



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL** held at 7.00 pm on **MONDAY 14 MARCH 2016** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Evesham.

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr F Kaler (Town Mayor)
Vice Chairman: Cllr A P Booth (Deputy Town Mayor)

Councillors: Cllr Mrs S Amor, Cllr K Barclay, Cllr R Bowers, Cllr M D Elliman,
Cllr M S Goodge, Cllr Miss E Haynes, Cllr C D Homer,
Cllr Mrs L S Jakeman, Cllr R S W Jones, Cllr Mrs J Johnson,
Cllr Mrs D R Raphael, Cllr R W Raphael, Cllr Mrs J E Sandalls,
Cllr Mrs F S Smith, Cllr J H Smith OBE, Cllr C Tether, Cllr N Tucker,
Cllr Mrs R J Whiting

Officers: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)

Also present were 10 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

84. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Bulman and A Barlow.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

86. Announcements by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor thanked everybody who had attended his Civic Service on the 28 February 2016.

87. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 January 2016, copies of which had been circulated to all Members with the agenda were considered.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record.

88. Committee Minutes

The following report had been circulated to all Members with the agenda for adoption as a true record and authorisation for execution where necessary:-

- a) Personnel Committee – 18 January 2016
No recommendations to Council

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted as a true record and correct record.

- b) Planning and Estates Committee – 25 January 2016
Recommended to Council - Minute 108 Christmas Lights Future Options – It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Council that the Council ask interested groups/parties to put together a proposal to take on the lights, but that if the Council are not satisfied, that it maintains control and goes out to tender as it has previously.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted as a true record and correct record and that the recommendation to Council be adopted.

- c) Planning and Estates Committee – Extraordinary Meeting 1 February 2016
No recommendations to Council

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted as a true record and correct record.

- d) Finance and General Purposes Committee – 1 February 2016
Recommended to Council – Minute 39 Local Council Award Scheme – It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Council do not pursue the Local Council Award Scheme at present.
Minute 42 Review of Annual Investment Policy – **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that the wording of 2.1 (i) be amended to read ‘the security of its reserves and investments’, and that the maximum that the Council can invest in long-term investments be increased to £150,000.
Minute 44 West Porch Bengeworth Old Church – Tender – It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that subject to confirmation that the tender was correct, that Croft Building and Conservation be appointed to undertake the work.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted as a true record and correct record and that the recommendations to Council be adopted.

- e) Town Plan Committee – 8 February 2016
No recommendations to Council

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted as a true record and correct record.

- f) Planning and Estates Committee – 15 February 2016
No recommendations to Council

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted as a true record and correct record.

- g) Planning and Estates Committee – 7 March 2016
Recommended to Council – Minute 133 Proposed new Bus Shelters for Pershore Road - It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Council take on the responsibility of the shelters once installed and that it is requested that they be internally lit.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be adopted as a true record and correct record and that the recommendation to Council be adopted.

89. Update from Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council members if present

Councillor Mrs Jo Sandalls, WDC ward members for Evesham North updated members on a number of issues. Cllr Sandalls informed members that the SWDP had been adopted by all the partner district councils. There was a 6 week period where the process of formulating the plan could be challenged at the High Court; the proposals in the plan could not be challenged. The adoption of the SWDP meant that the local plan was now obsolete. Cllr Sandalls advised that 28 new travellers' pitches would have to be found.

Cllr Sandalls went on to talk about the WDC budget, stating that the reduction in government grant was less than expected. Further savings were being investigated through sharing services with other councils. The Executive Board had ruled out cuts to frontline services this year and council tax had been increased to cover the cost of this.

Cllr Sandalls advised that a youth bus had been kitted out for young people to help them work and play, and members were encouraged to contact WDC to utilise the bus.

Cllr Mrs J E Sandalls was thanked for her update.

90. Abbey Cloisters Project

Mr Barrie Baldelli and Mr Tony Haugh were present from the Abbey Gardens Trust to brief members on the proposed plan to transform some allotments at Abbey Park into a community garden.

They started by giving some background information on the project and the site. The Abbey Gardens Trust had been created to initiate this project and it was a great opportunity to develop a tourist attraction which in turn met some of the aspirations in the Town Plan. The site in question was 2 acres and currently used as allotment gardens. The Rudge Estate who owned the site was willing to gift the land to the trust in order to undertake this project.

