

MINUTES
of an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council
held at the George Watson Memorial Hall on 17th January 2022 at 6.00pm

Present: Cllrs J Raywood (Chair), P Aldridge, K Brennan, H Bowman, P Brookes, C Cody, C Danter, P Devine, K Powell, S Raywood, M Sztymiak, V Smith

In attendance: D Hill (Town Clerk) & J King (Assistant Town Clerk), Rev D Coulton & one member of the public

21/22 - 111 To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Cllr Gurney (work) & Cllr Davis (personal)
Cllr Davis has resigned and the Mayor thanked her for her support and contribution.

21/22 - 112 To receive declarations of interest
Cllr Sztymiak – Tewkesbury Borough Councillor
Cllr S Raywood – Employed by the Planning Inspectorate
Cllr C Cody – Tewkesbury Borough & Gloucestershire County Councillor
Cllr V Smith – Tewkesbury Borough & Gloucestershire County Councillor

21/22 - 113 To consider requests for dispensation
None required.

21/22 - 114 To receive written questions from member of the public
None received.

21/22 - 115 Public Participation
There was no public participation.

21/22 - 116 To note the Mayor's Announcements
Nominations are now open for the 2022 Civic Awards, nomination forms are available on the website.

There are two Councillor vacancies that can be filled by co-option. Any interested parties should contact the office for more details.

All Councillors are invited to take part in adding stitches to the Tewkesbury Stitch Story – dates to be circulated.

21/22 - 117 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2021
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2021. Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr Brennan.

21/22 - 118 Matters arising from the minutes – for information only
21/22-74 – Museum Update – Final funding has been received. Town Clerk will circulate final cost breakdown – complete

- 21/22-110 – Tewkesbury 2030 feedback
- Town Clerk to contact Tewkesbury Direct re: editorial content – complete
 - Copies of feedback in Town Hall & details in noticeboard - complete

- Analysis of postcodes for responses - ongoing
- Town Mayor to contact MP to ask for a progress report on Severn Vale MP's working together re: flooding - ongoing

21/22 - 119 To note the following Committee Minutes: Planning – 10th & 24th November 2021, Finance – 4th November 2021, Buildings & Moorings – 17th November 2021, Severn Ham – 18th November 2021

The above minutes were noted.

21/22 - 120 To receive the finance reports for October & November 2021 and earmarked reserves report

The reports were received.

Cllrs raised questions regarding the bar income – budget vs actual and the stock expenditure for the Watson Hall (budget vs actual). Internal control checkers have raised that it is difficult to reconcile the figures with what is presented in the accounts. Working group of Councillors Brookes, Sztymiak & Powell to look at the issue and report back to Full Council.

The Town Clerk advised that she has asked Tewkesbury Borough Council to release the funds for the improvements at the Watson Hall that have been incurred so far, so that they are accounted for in this financial year.

21/22 - 121 To receive the payment reports for October & November 2021

The payment reports were received.

21/22 - 122 To receive the bank reconciliations for Q2 as approved by the Finance Committee

The bank reconciliations were received.

21/22 - 123 To review and approve the budget for financial year 2022-23

The Mayor set out the rationale for the large increase in the budget, highlighting the issue of owning three historical buildings and moorings that require essential maintenance. The Council is dealing with the historical impact of keeping the precept low, in that there is not enough money to carry out this work. The Smart Clock was an example of where lack of maintenance over the years, had caused an expensive and emergency repair bill. Lack of maintenance causes issues for the future and the Council needs to stop this approach. The budget also has to cover the expected increases of up to 30% for utility bills over the next year. Last year the budget was propped up by using reserves, but this isn't an option for the forthcoming year. Cllrs noted that no one wants to raise taxes, but the proposed increase equates to 52p per week for a Band D household and the majority of houses in the parish are Band C or below.

Cllr Sztymiak set out his amendment to the budget of a 2.5% increase for Band D. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Smith. The main change to the budget is the removal of projects money from all Committees and a pot of £25,000 created for all projects to be decided on by Full Council. Cllr Sztymiak does not feel that projects are thought through by the Committees.

Cllrs were reminded that all are welcome to attend any committee meetings or to raise questions with the Chairs if they are not able to attend. Putting the project money with Full Council leaves Committees bidding against each other and each Committee has expertise within it about the planned projects.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment.

For: Cllrs Devine, Smith & Sztymiak

Against: Cllrs Aldridge, Danter, Brookes, Powell, Bowman, Cody, Brennan, S Raywood & J Raywood

The amendment was not carried.

It was RESOLVED to approve the budget as recommended by the Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr S Raywood.

A recorded vote was requested.

For: Cllrs Aldridge, Danter, Brookes, Powell, Bowman, Cody, Brennan, S Raywood & J Raywood

Against: Cllrs Devine, Smith & Sztymiak

The motion was carried.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Sztymiak for provoking lots of good discussion.

21/22 - 124 To agree the Council's precept request for financial year 2022-23

It was RESOLVED to agree the precept request of £419,939.00.

Proposed by Cllr S Raywood, seconded by Cllr Bowman.

A recorded vote was requested.

For – Cllrs Aldridge, Danter, Brookes, Powell, Bowman, Cody, Brennan, S Raywood & J Raywood

Against – Cllrs Smith & Sztymiak

Abstain – Cllr Devine

21/22 - 125 To agree the scheme of delegation

Given the ever-changing situation and that updated Government guidance is expected on 26th January. It was RESOLVED to drop this motion.

Proposed by Cllr Brennan, seconded by Cllr Sztymiak.

21/22 - 126 To consider a proposal from Cllr Cody that full council meetings should continue to be held in the Watson Hall, due to accessibility issues at the Town Hall

Cllrs discussed the issues regarding access to the Council Chamber

- No access is possible until the safety work on the pictures is completed.
- The Council Chamber is not accessible – no lift and the stairs are steep
- The Watson Hall provides a suitable space but no speaker system
- Should not expect people to book in advance due to their additional needs

The Council strongly accepts the case that meetings need to be more inclusive. For smaller meetings there is an ability to meet downstairs at the Town Hall and a permanent screen is being installed in the Court Room.

Possible options are:

- Sound system being moved to the Watson Hall
- Streaming the Full Council meetings down to the Court Room
- Streaming Full Council meetings so they can be watched remotely
- Installing a lift or other appropriate technology

It was RESOLVED that meetings should continue to be held in the Watson Hall until further notice and that the Council expresses a commitment to make sure that their meetings are accessible.

Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Cody

Cllrs will review the situation again once the Chamber is able to be used and the screen has been installed in the Court Room.

21/22 - 127 To review and agree grant applications

None received.

21/22 - 128 To approve payments list

It was RESOLVED to approve the payments list totalling £4994.78.

Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr Devine.

21/22 - 129 Correspondence

Correspondence was received from a member of the public regarding Tewkesbury 2030, particularly regarding electric charging points and this was raised with Cllr Smith for response.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00pm

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes 14th February 2022