

**MINUTES OF A STATUTORY MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2016 AT THE TOWN HALL AT 7.30PM.**

PRESENT:

	The Mayor (Councillor R J Gell)	
	The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs P H Whiting)	
Councillor D Drage		Councillor D Hamblin
Councillor H L Jackson		Councillor D C Lawson MBE
Councillor Mrs S Mantle		Councillor Mrs O Mayes
Councillor Mrs V M Newbery		Councillor B Prigmore
Councillor A M T Reading		Councillor Mrs A M Sauntson
Councillor J Smithers		Councillor P Tomas
Mrs S J Mitcham (Town Clerk)		Mr D Wicks (Mayors' Sergeant)

IN ATTENDANCE: PC D Brown and District Councillor G Harwood MBE.

16/21. **PRAYERS**

The meeting was opened with prayers led by Rev. Margaret Eales.

16/22. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr Mrs C Reavey and Cllr C O'Rourke.

16/23. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Other Interests

Cllr H L Jackson – Item 14 (xv) – Member of Higham Ferrers Tourism and Twinning

Cllr Mrs A Sauntson - Item 14 (xv) – Member of Higham Ferrers Tourism and Twinning

Cllr Mrs V Newbery Item 14 (xv) – Member of Twinning Association.

Cllr Mrs O Mayes – Item 18 Heritage Centre – Chairman of HiFars

Cllr Mrs A Sauntson - Item 18 Heritage Centre – Member of Higham Ferrers Tourism.

Cllr H L Jackson - Item 18 Heritage Centre – Member of Higham Ferrers Tourism.

Cllr Mrs A Sauntson – Item 19 – Charters – Member of Working Group and Higham Ferrers Tourism.

16/24. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2016 be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record.

16/25. **POLICING**

PC D Brown gave the following report:-

	2015	2016
Burglary	1	2
Burglary Other	3	6
Criminal Damage	7	2
Theft from Motor Vehicle	0	4
Violent Offences	3	4
Drug Offences	1	0

The following points were raised:-

- The slow responses to the 101 number.
- Feedback from the Police to the CCTV Control Room.

16/26. **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**

No public present.

16/27. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Mayor gave the following report:-

“Since the last meeting I have had a guided tour of the Higham Business Park with Mr Stephen Woodley. I have visited Roltons in Midland Road, attended a Northampton University Graduation Ceremony and the Awards evening for the Sea Cadets at Rushden. There is still time to order tickets for the joint Civic Dance on March 18th. Joyce Bailey, a former Mayoress has recently died aged 101.”

16/28. **PLANNING.**

16/28.1 **To consider responses to the following planning applications received: -
15/00038/WASFUL:Retrospective planning application for the erection of a steel
framed building: The Caravan Site, Station Rd, Irthlingborough.**

RESOLVED:

That the Council object to the application. The following comments to be made:-
The site is in flood risk zone 3 and the sequential test has not been applied. It does not constitute minor development as laid out in PPG Flood Risk and Coast Change. There are no flood defences and the Environment Agency has indicated that there is a high risk of the site flooding and there is a 1 in 2 year chance of the site flooding. Should the site flood the Council is concerned at the possible impacts and danger of the scrap metal and pollutants on the environment. The Council is concerned that the building has been constructed with no apparent inspections by the Building Control Inspector and wonder if it is constructed to meet the relevant Building Regulations.

16/28.2 **To note determinations on planning applications.**

RESOLVED:

That the report on determinations of planning applications previously considered be noted.

16/29. **TOWN CLERKS REPORT**

Open Space

A resident complained that the land adjacent to the walkway through to Vine Hill Drive to the rear of 36 and 38 Russell Way was being fenced in. Investigations have shown the land was owned by Spire Homes and sold to numbers 36 and 38 to be used as garden land. They were not aware that planning permission was needed and an application is being submitted.

School Crossing Patrol Vacancy

There were not applicants by the original deadline. The deadline has been extended until 23rd March.

CCTV

Attached is the recent report from the Monitoring Centre.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Referendum had taken place on the 18th February. Turnout out had been 16.098% and the number of electors in favour was 91.62%. There was a vote of thanks to the Steering Group and Town Clerk on all their hard work in getting the Neighbourhood Plan to this stage.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerks report be received and noted.

16/30. **QUESTIONS.**

None.

16/31. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES.**

No reports.

16/32. **FINANCE.**

16/32.1 **To approve accounts for payment as at 23rd February 2016.**

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment totalling £28993.03 be approved for payment.

