

MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

Monday 13 November 2023

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Jack Douglas, Jeanette Lock, Neil McGuinness, and Richard Tyrell

Officers: Laurence Ellis and Robyn Bunyan

Apologies for Absence

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

Apologies were received from Councillor Taylor, Vice-Chair.

Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

Minutes

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS	UPDATE
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.	Chris Joyce was supposed to reply to an email to the Chair regarding this. The answer was pending.
HUB to share the website link to the existing consultation on Building C.	COMPLETED – Sent it out in late-September 2023.
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.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Resident Update

The Chair informed that a new lift and staircase had been installed at Maidenhead Railway Station as part of improvement works. He added that there was additional staff on the station platform helping residents, having met railway operators in the previous week when the works began. He informed that Platforms 2 and 3 would not have lifts installed, but there would be step access available on Platform 1. He also informed that the Network Operator was doing an extensive campaign to let residents know how to get off at the Station, such as, if coming back from London, getting off at Twyford or Reading and then take another train back to the

other platform. The works were scheduled to go on for 10 months and would be a major improvement once completed.

The Chair highlighted that Cookham Bridge was closed due to a 20-week operation, and there would be a campaign to highlight this to residents. Despite the closure, Cookham village was still open for business and there were diversion routes. He added that Robyn Bunyan, Maidenhead Town Manager, would provide further elaboration later on in the meeting.

On the Broadway car park, the Chair informed that a contractor, Collard, had been arranged to do the demolition, with the work beginning on Friday 17th November 2023 and expected to last 10 weeks. There would also be an extensive campaign to raise awareness of this to residents. The works would be halted at around Christmas and would recommence in January 2024 to minimise disruption.

Holyport F.C.

Neil McGuinness, Head of Football and Development at Holyport F.C., and Richard Tyrell, Secretary and Treasurer at Holyport F.C., gave a PowerPoint presentation introducing Holyport Football Club.

The football club was established in 1897 (recently celebrating its 125th anniversary in the previous season) and had been located at Spencer's Farm since 2005. Since joining in 2005, Richard Tyrell informed that the team initially played at Step 5 of the FA Pyramid. During last weekend, they played in the FA Vase and were through to the last 164 teams in the entirety of the country at the level, but narrowly lost to Jersey Bulls F.C.

Richard Tyrell informed that Holyport F.C. was 'FA Accredited', meaning that a review of all coaches, qualifications, safeguarding, and DBS checks had taken place. He believed that the club became Maidenhead's second team.

Neil McGuinness stated that, while Maidenhead United were doing well as a team, there was nevertheless a void in the community. While there were a few football clubs in Maidenhead, Holyport F.C. had grown in the last few years from having only two teams: the First Team and the Vets Team for older players. A reserve team was created to establish a pathway for people from aged 16 onwards into men's football. Other teams who had previously been part of other groups (e.g., Maidenhead Boys and Girls, Maidenhead United Juniors) had approached Holyport F.C. Neil McGuinness believed that this was down to the club's values and beliefs of "do[ing] things the right way", namely the methodology, enjoyment and comradery, and getting people to become part of the club. From this, Holyport F.C. experienced some success with over 200 players.

Neil McGuinness informed that he came across a statistic from a few years ago which stated that 80% of children stopped playing football at 16 years of age, surprising him. Based on this, Neil McGuinness sought to ensure that the young players, whether within Holyport or other places, would go through development. As a result, there was some success with a few players as they had gone onto semi-professional football, such as two players (Kai Walters and Daniel Bailey) playing for Ascot United at Wembley Stadium in the last season.

Neil McGuinness added that Holyport F.C. had ties to other establishments, notably BCA (Berkshire College of Agriculture), whereby some players came through BCA, then through to either Maidenhead United or Holyport F.C., and then onto other places. Richard Tyrell elaborated that the connection to BCA had started five years ago when it became clear that there was a large gap to get into Maidenhead United's level. He explained that Holyport F.C. gave 16-, 17- and 18-year-old boys an opportunity to go into men's football, becoming a pathway for players to develop.

Richard Tyrell then informed that, as Maidenhead's second largest football team, Holyport F.C. had a loyal following from the local community, seeing crowds grow from around 50-to-60 people when he first joined to an average of 120 residents. The club supported women's football by hosting Maidenhead United Women's First Team home games, but Maidenhead United Women's Development Team now mostly played their games at Summerleaze.