The first stage of the four-part major recreation would see the grade two listed Abbot Chryrton's Wall stripped back to re-line and restore the at risk structure. Work would then begin to carry out an archaeological survey of the entire site- the first of its kind to be carried on the site.

Further phases to create the public gardens would see the cloisters of the abbey recreated using metal structures covered in foliage to show what it would have been like to have been inside the abbey if it was still standing.

Finally, the nave of the abbey would be set out using trees and then designers would be brought in to design the rest of the gardens which members could have a say over.

In response to a question it was stated that the final cost was not known. The estimated cost to repair the walls and undertake the archaeological study was £900,000.

When asked about what would happen if the project did not go ahead, it was stated that the Rudge Estate had given no indication.

With regards to a start date, it was commented that it would be no earlier than March 2017. It was also confirmed that at present the land remained in the ownership of the Rudge Estate and that they were not in a hurry to transfer it. When transferred the charity would take on all responsibility for the structures including the wall.

It was commented that this as an exciting project and that the Council would fully support a bid for New Homes Bonus funding.

It was commented that some believed that some sort of growing should remain on the site, given Evesham and the Vale's rich history. In response to this it was explained that if this was to be the case then this would happen in the third phase. Any archaeological dig would be done on the whole site, meaning that all current allotments would have to be vacated.

In response to the current allotment holders who have tenancies on the land it was explained that the Rudge Estate were liaising with them and it was thought possible that they would be offered the land at Sawmills Lane directly.

Overall members fully supported this exciting scheme highlighting the potential benefits to the town in terms of tourism and in the fact that it would open up this area to everybody.

NOTED

91. Finance Report – Payments and Receipts for the January and February 2016.

Evesham Town Council's payments and receipts for the months of January and February 2016 were circulated to Members with the agenda.

In response to a question it was confirmed that the caretaking arrangements at the Town Hall despite a few minor hiccups, were working well, and that overall there was a small saving in cost compared to the previous system.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council payments for the month of January, as attached at appendix A, amounting to £65,258.32 (NET) be approved and the receipts be **NOTED**.

It was also **RESOLVED** that the Town Council payments for the month of February, as attached at appendix B, amounting to £35,383.84 (NET) be approved and the receipts be **NOTED**.

92. Market Steering Group

The minutes of the latest Market Steering Group meeting were circulated with the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations detailed in the minutes namely that:

- The Charter Market Contract is extended from October 2016 to March 2017, to allow a full and proper tender process to be carried out taking in to account the Charter Market, the Tuesday market and the Christmas Market.
- That the Council goes to tender in the meantime with a contract start date of April 2017
- That this years Christmas Market run from 12 to 24 December inclusive.

It was commented that the appearance of the market was still not as it should be and that there had been an occasion where vehicles blocked the market place. Al this would be fed back at the next Market Steering Group.

93. New Homes Bonus

Distributed to members with the agenda was a report on New Homes Bonus (NHB). The report had been compiled following a meeting of the New Homes Bonus Working Group who had made a number of recommendations regarding how to proceed.

It was noted that Evesham had around £240,000 in New Homes Bonus, approximately £55,000 of this was earmarked for the Almonry. A further allocation would be made in the forthcoming financial year.

Clerk's Note: Evesham's New Homes Bonus Allocation available to draw down at present is £416,897. This includes the 16/17 allocation and also includes the £55,000 earmarked for the Almonry.

The report highlighted to members that Wychavon District Council who allocated the funding to parishes had enhanced the requirement to consult with residents before making any awards. WDC were also looking for town and parishes to undertake larger projects which left a legacy.

Accordingly the NHB Working Group had recommended that the Council seek ideas from larger projects from the residents of Evesham. These projects should have a minimum funding requirement of £10,000 from NHB. Those wishing to have projects considered would be required to submit an application form.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council seek projects where the funding requirement is in excess of £10,000 for NHB, and that all proposals are put before the Council in due course for consideration, after initially being considered by the NHB Working Group.

94. Review of Internal Controls, System of Internal Audit and Assessment of Risks

A report was circulated to Members detailing the measures the Council has in place with regards to internal audit, internal controls and assessment of risks.

