



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held at 6.30 pm on **MONDAY 8 MARCH 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)

Councillors: Cllr A P Booth, Cllr A Dyke, Cllr G Bearcroft, Cllr G Hale, Cllr R Hale, Cllr Mrs J Haines, 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 C Smith, Cllr Mrs F S Smith, Cllr Mrs B Timbrell, Cllr Mrs J Tucker, Cllr N S Tucker

Officers: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)

70. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs J Sandalls.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

72. Announcements by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor Cllr Mrs Amor informed members that she planned to launch a 'Covid Heroes' scheme whereby those who had gone above and beyond during the pandemic would be personally thanked by the Mayor. See minute 76.

73. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 8 February 2021 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 18 February 2021

The Town Clerk had circulated with the agenda the minutes of the previous Town Council Meetings. It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes for the Council meeting held 8 February 2021 and the Extraordinary Meeting held 18 February 2021 be approved and adopted as a true record.

74. Committee Minutes

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

- a) **Planning and Estates Committee held on 22 February 2021.** It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes and the recommendations contained therein be approved.
- b) **Town Plan Committee held on 1 March 2021.** It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

75. Finance – Payments and Receipts for February 2021

The Town Clerk had circulated with the agenda details of the income and expenditure of the Council for the month of February 2021. Also attached were the bank reconciliation reports. The payments had been approved by the Chairmen of the Committees in line with the scheme of delegation.

In response to a question about a payment for Almonry laser scan, the Clerk confirmed that this was part of the surveys of the Almonry and that the Almonry manager had successfully applied for funding to cover the costs of these scans.

With regards to a question about two payments to Wallace House it as confirmed that one was for New Homes Bonus Funding from WDC, and the other was payment of a grant which they had successfully applied for from the Council grants scheme last year and that they had recently requested following completion of works to the lift.

It was moved seconded and **RESOLVED** that the receipts and payments and bank reconciliation for February 2021 be approved.

76. Covid Heroes

The Town Mayor introduced a report on her Covid Heroes project. The Mayor explained that she wanted to mark the pandemic and all the people that had played their part in it, whether it was small or large.

With this in mind, the Mayor stated that she was going to launch Covid Heroes, in recognition of all those in Evesham who had played their part. The idea behind this was that it was inclusive and therefore anybody who was nominated would receive a specially commissioned pin badge and letter from the Mayor.

The Mayor was keen to emphasise that this was not a competition comparing peoples' efforts but about recognising the many people had played their role, from neighbours doing shopping on behalf of their more vulnerable neighbours, to those on the front line and this was a small thank you to them.

The only criteria were that you could not nominate yourself and the nominee must live in Evesham, and/or the deed for which they were being nominated took place in Evesham. Anybody nominated would receive a letter and pin badge.

The cost of the badges was being met by the Town Mayor. Members were very supportive of the idea.

77. Request to Support Honeybourne to Stratford Railway study

The Town Clerk reported that the Stratford Rail Transport Group had written to the Council to seek its support as they went for government funding to undertake a study to look at creating a new rail link from Honeybourne to Stratford, therefore linking Evesham to Stratford by rail.

Detailed in the report and below was an email to the Clerk from the Stratford Rail Transport Group requesting support as they look to apply for funding to undertake a study to look at the creation of the rail link.

Dear Town Clerk,

Stratford-Honeybourne-Evesham-Pershore-Worcester/Oxford railway-SWO

On 25 November 2020, a bid for an Economic Impact Study submitted by four local Rail User Groups to the Department of Transport's 'Restoring Your Railway' programme was successful.*

The bid was supported by 11 M. P's with Nigel Huddleston MP as the lead and has the endorsement of a further 18 organisations which include Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire County Councils together with Stratford on Avon, Wychavon and Cotswold District Councils.

The 'Restoring your Railway' programme helps fund transport and economic studies and the successful bid will now help determine a business case for restoration of the rail link between Stratford-Long Marston-Honeybourne which, if viable, would enable rail connectivity with Oxford and Worcester.

The Department for Transport will fund 75% of costs up to £50,000 for successful study and business case proposals. A further £18,000 has been pledged by local authorities and the rail user groups.

Any eventual restoration of the railway would provide passenger services serving a committed population of 24,000 people in the wider Long Marston area and 36,000 in Stratford upon Avon, providing a sustainable alternative to the car. Freight trains would not be involved neither would reinstatement of the railway result in loss of the Greenway, as a single track railway can co-exist alongside other green and sustainable transport modes. There is a committed population of 241,987 on the Stratford-Evesham-Worcester rail corridor Total pop.

Consequently, we would like to invite Evesham Town Council to confirm its support for the proposed study that could ultimately lead to the restoration of the railway line. We are happy to answer any questions

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council support the Stratford Rail group in their bid for funding and in the proposed rail link in principle.

78. Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Mayor Making

The Town Clerk circulated a report regarding the Annuals Town Meeting and the Annual Mayor Making.

It was explained that the annual meeting of parishioners was not a Council meeting but there was a legal requirement on a town and parish council to hold this meeting. It was explained that the parishioners meeting was an open forum question and answer for Evesham parishioners hosted by the Mayor. Residents could ask questions on the work and functions of the Council. Last year it was not held as the lockdown legislation overrode the legislation requiring a town or parish to hold one. This year, with the introduction The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 we are able to hold this meeting and are advised to do so. It was scheduled for 4 April however; this is Easter Monday. It was therefore proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to postpone the Personnel meeting and hold the Annual Town Meeting on 19 April 2021.