Richard Tyrell stated that Holyport F.C. was about creating a bond from when players joined as well as to develop them so that they understood what the club was about, where they would then hopefully go through to the adult teams.

Neil McGuinness stated that Holyport F.C. was self-sustainable whereby it received money through subscriptions, some advertising and its own fundraising. He added that the club was not seeking to make a lot of profit but rather fundraise in order to expand itself without diluting its ethos and message as well as being able to reach out and support the community. For example, the club lent out the football pitch for free to certain fundraisers; and, to use a specific example, support some media university students by building a gantry on the pitch to allow them to livestream football matches.

To conclude his presentation, Richard Tyrell informed that Holyport F.C. had limited space and facilities, as well as deteriorating changing rooms. He mentioned that the Local Borough Plan (if approved) would include a provision on improved sporting facilities. From there, he hoped that Section 106 funding could be provided for better training facilities, improved changing rooms and possibly a clubhouse. He conveyed his appreciation in being invited to the Forum.

After thanking Neil McGuinness and Richard Tyrell, Councillor Reynolds, having visited the club alongside Councillors G. Singh and Coe a few months prior, suggested to have a catch-up with Holyport F.C. in the next few weeks and see how things could be pushed forward. Neil McGuinness and Richard Tyrell supported the suggestion.

Councillor Baskerville asked whether Holyport F.C. would be able to have a team in the FA Youth Cup. Richard Tyrell answered that Holyport F.C. had an Allied Counties Youth Football League match around four-to-six years ago; though the club struggled as it was a relatively new club. Despite this, the club sought to bring another team from the Allied Counties to the pitch; however, an issue the club would likely experience was the amount of games being played on the pitch which could deteriorate it. While an astroturf would facilitate the teams and matches, the costs of installing one inhibited this.

Neil McGuinness added that while the club was confident in its abilities to keep nurturing the young players, placing them in a general park was not good enough. Nevertheless, he envisioned that the club could bring its teams to the more established FA cups in the next two years.

The Chair thanked Neil McGuinness and Richard Tyrell for attending the Forum meeting and that the Council was open to suggestions to support the club. He commended the work of Holyport F.C., stating that there was a lack of youth sport facilities around Holyport and Furze Platt. Appreciative of the comments, Neil McGuinness reiterated that the club would like to be part of the agenda and discussion at the Borough, adding that the club was flexible with any opportunities to take its activities on a larger scale. He stated that Holyport F.C. would like to be sustainable going forward and continue to organically grow in the right way rather than stagnate.

Robyn Bunyan advised that Holyport F.C. could tag the Make Maidenhead social media pages on Instagram and Facebook, in which football matches and other activities could be promoted. She also highlighted that there was a boot swap at A-Plan Insurance (now known as Howden on the High Street) in which some young players could acquire a pair of boots.

The Chair asked whether Holyport F.C. ever had Maidenhead derbies (football rivalry) with, for example, against Maidenhead United. Richard Tyrell replied that Holyport F.C. had played against Maidenhead United in a pre-season match around a year ago, which highlighted the Holyport F.C. and provided some fundraising. While Maidenhead United was open to returning for another match, they did not return in 2023. He stated that the closest derby which Holyport F.C. had would be Burnham F.C. Richard Tyrell hoped that some matches with Holyport F.C. would take place in the new year (2024).

Public Safety and Protection

Peter Murkin, RBWM Community Warden, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness and was also unable to arrange someone to substitute. As a result, a presentation on the RBWM Community Wardens was unable to take place.

Jeanette Lock, Chair of the Maidenhead Street Angels, explained that the Street Angels Initiative was set up in 2005 in Halifax as a joint venture between the Churches Together in England and the YMCA England & Wales (Young Men's Christian Association). It was set up to address the problems of violence on the streets at night, sexual assaults, underage drinking, binge drinking and various other problems at night. Within weeks, according to Jeanette Lock, the Street Angels had made a huge difference.

The Street Angels had been in Maidenhead since 2011, with its first patrol on 11th February 2011 being launched by Theresa May, MP for Maidenhead. They were composed of volunteers, predominantly Christians from different churches but included people from other religious faiths and people with no faith.

