

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 31st OCTOBER 2017 AT THE TOWN HALL AT 7.30PM.**

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillor G Harwood MBE

17/194. **APOLOGIES**
None.

17/195. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Other Interests
Cllr Mrs P H Whiting, item 15, some of the plots of land have a chancel caution and she is a Church Warden.
Cllr C P O'Rourke, item 16, member of Cando Care.
Cllr P Tomas, item 9.1, chq 300479, Civic Service expenses.

17/196. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th September 2017 be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record.

17/197. **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**
District Councillor G Harwood MBE spoke of the County Council's financial circumstances. Direct savings of £9.6 million are required this coming year. The overspend this year 2017/18 is in the region of nearly £12 million with 6 months to go to year end for the complete picture. He is aware of the impact of the saving cuts for local residents in Higham Ferrers and the review being undertaken of library services. A last resort consideration for the County Council is enforced unpaid leave for some employees.

17/198. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**
The Mayor reported on the events he had attended:

- 8th October, Mayor's Civic Service at St Mary's Church followed by a reception in the Bede House. The Mayor was pleased to see so many Councillors in attendance. The highlight of the service for the Mayor was the presentation of the ribbons to the children of the choir for achieving their grades.
- 14th October, St Neots Town Council, Royal Air Force Cadets Freedom Parade followed by a reception at the Priory Centre.
- 15th October, Civic Service for the Mayor of March at St Marys Church.
- 17th October, Alpha Pre-School visit to celebrate their 50th Birthday.

- 22nd October, Civic Service for the Mayor of Huntingdon at St Marys Church.

The Deputy Mayor reported on the events he had attended:

- 30th October, Henry Chichele Primary School, with a tour of the extension area.
- 1st October, Civic Service for the Mayor of Rushden, followed by a buffet lunch at the Town Hall.
- 7th October, NCALE AGM at Moulton Community Centre Moulton.

17/199. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Policing

Letter received from Inspector Daryl Lyon advising of the local priorities identified for Wellingborough and East Northants.

Parking Chichele Street

A copy of a letter received has been passed to the County Council as the Highways Authority and ENC regarding the nuisance caused by the development. The Police are aware of the issue regarding parking near the business and they are monitoring.

Archaeological Dig – Walnut Tree Area

4-5 pieces of pottery were found as well as a tiny silver half penny with long solid cross. The coin has a tentative date of 1430 (Henry VI).

General Data Protection Regulations.

These are due to change from 25th May 2018. Having undertaken a training course the Council has to undertake some work around reviewing what information it holds and reviewing processes.

Community Facilities Grants

Saffron Road Equipment – Approved to Stage 2.

Blue Heritage Plaques - £3500 approved.

Mallard Close Equipment – Rejected.

Unitary Authorities

Peter Bone MP has responded to say there are no proposals for restructuring or transferring powers within any of the Councils at any level. He has regular meetings with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and will update the Town Council if there are any changes to this view.

Dogs off Lead Area

The Dogs off Lead Area on Stanwick Road is open. A formal opening is planned for the spring.

Cabin at the Tennis Courts

The cabin was installed this week in the compound area at the tennis courts.

Police and Crime Update

Incidents of note reported:

29th October, theft of a motor vehicle parked on the driveway of a property in Kestrel Drive.

26th October, burglary of a property in Elizabeth Way.

25th October, motor cycle stolen from insecure garden shed in Kings Avenue.

13th October, burglary of a property in Betjeman Close and items stolen from a vehicle parked on the drive.

11th October, burglary of a property in Shelley Drive.

RESOLVED:

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

17/200. **QUESTIONS**

None.

17/201. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

None.

17/202. **FINANCE**

17/202.1 **To approve accounts for payment as at 31st October 2017.**

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment total of £41,471.87 be approved for payment. Copy attached to the minutes.

17/202.2 **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 30th September 2017.**

RESOLVED:

That the bank reconciliation as at 30th September 2017 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr D C Lawson MBE.

17/203. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

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

17/203.1 **Planning and Development Committee held on the 17th October 2017.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 17th October 2017 be received and adopted.

17/203.2 **Policy and Resources Committee held on the 10th October 2017.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 10th October 2017 be received and adopted.

Recommendations

(i) **Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy**

RESOLVED:

That the Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy be reviewed without change.

(ii) **Tree Management Policy**

RESOLVED:

That the Tree Management Policy be reviewed without change.

(iii) **Investment Strategy**

RESOLVED:

That the Investment Strategy be reviewed without change.

(iv) **Complaints Policy**

RESOLVED:

That the Complaints Policy be reviewed without change.

