

TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12TH DECEMBER 2016 AT 6.00PM IN THE TOWN HALL

PRESENT

Councillors K. Brennan (Chairman), P. Aldridge, J. Badham, H. Burns, S. Carter, C. Danter, C. Monk, M. Poxon, S. Raywood, A. Smith, V. Smith, M. Sztymiak, T. Walker, and P. Workman.

10425(01) TO PARTICIPATE IN A TRAINING SESSION BY GAPTC

Councillors participated in a one-hour training session on the role of a councillor and the council as a corporate body delivered by Anita Sach from the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils. Handouts and project work packs were given to each councillor who attended. Anita suggested that the council could show that they meet the standards of the sector by aiming for a certificate in the Local Council Award Scheme at Foundation Level.

10426(02) APOLOGIES

- i. Cllr R. Mills – Illness
- ii. Cllr P. Clatworthy

10427(03) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Cllr V. Smith – Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council
- ii. Cllr M. Sztymiak – Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council
- iii. Cllr P. Workman – Tewkesbury Borough Council

10428(04) DISPENSATIONS

None

10429(05) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14TH NOVEMBER 2016

Councillors made two amendments to the minutes and approved the amended minutes as a true and accurate record.

10430(06) QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions were received from members of the public.

10431(07) MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed councillors that a further letter had been received from DF Legal and that she, Cllr Workman, and the Clerk had an appointment with the Town Council's solicitor to discuss the contents of the letter.

10432(08) TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES

Councillors received the minutes of committees attached to their agenda pack and paper copies of minutes of committees that had not been written when the pack was sent out but had taken place before the meeting.

10433(09) TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM MEMBERS WHO HAVE ATTENDED OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Raywood reported that the NDP had met and that a new website has been circulated with a new app to identify work required. Cllr Brennan asked that he sent this to all councillors. Cllr Burns reported that she couldn't do the social media training due to low turnout and it has consequently been rearranged. Cllr Danter reported attending PPNP's Extra Care Day which was not well attended, but Town Council bags were well received.

10434(10) TO PROPOSE THAT A THREE-YEAR PLAN MEETING IS HELD IN JANUARY AND THAT ALL COUNCILLORS SHOULD ATTEND

The Mayor asked that this take place on 16th January and this was seconded by Cllr Aldridge.

10435(11) TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET PREPARED BY FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE

Cllr Sztymiak noted that the budget proposals were a 'first cut'. Cllr Poxon pointed out that the figures represented a £51,000 increase on the existing precept figure. Cllr Brennan explained that the grants budget was increased from £8000 to £16000 to cope with increased requests for grants from community groups to cover the cost of hiring the Watson Hall. Cllr Badham said that he would not want to see a 20% rise in the precept.

Cllr Aldridge recommended placing the figures to be 'carried forward' into reserves at the end of the financial year and bringing them back out in the next. Cllr Sztymiak noted that the money from Warwick Place would also be placed into these committed reserves.

Cllr V Smith expressed his shock at the increase being considered and prompted councillors to make efficiencies and get the best costs for the people of Tewkesbury.

Cllr Poxon said he was concerned at the lack of long term business plan for the council owned buildings. He also stated that he had not seen the business case for developing the moorings. To benefit the people of Tewkesbury there was a need for a robust business case.

Cllr Workman reported that as chair of the Buildings committee he hoped the newly updated charges and the cancellation of 'free use' of these buildings would start to improve the income of the Watson and Town Halls.

Cllr Aldridge suggested that Borough and County Cllr V Smith could make some suggestions to help the Finance & Staffing committee with their final budget decision.

Cllr Monk urged councillors to set a budget which identified only realistically achievable projects.

Cllr Sztymiak asked the clerk to provide Tewkesbury Borough Council's precept figures from last financial year too and circulate them to all councillors.

10436(12) TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE RELATING TO TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL'S TOWN CLERK CONTRACT

It was proposed by the Mayor and seconded by Cllr Aldridge that the item be considered under confidential business.

10437(13) TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM THE CLERK

The Clerk reported that the Watson Hall boiler was now in situ and operational.

She also reported that the cleaning and maintenance tender would be added to Contract Finder on the 15th December 2016. A discussion about the cleaning and maintenance contract was prompted by this and it was resolved that Cllr Poxon would form a Working Group to investigate the alternative option of bringing the maintenance provision in-house and to consider partnership working with the Borough and County Councils.