16/32.2 **To approve the Bank Account reconciliation as at 31st January 2016.**

RESOLVED:

That the bank reconciliation as at 31st January 2016 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr D C Lawson MBE.

16/32.3 **To receive and note the budget report as at 31st January 2016.**

RESOLVED:

That the budget report as at 31st January 2016 be received and noted.

16/32.4 **To consider the following items of expenditure:-**

(i) **Tree Works.**

Two quotes had been received:-

Quote A- £4893.30

Quote B - £8011.25

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk obtain a third quote and accept the lowest quote.

16/32.5 **To ratify expenditure under Clerk's delegated powers.**

RESOLVED:

That the following payments under the Clerks delegated powers be ratified:-

All figures include VAT.

Vaughtons	Repair Mayors Medallion	472.02
SLCC	Job Advert Town Manager	210.00
Colemans	2 x photocopies & batteries	4.19
Colemans	1st & 2nd class stamps	119.96
ESPO	Manilla Folders	6.96
Stephen Pell	Replace dragons tooth	35.00
Stephen Pell	Fit new dog bin lid	15.00
Earls Barton Community Magazine	Farmers Market advertising	50.00
ESPO	1 x Blk metal paint	31.20
Stephen Pell	Repair Seat Pavilion	25.00
Stephen Pell	Re attach hanging baskets and hang picture	25.00
Stephen Pell	Carry out repairs side door lock pavilion	35.00
Stephen Pell	Lay matting rear gateway Play Area	85.00
Rushden Graphics	Amend banner - Neighbourhood Plan	30.00
RAO Stationers Ltd	1 multipurpose stamp	9.64

16/33. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT.**

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Audit Report dated 14th February 2016 be received and noted.

16/34. **COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 9th February 2016 be received and adopted.

Recommendations:

- (i) **Risk Assessments**
RESOLVED:
That the report on the review of risk assessments and the ‘Financial Risk Assessment’ attached to the minutes be approved.
- (ii) **Review of Council Internal Controls And Internal Audit.**
RESOLVED:
That having carried out the annual review of the Council’s Internal Controls and Internal Audit procedures that the documents be adopted.
- (iii) **Review of Insurance**
RESOLVED:
That the Council remain with Zurich Municipal at a cost of £5912.46 which included subsidence cover, Terrorism cover and cover for the bridges at Riverside Park.
- (iv) **Internal audit.**
RESOLVED:
That NCALC Internal Audit Service be appointed as Independent Internal Auditor for 2016/17 and that the ‘Terms of Reference’ be agreed.
- (v) **County Air Ambulance Trust.**
RESOLVED:
That no donation be made to County Air Ambulance as there was no certainty that monies would benefit Higham Ferrers directly.
- (vi) **SERVE.**
RESOLVED:
That a donation of £500 be made to SERVE toward the expansion of the Handyman Service in Higham Ferrers.
- (vii) **Sickness Absence Policy.**
RESOLVED:
That the Sickness Absence Policy be reviewed without change.
- (viii) **Retirement Policy.**
RESOLVED:
That the Retirement Policy be reviewed without change.
- (ix) **Standing Orders**
RESOLVED:
That the Standing Orders be reviewed without change.
- (x) **Equal Opportunities Policy** .
RESOLVED:
A copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy with proposed amendments had been circulated along with a new separate Staff Equal Opportunities policy.
That the Equal Opportunities Policy as amended be adopted.
That the Staff Equal Opportunities Policy be adopted.
- (xi) **Financial Regulations**
RESOLVED:
That the Financial Regulations as amended be adopted.
- (xii) **Safeguarding Policy**
RESOLVED:
That the Safeguarding Policy be reviewed without change.
- (xiii) **Phone Lines.**
RESOLVED:
That the Council transfer all lines to BT and continue with the broadband service with BT. Cost £72.70 per month plus £10 package for unlimited calls to National/Local/Mobile numbers. Clerk to compare cost to Virgin Media before the decision was ratified.
- (xiv) **Fire Alarm and Fire Extinguishers Servicing Contract**

RESOLVED:

That the Council renew the contract with Northants Fire to undertake the servicing of the fire alarm, emergency lights and fire extinguishers at the Town Hall and the servicing of the emergency lights and fire extinguishers at the Sports Pavilion.