(v) **Purchase of Tablets for Councillors**

RESOLVED:

- That the Council allocate a budget of £150 per tablet. The proposed tablet would be a Lenovo.
- That the draft 'Tablet Agreement' that would be signed by Councillors as circulated be approved.

17/204. **STANDING ORDERS**

RESOLVED:

That the following amendments are made to the standing orders:-

(i) Alter 1.w as follows:-

Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any questions shall be by a show of hands. Where the decision relates to co-optation of a Councillor voting will be

by written ballot where there is more than 1 candidate.

(ii) Alter 3.b. (I) as follows:-

Sign and serve to councillors by email, delivery or post at their residences.....

17/205. **CO-OPTION OF A COUNCILLOR**

Voting took place by written ballot with three candidates standing for co-option; Mrs Angela Gardner, Mr David Robinson and Mr Gary Salmon. The first ballot achieved a majority of those voting.

RESOLVED:

That Mrs Angela Gardner be co-opted to the fill the vacancy, holding office under the co-option until the next election.

17/206. **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

RESOLVED:

That the new Councillor, Mrs Angela Gardner, be appointed to the following committees until the Annual Meeting of the Council in May;

- Planning and Development Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Appeals Committee

17/207. **COMPLAINT REGARDING THE MUGA**

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk writes to the residents outlining the measures undertaken by the Council following the issues that have arisen since the installation of the upgraded facilities at the MUGA. That the letter state Council has done all it can and that the matter is to be closed.

17/208. **CEMETERY LAND**

Council considered whether they wished to proactively pursue additional cemetery land. The proposal was put forward that the Council no longer pursues land east of the A6 for a new cemetery due to costs associated with on-site testing, access and the location of the sites from the town. Discussion included consideration that Council should pursue all possible land options within the Parish, and that Council should take up the Duchy offer on the 4 sites offered for testing by them on land to the east of A6.

Cllr B Prigmore proposed, seconded by Cllr R Gell the following motion:-

That the council no longer actively pursue land for use as a cemetery, as after 4 years and expenditure of £3220 no land has been made available. The only land offered for testing is too far away from the town, and still has to be tested. The project to be listed as long term in the Forward Plan, unless land is offered to the town which is suitable and within easy access of the town.

Cllr Mrs A Sauntson requested the recording of the vote. Following a vote the motion failed.

Councillor D Drage (Against)

Councillor R Gell (For)

Councillor R D Hamblin (Abstention)

Councillor H L Jackson (For)

Councillor D C Lawson MBE (Against)

Councillor Mrs S Mantle (Against)

Councillor Mrs V M Newbery (Against)

Councillor B Prigmore (For)

Councillor C P O'Rourke (Against)

Councillor Mrs T Reavey (Against)

Councillor A M T Reading (Abstention)

Councillor Mrs A Sauntson (Against)

Councillor Mrs P H Whiting (Against)

Councillor J Smithers (Against)

Councillor P Tomas (Against)

- 17/209. **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICE REVIEW**
Council considered what initial action to take regarding the NCC Library Service Review.
RESOLVED:
That the Clerk and the Leader be delegated to carry forward the following:
- Issuing a consultation to gauge the views of the community on the retention of the library service as well as views on increases to the council tax to provide it.
 - Setting up a working group to include representation from Friends of Higham Ferrers library.
- 17/210. **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, BUDGET CONSULTATION**
RESOLVED:
That individually the Councillors complete the NCC budget consultation questionnaire and submit their responses to the Clerk by the 17th November in order to allow the Clerk to gather Councillors views to enable formulation of a draft corporate response to the consultation for consideration at the November meeting of the Council.
- 17/211. **EVENTS WORKING PARTY MEETING**
It was drawn to the attention of Council that Mrs Pat Bird attended the meeting but had been omitted from the list of those present.
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the Events Working Party meeting held on the 3rd October 2017 be received and noted.
- 17/212. **CLOSURE OF MEETING TO 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.
- 17/213. **RUSHDEN EAST**
RESOLVED:
That no further action be taken pending the meeting on the 20th November with the ENC Chief Executive and Head of Planning. That this meeting will allow Council the opportunity to raise questions and from this consideration of actions can follow at the November meeting of the Council.
- 17/214. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on the 10th October 2017 be received and adopted.
- 17/215. **RE-OPEN THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**
RESOLVED:
That the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.
- 17/216. **ITEMS TO REPORT**
Cllr Mrs A Saunston reported that Tourism had sought permission from Northamptonshire Highways to plant bulbs on the highway to the front of Borough

Court. A licence at a cost of £225 was required to allow the planting so Tourism had subsequently decided the bulbs would be planted in the churchyard instead.

Mayor

Date