

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 31ST JANUARY 2023 AT 7.30PM
AT THE TOWN HALL

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE: 1 member of the public

22/274. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr A M T Reading, Cllr Mrs J Bone, Cllr Mrs P H Whiting

22/275. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Other Interests

Cllr H L Jackson as member of the Unitary Council, will consider all matters at Unitary level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations at the Unitary tier. Therefore, he cannot be bound in any way by any view expressed in the parish tier or by the decisions of this Council.

Cllr C P O'Rourke, Cllr N Brown, Cllr Mrs C Reavey and Cllr H L Jackson, item 14, all are Trustees for United Charities.

Cllr B Prigmore – item 15, concerns a project put forth by Cllr B Prigmore

Cllr B Spencer – item 11.2 (i), is a member of the Riverside Park Angler's Association

22/276. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th December 2022 be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record.

22/277. **PUBLIC FORUM**

None.

22/278. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor gave a report detailing the following functions that he had attended in the last month: -

- 21st December – Bedesmen Day with the Clerk and Mayor's Sergeant.
- 10th January – Higham Ferrers Junior School assembly with the Mayor's Sergeant and Carol Fitzgerald from the Tourism group.
- 12th January – St Ives panto with the Mayoress.
- 14th January – Daventry Civic Service accompanied by the Deputy Mayor.
- 14th January – Swivel Club's quiz night.
- 27th January – opened the doors to the newest shop in Higham Ferrers, the Age UK charity shop.

The Mayor reminded Councillors that his next fundraiser was a Quiz and Gig evening on Saturday 4th March and he hoped they would be able to support and attend.

22/279. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Police Report

Link to crimes for November 2022

[Local Crime Information for Market Square, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, NN10 8BT - November 2022 \(streetcheck.co.uk\)](#)

55 Crimes for November: -

- Anti-Social Behaviour – 7
- Criminal damage and arson – 4
- Other theft – 2
- Burglary – 1
- Public order – 6
- Possession of weapons - 2
- Drugs - 1
- Other - 1
- Shoplifting – 12
- Violent and sexual offences – 19

RESOLVED:

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

22/280. **QUESTIONS**

Cllr B Prigmore questioned if the skate park had been checked for any further cracking following the recent icy weather. His question followed feedback he had received from skate park users. The Clerk referred to the routine weekly inspections and the last inspection undertaken that weekend.

22/281. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

Cllr Jackson delivered a report on behalf of himself and Cllr Bone who both attended the East Northants Urban Local Area Partnership. This group is to give local areas an opportunity to feed back any issues that affect their council or area, such as rural transport. The partnership discussed 4 issues to take forward for consideration and these were mental health, depression, self-harm and fuel poverty. Mental health was selected as the focus issue to go forward with.

Cllr Bone sent a report in her absence, which was read by the clerk:

Cllr Bone met with the PCSO for a walkabout on 28th January. They visited Milton Street, Saffron Road, the Market Square and other surrounding areas. Concerns regarding an alleged brothel in Milton Street have been flagged, the police are aware and investigations are ongoing. They discussed the dog attack at Saffron Road and that the town council have already shared the police appeal for witnesses, and also speeding issues along North End to Chowns Mill. The council are advised that some enforcement will take place soon. The PCSO advised Cllr Bone of some incidents that have occurred outside the Ferrers School and confirmed that there is an ongoing police presence and engagement with the school leadership. There have also been preliminary investigations into potential cannabis growing in Higham Ferrers.

22/282. **REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

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

22/283. **FINANCE**

22/283.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 31st January 2023.**

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment of £33,423.87 as at 31st January 2023 be approved for payment.

22/283.2. **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 31st December 2022.**

RESOLVED:

That the bank account reconciliation as at 31st December 2022 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr C P O'Rourke.

22/283.3. **To approve the following expenditure:**

(i) **Annual membership of CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) - £36**

RESOLVED:

That the annual membership of CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) be approved at a cost of £36.

(ii) **Advert in the Nene Valley News - £195 per month to end of December 2023**

RESOLVED:

That the advert in the Nene Valley News be approved at a cost of £195 per month to end of December 2023.

(iii) **Replacement water heater in the portacabin - £72 plus contractor installation of £110**

RESOLVED:

That the replacement water heater in the portacabin be approved at a cost of £72 plus contractor installation of £110.

(iv) **Electrical safety inspection and certification of the portacabin - £280**

RESOLVED:

That the electrical safety inspection and certification of the portacabin be approved at a cost of £280.

22/283.4 **To ratify the following expenditure under the Clerk's delegated powers**

(i) **Replacement automatic flushing cistern in the men's toilets, light sensor repair and replacement toilet roll holders in the public toilets - £1059.42**

RESOLVED:

That the replacement automatic flushing cistern in the men's toilets, light sensor repair and replacement toilet roll holders in the public toilets be approved at a cost of £1059.42. Expenditure listed exceeds the budget. Balance exceeding budget to be met from Earmarked Reserve Building Maintenance.

22/284. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

To receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees:

22/284.1. **Planning and Development Committee held on 10th January 2023.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on the 10th January 2023 be received and adopted.

22/284.2. **Environment and Recreation Committee held on the 10th January 2023.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on the 10th January 2023 be received and adopted.

(i) **Riverside Park Improvement Scheme**

Cllr B Spencer, having declared an interest, did not take part in the vote or the discussion.

RESOLVED:

That a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal be undertaken for Riverside Park. That a budget of £1650 be set for the appraisal with comparative quotes sought.

22/285. **INTEGRATED CARE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND THE LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS**

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Bone be offered the chance to become the Higham Ferrers Town Council representative for the Local Area Partnership for East Northants Urban. That if Cllr Bone declines this item is brought back to the next meeting.

