festival on previous occasions, though they may still visit.

The Chair then asked whether the project was on target, whether there was any potential to reduce the timespan and whether the Borough could help with this. Malcolm Wood responded that the Borough was already helping with road traffic and access, and the project was meeting its ambitious timetable target despite, for example, weather patterns.

The Chair then asked if Countryside Partnerships had any future plans. Malcolm Wood said that Countryside Partnerships regularly met with the Royal Borough Development Partnership

which included RBWM and other councils, presenting updates of Countryside Partnerships' activities. Alongside development works at Saint-Cloud Way, there were also two other sites within the Borough framework agreement.

(Malcolm Wood and Grace Alderson left the meeting at 7:29pm)

Flooding and Emergency Response

Ben Crampin, Principal Flood Risk Manager, and Carolyn Richardson, Service Manager – Joint Emergency Planning Unit, gave an overview on the role and responsibilities in flooding.

The Borough had two key roles within flooding and incident response. The first is being the Lead Local Flood Authority (lead by Ben Crampin) which included the following responsibilities:

- Maintain a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy,
- Being the relevant authority for surface water and groundwater flooding,
- Investigate flooding events,
- A consultee on planning applications, such as new homes and business proposals to ensure they were not increasing flood risk,
- Maintain RBWM-owned drainage systems,
- Ensure riparian owners on ordinary water course were maintaining their responsibilities.

The second role from RBWM was its responsibilities in Emergency Planning (headed by Carolyn Richardson) which encompassed:

- Review risks in the area,
- Prepare plans relating to these risks, such as Adverse Weather Plan, which was implemented during the recent flooding event,
- Undertake training and exercising with the Council and with multi-agency partners to ensure preparedness,
- Support information sharing and engagement to help the public and community groups prepare for emergencies,
- Work with Parish Council and local groups to help create community plans and encourage flood resilience, including property-level protection.

The Environment Agency (EA) were the Strategic Flooding Authority who had the following responsibilities:

- Strategic oversight, including modelling for flood risk and maintaining a National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy,
- Relevant authority for Fluvial Flood Risk, notably flooding from the River Thames, Thames Water were the Sewerage Provider, who were responsible for:
 - Managing and maintaining the public sewer network,
 - Being the relevant authority for Sewage flooding.

During a flooding event, the relevant aforementioned authorities would work together to respond to it and provide information to the public and community groups. RBWM and EA would investigate the causes of the flooding, following by debriefs and implementing solutions.

After the Cabinet Office had set up Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), the Borough would establish the following structure:

- At gold level, a Multi-Agency Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and a Strategic Emergency Management Team (SEMT),
- At silver level, the Multi-Agency Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) and an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC),
- At bronze level, Multi-Agency Operational Coordinating Group and a Reception/Rest/Humanitarian Assistance Centre etc.

The Borough was in the process of developing a new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, with the current one having been published in 2014 and thus requiring an update to bring it in line with current policy and to ensure it was line with current local flood risk (defined as surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses).

The new strategy would include:

- Identification of Risk Management Authorities and their roles,
- Known flood risk in the Borough,
- Aims and objectives to mitigate local flood risk,
- Action Plans detailing how these objectives would be achieved.

The strategy would be developed into a multi-agency document with other risk management agencies, Town Forums and Parish Councils being consulted throughout the process.

In terms of timescale, the consultation was supposed to take place at around March 2024, but this was delayed due to the recent flooding event in January 2024. The new timescale for the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy:

- **Summer 2023:** Internal Consultation workshops.
- **Winter 2023/24:** Held a drop in event for parish and borough members; and started organising further consultation events.
- **January 2024:** Flooding from River Thames, which caused a delay to strategy development.
- **Summer 2024:** Recommence consultation workshops for Parish and Town Forum areas with opportunity for feedback on draft objectives.
- **Ongoing:** Development of action plans; complete the Strategy Document; a Statutory Consultation period for whole document; and finally, a Cabinet sign off.

The Chair commended the work on flooding response by the Borough flood officers.

Councillor Shaw mentioned that many areas were affected by surface flooding caused by unmaintained gullies and soakaways and asked what kind of investigations for these had taken place. Ben Crampin answered that the investigations were split in regard to highway (conducted by VolkerHighways) and property (by the RBWM Flood Risk Team). He stated that he was open for any maintenance issues being highlighted to him, particularly if there was any property impact.

The Chair asked about the timeline of the consultation and when the Strategy would be adopted. Ben Crampin answered that the original plan was to adopt the Strategy by the end of Summer 2024 but the flooding event in January 2024 and the subsequent investigations had pushed this back by 4-to-6 months. Once the post-flood investigations were completed, he anticipated that consultation would move again in Summer 2024 and that the Strategy would be adopted in early 2025.