It explained that the Council was required to carry out a review of the effectiveness both of its internal controls and its system of internal audit. The Annual Return also required Members to agree that they have 'assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Attached for Members was a risk management policy and controls which had been adopted by the Council a year earlier. It was explained that this document aided both the Council and the Clerk in ensuring that the proper checks were in place with regards to risk management and internal controls.

It was highlighted that as part of the Council's internal audit programme, it had appointed a qualified local government accountant to act as its independent internal auditor. It was explained that the role of the internal auditor was to assist the Council in fulfilling its responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, errors and mistakes. Currently, the internal auditor made one visit towards the end of the financial year to review the internal controls and to carry out testing on the transactions undertaken and to ensure compliance with financial regulations. A further review, particularly regarding the year end annual accounts was carried out when the annual accounts had been prepared and to assist with the submittal of the Annual Return.

Members agreed that the audit arrangements were to their satisfaction.

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk was redrafting the Asset Register and that this would come before the Town Council in due course.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council agree with the statement in the Annual Return confirming that it has assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Council agree with the statement in the Annual Return confirming that it maintained an adequate system of internal control over the last financial year.

95. Town Council Committee Review and Schedule of Meetings 2016/17

Circulated with the agenda was a detailing a number of recommendations made by members who had looked into the current committee structure and system of delegation. It was found that the main issue for Members was the delegated authority of each committee to respond within set parameters. Members felt that this diminished the role of the Council as a whole. The following recommendations had been made:

The group have proposed that the Council consider the following:

- The committees remit and responsibilities to remain the same
- The removal of the delegated authority to respond from all committees (except when responding to Planning applications)
- Reinstatement of monthly Council meetings apart from in August and December
- Planning Estates Committee to be held monthly, with any planning applications that do not fit into the schedule being dealt with by the Council with all members being able to vote

It was commented that the committees were functioning well and the removal of the powers of delegation was arbitrary. However, the majority of members agreed that the Council should have the final say on committee recommendations.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to remove the delegated authority from all committees (except when responding to planning applications). It was further **RESOLVED** to reinstate monthly Council meetings (excluding August and December), and to make Planning and Estate Committee meetings monthly, with planning applications that do not fit into the schedule being dealt with by full Council, with all able to vote. This would come into action with effect from the Council meeting on 16 May 2016.

The Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference will be amended to represent the removal of delegated authority.

The Schedule of Meetings was **NOTED**.

96. Memorandum of Understanding between the Almonry Museum and VEHS

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and therefore not considered.

NOTED

97. Appointment of Council representative to Evesham and District Mental Health Support Services (EDMHSS) board of trustees

In response to this request from EDMHSS it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Mrs S Amor be appointed to the board of trustees to represent the Council. Cllr Amor would serve until at least May 2017, when the position would be considered along with all other Council appointments to outside bodies.

98. Wychavon District Council (WDC) Flooding Alleviation Grant application

The Town Clerk tabled a report advising members of a grant scheme from WDC which was open to Town and parish Councils to apply to.

It was explained that the grant was for a maximum of £10,000 and was intended for the carrying out of actual works on the ground and not for the appointment of consultants. The grant was not applicable to schemes where the flooding is caused by main watercourses, i.e. rivers, as this is the responsibility of the Environment Agency and they have their own schemes.

A proposal has been identified as part of a flooding plan conducted in 2007 and is centred on houses in Evendene Road, Charlton Close and Berryfields. During periods of heavy rain, surface water cascaded off the field located north of Evendene Road. It was currently directed down an alley at the rear of two rows of bungalows on Evendene Road and Merrybrook depositing itself into properties at the bottom of the alley at Evendene Road/Charlton Close and Berryfield Road. One property had built a wall which had stopped some water flooding their garden but as a result sent more water further down the channel.

It was therefore proposed to approach the landowner about re-profiling the land to shed water towards the Merry Brook. The profiling would be the creation of a gentle swale which in turn would stop the surface water going down this ally and depositing on the road and in houses.

It was noted that the scheme is dependent on the agreement of the landowner and this would be the next step if the Council approved the submission of an application and WDC subsequently approved it.

Members fully supported the application and it was **RESOLVED** to submit it to WDC accordingly.

99. Reports from Council's Representatives

Cllr Mrs J Johnson updated members on the Evesham Art Centre for which she was thanked.

NOTED

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

There were no matters brought up under this item.

NOTED

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45 pm

**COUNCILLOR F KALER
TOWN MAYOR**