22.286. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

RESOLVED:

That Cllr B Prigmore, Cllr V K Paul, Cllr G Salmon, Cllr Mrs A Gardner, Cllr H L Jackson and Cllr P McCann be appointed as Councillor representatives to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

22/287. **UNITED CHARITIES**

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

RESOLVED:

That Higham Ferrers Town Council become the appointed administrators for United Charities. That the Assistant Clerk's salary be increased by 1 hour per week to cover the additional workload. That an initial administration charge of at least £2000 be made to the Charity. This charge covers the direct cost of the increased salary of the Assistant Clerk whilst providing a sum for associated overheads for working from the Town Hall. That the administration charge be reviewed annually between the Town Council and the United Charities. That one or more of the Trustees are asked to undertake some of the administration tasks directly where possible, this may include but not be limited to: arranging meetings, organising events, sending out event invitations and receiving replies.

22/288. **PROPOSED USE OF THE COMMUNITY ROOM FOR A BOOK EXCHANGE**

Cllr B Prigmore, having declared an interest, did not take part in the vote or discussion.

RESOLVED:

That the community room be used to run a book exchange with no fee charged for the use of the room for this purpose. That the dates and times and specific arrangements are delegated to the Clerk to arrange direct with the organisers.

22/289. **CONSULTATION WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW**

RESOLVED:

That this discussion is deferred to the closed session as there is a confidential document regarding the issue that is considered key to the discussion.

22/290. **COMMUNITY CENTRE PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

22/290.1. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes from the Community Centre working party meeting held on 26th January 2023 be received and noted.

22/290.2. **Community Centre Consultation Format**

RESOLVED:

That the format for the community centre consultation is received and noted.

22/290.3. **Additional Expenditure to Facilitate the Consultation**

RESOLVED:

That additional expenditure to facilitate the community centre consultation be approved at the following costs:

- Design for 6-8nr presentation boards £1560.
- Budget for printing of boards and council printing costs associated with the consultation £940.
- Total = £2500

22/291. **TOWN TEAM WORKING PARTY**

22/291.1. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes from the Town Team working party meeting held on 17th January 2023 be received and noted.

22/291.2. **Farmers Market Review of Fees**

RESOLVED:

That the Farmers Market pitch fees remain at £20 payable in advance for a standard pitch with a fee of £30 charged for an extended pitch (up to 6m in length x 3m). That a charge of £5 be made for those who require electrical hook-up.

22/292. **CHRISTMAS SPARKLE WORKING PARTY**

22/292.1. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Sparkle working party meeting held on the 23rd January 2023 be received and noted.

22/292.2. **Date and Framework**

RESOLVED:

That the Christmas Sparkle is scheduled to be held on 18th November 2023. That the framework of the event is the same as last year with the council to arrange all outside stalls and with the detail of the event planned by the working party in conjunction with the Town Clerk.

22/292.3. **Expenditure**

RESOLVED:

That delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk to incur expenditure for the Christmas Sparkle within the budget.

22/292.4. **Sponsorship Arrangements**

RESOLVED:

That delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk to agree sponsorship arrangements in conjunction with the working party.

22/292.5. **Stall Pitch Fees and Selection Criteria**

RESOLVED:

That stall pitch fees and criteria for selection for stall holders is as follows:

- That the 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 the remaining stalls to be food and half craft. In addition, that the council aims to secure 10 charity stalls.
- That the pitch fees for a 3m x 3m stall be set at £90 for a trade stall and £15 for a charity stall. That the rate charged pro-rata for each 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.

22/293 **CORONATION WORKING PARTY**

22/293.1. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Coronation working party meeting held on 30th January 2023 be received and noted.

22/293.2. **Event Dates**

RESOLVED:

That the date of the celebration events are agreed as Sunday 7th May and Monday 8th May. That the events comprise the following:

- Sunday 7th May: an event in conjunction with the national ‘Big Lunch’ within the market square from 12-3pm.
- Monday 8th May – Mayor’s Market, with additional activities to tie in with the national ‘Big Help Out’ from 10am-2pm.

22/293.3. **Framework for the Events**

RESOLVED:

That the framework of the events be planned by the working party in conjunction with the Town Clerk.

22/293.4. **Expenditure**

RESOLVED:

That delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk to incur expenditure for these events within the budget.

22/294. **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.

22/295. **CONSULTATION WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW (deferred to closed session)**

RESOLVED:

That the Council submit a response with our views to align with those expressed by the Unitary Councillors, highlighting the importance of the interlinking that is present between Higham Ferrers and Rushden.

22/296. **PENSION REVALUATION**

RESOLVED:

That the results of the pension revaluation be received and noted. That the proposed contribution rates from 31st March 2023 to 31st March 2026 be accepted.

22/297. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONSORTIUM CONTRACT**

RESOLVED:

That the report to update on the Grounds Maintenance arrangements from 1st January 2024 be received and noted.

22/298. **REOPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED:

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

22/299. **ITEMS TO REPORT**

Cllr B Prigmore reported that the older youths have been asked not to use Rushden skate park and we may therefore get an influx of users in Higham Ferrers.

Cllr C P O'Rourke reported tyre marks and damage on the grass around Fitzwilliam Leys Play Area with a suspicion that this has been caused by grounds maintenance contractors. The clerk will follow this up.

Councillors requested an update about the dog attack at Saffron Road Recreation Ground. The Clerk confirmed she had spoken to a family member and had met with the dog warden. The Public Spaces Protection Orders are reviewed every 3 years and will next be reviewed this year so the council can consider at that time whether they wish to extend the area where dogs are required to be on lead.

Mayor

Date