(Ben Crampin and Carolyn Richardson left the meeting at 7:47pm)

Maidenhead Town Update

Robyn Bunyan first informed that the item had two reports due to the meeting January 2024 being cancelled. Mostly covering the update for March 2024, she gave some key details:

- For footfall on Saturday 10th February 2024 (Lunar New Year), the High Street had 5,834 visits, a 62% increase compared to the same Saturday in 2023; and the larger Maidenhead area had 4,215 visits, a 10% increase compared to the same Saturday in 2023. These illustrated that the events lead to people to engage in the Town Centre and help the local economy.
- The Maidenhead Pancake Race and other social events had been successes.
- Alongside footfall, car parking had increased with Hines Meadow making up 45% of all car parking.

- There were some new lettings on the High Street, including GDK (German Doner Kebab); Bombay Story (opening at Waterside Quarter); Sushi Point (opening on the High Street); Card Zone (recently opened); ToMo (Czech Budvar and food at Waterside Quarter); Your Petjesy and No.1 Bar and Grill (opened on Queen Street); Bills Bargains (opened on the High Street); Cocoba chocolate shop would open up at Waterside Quarter; Nando's letting had been confirmed, and 2 other large national brands were also confirmed to join One Maidenhead development.
- Office lettings in the last quarter totalled to 36,307 square feet, achieving a total rent of £1,003,912 per annum.
- Vacancy rates were lower than the national average.

With Make Maidenhead events, Robyn Bunyan stated that the weeks through January, February and March 2024 had been filled with various social events. Upcoming events in March 2024 included:

- Weekly Produce Market,
- Maidenhead's Big Read,
- Random and Rocks: Superhero Party,
- Maidenhead Cycle Hub Family Ride,
- Norden Farm: Explore Day,
- Rotary Easter Family Fun Day.

After revealing the new orange Maidenhead Town Team high visibility vests, Robyn Bunyan stated that the Maidenhead Town Team were running a volunteer planting project on Saturday 16 March 2024 to clean up the abandoned planters around the Town Centre in preparation of replanting them. Volunteers could sign up outside the Town Hall on Saturday morning. The project was in collaboration with Braywick HEATH Nurseries with some funding from UK SPF (shared prosperity fund). Hanging plant baskets had also been installed with growing plants.

Robyn Bunyan concluded by giving praise to the Town Team and expressed appreciation to Goyals Uniforms Workshop for the high-visibility vests.

(Claire Charalambous and Aleks Brown entered the meeting virtually at 7:54pm)

Councillor Reynolds commended the recent events, notably the Big Read event receiving 4,000 people and the turnout at the Pancake Race, and the work by the Library Team as well as the Town Team.

Councillor Douglas asked whether Maidenhead Town Centre had turned a corner with the new food units. Robyn Bunyan answered that the data showed that Maidenhead was moving in the right direction with footfall having recovered, vacancy rates being low and lettings standing at a good level. A change had taken place from a classic retail high street to experimental dining. Despite this, the cost-of-living crisis had affected trade in Maidenhead with a couple of retailers struggling. Maidenhead performed best in the summer with footfall peaking in May to the end of the summer period of 2023. In addition, more residents were expected to live near the Town Centre which would lead to increased activity.

Councillor Douglas then thanked the Town Team for their work.

Councillor Shaw asked for elaboration of the new plants being "hardy plants" (i.e., resistant to drought) as part of the Town Team planting project. Robyn Bunyan informed that the Town Team was given three options of plants, including ferns, heathers and succulent plants. The Team was looking at diverse plants which would persevere in various climates.

Councillor Baskerville asked if Maidenhead development was on track to be finished on time. Robyn Bunyan replied that most developments for the Town Centre were completed. Waterside quarter and Watermark had residents moving in and had only a few lettings. There was some upcoming development in the High Street, namely shop frontages and properties. One Maidenhead was on track to have residents moving in. There were plans for King's Street

to have a facelift. Robyn Bunyan anticipated that the developments would be set by the end of 2024.

Councillor Baskerville then asked if parking was considered as part of the developments. Robyn Bunyan answered that Broadway car park demolition had been moving forward after a slight delay. Surface-level car parks, particularly in West Street and Grove Road, continued to be popular though there was enough parking capacity throughout Maidenhead to facilitate visitors. In addition, due to footfall exceeding parking figures, there was speculation that more visitors were walking and cycling to the Town Centre, particularly as most visitors were from the local catchment.

After thanking Robyn Bunyan for all her work, the Chair asked about the two upcoming retailers. Robyn Bunyan stated that the two major national brands were not publicly announced yet.

(Robyn Bunyan left the meeting at 8:18pm)

Nature's Haven

Claire Charalambous, Horticultural Therapist (Nature's Haven), and Aleks Brown, Naturopath / Nutrition Therapist (Nature's Haven), gave an overview of Nature's Haven. The objectives of Nature's Haven were to bring the community together, give them a safe space to attend events and workshops, learn more about horticulture and nature and how that can benefit them. They were doing this in conjunction with other organisations, namely Waltham Place and Braywick Nature Centre, forming a group named 'Gather and Grow' to promote events throughout the year.

