



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held at 6.30 pm on **MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2020** 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)

Councillors: Cllr A P Booth, Cllr A Dyke, 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 S Schaathun, Cllr Mrs S Smith, Cllr B Turrell, Cllr Mrs B Timbrell, Cllr Mrs J Tucker, Cllr N S Tucker

Officers: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)

12. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs F S Smith, Cllr Mrs C Smith and Cllr Mrs J Sandalls.

13. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests (if any)

No declarations were made.

14. Announcements by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor stated that their had not been many engagements because of the epidemic but that she was enjoying tenure so far.

15. Minutes of Previous Meetings

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes for the Council meeting held on 14 July, Extraordinary meeting held 3 August, and the Annual Meeting/Mayor Making held 3 August 2020.

Cllr Raphael congratulated the Town Mayor and Town Clerk on the excellent video that had been produced to mark the Mayor Making. It was available to view on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/lsfyDwllnXo>.

16. Committee Minutes

- a) Planning and Estates Committee – 20 July 2020. It was **RESOLVED** to accept and approve the minutes and the recommendations contained therein.
- b) Planning and Estates Committee – 10 August 2020. It was **RESOLVED** to accept and approve the minutes and the recommendations contained therein.

- c) Planning and Estates Committee – 1 September 2020. It was **RESOLVED** to accept and approve the minutes and the recommendations contained therein.

17. Finance Report – Payments and Receipts

Circulated with the agenda were the payments and receipts for June and July 2020.

In response to a question it was explained that the payment to Neil Healey was his fees for the planning application relating to the extension at Hampton Cemetery.

In response to a further question it was explained that the Council had hired a van for 5 weeks to assist the outdoor staff with their duties during lockdown enabling them to maintain social distancing and also carry out food deliveries in partnership with Wallace House.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the payments and note the receipts and bank reconciliation.

18. Almonry Museum Update

Attached to the agenda was an update from Ms Ashleigh Jayes, the Manager of the Almonry Museum and Tourist Information Centre (TIC). Ms Jayes presented her report.

Ms Jayes explained that following an increase in visitor figures during 2019-2020, COVID-19 has made a huge impact to the 2020-2021 figures. The Almonry was closed on from 20 March and the TIC and Gift Shop re-opened in late June with the museum re-opening in August. Museum visitor figures for August 2020 compared to August 2019 showed a drop of 42%. It was explained that having spoken to colleagues across the region and nationally, this downturn was matched across the board. Ms Jayes went on to explain that as the winter opening hours came into effect in November she expected visitor numbers to be low particularly as there was caution over a potential second wave of the virus.

Group and school visits were not expected to return until next year at the very earliest, schools may not be back until the next academic year.

With regards to income the drop in visitor numbers had impacted in the income which had fallen by 52% when compared to the same period last year. With the likelihood of no group or school visits and reduced visitor numbers we are expecting our annual income to be substantially below last year's total.

With regards to funding it was explained that the National Lottery Heritage Fund delayed all new applications until 2021. Once the application window opened again the project proposal that was prepared earlier this year would be submitted. Historic England had launched an Emergency Heritage at Risk Response Fund. A proposal was submitted in June for £25,000 to facilitate the surveys and investigations required to inform urgent repairs to the Almonry. The proposal was unsuccessful but had been taken forward for consideration in a second round of funding. The response was expected in early October. The Art Fund had launched Respond and Reimagine, a scheme that offered grants of between £10,000-£50,000 with the possibility of 100% funding. The COVID-19 crisis had highlighted how poor the Almonry's digital engagement was with our existing visitors and was practically non-existent with potential visitors. Consequently, Ms Jayes stated that she had been attending online webinars and training over the summer and was preparing a funding bid that would enable us to build a new website that was accessible and inclusive and would allow us to engage with a wider audience. The submission date was October with a decision due in early November.

It was reported that the lockdown had an effect on the timeline for cataloguing and accessioning. A workstation had been set up in the Huddy Room with scanners, camera and a PC to enable work on accessioning and cataloguing. Ms Jayes would be looking to recruit a volunteer with MODES experience to assist with the cataloguing. As a result of the lockdown and its impact on plans, a full review of the museum Documentation Plan and Forward Plan was needed and a new timetable put into place.

Look forward to events and plans, Ms Jayes reported that all event and exhibition plans for next year would be made with due consideration for any changes with the virus and consequent government recommendations. A draft plan would be drawn up in October with the flexibility to change and adapt events at short notice should the need arise.