The objective of the Angels was to provide assistance to people which they came across on the streets at night, such as excessive alcoholic drinkers, drug users and victims of drink spiking. The Street Angels looked out for people who had been separated from their friends (e.g., as a result of quarrelling), leaving them vulnerable on their own in the town at night and possibly under the influence of alcohol, and usually helped them get home safely by taking them to a nearby taxi. They also looked out for homeless people in Maidenhead, providing them with sleeping bags, blankets and hot soup. Jeanette Lock informed that the Street Angels had an "amazing relationship" with the fast-food restaurants whereby they would donate (at no cost) hot food and a drink to the Angels who would then give them to the homeless person.

Jeanette Lock explained that the Street Angels came across many people who were sometimes lonely, had mental health problems or emotionally distressed, and that they sometimes wanted someone to talk to and be listened to.

The Street Angels received great support from the pubs and nightclubs; for example, a nightclub bought all the bottled water for the Angels, while a pub provided the Angels the lollipops. A lot of pubs (but one in particular) provided the Street Angels a free hot drink and allowed them to use their facilities.

Jeanette Lock stated that the Street Angels had a "calming influence" in Maidenhead, with people at the doors of pubs and nightclubs saying that the presence of the Street Angels wandering around made a difference.

Jeanette Lock informed that the Street Angels sought to get a team out every Saturday as well as the last Friday of each month (i.e., payday Friday). They met at 9:45pm at their base at Kingsway House (next door to the Methodist Church), where they stored their supplies, such as water, lollipops and flip-flops. As a predominantly Christian movement, Street Angels would start with prayers. They would start their patrols at 10:00pm and end at around 1:00am. However, they may finish earlier if it was a wet night or if there was little activity; or they may stay out longer if it was a busy night.

Jeanette Lock explained that the Street Angels walked around the main part of Maidenhead, namely King's Street, Queen's Street and the High Street, walking around three miles a night. They wore bright coats with a luminous Street Angels logo, supplied by the Maidenhead Lion's Club.

Jeanette Lock assured that the Street Angels were there for people and that they were not Bible-bashers or evangelising, stating that they were "showing God's love" by their actions in helping and listening to people and giving practical resources on the streets. They would pray for people and situations only if asked.

The Street Angels carried a town radio to keep themselves updated on any activities in Maidenhead. They would sometimes be contacted by the pubs and nightclubs if somebody required assistance. The Angels would carry rucksacks with a simple first-aid kit, flip-flops (primarily for women who cannot walk in high heels), sick bags for people going in taxis, space blankets, and lots of water and lollipops which were useful for diffusing situations and starting conversations.

In terms of other activities, the Street Angels:

- Attended the Summer Festival in Kidwell's Park,
- Sent a team out for the Christmas Lights Switch-On,
- Helped Windsor Street Angels at Royal Ascot,
- Helped Reading Street Pastors at Reading Festival,
- Attended the Lantern Parade,
- Get involved in the Walk of Witness on Good Friday,
- Get involved with St. Luke's Christmas Tree Festival.

On the question of why the Street Angels would do patrols on cold, wet nights, Jeanette Lock reiterated that it was an opportunity to "share God's love" with people they met and to let them know that they were loved.

Robyn Bunyan asked how the Street Angels had found the night-time economy Maidenhead changed, stating that there had been some change from bars and nightclubs to more dining and clientele, and whether the Street Angels' services were still being used. Jeanette Lock confirmed that Maidenhead had changed whereby residents mostly went to the pubs and restaurants, in contrast to mostly attending the nightclubs. In spite of this, the Street Angels were kept busy with many people still going out at night. Robyn Bunyan then highlighted that there were more people living in the Town Centre, which likely lead to more people walking around the area and therefore keeping the Street Angels busy.

Councillor Reynolds asked how the Street Angels recruited new people; namely how people could get involved or whether they were recruiting, and how the Borough could persuade people to join, such as using social media. Jeanette Lock confirmed that volunteers were always needed, stating that there were some Saturday nights in which they were unable to send a team out. She elaborated that the Street Angel teams were always composed of at least three people as well as a mix of genders due to it being considered appropriate in terms of safeguarding.

Jeanette Lock then highlighted that the Street Angels had a Facebook page and an email address whereby people could contact them, adding that they did not have a website as they did not have someone to administrate it. She also believed that she was linked with the Make Maidenhead tag, in which Robyn Bunyan said she would check.

