

MINUTES
of the
Full Council meeting held on 10th February 2020
In the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, High Street, Tewkesbury

Present: Cllrs K Brennan (Chair), P Aldridge, K Powell, A Rudge, A Carter, H Davis, S Raywood, M Sztymiak, J Raywood, V Smith, C Cody, H Bowman.

In attendance: J King (Assistant Town Clerk); N Finnegan (Administrative Assistant)
10 members of the public

19/20 - 171 To consider the application for co-option to Tewkesbury Town Council and to receive a short presentation from the applicant
Deferred to the next meeting.

19/20 - 172 To receive apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Walker (health), Cllr Danter (personal)

19/20 - 173 To receive declarations of interest
Cllr S Raywood is related to one of the nominees for Deputy Mayor – 19/20-185.

19/20 - 174 To consider requests for dispensation
None requested.

19/20 - 175 To receive written questions from members of the public
“The Assistant Town Clerk made me aware of a "confidential meeting" held prior to Full Council on Monday 20 January. As far as I'm aware no notice of this meeting was posted online or on the Town Hall noticeboard (I checked both on the evening). As a result of the confidential meeting, the start of the Full Council meeting was delayed. Why wasn't the confidential matter included in the agenda of the Full Council meeting as a confidential item? Were any decisions or commitments made at the meeting? If yes, how will these decisions or commitments be minuted?”

As you know I have raised with you the issue of the lack of transparency with regard to the draft budget document that was discussed at the Finance Committee on Monday 13 January. You've stated that it was a "working document" as a reason why this was not available to the public prior to the meeting. I note, with concern, that this same argument could be used with any draft document discussed at Council meetings. This denies the public to read such documents prior to meetings and lobby their councillors. I believe this is particularly bad practice with regard to financial documents, draft or otherwise. I'm concerned that the Council is slipping back into its poor practices of the past with regard to transparency.

By copy to the Deputy Mayor, I would ask if she, and her fellow councillors, who she represents, are happy with this apparent purposeful reduction in transparency. If not, what steps will be taken to reverse this trend. I would like the issues raised here, namely:

a) lack of notice of the meeting held prior to Full Council

b) lack of access to documents related to agenda items
c) the Council's commitment to transparency in general
to be answered formally, by you and the Deputy Mayor, as an item of written correspondence to Full Council."

Response from the Town Council

In response to the points above:

- a) This was not a convened Council meeting - it was an update meeting arranged specifically for Cllrs. It was an informative, not a decision making meeting.
- b) As previously advised by the Town Clerk, the documents to which you refer were working documents.
- c) The Council continues to strive to make all of its decisions transparent. Appropriate supporting documentation; in excess of the legal requirements, is provided in the public domain for review where possible. All decisions are recorded in appropriate minutes which are also published in a timely manner. Cllrs carry out internal control checks, the Council has an internal audit and indeed this was carried out most recently on 3rd & 4th February and is also subject to an external audit.

19/20 - 176

Public participation

Members of the public commented / raised the following questions:

- Re: Air pollution. Are Cllrs aware of the most recent report from Tewkesbury Borough Council on air pollution? The report states that the reported (2017) levels are dropping and are below the safe limit and that Tewkesbury Borough Council are considering dropping the air quality measuring due to this.
- Should the item relating to expenditure in the confidential session be confidential. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that advice had been taken from the Town Clerk and it would be remaining in confidential session.
- That the information about the GCC Car Parking Consultation should have been on the Town Council website sooner and there should be more information on the Facebook page. The individual stated that the Council Awards scheme means that people should know what they are getting in terms of value for money.
- Do the Town Council have a view on the Car Parking proposals, and in the light of the poor consultative methods, lack of clear information and damage that will be caused to Town traders, will they make formal representations to Gloucestershire County Council?

19/20 - 177

To note the Mayor's announcements

- Item 17 the proposal from Cllr Aldridge regarding air pollution will be deferred to a future meeting to allow for time to debate the parking issue.
- Civic Award nominations are still open until the end of February 2020.