Councillor Dyke put forward the idea of forming a committee or working group to assist the Almonry Manager in her duties and increase the input from the councillors. He stated that the Almonry was a big project and that the Manager needed a lot of support to help her pursue lottery funding and everything else that was planned. This idea was widely supported and it was agreed that it would go formally on the agenda at a future meeting.

Ms Jayes was thanked for her report and left the meeting.

19. Appointments to Council Committees

Circulated with the agenda was a list of councillors who had put themselves forward for the Council's committees and working groups. The Clerk attempted to conclude the vote for the committees that were contested by having them set up on Zoom polls, however, some members stated that they were unable to see all the options. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to use a workaround and have the Clerk email out the vote using Survey Monkey in the days following the meeting. It was further proposed and **RESOLVED** that only those present at the meeting be permitted to vote in the survey.

Planning and Estates Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Nishigaki and seconded that the committee terms of reference be amended to ensure at least two members from each ward be appointed to the Planning and Estates Committee. The reason for this was that it would help share the burden of work and ensure there are representatives from each ward. Speaking against this it was commented that it was more important to have people who wanted to actually be on the committee, be present at the meeting and do the background work rather than be on it by default. It was also noted that big wards such as Bengeworth had many more applications. Upon being put to the vote this proposal failed.

It was further proposed by Cllr Nishigaki and seconded that the terms of reference be amended to state that at least one member from each ward be represented on the committee. Upon being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that at least one member from each ward be elected to the committee. In practical terms the Clerk stated that members should vote for who they wanted and if there was a ward that did not have a representative, further advice would be taken.

Following the vote via Survey Monkey (excluding the Mayor and Dep Mayor who are ex-officio members) the following were elected to the Planning and Estates Committee:

Cllr S Amor (South) (Ex-officio as Town Mayor)
Cllr G Bearcroft (Little Hampton)
Cllr A Booth (Bengeworth)
Cllr P Clifford (Little Hampton) (Ex officio as Deputy Mayor)

Cllr M Goodge (Bengeworth)
Cllr R Hale (Bengeworth)
Cllr E Haynes (Great Hampton)
Cllr J Johnson (Avon)
Cllr J Sandalls (Twyford)
Cllr S Schaathun (Little Hampton)
Cllr C Smith (South)

All wards are represented.

Elected (excluding the Mayor and Dep Mayor who are ex-officio members) uncontested to the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** were:

Cllr S Amor (Ex-officio as Town Mayor)
Cllr A Booth
Cllr P Boyd
Cllr P Clifford (Ex-officio as Deputy Mayor)
Cllr A Dyke
Cllr M Goodge
Cllr E Nishigaki
Cllr R Raphael
Cllr M Sale
Cllr F Smith
Cllr J Haines

Following the vote via Survey Monkey (excluding the Mayor and Dep Mayor who are ex-officio members) the following were elected to the **Personnel Committee**:

Cllr S Amor (Ex-officio as Town Mayor)
Cllr A Booth
Cllr P Clifford (Ex-officio as Deputy Mayor)
Cllr A Dyke
Cllr M Goodge
Cllr J Johnson
Cllr S Schaathun
Cllr F Smith
Cllr N Tucker

Following the vote via Survey Monkey (excluding the Mayor and Dep Mayor who are ex-officio members) the following were elected to the **Town Plan Committee**:

Cllr S Amor (Ex-officio as Town Mayor)
Cllr A Booth
Cllr Clifford (Ex-officio as Deputy Mayor)
Cllr A Dyke
Cllr M Goodge
Cllr R Hale
Cllr J Tucker

Appointed uncontested to the **Samuel Wallace Smedley Trust Board:**

Cllr S Amor
Cllr G Bearcroft
Cllr A Booth
Cllr P Clifford
Cllr J Johnson
Cllr E Nishigaki
Cllr R Raphael
Cllr M Sale
Cllr C Smith
Cllr S Smith

Appointed uncontested to the **Charter Market Steering Group**

Cllr S Amor
Cllr A Booth
Cllr P Clifford
Cllr M Goodge
Cllr R Hale
Cllr R Raphael
Cllr J Sandalls

Appointed uncontested to the **New Homes Bonus Working Group**

Cllr S Amor
Cllr A Booth
Cllr P Clifford
Cllr M Goodge
Cllr E Nishigaki
Cllr C Smith
Cllr B Timbrell

20. Appointment of Council's Representatives to Outside Bodies

The following were appointed/voted to represent the Council on the outside bodies.

