

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Full Council
held at the Tewkesbury Town Hall on 9th January 2023 at 6.00pm

Present: Cllrs S Raywood (Chair), H Bowman, K Brennan, P Brookes, C Cody, C Danter, A Hayes, P Jones, R Langdon, J Raywood, V Smith, M Sztymiak.

In attendance: D Hill (Town Clerk), J King (Assistant Town Clerk) & 9 members of the public.

22/23 - 139 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Gurney (work), Cllr Aldridge (personal), Cllr Robertson (health). Cllr Cody advised that she needed to leave the meeting at 6.50pm.

22/23 - 140 To receive declarations of interest

Cllrs Sztymiak, Smith & Cody – Tewkesbury Borough Councillors
Cllrs Smith & Cody – Gloucestershire County Councillors

22/23 - 141 To consider requests for dispensation

None required.

22/23 - 142 To receive written questions from members of the public

None received.

22/23 - 143 Public Participation

Several members of the public spoke on the issue of appointing a hydrology consultant. Members of the public raised concerns about the fact that all areas of the town have flooding issues and they feel they cannot rely on Tewkesbury Borough Council for support. Specific concerns were raised about the land in Mitton which slopes towards the Carrant Brook and that the brooks around the town provide more danger than the main Avon and Severn rivers and there is little flood defence in Tewkesbury. They wished to know why developers have not provided any flood defences for the town, a need to know what flooding is going to take place and this is not provided by the developers. Further comment was made regarding the fact that the Carrant Brook has never been dredged and it was felt this would help. If 500 additional houses were built, the runoff would go straight into the brook and digging big holes to hold the water is not sufficient. Residents stated that Tewkesbury Borough Council have a duty of care to make sure their residents are protected and that the Environment Agency flood reports show that 95% of houses on the south side of the Carrant Brook are at risk of flooding at 2007 levels. There was conflicting evidence in the developer reports.

A member of the public commented that there are three Councillor profiles that are not on the website. That there were no Borough or County reports and that there is only a summary of the budget on the website. The Town Clerk advised that the three new Councillors are in the process of getting their photos taken and profiles prepared, there are no reports as it is not on the agenda for this meeting and that the full budget proposal is in the meeting pack published on the website.

Due to potential time limitations, the items regarding setting the budget, requesting the precept and the appointing of a hydrology consultant, were moved up the agenda.

To review and approve the budget for financial year 2023-24

The Town Clerk advised that following the Finance Committee meeting on 5th January the only alteration to the 2023/24 budget was to reduce the proposed expenditure allocated under planning consultancy from £10,000 to £5,000. This was also reduced to £5,000 for the financial year 2024/25

This gives a proposed expenditure of £630,178. There is no change to the budgeted income of £160,428 and there is no planned use of reserves for 2023/24. This leaves a funding difference is £469,750, which is an increase of 11.7% and in line with latest inflation data.

The Town Clerk advised that the increases per band; based on the proposed budget, would be as follows:

Band A from £77.76 to £86.88 a year, increase of 18p per week
 Band B from £90.72 to £101.36 a year, increase of 20p per week
 Band C from £103.68 to £115.84 a year, increase of 23p per week
 Band D from £116.60 to £130.25 a year, increase of 26p per week
 Band E from £142.56 to £159.28 a year, increase of 32p per week
 Band F from £168.48 to £188.24 a year, increase of 38p per week
 Band G from £194.40 to £217.20 a year, increase of 44p per week
 Band H from £233.28 to £260.64 a year, increase of 53p per week

Cllr Sztymiak proposed an alternative budget that would result in a 3.74% increase including the following adjustments:

Town Hall projects to be reduced from £16,000 to £6,000

Moorings projects from £10,000 to £6,500

Museum maintenance from £50,000 to £30,000

Planning consultancy to increase from £5,000 to £10,000

Bar stock expenditure to reduce from £25,000 to £23,000

Bar income to increase from £45,000 to £50,000

Cllr Smith seconded this motion.

The Town Clerk was asked to respond about the items that would be impacted by implementing this budget.

The museum building (64 Barton Street) currently has three defective ceilings and issues with the roof. The known cost for repairing the one decorative ceiling that is currently propped up is £25,000. £50,000 has been secured from the Heritage Action Zone Funding, but this has to be used on external work.