Upcoming events at the Watson Hall

- 13th February - Cllr Sztymiak & Cllr Workman's meeting about proposed car parking strategy. 7-9pm. Open to all.
- 22nd February – Ladies Night
- 23rd February– Town Band Tea Concert

- 27th February – Psychic Night
- 28th February – Northern Soul – Mayor’s Charity Event
- 29th February – JC Quo
- 11th April – Bon Giovi

Upcoming events at the Town Hall

- Every Thursday evening – Line dancing
- Every Friday evening – Free yoga / meditation
- 24th February – Zero Waste talk
- Every Friday – Country Markets
- Every Wednesday & Saturday – Craft markets
- 27th February – TADS auditions – open to all

19/20 - 178 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2020

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2020, subject to the inclusion after item 19/20-167 that re:19/20-160 Cllr Rudge wished to minute concerns not to the conclusion of the precept decision but the process by which the decision was arrived.

Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr J Raywood

19/20 - 179 Matters arising from the Minutes – for information only

19/20-153 Questions raised in Public Participation in January meeting

- The Watson Hall has made a loss before all costs are taken into account. The individual requested a copy of the Watson Hall accounts and any grants. [Accounts for Watson Hall are available under the Summary Income & Expenditure report provided each month at Full Council and in detail under the Income & Expenditure reports provided each month at the Finance Committee meeting.](#)
- Can you confirm if the Town Council is trading in any way, if yes, the individual requested a copy of the trading accounts and a copy of the business plan approved by the Council. [The Town Clerk has researched and taken advice on this matter and is of the opinion that the Town Council is not trading.](#)
- Will the proposed changes to the financial regulations mean that individuals cannot query items before decisions are made? [Decisions will continue to be made by the appropriate Committee / Full Council and individuals are welcome to comment either by submitting written questions or attending the meetings. Financial Regulations are still in draft form and being reviewed.](#)
- An individual requested that item 14 be deferred until supporting documentation was available for review, as they felt there were too many changes from the NALC guidelines. For example: they agree that the current regulation of £1000 maximum spend per Committee was too low, but they felt that £25,000 was too high. Was it possible to put an emergency procedure, rather than a blanket raise. [Item deferred to future meeting.](#)

19/20-060 Press releases – Will be included in the review of the Standing Orders – ongoing

19/20-115 GCC Report – Flood defence spending – Awaiting response from GCC- ongoing

19/20-123 Grant Application – Tewkesbury In Bloom – deferred until response received from TIB

19/20-141 TTRP – pre-meeting has been arranged for Thursday 20th Feb at 4pm – complete

19/20-157 Finance Minutes – The opening hours were reviewed by the staffing committee in January. They remain 9.30am – 3pm, Monday – Thursday. Compared to the historical opening hours, the critical lunchtime period is now covered. Staffing FTE for the majority of 2019/20 was 2.6 people. Three years ago this was a 2.88 FTE (based on a 35 hour working week). As stated at the last meeting this increased in January to 3.31 FTE when the business case supported it, so now 0.43 FTE extra than 3 years ago – complete.

19/20-163 Local Electricity Bill – details were circulated, deferred until Local Members Bill is returned to parliament - ongoing

19/20 - 180 To note the following Committee Minutes:

Staffing – 2nd December 2019

Environment & Amenities – 17th December 2019

Buildings & Moorings – 11th December 2019

Planning – 16th December 2019

The above minutes were noted.

A Cllr asked about what registering the Museum “At Risk” meant. They were advised that it involves registering it as an ‘At Risk’ listed building, as this can give access to possible grant funding.

19/20 - 181 To receive a report from Cllrs J Raywood & S Raywood regarding the GCC parking strategy consultation and to agree any actions

Cllrs discussed the report and an update was provided by Cllr Raywood who has been in touch with Cllr Norman, the GCC Cabinet Member for Parking. An urgent meeting has been called for Tuesday 11th November between officers and Cabinet members at GCC.

Cllrs raised concerns regarding:

- The methodology that has been used regarding the data that supports the proposals
- The accuracy of the maps that have been used at the briefing sessions
- The negative impact on the businesses on the High Street
- The lack of advance communication / consultation with the Town Council regarding the parking review and the lack of compliance with the Gloucestershire Charter
- The ability to only provide online feedback for the consultation, given the older than average population in Tewkesbury

It was RESOLVED that Tewkesbury Town Council requests that GCC withdraws the Car Parking Strategy. Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr Powell.

It was RESOLVED that the Town Council offices acts as a central collection point for individuals who are unable to access that internet, to feedback on the Consultation. Proposed by Cllr Sztymiak, seconded by Cllr Powell.

Cllr Raywood is arranging a session at the Town Hall on Friday 14th February where she will assist those without internet access to access the consultation.

