

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 26TH JANUARY 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 V Paul		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: 2 members of the public.

21/7. **APOLOGIES**

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

21/8. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Other Interests

Cllr H L Jackson, item 14 (i), Member of the Higham Ferrers Tourism Group
Cllr Mrs P H Whiting, item 14 (ii) Close family are members of the Rushden and Higham Ferrers Cricket Club.

21/9. **MINUTES**

21/9.1. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th of November 2020 be signed by the Mayor as a true and correct record.

21/9.2. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on the 11th January 2021 be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record.

21/10. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Mrs Hilary Dore spoke regarding item 16 and the strip of land adjoining her property. She referred to the letter that she had sent to Council in March seeking removal of the hedge. The hedge has established over the years and is difficult to maintain and the roots are now lifting the driveway paving and might damage her water meter. After several months she heard there should be access through this point from the close to the Greenway despite nothing mentioned regarding access when the Greenway was introduced and she finds it very disappointing that has only just been brought to her notice. It is believed it would be detrimental to the residents in the close to have this access opened. They regularly have people going up and down the Greenway on motorbikes and fear that they will use this access as well. People have forced their way through between the garage and the hedge damaging our neighbours' vehicle on several occasions hence the wheelie bins being placed. This section of the Greenway already has four access points which is sufficient.

21/11. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor referred to her reported activities from December and then updated Councillors with her activities in January.

- 26th November, Donna and I had a socially distanced meeting in the council chamber where we brought together all of the knitting and crocheting items that had been gathered. We enlisted the help of a couple more volunteers who helped assemble the sleeves and attach them to the bollards. I'm sure that you've all seen the results of the project. My thanks go to Donna for her inspiration and co-ordination and to all residents who helped with this community activity. It has been well received by our residents and Radio Northampton. We are hoping that the extra publicity may have brought people into our town and to our businesses. The Christmas tree looks amazing and so does the light show on the side of our town hall. Thank you to Alicia and Emily and to Chevron for loaning the display board where we were able to communicate our Christmas messages.
- 2nd December, with the help of Cllr Brown and Cllr Gardener's mother, the 'scattering of ashes area' in the cemetery was planted with its spring bulbs.
- 8th December saw Sandra and I meet up with Helen Howell from ENC in Castle Fields to officially open the 'trim trail'.
- 15th December and onwards, my thanks must go to Cllr Paul for his help in providing the hampers that we bought with our Grant from 'In This Together'. He arranged for them to be ready packed with an array of goodies in festive carrier bags which not only saved us money but also our time. We had 60 in total which were delivered by councillors.
- 19th December, Christmas Market. There was a lovely atmosphere but sadly we missed Father Christmas and the Brass Band playing Carols. I was however able to hold a socially distanced presentation of the voucher to the winner of my Christmas card competition and the Hamper to the lady who had guessed the nearest in our 'Guess the price of the Hamper' competition.
- 20th December, Cllr O'Rourke and I were able to join a limited number of people who attended the carol service in church.
- 3rd January, I removed the bollard covers and bunting and the baubles from the tree. I extend my thanks to all that helped me with the removal of the yarn bombing

21/12. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Police Report

Link to the report for November 2020

<https://www.streetcheck.co.uk/crime/nn108bt>

49 Crimes for October: -

- Anti-Social Behaviour – 8
- Criminal Damage and Arson – 6
- Public Order – 7
- Shoplifting – 7
- Vehicle Crime – 1
- Violent and sexual offences - 17
- Other Theft – 1
- Possession of Weapons - 2

ANPR Scheme

A report from the Police providing an update has been circulated.

Christmas Decorations

There were many positive comments on social media, plus we received phone calls and verbal positive feedback. Copies of a range of the emails received have been circulated.

Request for Crossings – Update following Submission.

Below is feedback from Sarah Barnwell of Northamptonshire Highways following the submission of the request for an upgrade of the zebra crossing to a pelican crossing on Kimbolton Road. The same process with Highways applies for the request made for a crossing on Station Road.

“I completed a form for it to be considered for Network Improvement Funding, which is our current means of funding larger projects. This list might also be referred to when considering any other potential funding that might become available from other sources. There are potential projects from across the County and of varying types, which are assessed on a number of factors to try to identify those which are highest priority. Therefore, at this stage, it is not possible to say what might be successful, but all requests which are not funded in their first year are carried forward for future consideration.

Decisions about which schemes to progress are normally made towards the end of one financial year ready for the next financial year, as these are often larger projects which need quite a bit of preparation and design. It is unusual for any significant schemes like this would be to be adopted this late in the financial year, but it is in place ready for assessment for next financial year.

That is not just due to financial/budgetary reasons, but we also have to consider road space availability for schemes which would need road closures or traffic management. Larger scale projects need planning ahead so we can be sure of being able to close the road when we need to, and we also have to consider if an alternative route is closed (such as Station Road in Higham Ferrers, although I think that is re-opening soon).

I should also mention that it would probably be a Puffin crossing rather than a Pelican crossing, as these are the modern version of crossing controlled by traffic lights.”

RESOLVED:

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

21/13. **QUESTIONS**

None.

