



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held at 6.30 pm on **MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2021** via the Zoom video conferencing platform and in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr Mrs S Amor (Town Mayor)
Vice Chairman: Cllr P Clifford (Deputy Mayor) from Minute 46

Councillors: Cllr A P Booth, Cllr A Dyke, Cllr G Bearcroft, Cllr G Hale, Cllr R Hale, Cllr Mrs J Haines, Cllr Miss E Haynes, Cllr M S Goodge, Cllr Mrs J Johnson, Cllr Mrs E Nishigaki, Cllr R W Raphael, Cllr Mrs M Sale, Cllr Mrs J Sandalls, Cllr Mrs S Schaathun, Cllr Mrs C Smith, Cllr Mrs F Smith, Cllr Mrs S Smith, Cllr Mrs B Timbrell, Cllr Mrs J Tucker, Cllr N S Tucker

Officers: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)
Mrs K Cullen
Miss A Jayes – Almonry Manager

Also present: Cllr P Griffiths (WDC)

40. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Cllr P Clifford although he did join the meeting from minute 46.

41. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest (if any)

- Cllr Mrs F Smith declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 as she is a member of the WDC Communities and Funding Advisory Panel which deals with NHB applications.
- Cllr G Bearcroft declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 as he is a member of the WDC Communities and Funding Advisory Panel which deals with NHB applications

42. Announcements by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor Cllr Mrs Amor informed members that she had recently been treated for a heart condition but was now fully recovered. Cllr Mrs Amor described how she had recently run an Evesham residents Christmas Lights competition and that the winners had been notified. Each winner would receive vouchers to use at the Evesham Fruit and Vegetable shop on the High Street.

43. Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 9 November 2020

The Town Clerk had circulated with the agenda the minutes of the previous Town Council Meeting. It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes for the Council meeting held on 9 November be approved and adopted as a true record.

44. Committee Minutes

The Town Clerk had circulated with the agenda the minutes of the following committees:

- a) **Town Plan Committee** held on 16 November 2020. It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record.
- b) **Planning and Estates Committee held on 23 November 2020.** It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record.
- c) **Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 7 December 2020.** It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record.
- d) **Planning and Estates Committee held on 21 December 2020.** It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record
- e) **Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 4 January 2021.** It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record.

45. Finance – Payments and Receipts for November and December 2020.

The Town Clerk had circulated with the agenda details of the income and expenditure of the Council for the months of November and December 2020. Also attached were the bank reconciliation reports for November and December. The payments had been approved by the Chairmen of the Committees in line with the scheme of delegation.

Following a query on the payment of the Mayors allowance and NI it was explained that the Mayors allowance was subject to tax and national insurance. The Mayor stated payment of the Mayor's allowance had continued during the pandemic, however, as official engagements had all but ceased, she planned to donate any unspent allowance to the Mayor's Charities.

In response to a question it was explained that the wages budgets included tax, national insurance contributions and pension contributions. The Clerk would see if it was possible to itemise these elements in a future budget.

It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the receipts and payments and bank reconciliations for November and December 2020 be approved.

46. Evesham Town Council Budget and Precept – 2021/22

Circulated with the agenda was the proposed budget and fees for the forthcoming financial year 2021/22. It was explained that the budget had been drafted following a meeting of the committee chairman and then two Finance and General Purposes Committees where various amendments were made. Councillors were asked to make reference to these minutes for a narrative of the budget.

The Clerk explained that he had been asked to set a budget that meant there would be no rise in the band D equivalent for the town council element for Evesham tax payers. This had resulted some cuts having to be made to some budget headings as detailed in the minutes of the finance committee meetings. The Finance Committee had also agreed to fund part of the budget from reserves following WDC's confirmation that the tax base had reduced.

It was explained that the proposed budget would see the Council plan to spend £705,822 (down from £729,790 in 2020/21) (excluding any expenditure from grants, NHB reserves etc) against a forecasted income of £130,722 including the Council Tax grant from WDC. This would result in a precept of £575,100.

The Clerk stated that WDC confirmed that they would pass on the Council Tax grant (£42,718) but that this was at their discretion and could be taken away in the future as had been the case in many other councils around the country.

With reference to the fees, it was noted that the request to make the almonry free admission be referred to the Almonry Advisory panel for further discussion before being referred back to the Council.

