

**MINUTES OF A STATUTORY MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY 24th NOVEMBER 2015 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 C O'Rourke
Councillor B Prigmore		Councillor A M T Reading
Councillor Mrs C Reavey		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 SPC T Raby

15/259. **PRAYERS**

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

15/260. **APOLOGIES**

None.

15/261. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Other Interests.

Cllr Mrs S Mantle - Item 12.1. chq no 300130 – Secretary of Pubwatch.

Cllr D C Lawson MBE and Cllr P Tomas – Item 17 – Live in Mallard Close

Cllr H L Jackson Item 8.1. (i) Lives in Linnetts Lane.

15/262. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 27th October 2015 be signed by the Mayor (Cllr R J Gell) as being a true and correct record.

15/263. **POLICING**

PC D Brown introduced Special Constable Terry Raby who will hopefully be working in the town. Current initiatives running at the moment were:-

- Road Safety Week – this was taking place mainly outside Schools.
- Focus on vehicle offences including drink driving.

The crime figures were as follows:-

	2014	15
Violent Offences	3	4
Theft of Motor Vehicles	0	0
Theft from motor vehicles	8	1
Criminal Damage	5	6
Burglary Other	7	6
Burglary Dwelling	2	1

15/264. **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**

No public present.

15.265 **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Mayor reported that he had attended the following:-

28th October - Annual cheque presentation – Higham Piecemakers

7th November - Royal British Legion

11th November - Wreath laying American Cemetery

14th November - Art Exhibition at Rushden.

21st November - Christmas Sparkle opening and switching on the lights.

He thanked all the Councillors, staff and volunteers who had helped with Christmas Sparkle.

The Mayors Annual Award had now been launched with closing date of 4th March 2016.

15/266. **PLANNING.**

15/266.1 **To consider responses to the following planning applications received:**

(i) **15/0278: Construction of new detached bungalow together with off road parking and associated works at 14 Tenter Close, Higham Ferrers.**

RESOLVED:

That the Council object to the application and make the following comments:-

- It is contrary to policy HF.H1 of the Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan. It is 'garden development' and it has not been demonstrated that the development is appropriate and has regards to the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- It is over development of the plot which would result in a cramped and an incongruous form of development.
- It would have a limited amount of garden/amenity space.
- It is detrimental to the residential amenity of the occupiers of the current dwelling at 14 Tenter Close.

15/266.2 **To note determinations on planning applications.**

RESOLVED:

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

15/267. **TOWN CLERKS REPORT**

15/256.Rushden East

A revised statement was submitted to the Core Strategy Inspector. The Town Clerk had taken part in the round table discussion on Rushden East at the Examination on 24th November. She gave a verbal report on the session.

Community Facilities Fund.

Two applications were put forward for stage 1 of the process. The application for funding towards the storage building adjacent to the tennis courts was unsuccessful. The bid for £50,000 towards the Heritage Centre has been selected to go forward to stage 2 of the process.

Police

Attached is a letter from the Police and Crime Commissioner for information.

Neighbourhood Plan

The referendum has been delayed from December to February because of staff resource issues at East Northamptonshire Council.

Town Hall Christmas Closure

The office will be closed from midday on Christmas Eve to Monday 4th January 2016

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk's report be received and noted.

15/268. **QUESTIONS.**

None.

15/269. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES.**

None.

15/270. **FINANCE.**15/270.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 24th November 2015.****RESOLVED:**

That the accounts for payment totalling £33,695.37 be approved for payment.

15/270.2. **To approve the Bank Account reconciliation as at 31st October 2015.****RESOLVED:**

That the bank reconciliation as at 31st October 2015 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr D C Lawson MBE.

15/270.3. **To consider following item of expenditure:-**(i) **Tree Work to Walnut Tree****RESOLVED:**

That the Council proceed with option 2, which would retain the tree at a cost of £620.

(ii) **Maintenance Works Storm Water Drainage -Parker Way -****RESOLVED:**

That maintenance works be undertaken to the storm water drainage at Parker Way at a cost of £1450.

15/270.4. **To ratify expenditure under Clerk's delegated powers.****RESOLVED:**

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

All figures include VAT

Rushden Graphics	10 x 5mm Foamex boards- CS	270.00
NCALC	Training Course	34.00
Rushden Pubwatch	Subscriptions 2015	10.00
RGS Arboricultural Consultants	Inspection Walnut Tree following fire damage	420.00
ESPO	Hazard warning tape & laminate pouches	13.56
ESPO	20 X Lanyards	13.92
ESPO	1 box of white Envelopes	11.58
Pulse Cashflow Finance 2 Ltd	Printing - Higham Times	642.00
Pulse Cashflow Finance 2 Ltd	Printing - Christmas Sparkle Programme	291.00
Rutherfords Locksmiths Ltd	4 x Keys cut	11.96
Rutherfords Locksmiths Ltd	2 x keys cut & tops	6.28
Colemans	Book of 2nd class stamps and stationery	54.00
Colemans	8 x A3 Colour copies	7.92
Colemans	AAA Batteries	3.99
Rosetta Publishing Ltd	Delivery of Christmas Sparkle flyer	134.40
Rosetta Publishing Ltd	Delivery Higham Times	134.40
Stephen Pell	Repair guttering to the rear of Little Steps	320.00
Toolstation	Cable ties	11.46
Amazon Marketplace	Megaphone	15.73
Co-operative	Refreshments Christmas Sparkle	15.59

15/271. **COMMITTEES**

15/271.1. **Planning Committee held on 10th November 2015.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10th November 2015 be received and adopted.

