

MINUTES OF THE STATUTORY MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7.30PM
USING ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

PRESENT:

	The Mayor (Councillor Mrs C Reavey)	
	The Deputy Mayor (Councillor C P O'Rourke)	
Councillor Mrs P H Whiting		Councillor N Brown
Councillor H L Jackson		Councillor Mrs A Gardner
Councillor J Smithers		Councillor B Spencer
Councillor P Tomas		Cllr Mrs S Mantle
Councillor B Prigmore		Alicia Schofield (Assistant Clerk)
Councillor A M T Reading		David Wicks (Mayors' Sergeant)
Mrs S J Mitcham (Town Clerk)		

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillor, Ms Harriet Pentland and 1 member of the public.

21/27. **PRAYERS**

The meeting was opened by prayers led by Revd. Michelle Dalliston.

21/28. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr D C Lawson MBE, Cllr A Sauntson, Cllr D Hamblin, Cllr V Paul.

21/29. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Other Interests

Cllr H L Jackson, item 14, member of East Northants District Council.

21/30. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th January 2021 be signed by the Mayor as a true and correct record.

21/31. **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**

Mrs Hilary Dore spoke regarding item 15 and the strip of land adjoining her property. She thanked Council for the prompt action in sending out the letter and consultation following the last meeting.

21.32. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported she hadn't been able to attend any function nor indeed host any that month due to the covid lockdown. However, she wished to update Councillors on a zoom meeting with the Assistant Clerk and Paul Valentine, Liaison Officer for Highways England A45 Chowns Mill improvement. The meeting was called to discuss the progress with three giant chairs that are going to be sited at the Nightingale Way play area. There are three large trunks approximately 6ft by 4ft. The wood carver, Carrie Yuan, has designed some outline ideas for each chair:-

- Giant acorn with an oak leaf
- Giant conker with horse-chestnut leaf
- A nut cluster with a hazel leaf

A school competition is being run where children can produce their own drawings and ideas that can be carved into the leaves on the back of the chairs. The school will have

their name carved into the front of the chair. The competition will be judged by the Mayor and Carrie week beginning 22nd March and it is hoped that the chairs will be installed in the play area in April.

21/33. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Police Report

The link to the report for December 2020 <https://www.streetcheck.co.uk/crime/nn108bt>

45 Crimes for November: -

- Anti-Social Behaviour – 8
- Criminal Damage and Arson – 7
- Public Order – 5
- Shoplifting – 1
- Vehicle Crime – 1
- Violent and sexual offences - 14
- Other Theft – 4
- Robbery - 1
- Burglary – 3
- Possession of Weapons - 1

Chichele College

The road has now been partially re-opened with temporary traffic lights as half the road is still closed alongside the College. The repairs will be organised by English Heritage and their contractor. We understand work will not start until April, possibly due to temperature as it needs to be done using lime mortar which is temperature sensitive. We currently understand the earliest completion date is likely to be June, as the wall needs to be dismantled and rebuilt.

EScooters

A trial is due to be launched in Rushden and Higham Ferrers on the 25th February 2021. A briefing note has been circulated.

RESOLVED:

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

21/34. **QUESTIONS**

None.

21/35. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

Cllr Mrs A Gardner reported her attendance that day at a presentation 'Why Representation in Local Councils Matters'. The presentation promoted equality, diversity, and the importance of listening to the community and how to encourage and reach people from all backgrounds and experiences in the community to stand for election.

Cllr Mrs A Gardner also reported following her monthly walkabout meeting with PCSO Stephanie Bacon on Saturday 20th February at 7pm. The town was very quiet which was good to see during lockdown. There have been incidents of egg throwing. Youths have been identified and the matter is being dealt with but if incidents are witnessed then please do still report them to the Police. Report had also been made to ENC of a local takeaway not observing social distancing rules and the use of face masks.

Cllr H L Jackson had circulated a report following his online attendance on the 15th February at a Rushden East meeting. Most of the meeting was spent going through the minutes of the last meeting. Gavin Sylvester had stated that Anglian Water were obliged to accept the treatment of the foul sewage even though the sewage works were not able to cope with the extra capacity of the SUE at this moment in time. With regard to the shared Cemetery the Consortium had confirmed that no land was available at the boundary, where the employment is proposed. The Town Clerk had informed them we still needed to have a new cemetery but not right at the south end, however they still went ahead with their plans and are now trying to claim it was because the Town Council had decided to go their own way. Regarding Section 106 claims it was stated that now both towns have responded to the request for a list of 106 requests, it would be addressed at the next meeting. It is felt the Town Council are not being listened to and are being used.

21/36. **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR**
A written report from District Councillor Ms Harriet Pentland is to be circulated. County Councillor Jason Smithers forwards regular reports to Councillors between meetings.

21/37. **FINANCE**

21/37.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 23rd February 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment total of £34,489.97 as at 23rd February 2021 be approved for payment. Copy attached to the minutes.

21/37.2. **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 31st January 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the bank account reconciliation as at 31st January 2021 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr Mrs P H Whiting.

