

Low Hill Pride in Place Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 3 September 2026.

Present: Mary Akinwa, Chris Allen (Chair), Jackline Anthony, Natoya Blake, Rebecca Bloomer, Sureena Brackenridge MP, Cllr Paula Brookfield (on line), Emma Causer, Steven Coles, Waljinder Singh Gill, Kimberley Maloney, Ruvarashe Mapuranga, Joanna Munroe, Dave Pritchard, Shane Slater.

In attendance: Jaspreet Chahal (MP Office / Minutes), Simon Hamilton (MP Office), Jenny Lewington (CoWC).

Apologies: Jas Dolphin (MHCLG), Laura Porter, Tracey Powis, Scott Williams.

1. Introduction from the Chair

The Chair, Chris Allen, welcomed the Board to its first meeting and encouraged members to get to know each other. He was grateful of the opportunity to visit St Christopher's Park prior to the meeting, facilitated by Sam Axtell (CoWC)

The Chair reminded Board members of their role as directors and leaders within the meetings.

Members were given a 'spider diagram' on which they were able to map their confidence around some key areas related to being a board member (see below). Those areas included:

- Listening to people in the community
- Helping decide how the £20 million is used
- Agreeing when money can be spent
- Working well with people who have different backgrounds and experiences
- Disagreeing with people respectfully
- Leading a task group with a specific focus
- Being a company director
- Reading and understanding the paperwork

Members were asked to listen actively, recognise that different views may be expressed, debate professionally, and make collective decisions as a Board. Members were also encouraged to flag up when further understanding was needed so we could learn together.

2. Consultation, Outreach and Governance

Shane Slater asked how the community would be reached, including through the website, Board meetings and consultation activity. The Chair confirmed that public consultation process is underway and is available on the council website.

Sureena Brackenridge MP asked about the target audience and timeframe for the consultation. The Chair explained the Communities Team had gone out to tender and engaged a range of community organisations to conduct consultation in such a way as to hear the views of people not associated with current community groups.

The community plan is due to complete by the end of November.

Councillor Paula Brookfield said that Board members should be in control of the process and that it should be resident-led. Natoya Blake also said Board members should be involved in the consultation and outreach process. The Chair agreed.

Shane Slater asked whether consultation costs would be covered by PIP funding. The Chair confirmed that they would. Shane also requested regular timeline updates. The Chair advised that the consultation is expected to run for one month, although dates may change following input from MLHCG.

The Chair and MP have asked MLHCG whether the area boundaries for the funding can be changed. A response is still awaited.

3. Programme Ideas and Emerging Themes

Board members were asked to consider workshop feedback, emerging themes, and any potential areas they may wish to champion, as set out in the agenda.

Natoya Blake asked whether funding could be used to support SMEs, young people and apprenticeships. The Chair confirmed that this could be considered.

Rebecca Bloomer asked whether local businesses could be involved in shaping the plan. The Chair confirmed that the PIP programme is intended to engage all voices from within the area and suggested that a Board member may wish to lead engagement with local businesses.

Joanna Munroe asked whether funding could support life skills provision for Low Hill residents. The Chair welcomed the suggestion.

Councillor Paula Brookfield said that the area map should be shared so Board members can prepare for the next stage. Sureena Brackenridge MP asked whether, once boundary changes have been agreed, consultation can include the areas shown on the updated map. The Chair confirmed that people in potential areas should be consulted about PIP funding.

4. St Christopher's Park

Steven Coles noted that St Christopher's Park has significant potential, including wildlife value, but also raised concerns about fly-tipping and fox holes on the site.

Natoya Blake asked why the area has not been maintained.

The Chair explained that the site would need to be managed by a local organisation to oversee security and project delivery. A feasibility study may be required to shape what can be delivered. If the Board agrees to take the project forward, PIP funding could potentially be used, and there may also be opportunities to secure additional funding if a community interest organisation manages the site.

Jenny Lewington suggested taking the matter back to City of Wolverhampton Council to investigate whether PIP funding could be used for St Christopher's Park. The Chair asked whether Board members were content for this to be explored.

Decision: The majority of Board members agreed that the Council should investigate the potential use of PIP funding for St Christopher's Park.

5. Recruitment, Community Forum and Policies

The Board discussed proposals for recruiting a Project Manager and Community Engagement Officer. The majority of Board members agreed that the recruitment process should begin.

The Board also discussed options for employing staff while the programme is not yet able to employ people directly. These included tendering for a local organisation, considering Council-based options, and exploring the Council's additional offer of Adecco recruitment agency support.

Decision: The Board agreed to keep recruitment options open and begin exploring the recruitment process for staff.

The first community forum is scheduled for 29 October. The forum will support production of the plan, with a proposed budget of £5,000. The Council offered to produce the plan at the meeting, and the Chair requested that a quote be obtained from the Council.

Board members were reminded to sign the terms of reference, self-declaration form, acceptable behaviour form and conflict of interest form.

6. Action Points

No.	Action	Owner	Deadline / Timing
1	Confirm the date for issuing the Plan of Action survey and circulate it to the public and Board members.	Chair / Programme team	To be confirmed
2	Share regular updates with Board members on the consultation timetable.	Chair / Programme team	During consultation period

3	Confirm whether MLHCG will agree to proposed changes to the funding area boundaries.	Chair and MP	Awaiting response
4	Share the area map with Board members so they can prepare for the next stage.	Programme team	Before next meeting
5	Consider emerging themes from workshop feedback and identify any areas Board members may wish to champion.	All Board members	Before next meeting
6	Explore whether PIP funding could potentially be used for St Christopher's Park and report back to the Board.	City of Wolverhampton Council	To be confirmed
7	Begin exploring recruitment options for a Project Manager and Community Engagement Officer, including Council, external and Adecco options.	Chair / Programme team	To be confirmed
8	Obtain a quote from the Council to produce the plan for the community forum.	Chair / Programme team	Before 29 October
9	Sign and return the terms of reference, self-declaration form, acceptable behaviour form and conflict of interest form.	All Board members	As soon as possible

7. Date of Next Meetings

1 October 2026 – Board meeting

29 October 2026 – Community Forum

Appendix (Spider diagram) below

