



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL** held at 6.30 pm on **MONDAY 14 JULY 2014** 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 J Bulman, Cllr M D Elliman, Cllr M S Goodge, Cllr Mrs B A Gurden, Cllr Mrs L Jakeman, Cllr R A 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 Mrs F S Smith, Cllr J H Smith OBE, Cllr N S Tucker, Cllr Mrs R J Whiting

Officers: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)

44. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors M Hammon, Mrs J M W Taylor, Mrs W D Dyke and A L Dyke.

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

Councillors Bulman, Jakeman and Mrs Sandalls declared an interest in minute 52 (Planning Applications) since they were members of Wychavon District Council's planning committee.

46. Announcements by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor informed Members that both he and the Mayoress had completed the Evesham 10km run and thanked everybody who had supported them.

The Town Mayor went on to inform Members how impressed he had been with both senior schools having recently attended Evesham High Awards Evening, and Prince Henry School's Speech Day, adding that the students were a credit to both their schools and the town. The Mayor was congratulated on a speech he had made at Evesham High School which had impressed and inspired all those who had been present.

The Mayor concluded by congratulating the organisers of the Evesham River Swim, the River Festival and the Service at Worcester Cathedral to celebrate 300 years of the John Martin's Charity, all of which he had attended.

47. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Council meeting held 9 June 2014, 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.

48. 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) Property Committee – 16 June 2014

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

b) Planning and General Purposes Committee – 30 June 2014

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

c) Personnel Committee – 7 July 2014

In response to a question it was confirmed that the Almonry would shut on a Wednesday, rather than a Monday, because National Trust attractions are closed on a Monday. It was highlighted that provision should be made to ensure some sort of Tourist Information is available on a Wednesday, possibly by signposting people to the Contact Centre.

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

49. Town Plan Update

Mr Patrick Staines, Chairman of the Town Plan Steering Group, gave a presentation to the Council updating them on the progress of the Town Plan.

Mr Staines confirmed that the Town Plan was at an advanced stage and would publish its final report including its findings in the coming months. He explained that the aim for the project was ‘creating a vision of the Evesham of the future reflecting the needs and aspirations of residents and users of Evesham, and an action plan to help us get there’.

Mr Staines explained that they had gathered data through various different methods including workshops, questionnaires, online, and that more than 6,000 comments and suggestions had been received. This had led to the creation of a database which in turn enabled the Steering Group to identify trends and priorities.

The main themes emerging from the data surrounded the town centre and how it could be improved. This included more shops, how Evesham can offer a more tourist attractions and more facilities for families and young people. The provision of better health facilities was also highlighted along with better cycling facilities including cycle paths.

In conclusion Mr Staines stated that they aimed to have the first draft ready by the end of August. In terms of delivering the plan, it was anticipated that this would be led by the Town Council via a body of partners and in constant liaison with the district and county council.

Mr Staines was thanked for his presentation.

Feeding into the Town Plan, specifically the town centre and retail provision, Mr Shawn Riley from Wychavon District Council’s Market Town partnership gave a presentation on the findings and trends he had identified through the LDC programme that the Town Council had helped purchase through New Homes Bonus funding.

Mr Riley first explained that the LDC gave data on vacancy rates, retail mix, which sectors were growing and shrinking for the whole of the UK. This enabled him to compare Evesham's performance with similar towns throughout the UK, understand what potential risks for the future were, identify growth opportunities and help ensure that Evesham is presented relative to the requirements of a potential. In short ensure that they target businesses who are expanding and have operations in similar towns.

It was explained that Evesham had a vacancy rate of 16.2% compared to a national average of 11.9% or 15.3% in the West Midlands. In all there were 355 vacant units of which 61 were vacant. Evesham had many more independent retailers when compared to the national average, at over 70%. In comparison to other towns in the locality, for example Pershore, which had a vacancy rate of 13.4%. Both Tamworth and Kidderminster had higher vacancy rates when compared to Evesham.

It was highlighted that the Riverside Shopping Centre skewed the vacancy statistics somewhat. If you looked at Evesham High Street and disregarded the Riverside, then the vacancy rate fell to 13.2%, only slightly above the national average, and lower than the West Midlands average. The Riverside Shopping Centre unfortunately had a vacancy rate of 47.2%, its high proportion of multiple or chain retailers made it vulnerable to national trends.

