

TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12TH MARCH 2018 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TEWKESBURY TOWN HALL AT 6.00 PM

Present: P Workman (Chairman), C Danter (Deputy Mayor), K Brennan, H Burns, S Carter, S Franklin, M Linton, K Powell, M Poxon, J Raywood, S Raywood, M Sztymiak, and T Walker
D Hill (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr K Cromwell (GCC), The Reverend Canon Paul Williams and three members of the public

The Reverend Canon Paul Williams said prayers.

Before the start of the meeting Cllr P Workman announced that a Masterplan meeting was planned for 27th March at 1.30pm to be held at Tewkesbury Borough Council offices. Good wishes are to be passed on to Geoff Peope (previous Councillor and Mayor).

18/19-051 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Aldridge, A Smith and V Smith

18/19-052 To receive reports from Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council

This item was moved by the Chairman.

Cllr Julie Greening, TBC gave the following report:

Budget

At its meeting on 20th February the net budget of £8,732,90 was approved. This included an increase in Council Tax, with a Band D property rising to £114.36 (£5 per year).

Consultation had taken place with the public, Citizen's Panel, businesses, Member's Transform Working Group and no key themes were raised that changed the budget proposals.

Once again this has been a tough process under difficult circumstances and it was unfortunate that Council Tax needed to be increased to help secure a balanced budget. The Council has maintained the same level of service and much of the deficit faced during the forthcoming year will be met through increased income i.e. more prudent savings, commercial property investments and treasury activities and financing streams as well as the increase in Council Tax. Future years may require tougher decisions around the operation of the Council, potentially reducing or stopping some services.

Gloucestershire was successful in a bid to be considered in the Government 100% Retained Business Rate Pilot scheme for 2018/19. The current scheme being 50% retention. Tewkesbury has suffered substantial losses over the past few years following successful appeals, mainly by Virgin Media. Recently this has improved with a retained income of £240,000 and growth expected to continue. Tewkesbury will therefore re-enter the Gloucestershire Pool for the next financial year. The pilot contains a clause that the Council can be no worse off than under their current scheme though it is hoped will benefit from increased business rate retention. The draft Government intention is for 75% retention across all local authorities by 2020.

No change to the New Homes Bonus will enable this be used to support the base budget, continue to fund the Community Funding Officer post, one-off costs for transformational activities, maintenance of Council assets (building and IT), GDPR requirements, Growth Hub and in conjunction with other external funding, help the increasing pressure on housing and homelessness requirements.

Full reports pack details are available on the Tewkesbury Borough Council website under meetings/agendas/minutes – Council.

Council Tax – Empty Homes Premium

It was agreed that from 1 April 2018, a Council Tax Empty Premium of 50% be implemented in respect of properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years; subject to the following of detailed governance arrangements including discretion for discounts, exemptions i.e. : a dwelling which was the sole, or main, residence of a member of the armed forces who was absent from the property as a result of such service; an annexe deemed unoccupied because it was being treated by the occupier of the main dwelling as part of that main dwelling; and a dwelling which was genuinely on the market for sale or letting. The benefits of this scheme would be to bring much needed empty properties back into use to help address the housing shortage rather than financial gain as the Borough Council would only keep 7% of the revenue, the remainder going to the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner in the same way Council Tax income is distributed.

It would be possible that a person could buy a property that had already been empty for two years and then be liable for the premium immediately; however, occupancy of a long term empty property for more than six weeks would ‘reset’ the clock and there were already other discounts in place that the owner may be able to take advantage of, such as properties that require major repair work to render them habitable and again these would be subject to Officer’s discretion in consultation with Members on a case by case basis.

Planning Enforcement Policy

As part of the Planning Services review, a draft policy has been considered by the relevant committees and agreed ready for public consultation.

This sets out the Council’s approach to delivery of the service and provides clear information to customers about the level of service they could expect to receive.

Flood and Water Management Supplementary Planning Document.

This was adopted in November 2014 however required significant updates to national guidance surrounding flood and water management, to climate change predictions. Following a review and public consultation the updated policy has been adopted.

Cllr Kevin Cromwell, GCC gave the following report:

Cllr Cromwell updated the meeting on the gulley project and the maintenance shceme. Cllr Cromwell will liaise with the Town Clerk to advise on confirmed dates for the projects. The Town Council will consider any requests for work to be undertaken through the project.

Cllr S Raywood commented on the business rates retention pilot. It was noted that Tewkesbury will be involved in the early stages of the electric vehicle infrastructure. Cllr Cromwell was thanked for his assistance with the Town Council’s Winter Plan.

18/19-053 To receive declarations of interests and consider requests for dispensation

Cllr Walker in respect of item 5.

18/19-054 To receive written questions from members of the public

No questions had been received.

18/19-055 Public Participation

No comments were received.