Costs as follows:

- Fire Alarm and Emergency Lights Servicing £115 per visit. (2 visits a year.)
- Redcare Monitoring £277 per annum.
- Fire Extinguishers Town Hall - £2.64 per unit. No attendance fee as linked to fire alarm service
- Fire Extinguishers – Sports Pavilion - £2.64 per unit plus £26.40 for visit

(xv)

Use of Town Hall.

RESOLVED:

That Higham Ferrers Tourism and the Twinning Association, because of their links to the Town Council, be allowed free use of the Town Hall for meetings, subject to a Councillor, who was a keyholder, being present to lock up and set the alarm.

(xvi)

Security Alarm

That the decision be deferred whilst clarification of the second year costs is sought.

16/35. **PLAY AREA SURFACING**

RESOLVED:

That the Wetpour quote B of £14,600 be accepted from DT Leisure.

16/36. **TOWN MANAGER**

RESOLVED:

- That a budget of £2000 be allocated for the Town Manager to be used on items such as promotional activities. Authority to incur expenditure under the budget to be delegated to the Town Clerk.
- That the Town Clerk be delegated the authority to confirm the appointment of the Town Manager in conjunction with Rushden Town Council representatives. The appointment to be in consultation with Cllr D C Lawson MBE.

16/37. **FLAG FLYING - MERCHANT NAVY DAY**

RESOLVED:

That Merchant Navy Day, 3rd September, be recognised by this Council by the flying of a Red Ensign outside the Town Hall this year and subsequent years.

Cllr AM T Reading would obtain a Merchant navy Flag. For the Council.

16/38. **HERITAGE CENTRE**

A detailed report had been circulated on the proposed Heritage Centre, which included copies of the survey, approximate capital costs and revenue costs as well as alternative management options. During the debate the following points were raised:-

- Indicative capital costs were just under £200000 and revenue costs in the region of £300000.
- If it was managed by a Charity would they be able to find the £25000 needed to run the building.
- Concern at the inclusion of a clause that the council would be responsible for 50% of the cost of maintaining the driveway. There were other users to the back of the building who would contribute to the wear and tear of the driveway.
- Several Councillors expressed support of the principal of a Heritage Centre.
- Preference would be to buy a building eg. A house in Wood Street was for sale at £165,000.
- The indicative costs of the facility were prohibitive of the short term of the lease.

It was benefitting the landlord as they would have a renovated building handed back at the end of the lease.

- It was a good location.
- Building was in a poor condition.
- Why can't the library be used.
- What would happen if the County Council withdrew funding from the Library? This was not planned at the present time.
- Strain on officer time.
- Would prefer the option of a 99 year lease with a peppercorn rent.
- The consultation had not solicited many responses and so community support was insufficient for a project of this size.

A motion to defer the decision whilst an urgent meeting with the Duchy of Lancaster was held to discuss the following issues:-

- Length of the lease.
- Whether the building could be purchased.
- Maintenance of the driveway.
- What capital the Duchy would put into the project.

For Cllrs D C Lawson MBE, HL Jackson, Mrs S Mantle and Mrs A Sauntson.

Against - Cllrs Mrs P Whiting, Mrs V Newbery, J Smithers, D Drage, P Tomas, D Hamblin, B Prigmore and R Gell

Abstention – Cllr A M T Reading.

The amendment failed.

RESOLVED:

That the Council withdraw from negotiations with the Duchy of Lancaster to lease or purchase 19 College Street for a Heritage Centre. The indicative capital costs of converting the building and the revenue costs over the offered lease term of 15 years would equate to expenditure of approximately half a million pounds. The financial implications for the Council and residents of Higham Ferrers was too high.

Proposer – Cllr B Prigmore'

Seconder – Cllr A M T Reading

For – 9- Cllrs Mrs P Whiting, Mrs V Newbery, J Smithers, D Drage, P Tomas, AMT Reading, D Hamblin, B Prigmore and R Gell.

Against - 4 – Cllrs D C Lawson MBE, Mrs S Mantle, HL Jackson and Mrs A Sauntson. Cllr Mrs O Mayes had an 'Other Interest' and did not vote.

16/39. **CHARTER PROJECT**

RESOLVED:

- That the Clerk submits an 'Expression of Interest' to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project.
- That if it is successful the Council advertises and recruits a Project Manager for the project.
- That expenditure be incurred in funding the Project Manager, using the £1500 allocated in the budget and funding from Higham Ferrers Tourism.

16/40. **ITEMS TO REPORT.**

None.

Mayor

Date