

**MINUTES OF A STATUTORY MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2018 AT THE TOWN HALL AT 7.30PM.**

**PRESENT:**

The Mayor (Councillor P Tomas)	
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor J Smithers)	
Councillor Mrs A Gardner	Councillor C P O'Rourke
Councillor R D Hamblin	Councillor Mrs C Reavey
Councillor H L Jackson	Councillor A M T Reading
Councillor D C Lawson MBE	Councillor Mrs A Sauntson
Councillor Mrs V M Newbery	Councillor Mrs P H Whiting
Councillor B Prigmore	Miss A Schofield (Assistant Town Clerk)
Mrs S J Mitcham (Town Clerk)	D Wicks (Mayor's Saergeant)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 4 members of the public.

- 18/025.     **PRAYERS**  
The meeting was opened with prayers led by Canon Richard Stainer.
- 18/026.     **APOLOGIES**  
Cllr D Drage, Cllr R Gell and Cllr Mrs S Mantle.
- 18/027.     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
**Other Interests**  
Cllr P Tomas – item 14, holds strong views regarding the library.  
Cllr P Tomas – item 10.1, chq 300655, 300656, 300661 and 300662 Mayoral expenses.  
Cllr Mrs A Sauntson – item 13, a member of Higham Ferrers Tourism.  
Cllr H L Jackson, - item 13, a member of Higham Ferrers Tourism.  
**Pecuniary Interests**  
Cllr C P O'Rourke – item 15, a member of Candocare and his partner receives an income from Candocare.
- 18/028.     **MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED:**  
That the minutes of the meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record.
- 18/029.     **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**  
Mrs Mayes spoke of the proposed library closure and referred to having reviewed the notes from the working party meetings. If there was a proposal before Council that no further action be taken with regard to the library Mrs Mayes asked for consideration of a counter proposal that a decision be deferred.  
Mr Broadbent said he was fearful for the future of the library. He attended the working party consultation event in the library on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February where he sought reassurance from the working party that they were committed to saving the library. He came away from the event with the impression he was looking at the demise of the library and hopes he was wrong.  
Mr King referred to the importance of the library and the library building within the town. He asked that the library be given to the community and they will run it. He stressed how vital it was that people had access to books.  
Mr Tomas spoke, not in his capacity as the Mayor or a Town Councillor, but as a

member of the public. The current library building was built by the church in 1906 as Parish Rooms and since that time it has been used to hold many community events. Now, as a home to the library, it brings benefit to many individuals and groups. As the County Council fails to deliver there is a need for core groups to step in. He urged Councillors to do their utmost to retain the buildings for the residents.

18/030. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported on the events he had attended:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> February, Concert held by the Royal Marines from RAF Collingford at Rushden Town Bowls Club. The event was organised by the Mayor of Rushden to raise funds for her chosen charities.
- 10<sup>th</sup> February, Mayor's Ferret Race Night at the Working Mens Club. The Mayor thanked everyone for making the event so successful and was pleased to inform that over £1,300 was raised for his chosen charities.
- 17<sup>th</sup> February, Fundraising event by the Chairman of the County Council at Saxon Hall, Raunds. Entertainment provided by Dr Busker with a fish and chip supper.

18/031. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

**Police Report**

- Entry gained to a garage – The Hedges, Higham Ferrers, between 4pm 10<sup>th</sup> February and 9.45am 11<sup>th</sup> February.
- Entry gained to a vehicle – Larkin Gardens between 9pm 31<sup>st</sup> January and 7am 1<sup>st</sup> February – Items stolen.
- Person/s slashed the front and rear passenger side tyres using an unknown sharp instrument of a motor vehicle parked in Elizabeth Way, Higham Ferrers, between 5.30pm on Thursday, 15 February and 10.18am on Friday, 16 February.

**Higham Ferrers Junior School**

The recent report following the Ofsted Inspection has been circulated.

**Annual Town Meeting**

The Annual Town Meeting will be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> May in the Adult School at 7.30pm.

**Rushden East Board Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

Some progress has been made on the Masterplan, with road layout and the character of the housing estates developing. A geophysical survey has revealed archaeological remains that will require further investigation. The location of the employment land remains as was previously located within Higham Ferrers. The planning application is scheduled for submission in June.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Town Clerk's Report be received and noted. That a letter be sent to the Higham Ferrers Junior School to congratulate them on their good Ofsted report.

18/032. **QUESTIONS**

Cllr D Hamblin spoke of the enthusiasm of the members of the Library Working Party and sought to reassure the public that the library issue is being taken seriously and that a thorough job is being undertaken by them.

Cllr Mrs A Saunston wished for thanks to be passed to Cllr H L Jackson for putting up the flags.