The Chair suggested that the Street Angels' details could be added to the meeting minutes:

- [Maidenhead Street Angels – Facebook](#)
- Maidenhead Street Angels email: stangelsm@hotmail.co.uk

Councillor Douglas asked how many volunteers the Street Angels had in total and whether they came from all age groups. Jeanette Lock answered that the Street Angels had volunteers

from a mix of ages, but they were mostly elderly and retired people. She added that some volunteers had been with the Street Angels since they were first established in 2011. She stated that it would be great to have more young people to join the Angels because it gave a different dynamic and that they were great at relating the people at night. She added that some young people came out on taster nights (e.g., some sixth form students recently). However, it was difficult to recruit because not many people wanted to come out on Saturday night.

Jeanette Lock informed that the Street Angels were cautious with who they recruited as volunteers, explaining that the recruitment process involved an interview process, an invite to taster nights and conducting a DBS check.

Pointing out the recent high winds, rain and cold nights with more likely to follow suit, Councillor Baskerville asked if the Street Angels had enough places to shelter homeless people. Jeanette Lock replied that the Street Angels did not have a place to take in people, all they could do was to tend and serve the people on Maidenhead's streets by providing space blankets and sleeping bags for example. Nevertheless, the Street Angels also had information (e.g., contact numbers) for homeless people in which they could give out.

The Chair asked if there was any advice on drink spiking which people should be aware of. Jeanette Lock advised that people should not leave their drinks unattended. She also informed that the Angels raised awareness of the 'Ask for Angela' code-phrase, whereby a person would go to a member of staff at a bar or restaurant and then 'ask for Angela' if they ever felt threatened by the person they were with.

The Chair then asked if all pubs were aware of the 'Ask for Angela' code-phrase. Robyn Bunyan confirmed this, stating that there was a Pubwatch Team in Maidenhead. She explained that Thames Valley Police (TVP) had started to promote a new campaign, 'Party Safe, Home Safe', which sought to raise awareness to people on their limits, to not leave their drinks unattended, to not finish a drink if it did not taste right, to let friends know if they were separated from them in a bar, pub or nightclub, and to use licensed taxis. Alongside this, 'Ask for Angela' was well promoted at all venues in Maidenhead.

The Chair expressed his appreciation for Jeanette Lock for attending the Forum as well as the work of the Maidenhead Street Angels.

Maidenhead Town Update

Robyn Bunyan, Maidenhead Town Manager, gave the town manager update. She started off by informing that the data covered September 2023 and that the footfall data was collected in areas, namely the High Street, St. Ives and Watermark Development (where the Town Hall and Library were located), and Waterside Quarter.

There were 174,000 visits to the High Street in September 2023, an increase of 34.5% year-on-year. A positive result, Robyn Bunyan stated that the statistics were beginning to "creep back". The best days were Thursdays to Saturdays which coincided with the produce market on the High Street as well as more office workers returning to the office. The usage of the High Street peaked at between 11:00am to 3:00pm timeslot with visitors and residents going out for lunch. This was consistent across all of the areas with some variation with the dwell time.

The dwell time in the Waterside Quarter area was around one hour, while the dwell time for the St. Ives and Watermark Development area was around 79 minutes. Robyn Bunyan conveyed that this illustrated that the Library was a good community hub with a lot of activity.

Overall, footfall and dwell time in September 2023 was good.

Moving onto car park in Maidenhead in September 2023, Robyn Bunyan notified that the data for August 2023 was outstanding at the moment but hoped to receive it by the end of the month. The total car parking usage for September 2023 was 59,361, which was slightly higher compared to September 2022, and was reflective of the increase in footfall.

On Broadway Car Park, Robyn Bunyan reported that demolition contractors would be on site on Friday 17th November 2023 to start hoarding the site, which would take around two weeks. On top of this, information would be released in the coming days about the process. The work would take place in a 10-week period, from the hoarding being installed to the building being totally demolished. Once the hoarding had been completed, scaffolding would be placed around the building (both under Phase One). Demolition work would begin in January 2024. Robyn Bunyan expected that there would be little-to-no disruption during the Christmas period. There would be around six weeks of demolition, with further information on the process being provided once it began.

