

EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL** held at 6.30 pm on **MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2015** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Evesham.

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr C D Homer (Town Mayor)

Vice Chairman: Cllr F Kaler (Deputy Town Mayor)

Councillors: Cllr A P Booth, Cllr P R Boyd, Cllr M D Elliman, Cllr Mrs B A Gurden, Cllr Miss E Haynes, Cllr Mrs L Jakeman, Cllr R S W Jones, Cllr G O'Donnell, Cllr Mrs D R Raphael, Cllr R W Raphael, Cllr Mrs J E Sandalls, Cllr N S Tucker,

Officers: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)

Also present was 1 member of the press

121. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A L Dyke, Mrs W D Dyke, J Bulman, J H Smith OBE, Mrs F S Smith, M Hammon, Mrs R Whiting and Mrs J M W Taylor

122. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest in accordance with the Town Council's Code of Conduct, including requests for dispensation (if any)

Councillor Mrs J E Sandalls declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 129, Planning Applications, as she is a member of Wychavon District Council's planning committee.

Councillor C D Homer declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 129(c) application 14/02683/CU and 14/0284/LB, since the applicant was a member of his family. Though only a non-pecuniary interest, Cllr Homer stated that he would leave the chamber during the discussion of this application and therefore relinquish the Chair.

123. Announcements by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor advised Members that he had a Burns breakfast planned for the 24 January 2015, tickets were available now.

The Mayor advised Members that the Town Clerk would be going on paternity leave imminently and wished him well.

The Mayor finally confirmed that the Promotion Committee meeting for 19 January had been postponed.

124. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 8 December 2014, a copy 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.

125. Committee Reports

The following reports were circulated with the agenda and were considered for adoption as a true record and authorisation for execution where action has not already been carried out under delegated authority:

- a) Property Committee – 22 December 2014

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

126. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions submitted under this item.

127. Update from Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council Members

Cllr B Banks was on hand to update members on issues relating to Worcestershire County Council (WCC). Cllr Banks first talked about the budget stating that economic growth was showing signs of improvement in the County and that capital investment in infrastructure was continuing across the County. The County Council had a net budget of £321 million.

WCC continued its support for business by continuing to invest in phase 4 Malvern Hills Science Park, Worcester Technology park, Parkway and Bromsgrove railways stations and the Holbrook link road. In addition WCC would continue to support children and families, health and wellbeing with increases to their budgets. £3.6 million had been made available from New Homes Bonus for flood prevention schemes.

Cllr Banks went on to explain how WCC was developing a new e-market project called Your Life, Your Choice which would offer a wide range of information and advise on public health and adult social care.

Cllr Banks informed Members that he had attended a Ushakov Medal presentation in Worcester. The medal was presented by officials from the Russian Embassy to 36 veterans of the Arctic Convoys. The medals were awarded to Worcestershire veterans of the arctic convoys on behalf of the Russian Government for courage and bravery displayed both in wartime and in peacetime.

Finally, Cllr Banks updated Members on potholes. WCC had been allocated further funding from the Department of Transport to help deal with potholes and general highway maintenance. In the current year, WCC will have repaired around 20,000 potholes.

In response to a question regarding the cost effectiveness of pothole repair, Cllr Banks explained that County Highways do the best they can with the funds available, which includes pothole repair.

Cllr Banks confirmed that some of the extra funding for children and families would go towards additional staff as this was a staff intensive service.

Cllr Banks was thanked for his update.

128. Finance

Evesham Town Council's payments and receipts for the month December 2014 were circulated to Members with the agenda. Also circulated was the bank reconciliation for the month of December 2014.

Referring to payment 784 Clock winder retainer and in response to a question it was explained that the clock winder looks after the Council's clocks at St Andrew's Church, the Town Hall and St Peters.

Clerk's note: The clock winder receives £100 a quarter.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council payments for the month of December as attached at appendix A totalling £56,339.89 (NET), be approved and that the receipts and bank reconciliation be **NOTED**.

129. Planning Applications

- (a) 14/02201/PN – Mr D Pollard – Inglenook, 16 Northwick Road
Erection of 2 no. dwellings
<http://bit.ly/1xtHZxA>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused. The application is considered to be overdevelopment and there are already issues with parking in the area which this development will add to. It will also increase traffic.

- (b) 14/02572/PP – Mr Heselton – The Cottage, 2 Brick Kiln Street
To remove existing cream cement render that has blown and cracked causing damp to the property and to reapply natural lime render with eco cork for insulation and a cream painted finish.
<http://bit.ly/13Ouriu>

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

The Town Mayor and Chairman, Councillor C D Homer stepped down from the Chair and left the Chamber for the discussion of the next application. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr F Kaler, took the Chair.

