



## **EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of **EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL** held at 6.30 pm on **MONDAY 11 JANUARY 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 A Barlow, Cllr R Bowers,  
Cllr M D Elliman, Cllr M S Goodge, 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)

### **71. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Miss E Haynes and K Barclay.

### **72. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests (if any)**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **73. Announcements by the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor wished everybody a happy New Year and advised of his forthcoming Burns Night Supper to be held on 27 January 2016.

The Town Mayor reminded members of the reception that was to be held for former MP Sir Peter Luff on Thursday 14 January and hoped as many members as possible could attend.

Finally the Town Mayor advised members that he had met with the Revd Andrew Spurr to plan a Civic Service in February.

### **74. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 November 2015, 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.

### **75. Committee Reports**

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) Planning and Estates Committee – 23 November 2015  
No recommendations to Council

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

- b) Planning and Estates Committee – 14 December 2015  
No recommendations to Council

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

- c) Finance and General Purposes Committee – 14 December 2015  
It was noted that the budget has recommended to the Council from this committee would be dealt with at minute 80.

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

- d) Planning and Estates Committee – 4 January 2016  
No recommendations to Council.

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

## **76. Market Steering Group**

The minutes of the latest Market Steering Group meeting were circulated with the agenda. Included was a proposal that the Council have an additional weekly Tuesday Market in the town centre. The market would sell general market wares. Tuesday had been identified as the quietest day for footfall in the town centre and it was hoped that market would have bring in more visitors benefiting town centre traders and market traders alike. It was proposed that this be done on a trial 6 month period, that the current market contractor Mr Jones is tasked with operating the market at 50% pro rata charge of the Saturday Market and that the income is used to help promote both markets. The market would commence towards the end of January.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt this proposal that a Tuesday market be set up for an initial trial period of 6 months with a charge that is 50% pro rata of the Saturday Charter Market.

## **77. Update from Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council members if present**

There were no updates from members of Worcestershire County Council or Wychavon District Council.

## **78. Finance**

Evesham Town Council's payments and receipts for the months of November and December 2015 were circulated to Members with the agenda. Also circulated was a bank reconciliation report as of 31 December 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council payments for the month of November, as attached at appendix A, amounting to £44,917.80 (NET) be approved and the receipts be **NOTED**.

It was also **RESOLVED** that the Town Council payments for the month of December, as attached at appendix B, amounting to £35,081.21 (NET) be approved and the receipts be **NOTED**.

The bank reconciliation was **NOTED**.

## **79. Almonry Manager's Report**

Circulated with the agenda was a report from the newly appointed Almonry Manager, Ms Ashley Jayes. In the report Ms Jayes made several recommendations for the Council's consideration.

Ms Jayes informed members of her intention to reopen the Almonry on Wednesdays in March 2016 inline with British summertime. The Almonry would close on Wednesdays during winter to allow time for deep cleaning, maintenance etcetera. There would be no change to staffing levels and cost.

A housekeeping checklist had been drawn up to ensure that all the regular cleaning and maintenance jobs were carried out and that there was a continuing level of care given to the building and the collection.

A new page would be added to the Almonry website to include more detail and greater transparency in taking in donations for the collection.

Ms Jayes had drafted a new list of charges for hiring the lecture room at the Almonry. The previous pricing structure was deemed unrealistic particularly when compared with the Town Hall charges. Ms Jayes explained that she hoped that a new fee structure would be more attractive to groups and individuals and would develop an additional income stream for the Almonry. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the proposed charges with effect from April 2016 as detailed at appendix C.

It was reported that the collection ownership issue with the Vale of Evesham Historical Society (VEHS) had yet to be resolved. The Manager has been investigating the VEHS claim and a meeting with the Society would be arranged shortly to try and resolve this. This issue had already impacted on the previous Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid and needed to be resolved before moving on to the new bid. The Manager was also investigating any impact the situation may have on the museum's Accreditation status. A telephone meeting had been booked with a Senior Manager with the Collections and Museum Programmes at the Arts Council England to discuss this further. The principle outcomes from the meeting with VEHS would be the drafting of a new working agreement between Evesham Town Council and the VEHS outlining all roles, responsibilities and accountabilities and a clear outline of collection ownership and subsequent arrangements for display and/or conservation care.

It was explained that there has been a drop in income and visitor figures during the last quarter of 2015. A full analysis needed to be carried in order to identify any patterns or trends across the whole year. A full breakdown of visitor figures and income would be available in the Almonry Annual Report which would be presented in March 2016.

Ms Jayes went onto update Members on the Great Big Almonry Project (GBAP). Members were informed that Historic England would be visiting the Almonry in January to look at the current state of the building and whether the condition of it has changed substantially, based on this assessment, a new project plan could then be drafted. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had advised that the bid process needs to be started from scratch, taking on board the advice given by the previous Development Officer and considering other issues such as the collection ownership.

If a new application was submitted in 2016 a decision from HLF regarding a grant could not be expected until late 2017. A project steering group for GBAP needs to be convened in January to define the project objectives and move the project forward. The Manager was drawing up a list of people to approach to join the Steering Group and requested two councillor volunteers. It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors Tether and Elliman serve on this steering group.

The Manager proposed that the museum be closed during February 2016 (from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February, reopening on the 29<sup>th</sup> February) and that the TIC and box office remain open to the public. The reason for this proposal was that it would allow for essential collections care work to be carried out. The closure would allow staff time to begin photographing, cataloguing and labelling and marking new acquisitions; to carry out a deep clean of the Archaeology room including relabeling objects and improving the overall interpretation of the collection; to check and replace all insect traps throughout the museum and to carry out a visual survey of conditions in the building and the collections. It was explained that this would require extra staff hours in order to complete the work. A quantity of museum grade packing materials and equipment has been purchased as part of on-going collections care.