Robyn Bunyan then highlighted some new lettings in Maidenhead:

- German Doner Kebab (GDK), an international brand, was opening a unit in the next couple of weeks on the High Street.
- The building for Bombay Story in Waterside Quarter had been completed, though an opening date was yet to be announced.
- At the top end of the High Street, a new sushi restaurant, Sushi Point, was fitting out in the former Fun Tech unit.
- Two further properties had been let in Waterside Quarter, meaning that they only had one property left to let and there was some interest.

On office lettings, Robyn Bunyan highlighted that office lettings had been “absolutely flying” in the last quarter, with 36,307 square feet of offices having been let. This led to a total rent of just over £1 million for the local area. There were large brands which were choosing to place their businesses in Maidenhead, which Robyn Bunyan believed showcased how far Maidenhead had come with its regeneration and where it was going in terms of the interest that people were placing on the area.

There was huge interest in the ground floor retail and food and drink options for One Maidenhead alongside a large amount of interest for Tempo, with the ground floor public café had also been let. The vacancy rate in the local area was slightly better than the national average.

Overall, Robyn Bunyan stated, Maidenhead was doing “really well” in terms of returning footfall and car parking, as well as new businesses and office letting coming in.

Robyn Bunyan then gave the highlights of events and activities in Maidenhead. In September 2023:

- Weekly Produce Market.
- Norden Farm Kite Festival.
- Free Sing September with Tuneless Choir.
- Cookham Dean Gravity Grand Prix.
- Mr Hoppy’s Maidenhead Pub Quiz.
- Cookham and Maidenhead Arts Trail.

In October 2023:

- Weekly Produce Market.
- A-Plan Insurance Family Fun Day, on the High Street.
- Pumpkin Carving and Costume Swap Shop, in the Nicholson’s Centre during the October half-term.
- Maidenhead Comic-Con and Toy Fair, at Braywick Leisure Centre (Maidenhead’s second time holding the event).
- Oktoberfest.

- Maidenhead Town Show.

Robyn Bunyan then discussed the upcoming Christmas events, with the most notable one being the Maidenhead Christmas Lights Switch-on and Christmas Market on Saturday 25th November 2023 (from 11:00am). Throughout the day, there would be a Festive Market at St. Ives Road and in Library Square with a selection of stalls, crafts and home-made items, hot drinks, a bar and street food. There would also be a fun fair with live music all day.

The day would kick off with Sing4You Choir, a community-based choir, at 11:00am. This would be followed by other live music throughout the day with youth dances, youth performances and bands. Providing there were no storms, fireworks would be displayed from the roof of the Town Hall.

Robyn Bunyan then showcased the RBWM Christmas Brochure which contained all the events taking place across the Borough during the Christmas 2023 period. This was being distributed around the Borough at various public places and libraries.

Robyn Bunyan explained that the Maidenhead Christmas Lights Switch-On and Festive Market event was organised by the volunteer Christmas Lights Committee and was being fundraised by another volunteer committee with a number of sponsors.

The other events taking place in the Borough in Maidenhead during the Christmas period included:

- 26th November 2023 (10:30am), Pinder Hall, Cookham: **Cookham Christmas Market**
- 28th November to 30 December 2023, Norden Farm Centre for the Arts: **Miki**
- 8th December 2023, Cookham Dean Village Hall: **Cookham Dean Metre Market – Christmas Special**
- 8th to 10th December 2023, St. Luke’s Church, Maidenhead: **St. Luke’s Church Christmas Tree Festival**
- 9th December 2023, Maidenhead Town Centre: **The Lantern Parade, Carnival of The Animals – Take Flight!**
- 13th to 17th December, Holyport Memorial Hall: **The Snow Queen, Maidenhead Drama Guild**
- 14th to 24th December 2023, Baylis Theatre, Braywick Leisure Centre, Maidenhead: **Beauty and The Beast**
- 17th December 2023 (11:00am), Maidenhead High Street: **Maidenhead Christmas Vegan Fiesta**
- 21st and 23rd December 2023, Baylis Theatre, Braywick Leisure Centre, Maidenhead: **The Santa Show 2023**

Robyn Bunyan gave a brief update on the Maidenhead Town Team. She reported that the Team were moving forward with their Launch Project, Community-led Planting, in partnership with Braywick Heath Nurseries, though this was going slightly slower than expected. A sub-committee had been formed to bring together the 30+ ideas which came out of the Team’s launch. These ideas would be distilled so that the Team had the next steps for 2024, ahead of presenting its forward plan to the wider Town Team, which had around 75 members, and the wider community.

