Minutes of the special meeting of Hay Town Council held in the Council Chamber on 8th February 2016

Present:

Cllr R Golesworthy (RG)  Cllr H Davies (HD)  Cllr D Gittins (DG)
Cllr F Howard (FH)  Cllr S Like (SL)  Cllr A Powell (AP)
County & Town Cllr G Ratcliffe (GR)  Cllr T Stedman (TS)

In Attendance:  H Zytynska (HZ)

Apologies: None

RG reported that Cllr R Shackelford had resigned from the Council; RG thanked him for all his hard work and wished him well in the future.

It was agreed to change the order of the Agenda and consider the Hay Castle planning application last.

1266. Declarations of Interest

DG is a Friend of Hay Castle so cannot take part in that discussion. RG declared a personal & prejudicial interest as his sisters run a café in Hay so he will not take part in the discussion of a café or shops at the Castle. GR declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the planning application but does not have to leave the meeting.

1267. Powys LDP Action Plan

TS mentioned that there are a lot of changes to this on the Powys CC website and comments have to be made by 11th March.

RG had spoken to NL and they suggested appointing a sub-committee to look at this and report back to full Council.

SL thought that all councillors should be looking at this and he would like a hard-copy of the documents to be made available in the Council office.

All felt the same and so it was agreed that a special meeting of HTC should be held on Thursday 18th February at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber to discuss this.

1268. Planning

(i) 16/13119/FUL – Greenfield, Brecon Road, Hay-on-Wye – no objections.

(ii) 16/13093/ADV – Pharos House, Anderson Brecon Site, Hay-on-Wye – no objections but it was noted that the signs had already been erected.

[RG & DG moved to the public gallery. GR took the chair.]

(iii) 15/13048/FUL & 15/13049/LBC – Hay Castle, Hay-on-Wye –

Two members of the Hay Castle Trust, Andrew Craven (AC) & Nancy Lavin Albert (NLA), were in attendance and FH proposed that they be allowed to ask and answer questions. GR asked councillors to vote on whether standing orders should be suspended to allow this and all were in favour.

TS was very concerned that a very prominent quote in the planning application seemed to say that HTC are in support but the quote had been taken from a letter (from RG) supporting a grant application only.
HD said she is delighted that the Castle is being developed and felt it would be good for Hay but felt there are one or two problems to consider. AP was concerned about the lack of parking on the site. SL said it should be highlighted that there does not seem to be space for parking for visitors and staff. He also had other concerns: 1. The steps/access off Market place would mean the loss of 4 parking places & he wondered if the space available for the Thursday market would be reduced & if the steps could be redesigned. 2. Access onto Castle Street via the Honesty bookshop includes the widening of the pavement which could cause a traffic bottleneck plus the possible withdrawal of 2 car parking spaces. 3. The proposed observation towers are of metal construction - he queried whether glass panelling might be preferable. 4. Although the provision of a café in the Castle is beyond the Council’s jurisdiction his personal view was that the space would be better used as a small museum/arts/crafts space. AP was of the opinion that visitors would like to be able to get refreshments on site. TS felt the same way as SL about the Market place access and also the safety aspect of children running down the steps into the parking area/road. TS & HD wondered if the Market place should be pedestrianised but also realised that this would lead to loss of income. FH pointed out that United Hay had suggested this option several years ago. TS asked what the phrase ‘highway de-designation’ on the plans meant. She also noted that the plans include a reading room and wondered if this had anything to do with hints from Jeremy Patterson, Chief Executive at Powys CC, that the town library could move there. GR stated that he was not strongly opposed to the development but was concerned about the loss of parking spaces including the possibility of the loss of disabled bays when Castle Street is widened. AP expressed congratulations to all involved with the design and planning, he felt is was a great achievement with just a few small problems to consider. HD felt that HTC could be really creative in planning and enhancing the central area of Hay, possibly extending the market area. Although not a planning issue TS added a plea (not a criticism) for later opening hours at the café at the Castle as feedback has shown that there are not enough places for people (especially with children) to eat in the evening.

[SL left the meeting.]

NLA responded to councillors saying she appreciated the comments and questions and felt they were very thoughtful and important and offered the following comments: Hay Castle Trust are still working with Powys CC (PCC) and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) regarding the loss of parking spaces and that the orientation of the spaces could be addressed to make more efficient use of the area. The term ‘re-designation’ of the highway was simply a formality to remove parking spaces. A transit report is with PCC to address issues with cars, driving and parking. The widening of the Castle Street pavement would not affect present parking spaces and PCC will only agree if “measurably allowable”. The viewing points in the Castle would have metal mesh panelling as this would be the least visible material.
HD asked about events on the ground floor of the Castle eg. weddings. NLA said the space would be used in many different ways to meet the needs of the community and not just for private hire. She also mentioned that they had not had any discussions about the town Library and the reading room on the plans would be just that to store archives for all to access.

GR asked about the planning application situation and NLA said that BBNPA were feeding back information to PCC regarding highways and parking at the moment.

HD asked how they would answer the worries about the effect the café and shops would have on local businesses. NLA said they felt the Castle would draw in more people to visit the town. FH said that locals were worried that people will only come to the Castle but she felt the steps down to the Market Square may help that.

TS asked what analysis had been carried out of how residents will interact with the Castle and its events. NLA said they have held and will be holding more consultation events; open days etc. asking what residents need; what might be missing; what they want to see/do at the Castle. AC mentioned that part of the Heritage Lottery Fund application included appointing someone to engage with locals.

GR asked for final comments & questions from councillors.

TS asked if it would be possible to go back to PCC and ask to pedestrianise the Market Square but GR felt locals would not want this as it could stop people just popping into the small shops.

FH said the parking issues need to be looked at.

It was felt the development should be incorporated into the Town Plan.

TS still had concerns about the safety of the steps into the Market Square.

AP was concerned about the narrowing of Castle Street and did not want to see any loss of parking facilities in that area.

GR would like to see the response from PCC regarding the parking layout.

TS asked what sort of lighting would be used in the Castle grounds and NLA said only ground lighting would be used, not floodlighting.

AP asked about the café opening hours but NLA did not know yet but they hoped the kitchen would be used as a catering outlet and would offer training for young people.

NLA also mentioned that staff parking will be considered by Powys and their criteria will have to be used.

HD asked about the grant to fund the project and whether the present grant will be enough. AC replied that they still need to raise £1.6million and that the grant will only be given when they have match-funding. All the money will be in place before they start work and will then be completed. HD asked how long the work would take and NLA said 22 months, that they may be able to make a start this year and they are looking at a possible end date of 2018/19.

GR summed up that HTC support the proposal, in principle, but with the following concerns:
- Loss of parking space in Market Square
- Widening of pavement in Castle Street
- The new entrance/steps at the front of the Castle
- Lack of staff parking on site

All were in agreement.
There being no further business the meeting closed at 8pm.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 7th March 2016