- 18/033. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**  
 Cllr Mrs V Newbery reported the last visit made by guests from Hachenburg was viewed as a success with only a few minor issues. The weekend made a loss of £164.92. At present 25 adults, 1 child and 2 people travelling independently are registered for the visit to Hachenburg taking place Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August to Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August. To raise funds for the guests for next year a skittles evening has been suggested and also a raffle on the bus to Hachenburg. The next meeting is the AGM on the 16<sup>th</sup> April. Cllr Newbery asked Councillors to consider joining the visit this year to ensure the continuation of the valuable partnership and for the town to make the experience stronger otherwise Raunds will become the dominant partner.
- 18/034. **FINANCE**
- 18/034.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018.**  
**RESOLVED:**  
 That the accounts for payment total of £32,336.20 be approved for payment. Copy attached to the minutes.
- 18/034.2. **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.**  
**RESOLVED:**  
 That the bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr D C Lawson MBE.
- 18/034.3. **To receive and note the budget report as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.**  
**RESOLVED:**  
 That the budget report as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 be received and noted.
- 18/035. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  
 To receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees:-
- 18/035.1. **Planning and Development Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018.**  
 Following query from Cllr B Prigmore it was advised that the Committee had objected to the previous application for advertisement consent at Atlanta House but it was agreed that no comment and no observation be made to the current advertisement application because permission had subsequently been granted for the advertisement boards under the previous application despite objection from the Town Council.  
**RESOLVED:**  
 That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018 be received and adopted.
- 18/035.2. **Policy and Resources Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018.**  
**RESOLVED:**  
 That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018 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) **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2018/19**

**RESOLVED:**

That NCALC Internal Audit Service be appointed as Independent Internal Auditor for 2018/19.

(iv) **REVIEW OF POLICIES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the following policies be reviewed without change.

- Sickness Absence Policy.
- Retirement Policy.
- Standing Orders
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Social Media Policy

(v) **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the following amendment be made to the Financial Regulations: -

*Alter 4.5 to match standing orders*

*In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2000. The Clerk shall report such action to the Leader as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.*

18/036. **REQUEST BY CIRCUS TO USE CASTLE FIELDS**

**RESOLVED:**

That permission be given, subject to the usual terms and conditions, to the Wonder Circus to use Castle Fields from the 9<sup>th</sup> April to the 16<sup>th</sup> April.

18/037. **GRANT APPLICATION FROM HIGHAM FERRERS TOURISM**

Cllr Mrs A Sauntson and Cllr H L Jackson, having declared an interest, withdrew from the discussion and vote.

**RESOLVED:**

That a grant of £985 be awarded to Higham Ferrers Tourism for sponsorship for the outdoor events at Chichele College.

18/038. **LIBRARY WORKING PARTY**

Cllr C P O'Rourke and Cllr P Tomas, having declared an interest, withdrew from the discussion and vote.

Cllr B Prigmore reported that following the building survey further investigations would be required. Roof space inspection has revealed minor damp staining. The full extent of the damp will not be known until the roof tiles are removed. Mr J Sidey, Architect, is to be appointed to look at the building and produce drawings. First for Wellbeing was funded by the County Council, NHS and the University of Northampton. It is not clear what the funding levels are and how this will be affected if the Town Council take over the library. Each week new questions are raised and the answers are not forthcoming. It is understood First for Wellbeing has been taken in house and forms part of Adult Services. Cllr B Prigmore, Cllr Mrs A Garnder and the

Town Clerk held a drop in session at the library on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February from 10am to 12 noon.

Cllr B Prigmore read the latest information emerging from the County Council following from the Cabinet meeting.

*That Option 2 from the Library Services Review as set out in Appendix 4 is supported and that a Strategy is developed to support the delivery of Northamptonshire Library and Information Service.*

*That the Council pursue those expressions of interest where interested parties have indicated that they wish to purchase their library building.*

*That an Independent Library Service contract is developed so that information can be provided to any of the 21 smaller libraries that wish to pursue developing an Independent Library provision.*

*That a decommissioning plan and timetable is developed and implemented from 1st April 2018 that includes a renewed Library timetable in the remaining libraries focussed on meeting peak customer demand.*

*That an extended Library to You service is implemented to support customers who find accessing a static library difficult in light of decommissioning of the current mobile library.*

*That children centre provision continues for a further period of three months in Designated Children Centre libraries whilst proposals for re-provision of these services is prepared.*

Cllr Mrs A Gardner spoke of First for Wellbeing. Wellbeing is an extremely important provision and it is not clear to the working party what is going to be happening to their services that run in the library. It was not part of the County Council consultation on budget cuts. If the service is being withdrawn/cut by the County Council the question arises as to who will provide the wellbeing service and the impact that any loss/cutbacks will have on the residents of the town.

18/038.1.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report from the Library Working Party meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 be received and noted.

18/038.2.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report from the Library Working Party meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018 be received and noted.

18/039.

**LITTER WORKING PARTY**

The Scouts have volunteered for the litter pick scheduled for this coming Saturday with the working party facilitating. The equipment is donated from the District Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report from the Litter Working Party meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 be received and noted.

18/040.

**ITEMS TO REPORT**

Cllr D Hamblin requested an agenda item with regard to the removal of Cllr C P O'Rourke's declared interest for the consideration of library agenda items. The Clerk advised this was not a matter that could be considered by Council because registration of interests is required by law and to conform with the Councils' Code of Conduct.

Mayor  
Date