

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Monday 10 June 2019 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors G Stevens – Town Mayor
G Corry – Deputy Town Mayor
A Armytage
S Cloughton
W Conian
P de Hoest
P Fisher
R Freedman
J Jones
A Peeler
T Porter
N Taylor
P White
N Woolner

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs J Mason, Town Clerk

7 members of the public

OPENING MATTERS AND GOVERNANCE

FC 71/19 To receive **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Hardinge.

FC 72/19 To **receive declarations of interest** regarding items on the agenda

None.

FC 73/19 **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 13 May 2019 were **received, approved and signed** by the Town Mayor.

FC 74/19 Public Participation

Suspension of standing orders to allow any members of the public present to speak.

Not applicable as no members of public wished to speak on this occasion.

FC 75/19 Town Mayor's Communications

- (i) New Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council announced May 2019: Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe.
- (ii) NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin

FC 76/19 Internal audit report

The Internal Audit Report arising from the auditor's visit made on 24 May 2019 was **received and adopted**.

As **noted** at F & P held on 28 May 2019 the auditor's overall conclusion was that the Town Council had maintained more than adequate and effective internal control measures during the financial year 2018-19.

FC 77/19 Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2019 (all papers attached)

The following are for **RESOLUTION**:

- (i) The Town Council **considered** the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), Section 1, Annual Governance Statement. Cllr P De Hoest proposed, Cllr R Freedman seconded and it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Annual Governance Statement be approved. The statement was then signed by the Town Clerk and the Town Mayor.

In undertaking such consideration Council referred to the Statement of Internal Control which was reviewed and adopted at Full Council on 13 May 2019 in addition to the Internal Auditor's report adopted at FC 76/19 above.

- (ii) The Town Clerk, as RFO, had signed and certified the AGAR Section 2, Accounting statements for 2018/19, by signing and dating;
- (iii) The Town Council then **considered** the AGAR section 2, Accounting Statements for 2018/19. Cllr P de Hoest proposed, Cllr R Freedman seconded and it was resolved unanimously that the Accounting Statements be approved. The Town Mayor then signed and dated the Accounting Statements to confirm such approval;
- (iv) It was **agreed** that the period during which electors and interested persons may exercise rights relating to the annual accounts will be Monday 17 June – Friday 26 July 2019. The relevant notice advising of such rights will therefore be displayed on the website and Town Council notice boards from Friday 14 June 2019.

- (v) The unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 prepared by DCK Accounting Solutions were **received and approved**; the Town Mayor and the Town Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer then signed and dated the balance sheet .

STANDING COMMITTEES

To receive and adopt the following minutes:

FC 78/19 Finance and Policy Committee

(i) Held on: 28 May 2019

(ii) Ear Marked Reserves

Arising from the above minutes (FP 38/19 (ii) refers), the approval of the ear marked reserves was **ratified**.

(iii) Allotment and Finance Officer Vacancy – Summer Cover

The decisions set out in FP 44/19 regarding the appointment of Ms K Morrison during June and July to help pending the re-advertising of the vacant post in the late summer were **ratified**. The Town Clerk will liaise with the Support Services Group in advance of advertising the post, to review the job description and person specification.

Action Town Clerk/Support Services Group

The minutes were **received and adopted**.

FC 79/19 Town Planning Committee

Held on: 14 May 2019
3 June 2019

In relation to the 3 June minutes Cllr P White drew attention to application 4/01663/18/FUL. The Committee had had no objection subject to strict conditions restricting the use of the lights to minimise impact on the AONB. Application 4/01127/19/FUL had been objected to on the grounds of bulk and mass. Finally, he noted that when an application was received to fell a tree the committee generally requested that a replacement tree of a native species be required.