Referring to the proposal to cut the £5,000 for Neighbourhood Plan, Cllr Mrs J Tucker stated that she understood the reasoning, however there was still an intention to look into the feasibility of conducting a plan, the pandemic had stopped it this year, and that Mr Ford at WDC had advised that it was still worthwhile. She asked that the Council consider allocating the unspent funds from this year to the project if it is required in the forthcoming financial year. It was agreed that this could be considered in the coming year if funding was required.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that a budget be agreed and that a precept of £575,100 (five hundred and seventy-five thousand, one hundred pounds) be set and requested from the precept raising authority, this being Wychavon District Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the fees be agreed as recommended by the committee this being a freeze on all fees and that the Almonry admission be considered by the Advisory Panel before coming back to Council.

47. New Homes Bonus

A report was circulated with the agenda regarding New Homes Bonus. It explained that the Town Council had successfully submitted a number of bids to NHB scheme over the years. At the end of last year WDC informed us that the scheme would be ending in March 2021. With this in mind the Council looked at further projects and gave the NHB working group delegated authority on which projects to submit to the WDC Legacy Scheme.

It was reported that the Town Council's New Homes Bonus (NHB) Working Group Chaired by Cllr Goodge recently held a meeting where it considered two applications for WDC Community Legacy Scheme from Avon Navigation Trust and Evesham Cricket Club. The working group decided to submit both applications, but graded them in accordance with WDC's requirement, with Evesham Lock Project from Avon Navigation Trust (ANT) being graded as a priority.

WDC had subsequently confirmed that the ANT project had been put forward for the next stage but the cricket club project had not. WDC were holding a consultation workshop which the Town Clerk, Cllr Goodge and a representative of the ANT would be attending.

The NHB working group agreed that if any of the projects were not successful they would consider putting it forward for NHB funding from the Council's own pot of money that has to be allocated by the end of March. This would mean putting forward a request on behalf of the Cricket Club for £50,000.

WDC Cllr Peter Griffiths who was involved with the Cricket Club informed members of the community benefit and that the potential amount of users and beneficiaries was significant.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to submit a bid of £50,000 on behalf of Evesham Cricket Club.

Cllr Goodge informed members that the bid from St Andrews School had been withdrawn by the school just before Christmas. This project had been allocated £75,000. This went back into Evesham's pot but if no projects were forthcoming before the end of March would go into the Legacy Scheme pot. Cllr Goodge therefore asked that the NHB Working Group be given delegated authority to consider and submit any applications in order to speed up the process. It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the NHB Working Group be given delegated authority to submit proposals and carry out any required consultations.

48. Update from the Almonry Advisory Panel

Cllr Dyke gave an update on behalf of the Almonry Advisory Panel which had held its first meeting in December. Cllr Dyke stated that he had been elected as chairman and that items discussed included the proposed electrical work and the appointment of a contractor to get quotes. Cllr Dyke confirmed that the panel had discussed the proposed Heritage Centre as part of the Public Hall development. The Town Council had asked to be kept informed as to the progress of this proposal and the panel was inviting representatives to speak to them in the near future.

NOTED

49. Lockdown Arrangements

The Clerk verbally updated members on the latest arrangements following the latest lockdown due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The office staff were primarily working from home, as they were previously however, instead of two people in the office only one would be in at any one time. There would be times when no officer would be in the office but the phone would be forwarded. The outdoor staff continued to work as they were, and the Almonry staff had been allocated work by the manager. The home schooling element had an impact on a number of staff which was noted.

NOTED

50. Reports from Council's Representatives

There were no reports from Council Representatives.

51. Matters of urgency raised, for information only, at the discretion of the Town Mayor

The Mayor informed members that Cllr R Hale had asked to speak.

Cllr R Hale informed the Council that local resident and former town councillor Colin Tether had taken it upon himself to repaint the plaques on Workman Bridge. This followed a convoluted process whereby WCC had asked that road closures and pavement closure be put in place. Mr Tether had gone and undertaken the work in a couple of hours at his own expense and the they looked very good and had saved the Council's a lot of money. Cllr R Hale asked that the Council write to express its thanks to Mr Tether for his work.

NOTED

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.20pm.

COUNCILLOR S AMOR
TOWN MAYOR