The Working Group will consist of Cllrs H Burns, J Badham, C Danter and S Carter. Cllr V Smith will offer Borough and County Council information to the group. Cllr K Brennan proposed that the specification for 2 full time workers be placed onto contract finder in the meantime, seconded by Cllr Raywood. 9 out of 14 voted in favour.

It was reported that the work experience placement of a student from Bredon School was going well and that the school had thanked the council for offering this experience.

The Clerk reported her attendance at the SLCC Roadshow at Cheltenham in which the subjects of Finance, Pensions, Risk Management, Employment Law, and Devolution were discussed. The Clerk had also received a talk from John Connell from the Department for Communities and Local Government and received the 2016 Practitioners Guide to Governance and Accountability.

10438(14) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Bill Adie asked for a list of all Councillors who failed to attend and didn't give apologies to the Clerk. He also drew attention to the alley list suggested by the Environment & Amenities committee and noted that some private alleys (such as Fryzer's) were listed, as well as Clark's Alley being missing. He warned the

committee to be careful about cutting the cleaning contract as it is one of the things local people look to the council to do. Which Alleys will cease to be cleaned and which are new ones?

Alan Snarey asked the Clerk to contact Northway Parish Council to ask them for their grass cutting prices.

Alan Purkiss agreed that Town Council assets need a 3-year business plan and that such a plans should be shown to the public.

Les Buchanan noted that Roses Court should not be on the maintenance contract. It was therefore resolved that the spec should include Clark's Alley and have Fryzer's Court and Roses Court removed.

Cllr M Poxon said there was no list previously. Cllr Poxon said he wanted to include areas where tourists would go.

10439(12) TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE RELATING TO TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL'S TOWN CLERK CONTRACT

Resolved: That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the business to be discussed was of a confidential nature.

The Chairman confirmed that an amended Ellis Whittam contract of employment had recently been given to the Town Clerk, along with a job description, terms and conditions of employment and an appraisal date of 20th December 2016. She explained that item 12. v. was asking full council if they are happy to accept the decision of the Finance and Staffing committee who had supported the terms of an offer letter given to the clerk stating that her temporary contract would become permanent if quarterly reviews and an appraisal were successful.

Cllr H Burns counter proposed that the existing temporary contract should be extended for a further 6 months to enable a longer appraisal period to be monitored. Councillor S Raywood seconded this, although he stated that he didn't agree with temporary contracts in general as he felt they led to instability. Cllr Badham reminded councillors that Employment Law was clear that the clerk had security of tenure following a successful appraisal. Therefore, he saw no advantage to extending the temporary contract. Cllr Sztymiak reminded councillors that the Finance and Staffing committee had made a proposal and that full council was causing further delays by not considering it.

The Chairman reminded council again of the agenda item and the clerk confirmed that the minutes of the Finance and Staffing committee, in paper copies in front of council, recorded that the committee had decided to bring their proposal to full council in order to include them in the process of recruitment of a clerk and to ask for their support.

Cllr V Smith spoke about how the council had been in a difficult position when the former clerk left and how, when serious accounting system problems had been identified, it had required costly work by at least two other clerks alongside the current clerk to put them right. He also reminded councillors of the succession of clerks the town council had had over the past 2 or 3 years. He asked members to

“draw a line under the past and show that we are happy to support the decision of the Finance and Staffing committee to back our clerk and vote her through subject to appraisal”. He reminded councillors that, as Cllr J Badham had suggested, this was supported in Employment Law. Cllr P Workman explained that the Finance and Staffing Committee were asking for full council to confirm that they were happy for this delegated power to be actioned by the committee.

The Chairman then asked councillors to vote on the proposal that the full council is happy to allow the Finance and staffing committee to use their delegated powers to make this decision and 10 councillors voted in favour of this.

Following the vote Cllr M Sztymiak asked councillors to show they are united on their decision to choose a Proper Officer for the Council. He was concerned that only members who were not on the Finance and Staffing committee had voted against this decision.

Resolved: That the Press and Public be readmitted to the meeting.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 9th January 2017 at 6pm

Final date for agenda items: 2nd January 2017

Final date for dispensation requests: 5th December 2016

The meeting ended at 9:00pm