- (c) 14/02683/CU & 14/0284/LB – Mr S Homer – Working Mens Club, Merstow Green
Part demolition of existing building and boundary wall, change of use from clubhouse to a flexible use with Class A1 (shops), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (food and drink) Class 4 (drinking establishments), two additional flats (first and second floor) and associated internal and external alterations.
<http://bit.ly/1ruVhY0>

Concern was expressed about the number of vehicle movements relating to the car park development. Concern was also expressed about the creation of a 'rat-run' and issues with highways. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved but that the aforementioned concerns also be expressed.

The Town Mayor and Chairman, Cllr C D Homer, returned to the Chamber and took the Chair.

- (d) 14/02525/PN – Newland Homes Limited – Brooklands Farm – Cheltenham Road
Development of 51 dwelling houses and associated infrastructure
<http://bit.ly/1xbVX5h>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused. Concern was expressed that another green space was to be lost, though it was noted that it was not a public green space. The design of the houses was considered not to be in keeping with the street scene, and that the development would create traffic problems given that the access

was to be opposite Thistledown, a busy road. Members asked that if this development was to be approved that some consideration be given with regards to timing, as the former ambulance station which is very close to this site, was scheduled to be redeveloped and both taking place at one would put considerable strain on the road network.

- (e) 14/02651/PP – Miss S Mills – 15 Isbourne Crescent
First floor side extension

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

- (f) 14/02435/CU – Mr R James – Ashdown Farm, Badsey Road
Retrospective permission to retain 2 x static homes
<http://bit.ly/13EvzFf>

It was noted that these static homes could not be seen from the road. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved.

- (g) 14/02720/PP – Mr P Ashfield – 15 Lupin Walk
Installation of a conservatory to the rear of the property
<http://bit.ly/13EvLnM>

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

- (h) 14/02657/PN – Royal Mail Group Property – Ground floor, 87 High Street
The removal of a window to form a new entrance and concrete DDA compliant ramp for access to the front elevation of the delivery office.
<http://bit.ly/1wvYPVu>

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

- (i) 14/02793/OU – Amberville Properties – Land off Robins Corner and, Common Road
Residential development
<http://bit.ly/1wXeG4P>

It was noted that the Council had previously recommended refusal with regards to a very similar application on the same site. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused as it is considered to be over development, will create issues with traffic and the land is prone to flooding.

- (j) 14/02734/PN – Bloor Homes – Land at Pershore Road
Substitution of house types and garages on plots 115, 136, 137, 143 and 151
<http://bit.ly/1vmrwDY>

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

- (k) 14/02819/PN – Mr D Jordan – 2 Shor Street
Demolition of Existing Industrial Units and clearance of site. Construction of 7 no. New dwellings (1 no. lifetime home bungalow, 4 no. 2 bedroom, 2 no. 1 bedroom) along with parking and landscaping
<http://bit.ly/1rJ91OP>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused. The proposal was considered to be too dense for the location and therefore considered to be

overdevelopment. This in turn would create issues with parking and traffic. There was also inadequate parking provision in the development.

- (l) 14/02537/PN – Mr & Mrs Godber – Oxstalls Cottage, Blayneys Lane
Proposed barn conversion to two bedroom cottage and replacement of covered area to one bedroom cottage.
<http://bit.ly/14hjqqW>

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

- (m) 14/02766/PN – Rooftop Housing – Brick Kiln Street Garage, Brick Kiln Street
Demolition of existing disused garage and warehouse and erection 29 two and one bedroom apartments to provide affordable housing
<http://bit.ly/1zZdjED>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused. The proposal was considered to be overdevelopment. It was also highlighted that there were significant issues with the road, in terms of traffic in Avon Street and Brick Kiln Street and that these should be resolved before any development takes place

130. Proposed Stopping Up of Highway at Martin Avenue

A report was circulated to Members explaining that the Department of Transport (DofT) were consulting on the ‘stopping up’ of two small areas of pavement in Martin Avenue. It was explained that ‘stopping up’ orders were made because the highway was no longer necessary or to allow development to take place. It was further explained that the order was required to enable development as permitted by Wychavon District Council under reference W/10/00166/PN. The DofT only wanted to know if the Council had an objection to the order. No objections were made and the report was **NOTED**.

131. Budget 2015/16

The Town Clerk had circulated a report to all Members with the agenda advising of the budget proposals for 2015/16. The report highlighted that in the forthcoming year, the Council faced a number of costs, most notably the cost of an election, and implementing the recommendations in the staffing review. The Town Plan was also likely to have cost implications for the Council.