21/14. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

Cllr Mrs A Gardner reported from the JAG meeting of the 21st of January. The priority remains anti-social behaviour and gatherings in contravention of the lockdown, including such gatherings at the skatepark which is closed. Any anti-social behaviour and these gatherings should be reported directly to the Police on 101 or online via www.northants.police.uk. Sarah Barnwell from Northamptonshire Highways joined the meeting and spoke regarding the procedure to be followed further to the requests submitted for the pedestrian crossings on Kimbolton Road and Station Road. Cllr Gardner also referred to her latest town walkabout meeting with the PCSO on Saturday at 6pm. The youths at the skatepark are often noted to be 20 years and older. The PCSO is maintaining her contacts with the local schools. Tickets can be issued by the Police where there are breaches of covid regulations.

21/15. **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

None.

21/16. **FINANCE**

21/16.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 22nd December 2020 and 26th January 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment total of £45,115.32 as at 22nd December 2020 and the accounts for payment total of £210,672.47 as at 26th January 2021 be approved for payment. Copies attached to the minutes.

- 21/16.2. **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 31st December 2020.**

RESOLVED:

That the bank account reconciliation as at 31st December 2020 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr Mrs P H Whiting.

- 21/16.3. **To receive and note the budget report as at 31st December 2020.**

RESOLVED:

That the budget report as at 31st December 2020 be received and noted.

21/17. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- 21/17.1. To receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees: -

Planning and Development Committee held on the 8th December 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 8th December 2020 be received and adopted.

- 21/17.2. **Planning and Development Committee held on the 12th January 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 12th January 2021 be received and adopted.

- 21/17.3. **Environment and Recreation Committee held on the 12th January 2021.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Environment and Recreation Committee held on the 12th January 2021 be received and adopted.

Recommendations

- (i) **SCREENING OF CEMETERY SOIL STOCKPILE**

RESOLVED:

That the soil stockpile at the cemetery be screened with the placement of woven fence panels at a cost of £380. That prior to installation of the fence panels the stockpile and the area around the stockpile be tidied to the satisfaction of the Clerk.

- (ii) **CREATION OF PATH IN THE SCATTERING OF ASHES AREA**

RESOLVED:

That a slab path be laid into the Scattering of Ashes area at a budget cost of £650 from the Higham Ferrers Improvement budget. That the type of slab and overall path dimensions be agreed by the Assistant Clerk in consultation with Cllr Reavey.

21/18. **REVIEW OF DELEGATED POWERS**

RESOLVED:

That the time period of the delegated powers given to the Clerk as a response to the Covid-19 outbreak be extended with a review date of March 2021.

21/19. **CONSULTATION, BUDGET FOR NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

RESOLVED:

That the response to the consultation of the draft budget for North Northamptonshire Council incorporate reference to the need to ensure future maintenance of the Greenway and that a sum be allocated in the budget for this.

21/20. **GRANT APPLICATIONS 2021/22**

To consider the following grant applications for 2021/22: -

(i) **Higham Ferrers Tourism for £900.**

Cllr H L Jackson, having declared an interest, withdrew to the zoom waiting room for the discussion and vote.

RESOLVED:

That a grant of £900 be awarded to Higham Ferrers Tourism for outdoor events at Chichele College and entertainment at Christmas Sparkle with payment only to be made against receipts.

(ii) **Rushden and Higham Ferrers Cricket Club for £1500.**

Cllr Mrs P H Whiting, having declared an interest, withdrew to the zoom waiting room for the discussion and vote.

RESOLVED:

That a grant of £750 be awarded to Rushden and Higham Ferrers Cricket Club towards maintenance of the wicket. That the given the uncertainty of play surrounding covid that the grant be paid at the end of the season only if matches have gone ahead.

21/21. **MEMORIAL BENCH**

RESOLVED:

That the request for a memorial bench to be located at Nightingale Way Play Area be denied but an alternative offer is made for the memorial bench to be located on near-by open space in either Nightingale Way or Kestrel Drive.

21/22. **BOUNDARY HEDGE AND ACCESS TO THE OPEN SPACE TO THE REAR OF BEDE CLOSE**

RESOLVED:

That consultation be undertaken with the Bede Close residents to garner their view regarding the possible re-establishment of the access to the open space and the removal of the hedge.

21/23. **URBAN HIGHWAY GRASS MOWING 2021**

RESOLVED:

That Council enter a Section 136 Agreement with Northamptonshire County Council for highway verge mowing for 2021.

21/24. **GREENWAY PHASE 2**

Of the 5 companies sent the documentation only 2 submitted a tender therefore a comparison has been included to check best value, with the comparison used being against one of the companies for the previous phase.

RESOLVED:

That the tender at a cost of £21898.59 be accepted. That although this tender is not the lowest it be accepted as the alternative tender was not priced as per the listing in the documentation and the site meeting did not provide reassurance that the detail and drawings had been fully understood.

21/25. **APPOINTMENT OF A POLICE LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE**

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Mrs A Gardner be appointed as a Police Liaison Representative to act as a single point of contact with Northamptonshire Police.

21/26. **ITEMS TO REPORT**

Cllr Mrs A Gardner asked for an agenda item to allow consideration of some form of memorial or dedicated point in the town in memory of those who have lost their life as a result of the covid pandemic.

Mayor

Date