The Town Clerk recently met with Avon Navigation Trust regarding the moorings on the Back of Avon and they advised that the moorings are on borrowed time. Repairs may give another two to three years, but they will need replacing and this will cost £50,000 - £100,000.

The Town Hall is a Grade II* listed building and requires a specialist survey. Issues we are already aware of are the lack of accessibility, the rear exit door not being compliant with fire regulations and the heat in the summer in the Corn Exchange. Long term solutions are required for all these issues.

The bar stock costs and income, were calculated based on year to date and forecast figures for the current financial year.

A Councillor asked why, given that the budgeting process starts within the committees in August, that this is being brought up at the last minute. How can

Councillors be expected to accurately consider it and why was the amendment not brought to the Finance Committee?

Action: Consider that any amendments to future budgets should be sent to Finance before Full Council considers them and that they should not be made last minute.

Cllr Sztymiak commented that this was not possible as the budget figures were only available following the Finance Committee meeting held on 5th January. The Town Clerk advised that the detailed budget had come before Full Council on 30th November and that the only change to the budget figures presented to that meeting, was a reduction to the planning consultation figure from £10,000 to £5,000.

A recorded vote was taken on the amended budget, with a rise of 3.74%

In favour: Cllrs Sztymiak & Smith

Against: Cllrs S Raywood, H Bowman, K Brennan, P Brookes, C Cody, C Danter, A Hayes, P Jones, R Langdon & J Raywood

The amendment was not passed.

It was RESOLVED to approve the budget of £630,178 expenditure and £160,428 income, as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Proposed by Cllr S Raywood, seconded by Cllr Brennan.

A recorded vote was requested.

In favour: Cllrs S Raywood, H Bowman, K Brennan, P Brookes, C Cody, C Danter, A Hayes, P Jones, R Langdon & J Raywood

Against: Cllrs Sztymiak & Smith

Cllr Cody left the meeting.

22/23 - 145 To agree the Council's precept request for financial year 2023-24

It was RESOLVED that the precept request will be £469,750.

Proposed by Cllr S Raywood, seconded by Cllr Brennan.

Cllrs Smith & Sztymiak voted against the precept request.

22/23 - 146 To consider a motion from Cllr Sztymiak, seconded by Cllr Smith that 'This council employs the services of a hydrological and flooding expert to look at the impact the South Worcestershire Development Plan review developments and Garden Town developments will have on Tewkesbury and what measures and actions should be taken to prevent Tewkesbury Parish from flooding'

Cllr S Raywood stated that he is employed by Planning Inspectorate but is not speaking on their behalf during this meeting.

Cllr Sztymiak stated that he had attended the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review and that Bredon Parish Council had employed two consultants to defend themselves against the planned new development and he felt that Tewkesbury Town Council should be doing the same. The planned new developments are going to impact all of Tewkesbury regarding flooding and not enough has been done to protect the town. The Town Council need an expert who is respected in the industry to challenge the developer, as developers will have their

own experts who will promote the interests of the developer. Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) are underfunded and cannot do a proper impact assessment. Tewkesbury Borough Council need / want the housing and that becomes the overriding factor without considering the risks to the town. Cllr Sztymiak stated that Tewkesbury should defend itself and need the hydrologist to come up with solutions on how to protect Tewkesbury.

Cllrs asked whether there were some background notes to support the proposal and what a hydrologist would cost? Would £10,000 be sufficient? Why don't TBC and GCC have sufficient funds, given that funding for flood risk assessment is coming from the garden town project. Is there an indication that TBC wouldn't choose an appropriate hydrologist? If a hydrology report is the responsibility of TBC and GCC, we should be able to trust the officers to be working for the elected representatives. If Pershore has already had some hydrology surveys done, could we find out what it had cost them?