VECTA:

Cllr Dyke

Rudge Charity:

Cllr C Smith
Cllr N Tucker

Evesham Twinning Association:

Cllr Booth
Cllr Timbrell

Evesham Relief in Need:

Cllr Raphael
Cllr G Hale

Vale Volunteers:

Cllr Bearcroft
Cllr C Smith

Evesham and District Mental Health Charity:
Cllr C Smith

Vale Public Transport Group:
Cllr J Tucker

Cross Parish Cycle and Path Project Group:
Cllr R Hale

21. Review of staff/council subscriptions

In accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, the subscriptions were presented to the Council for approval. Direct debits and banking standing orders would be presented at a future meeting.

- VECTA - £50 per annum
- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) – £310 per annum. The Clerk is a member of this professional body for Clerks that gives access to advice, discounted training events etc
- Cotswold Line Promotion Magazine - £10 per annum
- Museums Association - £125 per annum. The Manager is a member of this body which offers training, advice etc to museum professionals
- Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management - £90 per annum – The Council is a member of the ICCM which provides regular newsletters, advice line, and training events.
- Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce – £126 per annum. The Almonry is a member of the H&WCC, which aids them in publicising their events, the museum and tourist information.
- National Allotment Society - £55 per annum

It was **RESOLVED** to approve these subscriptions.

22. Mop Fair 2020

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the Mop Fair in relation to the Covid-19 epidemic.

The Clerk stated that he had been working with the fair organiser Mr Edward Danter, partner local authorities, and the emergency services to put on the Mop Fair. Up to that point all had been supportive of the event could be put on safely and it was noted that the government had been encouraging the opening up of the economy to support jobs.

However, the new government restrictions on gatherings of more than six and the rise in the local infection rate and caused the Clerk to rethink the event and whether it was safe to put on. The Clerk had spoken to the police who confirmed that they would be willing to police the event but asked for clarification as to how the fair would be able to assist them in maintaining social distancing and enforce the rule of six.

The Medieval Market which had taken place over the weekend 12-13 September, and had been extremely popular and well managed. However, the police had commented that social distancing had been difficult to enforce at times because of the events popularity.

The Clerk now favoured cancelling the event as he was of the opinion that the rule of six would put extra burden on the local police force making it almost unenforceable. In addition, the rise in the local infection rate and lockdowns in neighbouring areas meant that the balance had been tipped. Worcester had also announced the cancellation of their Christmas Market.

It was commented that the decision should be made by experts. The Clerk responded that it was ultimately his and the Town Council's decision to take based on the information given to them. The information from the police and from other local authorities had changed in the past week with a sense that the event should not take place.

It was commented that the Mop Fair was a great event that was really popular with the town, however the current pandemic meant that there was a greater responsibility and we could not be sure that it could be held safely and in compliance with the legislation. It was widely agreed that the potential burden on the local police and the health implications for the general public and staff of the fair were paramount and that the Council would support the decision to cancel the Mop Fair in 2020 because of the Covid-19 epidemic.

Clerk's Note: After subsequent conversations with the police, public health and Mr Danter, a joint decision was made with Mr Danter to postpone the 2020 Mop Fair because of the Covid-19 epidemic. A small child's ride and vintage fair vehicle would be place on the Market Square on Saturday 3 October to honour and preserve the fair charter.

23. Schedule of Meetings

Circulated with the agenda was a schedule of meetings up to May 2021. In line with legislation and recommendations from central government, Local Government Association, and other local councils it was noted that all meetings would be held remotely via video conferencing until further notice.

NOTED

24. In accordance with Standing Orders it was **RESOLVED** to go into confidential session due to the confidential nature of what was to be discussed

25. Christmas Light Contract – Additional Lights

In confidential session it was **RESOLVED** to purchase the extra tree lights for the High Street for 2020 and the extra individual Christmas Trees in 2021 from SparkX.

26. It was **RESOLVED** to end confidential session.

27. Reports from Council representatives

Cllr Nishigaki informed members that there was a group who were crocheting poppies in preparation for Remembrance Day. Anybody interested in getting involved could contact her.

The Town Clerk informed the Council that the three bids for New Homes Bonus for Battleton Brook, Wallace House and Prince Henrys School had all been recommended for approval by the panel at WDC. They were now awaiting sign off by the Executive Board at WDC.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

COUNCILLOR S AMOR

TOWN MAYOR