Central Government’s plans regarding capping, and the level in which it was to come in had been central in the formulating of the budget. The government were consulting on plans to cap parish and town councils precept increases at 2%, the timing of which was not ideal given that town and parish councils were required to get their budgets in by the middle of January. Advice received was that it was likely that only Town and Parish Councils with a Band D equivalent in the region of £140-£150 per annum would come under this legislation, Evesham Town Council’s current band D equivalent was £44.95. Despite this, the Clerk had prepared 2 budgets accordingly, one which resulted in a 6.5% increase, and another contingency budget which recommended an increase of 1.9%. It was highlighted that despite budget 1 recommending a 6.5% increase in financial terms it was only an extra £2.95 per annum per band D property, or 24p per month.

Firstly, the Council looked at the proposed income and fees for the forthcoming financial year. It was **RESOLVED** to set the charges as detailed in the report and as annexed at Appendix B.

Members then began to look at expenditure. It was explained that a few savings had been found, most prominently in enhancement where a new supplier had been identified who was slightly cheaper.

It was highlighted that budget 1 kept in place commitments to grants for local organisations and charities, tourism and money formally allocated to the Market Town partnership, which would be considered for other projects including the town plan, whereas budget 2 cut these headings considerably.

Members agreed that the Council should look to increase the precept to ensure that its grants budget and tourism budget are not cut. It was highlighted that the Town Plan had been formulated in consultation with the residents and funding was required to help implement it.

Members also commented that whilst they were not usually in favour of increasing taxes, the average cost to residents, £2.94 per annum, was small change. It was also highlighted that the Council had acted very prudently over the past 5 years, and the band D equivalent charge had only increased 10p over that period.

The Clerk had recommended that if the Council supported budget 1, they should also support budget 2, as a contingency in case the government did bring in the cap. Members agreed though they recommended that the grants heading, tourism heading and money previously allocated to the Market Town partnership not be earmarked as recommended, but decided on at a later point.

Regarding budget 1, taking into account a projected income for 2015/16 of £109,165, and an expected expenditure of £540,765, this meant a precept of £388,882, a grant of £42,718 meaning that the total requested from Wychavon District Council would be £431,600.

Regarding budget 2, the contingency budget, again the projected income for 2015/16 was £109,165, the budgeted expenditure was £524,115, this meant a precept of £372,232 and a grant of £42,718 meaning that the total requested from Wychavon District Council would be £414,950.

It was explained that because of the change in the way council tax is collected, and the increase in occupied homes, the tax base in Evesham had increased significantly, which in effect meant there were more people in the town eligible to pay the charge. This explained why the actual budget increase was greater in relation to the percentage increase.

It was **RESOLVED** that both budget 1 and budget 2 as set out by the Town Clerk in his report and as detailed at appendix C be approved and that budget 1 be submitted at this time, with budget 2 submitted if the cap was extended. Therefore a precept of £388,882 (three hundred eighty-eight thousand, eight hundred and eighty-two pounds) and grant of £42,718 for the financial year 2015/16 would be forwarded to Wychavon District Council.

132. Investment Policy and CCLA Investment

The Council considered a report and investment policy that had been tabled by the Town Clerk. It was explained that the report had been compiled in consultation with the Chairman of the Committees. It recommended that the Council deposit no more than £100,000 in long term investments. It also highlighted the requirement for the Council to consider security over return and for the Council to consider the following three principles before making any investment:

- Security of reserves
- Liquidity of investments
- Return of investments.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the Investment Policy as attached at appendix D.

The proposed investment in the CCLA Property Fund was also discussed. It was highlighted that Members should consider the investment taking into account the policy, and the three points

stated above. The Clerk explained that with regards to security, no investment was entirely secure and that this was higher risk than others; however, it was managed by the CCLA which was governed by members of local government, charities and churches. Regarding liquidity, funds could be moved out at a months notice, though a charge would be incurred. Return was expected to be between 4%-6%.

The Clerk informed Members that should Members invest, the money would no longer be treated as reserves by the auditor but as expenditure.

It was **RESOLVED** to deposit £100,000 in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

133. Reports from Council's Representatives

There were no reports presented under this agenda item.

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

The extremely poor appearance of the Vauxhall Pub was highlighted, and it was asked whether the Clerk could write to the owner and Wychavon District Council to ask them if anything could be done. This key building in the centre of Evesham was presenting a negative image and there seemed to be no movement with the development.

Whist Members agreed, some said that Wychavon District Council had little power to act, unless it could be shown to be dangerous. Despite this it was argued that the Town Council should try to do something, and that writing to both Wychavon District Council and the owner was not unreasonable, and would show that the Council cared.

Similar issues were highlighted with regards to the former Parkview Hotel and Crown Pub along Waterside. It was noted that the Riverside Hotel was back on the market. Members agreed that these were also in a poor state, however, that it would concentrate on the Vauxhall at present.

It was agreed that the Clerk write to the owner and WDC highlighting the poor state of the Vauxhall and asking whether anything can be done.

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

COUNCILLOR MR C D HOMER
CHAIRMAN