With regards to the Annual Meeting of the Council also known as Mayor Making the Clerk explained that the Council was advised to arrange a provisional earlier date for this meeting. The Annual Meeting was a legal requirement and had to be held in May. The reason being that the aforementioned The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 expired on 6 May 2021. The Clerk explained that the Local Authority sector was lobbying the government to extend the legislation and they were hopeful that they would succeed, however, there was concern that the government would not do so before the existing legislation expired due to the volume of work at Westminster. Therefore, they were advising councils to make arrangements to hold their annual meeting before the 6 May, in case the legislation was not extended in time. If the legislation is extended, then the Council can proceed with its Annual Town Meeting as planned on 10 May 2021. It was noted that there was no other meeting planned for 3 May 2021.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Annual Meeting of the Council/Mayor Making be provisionally moved to 3 May, but that if the legislation is extended it be held on 10 May as planned.

79. New Homes Bonus Update

Cllr Goodge, who chairs the New Homes Bonus (NHB) working Group gave a verbal update. Cllr Goodge explained that the working group had recently met to consider projects to put in for NHB funding. There was a deadline of 31 March to get applications in, though WDC had agreed an extension for a portion of that as they had rejected the Cricket Club bid and also the late withdrawal of the St Andrews School bid. The Council had in effect £74,000 worth NHB that it had to get applications in for by 30 June. Councillors were encouraged to forward any project ideas to the Clerk and Cllr Goodge, a press release would also be done asking for the public to submit proposals.

In the meantime, the remaining NHB had a deadline of 31 March 2021 and it was proposed to submit two applications, one on behalf of the new Baptist Church for their project to supply, maintain and facilitate provision of a fully rated Changing Place as a service to the area and to Evesham. The other bid was on behalf of the Council to rejuvenate the area known as the Sensory garden near the entrance to All Saints Church. The focal point would be a flagpole as there was not one currently in Evesham other than the police one on Abbey Road.

Though the working group had delegated authority, it was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the submittal of the two projects and the call for projects.

80. Planning Applications

(a) 21/00249/ADV – The Almonry, 52 Merstow Green,
Animated projection to facade of Almonry Museum.
<https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/21/00249/ADV>

The Clerk highlighted that this was an application for an animated projection, and that members should consider it from a planning perspective

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this be deferred pending an update and demonstration from the WDC Arts Officer who was leading this project

(b) 21/00187/FUL – 52 High Street, Evesham,
Change of use of the ground floor from an Estate agent (A2) to nail and beauty salon (sui generis)
<https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/21/00187/FUL>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved.

(c) 21/00266/OUT – Bengeworth C Of E First School, Burford Road
Extension to nursery, external landscaping and relocation of existing car park
<https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/21/00266/OUT>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved.

(d) 21/00216/FUL – 18 St Richards Road, Evesham
Demolition of Units 12 and 18b and the erection of two new industrial buildings split into three individual units
<https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/21/00216/FUL>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved. However, it was requested that a condition be added that these units are not able to be changed to retail units in the future in order to protect the town centre from further out of town shopping units.

(e) 20/02642/LB – 7 Merstow Green, Evesham
To amend the lettering on the front of the premises
<https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/20/02642/LB>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved.

(f) 21/00258/FUL – Davies House, Davies Road, Evesham
Change of use to A3/A5 and associated alterations
<https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/21/00258/FUL>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused. The Town Council is of the opinion that this is not appropriate for this area. The other units are all industrial and this will attract the general public to an area that is not suitable for lots of people. We support the business coming to Evesham but believe this to be the wrong location.

(g) 21/00100/GPDO – Wisdom Hall 12-13 Cowl Street
Prior notification for change of use from offices (Class B1(a) to 4 dwelling houses (Class C3)
<https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/21/00100/GPDO>

Members noted that this had already been considered and that the previous comments applied.

81. Reports from Council's Representatives

There were no reports from Council Representatives.

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

The Town Clerk informed members that it had been 6 months since Cllr B Turell had attended a meeting, and subject double checking, this would mean that Cllr Turrell would be disqualified as a councillor due to non attendance. This was **NOTED**.

83. It was **RESOLVED** to go into confidential session given the sensitive nature of the minutes from the Samuel Wallace Smedley Trust Board

84. Samuel Wallace Trust Board

The minutes from the latest meetings held 29 January 2021 and 17 February 2021 were circulated for member's information. There were a number of issues raised including a legal and HR issue, however members were advised that these were not for discussion, but for information. The trust Board had delegated authority to deal with these issues and was merely required to report minutes to the Council.

Members questioned the individual status of the trust and whether councillors were liable as trustees. The Clerk stated that the Council was a corporate trustee, individual councillors were not liable.

The minutes were NOTED.

Clerk's note: The Clerk spoke to the auditor who confirmed that the Council is a corporate trust. The Auditor also confirmed that matters of the trust should not be dealt with at a Council meeting, if a committee or board has been created then it is for that committee or board to deal with issues relating to the trust, not for the Council at a council meeting. The Council could choose to make all councillors members of the trust committee or board, but this still requires a separate meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm.

COUNCILLOR S AMOR
TOWN MAYOR