

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 20th DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30PM
AT THE TOWN HALL

PRESENT:

	The Mayor (Councillor N Brown)	
	The Deputy Mayor (Councillor V K Paul)	
Councillor B Spencer		Councillor Mrs J Bone
Councillor H L Jackson		Councillor Mrs A Gardner
Councillor Mrs C Reavey		Councillor Mrs P H Whiting
Councillor B Prigmore		Councillor G Salmon
Councillor C O'Rourke		
Miss Alicia Schofield (Town Clerk)		David Wicks (Mayor's Sergeant)
Mrs Emily Arrow (Assistant Clerk)		

IN ATTENDANCE: 1 member of the public

22/254. **APOLOGIES**
Cllr S Prosser, Cllr P McCann, Cllr P Tomas, Cllr A M T Reading, Cllr G Kelly

22/255. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Other Interests
Cllr P H Whiting, item 11.2.1(ii), family members are members of the Rushden and Higham Ferrers Town Cricket Club.
Cllr C P O'Rourke and Cllr H L Jackson, item 11.2.1(iii), both are members of the Higham Ferrers, Tourism, Business and Community Group.
Cllrs H L Jackson and Mrs J Bone, as members of the Unitary Council, will consider all matters at Unitary level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations at the Unitary tier. Therefore, they cannot be bound in any way by any view expressed in the parish tier or by the decisions of this Council.

22/256. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2022 be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record.

22/257. **PUBLIC FORUM**
None.

22/258. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**
The Mayor gave a report detailing the following functions that he had attended in the last month: -

- 3rd December – Officially opened the new florists shop on the High St, Lily Rose Floral Design. Later in the day he dressed as Santa for an event at the Working Men's Club with Cllr Paul McCann joining him as an inflatable snowman costume.
- 11th December – Attended the Eclipse Gymnastics Christmas Show.
- 16th December – Helped to judge Raunds' Christmas Shop Window Competition.
- 17th December – Attended the Christmas Farmers Market to sell hamper raffle tickets and draw the winners.

- 18th December – Helped deliver some Christmas hampers to local residents, courtesy of the Friends of Higham Ferrers. Later that day he went to the Rushden Civic Carol Service.
- 21st December is Bedesman’s Day which he is looking forward to attending.

22/259.

TOWN CLERK’S REPORT

Police Report

Link to crimes for October 2022

[Local Crime Information for Market Square, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, NN10 8BT - October 2022 \(streetcheck.co.uk\)](https://www.streetcheck.co.uk)

Please also see attached spreadsheet that tracks this months’ crimes against previous months.

66 Crimes for October: -

- Anti-Social Behaviour – 7
- Bicycle theft - 2
- Criminal damage and arson – 13
- Other theft – 6
- Burglary – 0
- Robbery - 7
- Public order – 12
- Drugs -3
- Other - 2
- Shoplifting – 11
- Vehicle crime - 3
- Violent and sexual offences – 0

Pattern of Electoral Wards in North Northamptonshire

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission England (the Commission) is drawing up a new pattern of electoral wards in North Northamptonshire. Information about the review is also available on the Commission’s website <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/east-midlands/northamptonshire/north-northamptonshire>

In drawing up the new wards, the Commission aims to ensure that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters. The review will also try to create wards that as far as possible reflect the interests and identities of communities across North Northamptonshire. As a new authority, the existing boundaries may not reflect the identity of communities, or provide for effective and convenient local government.

The initial consultation is open and runs until the 6th February. Consultation on the proposed new pattern of electoral wards will open 2 May 2023 and Council will be asked to consider these at that time. In the meantime anyone wishing to provide an initial view can do so using the website link given above. Comments are invited on the following

- Do you have suggestions about where your ward boundaries should be?
- Where do people in your area go to access local facilities, such as shops and leisure activities?
- Which areas do you identify as your local community?

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk’s report be received and noted.

22/260. **QUESTIONS**
None.

22/261. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

Cllr Mrs J Bone spoke as the Police Liaison Representative to advise she is undertaking walkabouts with the PCSO and is being updated on the hotspots in Higham Ferrers. They are regularly addressing issues that are forwarded to them.

Cllr H L Jackson reported from the JAG meeting with a brief report that the Northants Police '3 priorities' may remain the same for the next 3 month period and are allocated as per resources. The police have followed up on the speeding signage issues and plan to carry out some speed enforcement in the area.

Cllr G Salmon reported from the Wellingborough and East Northants IAG. Crime statistics were discussed, including the positive outcomes from police investigation in the area and that our detection rate locally is actually twice that of the national average. The Flare app has been launched to enable people to report inappropriate behaviour directly to the police. The police are also launching the Police Race Action Plan.

22/262. **REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

A report received from the North Northamptonshire Council Unitary Councillors was circulated.

22/263. **FINANCE**

22/263.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 20th December 2022**

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment of £35,001.08 as at 20th December 2022 be approved for payment.