21/37.3. **To receive and note the budget report as at 31st January 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the budget report as at 31st January 2021 be received and noted.

21/37.4. **To approve the following expenditure: -**

Rushden Reporter

RESOLVED:

That the half page advert in the Rushden Reporter be renewed for a further period of 6 months at a cost of £180 per month.

21/38. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

To receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees: -

21/38.1. **Planning and Development Committee held on the 9th February 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 9th February 2021 be received and adopted.

21/38.2. **Policy and Resources Committee held on the 9th February 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 9th February 2021 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. Minor changes agreed at the meeting are highlighted.

(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 2021/22**

Cllr J Smithers withdrew temporarily from the meeting and did not vote on this item.

RESOLVED:

That NCALC Internal Audit Service be appointed as Independent Internal Auditor for 2021/22. For 2022/23 alternative options to be considered.

(iv) **REVIEW OF POLICIES**

Cllr J Smithers withdrew temporarily from the meeting and did not vote on this item.

RESOLVED:

That the Sickness Absence Policy, Retirement Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Financial Regulations be reviewed without change.

That the standing orders be amended as follows: -

Items 3i – If the items raised by the member of the public is not on the agenda the Clerk will advise how the issue will be addressed.

21/39. **NCALC IN-YEAR INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2020/21**

RESOLVED:

That the NCALC In-Year Internal Audit report 2020/21 be received and noted.

21/40. **CONSULTATION, EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL, REGULATION 19, LOCAL PLAN PART 2**

The Clerk reported following the meeting with Peter Bone MP and stressed the importance of responding to the consultation in order to secure a place at the Planning Inquiry.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk, in conjunction with the Leader, Deputy Leader and the Chair of the Planning & Development Committee, work with the planning consultant to form a response to the Regulation 19 Consultation on the Local Plan Part 2.

21/41. **BOUNDARY HEDGE AND ACCESS TO THE OPEN SPACE TO THE REAR OF BEDE CLOSE**

The consultation responses overwhelmingly supported the removal of the hedge to the boundary of 10 Bede Close and closure of the access to the open space to the rear of Bede Close.

RESOLVED:

That a site meeting to explore the possibility of a licence agreement be held with the residents who had originally requested the hedge removal and closure of the access. That the Chair of the Environment and Recreation Committee also attend the meeting and the matter is presented back to the next meeting of the Council.

21/42. **TOWN WORKING PARTY**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Town Working Party held on the 27th January 2021 be received and noted.

21/43. **CHRISTMAS SPARKLE 2021**

RESOLVED:

- 21/43.1. That the minutes of the Christmas Sparkle Working Party held on the 10th February 2021 be received and noted.

RESOLVED:

- 21/43.2. To agree that Christmas Sparkle is scheduled to be held on the 20th November 2021. The framework of the event the same as originally planned for 2020, prior to Alternative Sparkle due to covid, with the Council to arrange all outside stalls instead of the former 'Continental Market', and with the detail of the event planned by the Working Group in conjunction with the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED:

- 21/43.3. To delegate authority to the Town Clerk to incur expenditure for the Christmas Sparkle within the budget.

RESOLVED:

- 21/43.4. To delegate authority to the Town Clerk to agree sponsorship arrangements in conjunction with the Working Party.

RESOLVED:

- 21/43.5. To agree stall pitch fees and criteria for selection for stall holders as follows: -
- That Council aim to secure approximately 35 Trade Stalls, to include no more than 4 alcohol traders who must sell different ranges such as beer/rum/gin/prosecco, with half of remaining stalls to be food and half craft. In addition, to aim to secure approximately 10 Charity stalls.
 - That the pitch fees for a 3mx3m stall be set at £90 for a trade stall and £15 for a charity stall. Pro-rata rate per additional metre.
 - That the selection criteria for stall holder applications be as follows:
 - Diversity – Traders with a unique product range will get priority.When more than one trader with similar produce applies the following criteria must be considered: -
 - Location – the most local trader will get priority.
 - Farmers Market Traders
 - Previous experience with the Traders
 - Prompt completion of necessary paperwork and supporting documentation

21/44. **CLOSURE OF 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.

21/45. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on the 2nd February 2021 be received and adopted.

Recommendations

(i) **STAFF SALARY REVIEWS 2020/21**

That the salary scale points from 1st April 2021 be as follows: -
Town Clerk - SCP 45
Assistant Clerk - SCP 24

Administration/ Communications Officer - SCP 9
Administration/Communications (Finance) Officer - SCP 10
Park Warden 1- SCP 6
Park Warden 2 - SCP 5
Cleaner - SCP 6

21/46. **ADVANCE PURCHASE OF BURIAL PLOT**

RESOLVED:

That further to a letter of appeal the pre-purchase of a burial plot be permitted due to the extenuating circumstances.

21/47. **RE-OPEN THE MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED:

That the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

21/48. **ITEMS TO REPORT**

None.

Mayor

Date