The minutes were **received and adopted**.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

FC 80/19 Motion before Cllr W Conian - Climate Emergency

Before the Council considered the Motion set out below, Cllr W Conian referred Councillors to the detail of the agenda item. She did not intend to repeat this verbatim but would endeavour to set out some context. The growing

evidence of the serious and adverse impact of climate change has been highlighted in the news and has resulted in climate breakdown and the resultant destruction of the planet's eco systems. Referring to the work of the Government Committee on climate change, she advised that everyone needed to act not just the Government. She hoped that by agreeing the motion set out below, the Town Council would be able to contribute to the aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality in the town by 2030 by setting targets to which families and individuals would also be able to commit. The Town Council would then lead by example in the community and also exert pressure upwards to other organisations both regional and national. In terms of the impact on climate change, any actions that the Town Council could initiate might seem small, however, the act of demonstrating leadership and commitment was significant. She thanked members of the public and hoped that measures to mitigate the climate emergency would be front and foremost of all future decisions made by the Town Council and she urged members to adopt the motion.

Thanking Cllr Conian, the Town Mayor invited comment. Councillors were generally supportive and asked how carbon neutrality could be defined and whether any working party that might be set up would also deal with associated issues such the use of plastics. Thanks were also expressed for the work of group whose market stall on a Saturday endeavoured to change behaviours across the community.

The motion before the Council was as follows:

This Council:

- a) Declares a Climate Emergency with the aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality in our community by 2030.
- b) Will undertake practical measures within our powers to reduce the impact of Council's activities on the environment.
- c) Will work with all sectors of our community to publicise this declaration and develop initiatives and practical measures that will help our community towards achieving carbon neutrality.
- d) Calls upon the Borough and Hertfordshire County Council systematically to review their services, planning regulations and Local Plans and implement measures to reduce their impact on the environment and climate breakdown.
- e) Calls upon the Government to provide regulations and resources that will enable communities to meet the goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.

Cllr W Conian then proposed and Cllr R Freedman seconded that the Town Council should **RESOLVE** to adopt the motion. This was **agreed** by those present with the exception of Cllr J Jones who abstained.

Furthermore, it was agreed to establish a working group, that would report to the Transport and Environment Committee. At a future date and as work

progressed it would most probably be necessary to co-opt additional members with appropriate specialist knowledge, however, in the meantime it was agreed that at this stage core membership of the group would be: Cllr W Conian; Cllr P De Hoest; Cllr P White; Cllr N Taylor; Cllr R Freedman and Cllr N Woolner. The group was asked to draw up terms of reference, that would address the various and connected issues. This document would be considered at the T & E Committee meeting scheduled for 19 August 2019.

Action Climate Emergency Working Group

FC 81/19 It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or for other special reasons stated in the resolution, arising from the nature of the business or proceedings.

FC 82/19 Festive Lighting Costs

To **consider and, as appropriate, approve** proposals and costs for the revised festive lighting scheme for implementation in 2019.

The Town Clerk's working papers had been previously circulated and set out the costs received to date for proposed improvements to the festive lighting scheme. These included the following elements: hire of new and more colourful motifs (ie the decorations attached to lighting columns); the introduction of lights in deciduous trees, initially on the two trees outside the Civic Centre and the two on the opposite pavement. The addition of colourful baubles to the Christmas tree would supplement the strings of lights. The tree would also be slightly smaller than previously with a brown picket fence acting as a safety barrier.

It was also noted that this year the three yearly structural tests on the columns was required and the results were awaited. Proposed infrastructure associated with establishing an electricity supply to the four deciduous trees had also been quoted for as had the introduction of timers in the columns and improvements to the column electrical circuits. The works would comply with PLG06 – Institute of Lighting Professionals, and included costs associated with utility searches, street works and obtaining the necessary permissions.

It was noted that the 2019-20 budget for the Festival of Light (total cost – not just lighting) was £18,000 including £4,000 from general reserves. Following a detailed discussion and given HCC's requirement that licence applications were required to be submitted in July, far earlier than previously, it was **agreed** that a small working group should meet with the Town Clerk to review the proposals to date. Members would be Cllr G Stevens; Cllr M Hardinge; Cllr T Porter and Cllr J Jones. The group would decide whether to progress all or some of the proposals. It was further **agreed** that if necessary an additional £5,000 could be drawn from reserves.

FC 83/19 Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.26 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....