Nature's Haven started in April 2023 after being invited by Councillor Douglas to clear up the neglected garden of the Maidenhead Community Centre. While it was primarily by Claire Charalambous and Aleks Brown, Nature's Haven had a band of volunteers to help out. After some work, the Community Centre garden being transformed into a haven, with the garden being designed to stimulate senses with sound, colour, fragrance, movement texture and taste. The garden had a mix of flowers, herbs, fruit and vegetables. It enabled visitors to visit a quiet place to reflect and to enjoy being outside in nature or to engage in gardening. As part of their gardening work, Nature's Haven was also developing a new area in front of the Community Centre building by clearing and shredding the area to make way for an orchard of various trees which would receive some funding from RBWM. The orchard would showcase how the amount of fruit could be grown in a relatively small space and the different way in which this could be achieved.

Nature's Haven was also going to launch the 'Sow, Grow, Eat...Repeat' program, a 4 week initiative to help people on how to grow, tend, harvest fruit and vegetables.

Claire Charalambous and Aleks Brown then gave some credit to their group of volunteers as well as support from another charity, GoodGym.

One principle which Nature's Haven promoted was sustainability, which included ensuring the fruit and vegetables which they grew was good quality as well as minimise waste (e.g., using old pumpkins for bird feed).

Nature's Haven recently started working with the Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) by taking on adult students who were learning to return to a working environment. The volunteering taught student horticultural skills which would open up opportunities for them to paid work. In addition, Nature's Haven were going to have some corporate volunteering sessions with Travelport and MCS (a software company) to help out with clearing the site for the orchard and then do some planting as well.

In conclusion, Claire Charalambous and Aleks Brown then listed the events and workshops which were managed by Nature's Haven: 'Sow, Grow, Eat...Repeat', Gather and Grow Container Gardening, Wreath Making, Tea Blending, Fire Pit Meet Ups, composting seed gatherings, the Harvest Festival Fruit Tree Pruning and more. They then displayed their contact details:

- Website: <https://www.natureshaven.net/>
- Instagram: natures.haven.garden
- Contact number: 07880 775731

Councillor Douglas declared an interest by informing that he was a trustee at Maidenhead Community Centre and therefore knew Nature's Haven. He then praised the work of Nature's Haven and their volunteers and thanked them for it.

Councillor Baskerville asked whether young offenders could be recruited as volunteers. Claire Charalambous and Aleks Brown had not thought of this idea, but they added that if they followed through with this, they would have to be careful due the BCA students having higher needs and therefore safeguarding was a potential issue. They would be open to the consideration if any details were sent through. The Chair suggested that Nature's Haven could contact the Youth Offending Team and Probation Team.

Councillor Reynolds thanked Nature's Haven for their work and looked forward to what they could do next. He notified that the Borough was launching a project called Verge on the Wild Site to encourage residents to look after a green space, whether their garden or a community area. He also offered support if needed. Claire Charalambous said she would be open to talking to Robyn Bunyan separately on this.

Councillor Douglas wondered if a new rose garden on the border between the back of the car park and Kidwell's park would serve the double purpose of preventing access through the hedges as well as to adorn the area. Claire Charalambous replied that this could be something to investigate and that prominent rose growers could be reached out on whether they would be willing to donate some roses. Councillor Douglas suggested that this may have to go through Councillor Reynolds and the Park Team, to which Councillor Reynolds gave his support.

(Claire Charalambous and Aleks Brown left the meeting at 8:40pm)

Resident Questions and Item Suggestions for Future Forums

When the Chair asked if there were any item suggestions, Laurence Ellis directed him to the minutes of the last meeting which had a few item suggestions, including charity/volunteer groups (such as Men's Matters which the Chair suggested Councillor Douglas could contact) and a youth provision within the Borough (which the Chair suggested that Councillor Reynolds could look into). The Chair stated that any item suggestions could be forwarded onto him.

Councillor Reynolds suggested to invite the Community Team to talk about projects which were being funded by the Innovation Fund.

Post-meeting update

There was an item suggestion to invite either Autism Group or Autism Berkshire.

The item suggestions for future Forum meetings were:

- Charity/volunteer group (e.g., Men's Matters)
- A youth provision within the Borough
- Braywick Heath Nurseries
- Autism Group or Autism Berkshire.

Date and Location of Future Meetings

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on 13th May 2024 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead.

The subsequent meeting dates (all 6:30pm) were:

- 11 Jul 2024
- 3 Sep 2024
- 14 Nov 2024
- 15 Jan 2025
- 13 Mar 2025
- 8 May 2025

The meeting, which began at 6.31 pm, finished at 8.42 pm

Chair.....

Date.....

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