Councillor Reynolds praised the brochure and the festive events it included. He also appreciated the update on the demolition of Nicholson’s Car Park, stating that it was important that it was getting done and that it was a concern for residents.

Robyn Bunyan requested people to notify her of any event which had been missed from the brochure.

Referencing a question from a resident, Councillor Baskerville asked whether there was enough parking space for disabled people near the Town Centre. Robyn Bunyan answered that the parking capacity was available, and this had been promoted widely by the RBWM Park Smart campaign. She informed that people without a disabled badge were encouraged to park correctly (i.e., not use disabled bays). If the disabled parking bays were unavailable, residents could park in any space so long as they display their blue disabled badge, and the wardens would not allocate a parking ticket.

Robyn Bunyan highlighted that the surface-level car parks were popular, notably Grove Road and West Street car parks, even when Broadway Car Park was available. She assured that the car parks always had capacity, notably Hines Meadow Car Park, which had 40% capacity, even at the weekend. There was also on-street parking for disabled residents. The disabled bays along King's Street, which fed into Nicholson's Shopping Centre, would not be suspended during the demolition of Broadway Car Park.

Councillor Shaw asked whether the slow increase in footfall and car park usage was due to more people walking into town. Robyn Bunyan believed that this was due to more people living in the Town Centre, whereby they do not need to use car parks. In addition, more people were walking and travelling with different methods, though bus usage had remained static. She then stated that the Borough would see a trend as the footfall would increase due to more people live in the Town Centre, whereby they would not need to use a vehicle. She added that would likely see an increase in permit parking alongside the office lettings, likely in the next six months.

The Chair asked how residents could acquire the brochure. Robyn Bunyan replied that 5,000 copies had been printed and could be found in all the Borough libraries alongside venues, cafes, and supermarkets. She highlighted that there was also an online version, promoted via Make Maidenhead, Visit Windsor and My Royal Borough. The Chair commended the brochure and the work being done to arrange it and the events it included.

Councillor Martin asked whether tagging on Make Maidenhead was only for arts and entertainment, or did it include businesses as well. Robyn Bunyan confirmed that businesses were included as well. She explained that there were two variants of Make Maidenhead on social media: one was a social media page (managed by Robyn Bunyan) which used to promote events and activities in Maidenhead and the surrounding areas (as well as promoting and supporting local businesses); the other was a group where local residents could share activities and their offers.

Robyn Bunyan advised to people to ensure that they were tagging on @MakeMaidenhead on Instagram and Facebook in which businesses and events could be promoted. She also highlighted the other tags for people to use: Make Maidenhead, Visit Windsor (which included all activities in the Borough rather than only in Windsor), and My Royal Borough, which was more business-focused, with regular networking sessions, business training opportunities and networking. From there, the Town Management Team would be notified and would then share the event/activity. She also highlighted the hashtag #MyFestiveRoyalBorough, which was being used across the Borough's Christmas campaign.

The Chair believed it was positive that offices were being let and office space was being used.

Maidenhead Community Centre

As the Community Champion for Volunteering, Councillor Douglas gave a presentation on the Maidenhead Community Centre in which he was a trustee for.

Beginning with the background, Councillor Douglas informed that back in 2016, a group which he was involved with had hired out a small hall, managed by the Royal Voluntary Service for many years, on York Road, Maidenhead as a judo club. Just after hiring the place, the Royal Voluntary Service announced that they were going to close the hall due to receiving losses

from managing it. In response to this, Councillor Douglas's group offered to manage the hall for three years, in which the Royal Voluntary Service accepted providing they formed a charity.

In January 2017, Councillor Douglas and two other trustees had established a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation) and had been running it as a community centre ever since, along with a lot of volunteers they inherited from the Royal Voluntary Service. There were around 40 volunteers, including the three founding trustees and the caretaker, with many people aged between 70 and 96 who helped out in the café. After around 4 years of running the building, the trustees turned over £100,000, using this to build up the hall.