22/263.2. **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 30th November 2022**

RESOLVED:

That the bank account reconciliation as at 30th November 2022 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr Mrs P H Whiting.

22/263.3. **To approve the following expenditure:**

- (i) **Replacement Laptop for the Administration, Communications and Finance Officer.**

RESOLVED:

That the replacement laptop for the Administration, Communications and Finance Officer be approved at a cost of £1,156.

22/264. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

To receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees:

22/264.1. **Planning and Development Committee held on 13th December 2022**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on the 13th December 2022 be received and adopted.

22/264.2. **Policy and Resources Committee held on the 13th December 2022**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on the 13th December 2022 be received and adopted.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

- (i) **Higham Ferrers Bowls Club**

RESOLVED:

That no grant is awarded to the club for 2023/24 as it is considered they have a relatively healthy bank balance and that the club are to be encouraged to increase their promotional and fundraising activities to increase their income.

(ii) **Rushden and Higham Ferrers Town Cricket Club**

Cllr Mrs P H Whiting, having declared an interest, did not vote or take part in the discussion.

RESOLVED:

That no grant is awarded to the club in 2023/24 as the finances of the club do not support the need.

(iii) **Higham Ferrers Tourism, Business and Community Group**

Cllr H L Jackson and Cllr C P O'Rourke, having declared an interest, did not vote or take part in the discussion.

RESOLVED:

That a grant of £1100 be awarded to the Higham Ferrers Tourism, Business and Community Group in 2023/24 towards the cost of outside events at Chichele College and entertainment for Santa's Grotto at Christmas Sparkle.

INVESTMENTS

RESOLVED:

That of the £200,000 on notice of withdrawal from the Melton Building Society, £100,000 be invested in the Buckinghamshire Building Society 120 day notice account and £100,000 be invested in the Natwest 95 day notice account.

RUSHDEN-HIGHAM LINK BUS

RESOLVED:

That the Council join with Rushden Town Council to form an alliance with Wellibus to provide a door to door demand led minibus service for a 6 month trial period with a maximum cost allocation of £10,000. That the trial commence as soon as reasonably practical in 2023. That the trial be supported by a promotional campaign to encourage use.

BUDGET 2023/24

RESOLVED:

That the draft budget as circulated be approved following amendment to grant figures of £1750 due to less being agreed than requested and the inclusion of £10,000 for the Riverside Park Management Plan project.

PRECEPT 2023/24

RESOLVED:

That the precept be set at £477,000 for 2023/24. An increase of £22,000 or 4.94%. This equates to £7.71pa or 15p per week for a Band D property on the current council tax base.

22/265. **COMMEMORATION FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

RESOLVED:

To purchase a Queen Elizabeth II commemorative bench for the Market Square at a total cost of £1,380 to include all fixings and delivery.

22.266. **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN THE MARKET SQUARE TREES**

RESOLVED:

That all the Market Square trees Christmas lights be replaced in the new year at an additional cost of £6000. That the cost be met from the Higham Ferrers Improvement Fund. That the £3000 in the proposed budget for 2023/24 for the lights be transferred into the Higham Ferrers Improvement Fund and the budget 2024/25 includes £3000 to the Higham Ferrers Improvement Fund.

- 22/267. **INTEGRATED CARE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND THE LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS**
RESOLVED:
That the appointment of a representative is deferred to the January 2023 meeting to enable those who are not present the opportunity to consider representation.
- 22/268. **MAYOR MAKING**
RESOLVED:
That the date for Mayor Making be rescheduled to Monday 15th May 2023 in light of Monday 8th May 2023 now falling on a bank holiday following the Coronation of King Charles III to be held on Saturday 6th May 2023.
- 22/269. **CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III**
RESOLVED:
That a working party is set up to consider holding a form of celebration to mark the event. That the working party consists of Cllr Mrs J Bone, Cllr C O'Rourke, Cllr Mrs C Reavey, Cllr V K Paul and Cllr G Salmon.
- 22/270. **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**
RESOLVED:
That in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the following items of business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the meeting for the next item.
- 22/271. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONSORTIUM CONTRACT**
RESOLVED:
That option 4 and 1 are identified as the preferred way forward for the Grounds Maintenance contract. That the legal advice received regarding option 4 presents issues that require follow up action by the Clerk. That option 4 is identified as the preferred way forward, if it proves possible, followed by option 1.
- 22/272. **REOPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS**
RESOLVED:
That, the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.
- 22/273. **ITEMS TO REPORT**
Cllr B Spencer reported that following the recent cold weather and the sad news of deaths occurring due to people stepping onto ice over bodies of water appropriate warning signage at Riverside Park have been put up to dissuade anyone from doing this.

Cllr Mrs P H Whiting made a statement, copy attached, to advise she was becoming an Independent Councillor as of 1st January 2023.

Mayor

Date