Long term the Riverside Centre vacancy rate did not seem likely to improve, as many of the retailers with a presence in the centre were going through consolidation and often store closure. For example the Carphone Warehouse had closed 28 shops in the last year, and Burton Menswear 27 shops. This trend seemed to indicate that the Riverside would lose further shops.

Some early conclusions made by Mr Riley included:

- The Riverside Shopping Centre's performance is skewing Evesham's overall performance, which otherwise is generally in line with the UK average;
- The Riverside Shopping Centre has an extremely high proportion of multiple retailers making it vulnerable to the national trend in premises consolidation;
- Some of the Riverside Centre's remaining multiple tenants have contracted nationally in the past 12 months;
- Footfall generators in the Leisure, Service and Convenience sectors might help to inject vitality into the centre.

Looking at where growth could come from for Evesham as a whole, retail defined as leisure (restaurants, cafes, takeaways, hotels and bookmakers) were expanding, having grown 5% over the last year. Convenience (Tesco metro, One Stop, Greggs, etc) had also grown very slightly, by 1%. A number of companies going through expansion had been identified and if their expansion in other areas matched Evesham's profile then they would be targeted.

Mr Riley was thanked for his presentation.

50. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions were asked under this agenda item.

51. Finance

Evesham Town Council's payments and receipts for the month of June 2014 were circulated to Members with the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council payments for the month of June, as attached at appendix A, amounting to £35,430.33 (NET) be approved and the receipts be **NOTED**.

52. Planning Applications

(a) W/14/01311/PP – 4 Fielden Close

Single storey side and rear extension following demolition of car port and garage

<http://bit.ly/1osjp6X>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved subject to it not encroaching on the neighbouring properties.

(b) W/14/01242/PN – Walsh Mushrooms, Crab Apple Way

Construction of a new store, packing and distribution warehouse with associated offices, delivery yard, external car parking and lorry parking. The warehouse will be operated on a 24hr 365 days a year basis.

<http://bit.ly/1mA4mLB>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved. Members also encouraged the applicant to include provision for rainwater harvesting in the proposal.

(c) W/14/01274/OU – Amberville Properties Ltd, Land off Robins Corner and, Common Road

Residential development of up to 8 dwellings.

<http://bit.ly/1pU3m7w>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused. The proposal was considered to be overdevelopment and would also add to the existing traffic problems that exist in this area.

(d) W/14/01152/LB & W/14/01151/CU – D.A. Cook Builders Ltd, Office 2, Abbey Gate
Change of Use of Grade I listed office building to two bedroom dwelling - including replacement facade and internal timber structural work - Listed Building Consent

<http://bit.ly/1zjvXoG> & <http://bit.ly/TY9exT>

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

(e) W/14/01315/PP – Lower Dene Nurseries, Badsey Road

Proposed single storey side extension

<http://bit.ly/1mA8I5n>

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

(f) W/14/01209/OU – Merrybrook Farm, Pershore Road

Application for Outline Planning Permission for the erection of 41 Residential dwellings with provision of public open space forming Phase 2 of the previously approved and contiguous Phase 1 site to the South east

<http://bit.ly/1qb8HD6>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be refused. The design is not in keeping with the surrounding buildings, and it is overdevelopment. Furthermore, this will create problems with traffic in what is already a congested road.

(g) W/14/01103/PP – 66B Greenhill,
Provision of garden store shed and summer house
<http://bit.ly/1jfXjY2>

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

(h) W/13/02368/AA & W/13/02393/LB – 61 High Street
Shop front signage
<http://bit.ly/1xFkVsa> & <http://bit.ly/1qb98NT>

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that this application be approved subject to it complying with Wychavon District Council's (WDC) conditions.

53. Reports from Council's Representatives

The Town Mayor updated Members on a meeting that he and the Town Clerk had had with the Deputy Leader and Chief Executive of WDC. He confirmed that he had raised concerns with litter and dog fouling in the town and that these would be looked into.

Cllr Elliman, representative on Evesham Arts Centre, advised Members that the committee Chairman had retired. He went to inform members that the Arts Centre had hosted 38 shows in the last quarter and that a new carpet had been laid.

NOTED

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

The Town Mayor praised the organisers of the Evesham 10km. He stated that there had been 564 entrants, and that the event had been very well organised and that it was also self funding. He thanked all those involved.

Cllr R W Raphael advised Members of the upcoming Evesham Spring Clean that was taking place on Thursday 17 July 2014, meeting in the Market Place.

NOTED

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.30pm.

COUNCILLOR C D HOMER
TOWN MAYOR