The financial implications of the museum closure for one month were estimated as follows:

Based on figures for museum admissions in February 2015, a closure in February 2016 would result in the loss of £503 (based on the new admission charges)

For extra staff hours to complete the work specified

Job share @ 8 days	£700.63	Including Employee NI and Pension Contributions
P/T staff @ 60 hours	£651.27	Including Employee NI and Pension Contributions

Overall cost to the Town Council was estimated at £1,351.90 for employee wages plus income loss £503.

In response to a question about whether this could be afforded, it was explained that small saving had been made during the period when there was no almonry manager, however, it was likely that there would be an overspend in wages if this was to proceed.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree to the closure of the museum for the month of February and to the extra staff hours.

In order to enhance the link between Members and the Almonry the Manager proposed the establishment of a permanent Museum Management Committee to oversee the progress and future development of the museum. Ms Jayes explained that the Almonry needed to have a robust Strategic Plan in place that incorporated the aims and objectives of the relevant parts of the Town Plan and set out a detailed plan of action for its future development in line with museum best practice. Alongside this there had to be a Fundraising Plan that outlined the opportunities and risks for the Almonry in the current financial/funding market, this document would also support GBAP in sourcing alternative strands of funding to either support or replace an application to HLF. The Manager proposed that the Museum Management Committee meet early in the New Year to begin work on these important documents. It was proposed that the committee would consist of the Manager, the Town Clerk and 2 councillors. It was **RESOLVED** to create this management committee and that Councillors Goodge and Mrs Smith be appointed to it.

Finally, Ms Jayes proposed that the Almonry changes its name to the 'Almonry Museum and Tourist Information Centre' rather than Heritage Centre. Ms Jayes was of the opinion that 'Heritage Centre' was a very broad term that did not define the Almonry's purpose. The term

'museum' was clear and better defined the Almonry offer and what the public could expect from it when visiting. Members fully supported this proposal and it was **RESOLVED** to change the name to the Almonry Museum and Tourist Information Centre.

Ms Jayes was thanked for her comprehensive report.

## **80. Town Council budget and precept for 2016/17**

The Town Clerk had circulated a report to all Members with the agenda advising of the budget proposals for 2016/17. This budget had been prepared and recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The report highlighted that in the forthcoming year, the Council faced a number of costs, notably an increase in National Insurance contributions. It was explained that the government was to bring in a change to National Insurance from April 2016, which passed more cost to the employer and to the employee. On 6 April 2016 the current basic state pension and state second pension (S2P) would be abolished and replaced by a single-tier state pension. The abolition of S2P meant the end of contracting-out. The measures to implement the single-tier state pension and abolition of contracting-out are contained in the Pensions Act 2014. Currently contracted-out schemes like the Local Government Pension Scheme must provide a certain level of Defined Benefit (DB) benefits, sufficient to satisfy the statutory reference scheme test, and in return both employer and employees pay lower National Insurance Contributions (NICs). The abolition of contracting-out would therefore have cost implications for both employers and employees because of the loss of the NIC rebates. As a result, employers' Class 1 NICs will increase by 3.4% (of relevant earnings) and employees' Class 1 NICs will increase by 1.4% (of relevant earnings). In addition the Worcestershire Local Government Pension Scheme was to increase employers' contributions from April 2016 by 1.1%. This increase was mostly to meet the deficit that currently existed between pension scheme liabilities and what it brings in from contributions and investment returns. The scheme was to be re-valued in 2016 and it was very likely that future employer contributions would rise.

It was noted that the tax base had increased from 8,119.64 to 8,476.41. It was explained that the tax base is an important figure for budget setting as a significant rise can reduce the percentage on the charge paid by a band D home in Evesham.

Members were reminded that scrutiny of the budget had taken place at meetings of the Finance Committee on 19 October and again on 14 December, and much of the detail could be found in the reports and minutes from these meetings.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the fees as attached at appendix D be approved. It was further proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that a budget of £583,565 be approved for the 2016/17 financial year. Therefore a precept of £430,647 (four hundred thirty thousand, six hundred and forty-seven pounds) and grant of £42,718 for the financial year 2016/17 would be forwarded to precepting authority this being Wychavon District Council.

## **81. Council Committees/Meetings**

A report was circulated with the agenda following a request from Cllr Bulman to review the committee structure. This followed the implementation of new committees with devolved powers from May 2015.

The Clerk had recommended the formation of a group to review the committees and their remits as it was not clear whether those that objected to the structure did not like the committees themselves, their devolved powers or both.

The Mayor commented that he liked the committees but wanted to revert back to monthly Council meetings. It was **RESOLVED** to revert back to monthly Council meetings May 2016.

It was **RESOLVED** that working group consisting of Councillors Goodge, Johnson, Amor, Smith OBE, Mrs Smith, Sandalls, Bulman, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be formed to review the committees and report back to the next Council meeting.

**NOTED**

## **82. Reports from Council's Representatives**

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

Cllr Mrs S Amor informed the Council of her intention to organise a street party with the assistance of Cllr Miss E Haynes, to mark the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The event would be held on the 12 June and it was likely that the residents of Evesham would be invited to bring their own food, but celebrate together. The details were yet to be finalised but Cllr Amor was seeking the provisional support of the Town Council. Members fully supported this initiative and the Clerk stated that confirmed that they would provide any assistance they could in terms of offering resources. It was noted that any request for finance would have to be formally considered by the appropriate committee.

**NOTED**

## **83. 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 7.30 pm

**COUNCILLOR F KALER  
TOWN MAYOR**