Tewkesbury will want surveys of the whole town done, not just one area and is it known how long a report remains 'valid' for. No Councillor disagrees that there needs to be a report that can be believed, trusted and accurate, but if TBC has money in their budget to do this, should we not be applying pressure to them, rather than the action returning to the Town Council. A Councillor stated that TBC has secured funding of £750,000 and £2.4m to deliver their obligations regarding the garden town. TBC's Place Development Manager - Garden Communities Team at Tewkesbury Borough Council, recently confirmed that wider infrastructure / flood / environmental assessment evidence based work will form part of the JSP (Joint Strategic Plan, formerly Joint Core Strategy) review process. It was also confirmed that should any planning application be received prior to that it would have to include all the detailed technical studies that are a normal requirement of the planning process. Surely therefore, the role of the Town Council should be to put pressure on TBC to ensure that these reports are suitably commissioned and briefed. The Town Council do not know where all the proposed housing is planned for, so it would be difficult to brief a hydrologist effectively. If the Town Council do not believe that TBC have the safety of Tewkesbury in mind, then this should be pursued through the appropriate channels.

Cllr Smith was asked about the Tewkesbury 2030 day and the proposals that came out of this.

Cllr Smith replied that the Tewkesbury 2030 feedback showed that the flood defences were rejected by the public as being ugly and disruptive. He stated that the water courses are now being dredged. Cllr Smith requested that the September 2008 report be circulated to new Councillors, as it states that the Planning Authority is the problem. The Environment Agency reports do not take into account rainfall and that a hydrologist is needed to help beat unwanted planning applications. Developers get the report they pay for.

It was RESOLVED to defer this item to a future Full Council meeting once further information is available .

Proposed by Cllr Brennan, seconded by Cllr Bowman.

Cllrs Smith & Sztymiak voted against the deferral.

Councillors requested the following additional information in order to move this item forward:

What will it cost to produce this report for the whole parish?

What will the scope of the report be?

Who would we approach to do it?

How long does a report like this take to produce, is there a timescale within which it is valid?

Actions: Town Clerk to circulate the Tewkesbury 2030 report and the flood report from 2008.

22/23 - 147 To note the Mayor's Announcements

Thank you to everyone who attended the Town Council's Carol Service. The collection made £139.28, which was split between the Town Band and the Mayor's Charity Fund.

Nominations for Community Awards are now open. Details are on the Town Council website. Closing date for nominations is the end of February.

Next date for the diaries: Tewkesbury Town Council Civic Service at Tewkesbury Abbey on Sunday 12th March at 5pm

22/23 - 148 To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 14th & 30th November 2022

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 14th & 30th November 2022. Proposed by Cllr Brennan, seconded by Cllr Jones.

22/23 - 149 Matter arising

21/22-147 **Cycle storage and Riverside Walk signs** – ongoing as part of the High Street Action Zone work.

22/23-95 **Accessibility of Town Hall.** Working with DB Pixelhouse who installed the streaming equipment at the Abbey to investigate options for the Council Chamber. Have also approached an alternative provider who specialise in local council streaming solutions.

22/23 - 150 To note the following Committee Minutes: Finance – 3rd November 2022, Buildings & Moorings – 8th November 2022, Planning – 9th & 23rd November 2022

The above minutes were noted.

22/23 - 151 To receive the finance reports for October & November 2022

The finance reports were received.

The Town Clerk advised that there are two items of good news not yet in the report. Funding of £50,000 has been received to carry out the external work at 64 Barton Street. This work has to be completed by 31st March.

The Council has also received £1,000 of Covid related funding from Tewkesbury Borough Council towards Tewkesbury Live in 2023.

The releases from earmarked reserves, as approved at the last Full Council meeting, have all been completed.

22/23 - 152 To receive the payments reports for October & November 2022

The payments reports were received.

22/23 - 153 To note the GAPTC subscription fee for 2023-24

The subscription fee was noted.

22/23 - 154 To note that Cllr S Raywood has been appointed a trustee for Reverend C W Groves Almshouses

It was noted. This role forms part of the Town Mayoral duties and changes with the Town Mayor.

22/23 - 155 Correspondence

A card was received from King Charles III replying to the Town Council's message of condolence which was sent following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Following Borough Cllr Sztymiak and Cllr Workman's recent ward correspondence and suggestion that members of the public write to the Town Clerk requesting that a flooding expert be appointed, a number of such letters have been received. Cllr Sztymiak asked why these had not been distributed to Councillors. The Town Clerk responded that correspondence is still being received on this matter and that the office had not been advised of the request made in the correspondence prior to this being distributed which has resulted in additional workload.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.42pm.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes 13th February 2023