It was RESOLVED to lodge a formal complaint with Gloucestershire County Council that the Town Council were not involved or consulted in the car parking strategy and this contravenes the Gloucestershire Charter.

Proposed by Cllr Sztymiak, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

Discussions were had regarding maintaining good relations with Gloucestershire County Council and the response to be submitted to GCC was amended.

It was RESOLVED that Tewkesbury Town Council objects to the GCC Car Parking Strategy in its current form looks forward to further discussions with Gloucestershire County Council to find a solution.

Proposed by Cllr Rudge, seconded by Cllr Carter.

19/20 - 182 To receive Councillor reports for Tewkesbury Borough Council from Cllr Reid & Gloucestershire County Council from Cllr Smith

Cllr Cody provided a report from Tewkesbury Borough Council on behalf of Cllr Reid and herself covering:

- Member Allowances
- Civic Heads for 2021
- Council Plan 2020-2024 which has been adapted to add two new priorities concerning Garden Communities & Sustainability environment.
- New store in old Superdrug building will be a Mountain Warehouse
- Permission for 850 homes granted at Fiddington
- Electric charging points are available to the public behind the Borough Council offices.

Cllr Smith provided an update from Gloucestershire County Council covering:

- £1 million climate change action fund approved
- GCC Highways Update
- New cycle routes – drop-in session at the Boys Brigade, Tewkesbury between 10am – 1pm on Saturday 29th February. Open to all.

19/20 - 183 To receive the budget report and payments report for December 2019

The budget and payment reports for December 2019 were received.

A Cllr asked about the Mayor's Charity Account and whether it was possible to split the income and expenditure by Mayor. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the accounting year does not line up with the Mayoral year, so it is not possible.

A Cllr asked about the accounts for Buildings and Moorings and the Watson Hall being separate. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the running of the Watson Hall still falls under Building & Moorings, but it has a separate cost centre in the accounts.

A Cllr asked if the staff are included under the expenditure for the Watson Hall.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to investigate.

19/20 - 184 To review the bank reconciliations for December 2019

The bank reconciliations were reviewed.

- 19/20 - 185 To receive and vote on nominations for the positions of Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor**
It was RESOLVED that Cllr Brennan will be Mayor from May 2020 to May 2021.
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr S Raywood.
- It was RESOLVED that Cllr J Raywood will be Deputy Mayor from May 2020 to May 2021. Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr Bowman.
- 19/20 - 186 To consider and agree an option for prayers at Town Council meetings**
Cllrs discussed the options proposed in the meeting pack. Cllrs felt that the current situation, where prayers are said before the meeting, but that individuals are given the opportunity to leave should they wish to, was the preferred option. Prayers will continue to not form part of the agenda.
- It was RESOLVED that there be no change to the current situation.
Proposed by Cllr Sztymiak, seconded by Cllr Aldridge.
- 19/20 - 187 To consider a proposal from Cllr Aldridge that the Town Council raises its concerns, and requests details regarding current actions being taken on air pollution in Tewkesbury, from Tewkesbury Borough Council & Gloucestershire County Council**
Deferred to the next meeting.
- 19/20 - 188 To receive reports from members representing the Town Council on outside bodies**
- The wheelchair bus is looking for drivers. Commitment of 4 hours per week, must be over 26 and under 75 years old. Please contact Cllr Aldridge for more information.
 - Cllr J Raywood assisted at the Tewkesbury Hospital League of Friends event, currently fundraising for kits to help patients maintain active minds.
 - Cllr Carter thanked all Cllrs who attended the brainstorming session and helped come up with the great ideas for the Heritage Lottery Funding bid. Next step is a meeting with the Abbey to discuss.
 - Cllr S Raywood – asked Cllrs to start thinking about any motions they may wish to bring to the NALC AGM
 - Cllr Brennan reminded Cllrs about the pre-meeting for TTRP on 20th February at 4pm.
- 19/20 - 189 To approve the payments list**
It was RESOLVED to approve the payments list totalling £6,394.51
Proposed by Cllr Rudge, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.
- 19/20 - 190 Correspondence**
The latest LRC magazine is available to borrow.
- 19/20 - 191 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 on the agenda**
It was RESOLVED that 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 on the agenda.

Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr S Raywood

19/20 - 192 To authorise payment on account to Thomson & Bancks in respect of an ongoing legal matter

It was RESOLVED to authorise the payment on account to Thomson & Bancks in respect of an ongoing legal matter.

Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:37pm.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes 9th March 2020