18/19-056 Co-option of two new Councillors

Four prospective candidates gave a brief overview of their application to become a Town Councillor. Members were then given the opportunity to ask the candidates questions. Sophie Franklin and Mark Linton were duly elected as Councillors representing the Town with Mitton Ward. Cllr Walker abstained from voting.

18/19-057 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th February 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2018 were approved. Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr J Raywood. Unanimous, **motion carried**.

18/19-058 Matters arising from the minutes – for information only

It was noted that item 18/19 036 regarding a revised meeting schedule needs to be carried forward to the next meeting.

18/19-059 To note draft minutes of the following committees:

Planning 7th February, Buildings & Moorings 8th February, Environment & Amenities 9th January and 2nd February minutes were noted.

18/19-060 To receive reports from outside bodies

Cllr Danter reported that the replacement plaque will be dedicated on Armed Forces Day.

Cllr S Raywood reported that an informal meeting of Tewkesbury Town Regeneration Partnership (TTRP) had been held. Cllr Poxon queried why minutes of TTRP meetings were not made public or available to members. Cllr Raywood replied that it is not a statutory body and therefore there is no actual requirement for the minutes to be published. It was noted that previous minutes had not been prepared to a standard acceptable to publishing widely but that a report was available.

Action: Town Clerk to distribute report to all members.

18/19-061 To approve payments for February and to note the February bank reconciliation

The payments for February were discussed and approved. Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr Walker. **Motion carried, 1 abstention.**

The Town Clerk was asked to check back on the coding of a couple of payments.

The bank reconciliation for February was not yet available.

18/19-062 To receive the February budget report

The February budget report was noted. Cllr Poxon queried whether the RFO had been able to prepare a spreadsheet in order to assist with the committed budget position.

18/19-063 To receive the interim internal audit report and to receive any recommendations from the Finance & Staffing committee

The Clerk reported that Peter Newman had visited over a two day period. Cllr J Raywood advised that she had met with Peter when he visited the Town Hall. Cllr Raywood reported that a piece of work had been completed in relation to categorising s.137 payments.

It was proposed that the Finance & Staffing Committee should have delegated power to renew the annual insurance policy in line with current issues raised, to a maximum of £6k. Proposed by Cllr Poxon, seconded by Cllr Danter.

18/19-064 To discuss Tewkesbury Town Council's request for s.106 monies

It was agreed that this item should be deferred to the Planning Committee. Proposed by Cllr Burns, seconded by Cllr S Raywood. Unanimous, **motion carried**.

18/19-065 To consider whether to apply for flood funding

Cllr Burns stated that the Town Council had not benefitted from the 2013/14 funding. Cllr Sztymiak felt that there may be some funding available for emergency items e.g. sand bags, walkie talkies etc. It was proposed that this item should be discussed and agreed by the Environment & Amenities committee. Proposed by Cllr Sztymiak, seconded by Cllr Walker. Unanimous, **motion carried**.

18/19-066 To consider and agree a grant application from an outside body

The grant application from the Medieval Society was reviewed. It was agreed to allocate the remaining grant budget for 2018/19 to the Society. Proposed by Cllr Sztymiak, seconded by Cllr Brennan. Unanimous, **motion carried**.

18/19-067 To receive and vote on nominations for the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Cllr Danter was nominated as Mayor and Cllr Walker was nominated as Deputy Mayor.

18/19-068 To nominate a representative of Tewkesbury Town Council on the Tewkesbury Town Regeneration Project

Cllr J Raywood was nominated as the new representative.

18/19-069 To consider holding the '2050 vision' presentation and how this could be facilitated

All members agreed that this idea should be pursued and felt the Watson Hall would be a suitable venue. Cllr Poxon agreed to facilitate moving this forwards.

18/19-070 Correspondence

The Clerk's report was noted.

Members asked for feedback from the Clerk once she has attended the GPC course being run by GAPTC in April. It was noted that Sara Freckleton, TBC has offered to provide some Code of Conduct and associated training for the Town Council.

Action: Clerk to contact Sara Freckleton and also to facilitate the Skill Zone visit.

18/19-071 Cheques for signature

Cheques were signed in accordance with the payments list.

18/19-072 Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave during the consideration of the following items

Proposed by Cllr S Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter. Unanimous, **motion carried**.

18/19-073 To receive a report from the Clerk on the Moorings legal case and to agree any necessary action

The settlement proposal that had previously been circulated to members was discussed. It was agreed that the Town Council would not enter into informal negotiation on this basis.

Action: Clerk to report back to Thomson & Bancks.

Cllrs V Smith and Sztymiak left at this juncture.

18/19-074 To receive a report from the Personnel Committee

Cllr Danter gave an update on behalf of the Personnel Committee. The future structure of support staff was discussed. Cllr Danter will liaise with GAPTC.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of Minutes 23rd April 2018