15/271.2

Policy and Resources Committee held on 10th November 2015.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 10th November 2015 be received and adopted

Recommendations:

(i) **Complaints Procedure**

RESOLVED:

That the Complaints Procedure be adopted including the minor alterations suggested.

(ii) **Policy for dealing with Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour.**

RESOLVED:

That the Policy for dealing with Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour be reviewed without change.

(iii) **Investment Strategy.**

RESOLVED:

That the Investment Strategy as circulated with one minor change be adopted.

(iv) **Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor Protocol.**

RESOLVED:

That the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor Protocol be reviewed without change.

(v) **Leader of the Council Protocol.**

RESOLVED:

That the Leader of the Council Protocol be reviewed without change.

(vi) **Social Media Policy**

Following some questions it was:-

RESOLVED:

That the Social Media Policy be referred back to Policy and Resources Committee for it to be considered in association with the Data Protection Policy.

(vii) **Website**

RESOLVED:

That the Council change website provider to '2 Commune'. Costs as follows-

Classic Website - £650

Transfer Domain Name - £150

Social Media Integration - £150

Total £950

Annual hosting including 4 email addresses £500

Grand Total Year 1 £1450.

(viii) **Heritage Centre**

RESOLVED:

- That expenditure on a valuation at a cost of up to £600 is approved.
- That expenditure on architect fees for sketch drawings for alterations be approved.
Cost of up to £500.

(ix) **Budgets 2015/16**

RESOLVED:

That the budgets for 2015/16 including transfers from earmarked reserves be amended as recommended.

15/272. **SPECIFICATION FOR STAFFING REVIEWS**

RESOLVED:

That the Council obtain quotes for the following works for future consideration:-

- A review of the Council's staffing, looking at issues of capacity and structure,

including reviewing individual workloads to ensure these are appropriate. All of this to be evidence based to ensure that the Council's structure and staffing is fit for purpose, and where change is likely, including to deal with challenges that may arise from devolution, that is 'match- ready' for addressing this. This review will include a formal job evaluation.

As an optional extra:-

- A review of the how the Council operates, the number and function of committees, frequency of meetings and scheme of delegations.

15/273.

GRAFFITI

An email from a resident had been circulated who felt that the Town Council should coordinate removal of graffiti by Community Payback on property not owned by the Town Council.

RESOLVED:

That the following response be sent:-

The Council reiterate their policy to only deal with graffiti on their own property, and they will not co-ordinate works to remove graffiti on property not owned by them. They will continue, as they have done in the past, to report graffiti to other organisations that have graffiti on their property.

15/274.

EMAIL RE VARIOUS ISSUES

An email had been received from a resident highlighting various issues to which the Clerk had responded and copy of the response had been circulated. There was a question concerning litter that the Council were required to agree a response.

RESOLVED:

That the following response be sent:-

The Council cannot recall having ever discussed an issue with litter in the Market Square, but agreed that litter is not acceptable in any area of the town and do whenever possible initiate courses of action to address any issues.

15/275.

COMMON LAND MALLARD CLOSE.

A report had been circulated outlining progress of the working group dealing with issues surrounding this site.

RESOLVED:

The following expenditure be agreed:-

- Clear all brambles, hawthorn, blackthorn shrubs from the Mallard Close and Station Road site sides of the field and burn/dispose of. Flail all the field to a height of about 75 mm – Cost £2670
- Erect ranch style post and rail fencing (to match existing) to the rest of the boundaries, with another access gate at the end of Mallard Close. Maximum budget of £2145. Another price to be obtained.

15/276.

URBAN HIGHWAY GRASS MOWING 2015

RESOLVED:

That the Council enter into a s136 agreement with Northamptonshire County Council for verge mowing for 2016.

15/277.

ITEMS TO REPORT.

Cllr J Smithers raised the state of the entrance from Chowns Mill roundabout and that it should be cut back to improve the appearance.

Cllr Mrs A Sauntson reported on the work of the Charter group. The project aims were to:-

- Renovate the charters

- Move the originals to storage in suitable conditions
- Reproduce copies of them.

The group is hoping to obtain grants to cover the full cost and had approached a possible project manager.

Mayor

Date