Eventually, there were plans for the building to be demolished. Wishing to continue with their activities, the trustees lobbied the Borough, submitted two petitions (each with around 2,000 signatures) and launched a campaign to continue with their activities. In the end, the trustees were given an alternative venue at 4 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, which Councillor Douglas described as "fantastic" in spite of originally being neglected and initially challenging to manage.

Based on survey data, Councillor Douglas informed that the Community Centre building was attended by around 1,000 people per week, adding that it was expected to increase in the coming years. The Community Centre hosted a variety of activities, including fitness, sport, dance, education, music, art and more.

Councillor Douglas then shared a selection of photos which showcased the activities at the Community Centre.

Councillor Douglas informed that there were many volunteering opportunities at the Community Centre for those who were interested, with some of the skilled and unskilled. For example, Nature's Haven, who worked in the Community Centre gardens, had been actively looking for volunteers to do garden work. (On top of this, Councillor Douglas suggested to invite Nature's Haven to a future Forum meeting). Other volunteer groups who used the Community Centre included:

- GoodGym, using the Community Centre as their main meeting point on Wednesday evenings,
- Men's Matters
- Buckinghamshire Mind, who supported mental health within the community and who were actively seeking out volunteers.

Councillor Douglas stated that the Community Centre wished to establish a full-time volunteer-run café, hoping there would be enough people to help out with this as well as there being a suitable time to set it up.

Councillor Douglas added that there was a possibility of running a weekly volunteering hub in 2024, though this was still in early stages. He added that there were some people who would like to volunteer; but they rather joined face-to-face rather than join up via email or Facebook.

Councillor Douglas concluded his presentation by displaying the website link and contact details of the Community Centre.

- maidenheadcentre.org.uk
- bookings@maidenheadcentre.org.uk
- jack@maidenheadcentre.org.uk
- 01628 203400

The Chair thanked Councillor Douglas for his presentation and commended the work of the Community Centre, describing it as community driven and therefore making it a warm place to visit.

Councillor Reynolds expressed appreciation for the work of the Community Centre. Councillor Douglas responded by describing his involvement as enjoyable and rewarding.

Councillor Martin asked whether the Community Centre sought to hire out rooms during the quieter times. Councillor Douglas replied that the Community Centre had grown and always had demand for space (partly due to a lack of options in the Town Centre) even though it had never done any sort of advertising or marketing. The Community Centre generally had quieter periods during lunchtimes, Friday evenings and Saturdays to an extent; however, these quieter periods were gradually being filled up by new activities. Nevertheless, Councillor Douglas stated that it would be good for these quieter periods to be used by volunteer groups who were interested.

The Chair asked whether there were any other areas which the Community Centre were seeking to expand alongside seeking to establish a volunteer café. Councillor Douglas answered that the main objective of the Community Centre was to provide a venue for various volunteer groups with a café being a part of a puzzle whereby people within the building may join a different activity or group based in the building. Nevertheless, the Community Centre hoped that to persuade Nature's Haven to adopt parts of Kidwell's Park to spread the Community Centre's positive influence in the area.

Resident Questions and Item Suggestions for Future Forums

Based on Councillor Douglas's earlier suggestion, the Chair stated that Nature's Haven volunteers could be invited to do an item at a future Forum meeting.

Councillor Douglas suggested other volunteer groups could be invited, such as Men's Matters. He also suggested that he could forward a list of volunteer and charity groups from the Community Centre who could be invited.

Councillor Baskerville asked Councillor Douglas whether young people attended the Community Centre, highlighting that 4 Marlow Road used to be a youth club. He also suggested an area of discussion could be youth provision within the Borough, stating that many youth clubs had been closed. Councillor Douglas acknowledged that there was a lot less youth activities at the Community Centre, though there were groups and activities which young people could attend, such as dance and performance, as well as a single general youth club.

Item suggestions for Future Forum meetings:

- Nature's Haven
- Other volunteer/charity groups at the Community Centre, such as Men's Matters.
- Youth provision within the Borough.

The Chair informed that item suggestions could be emailed to himself or Laurence Ellis, Democratic Services Officer.

Dates of Future Meetings

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on 15th January 2023 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead.

They also noted the other upcoming meetings on the following dates (all at 6:30pm):

- 13th March 2024
- 9th May 2024

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.02 pm

Chair.....

Date.....