

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Held via 'Zoom' video conferencing on

Monday 23 November 2020 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs D Beecroft, Finance Officer
Mr Tony Noakes, Town Clerk

FC 143/20 To receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs G Corry, P Fisher, T Porter and M Hardinge.

FC 144/20 To receive declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

FC 145/20 Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of Berkhamsted Town Council held on 21 September 2020 and the 3 November 2020 were **approved**.

FC 146/20 Public Participation

To **suspend standing orders** to allow any members of the public present to speak.

No members of the public were present.

FC 147/20 Town Mayor's Communications

- (i) Berkhamsted Town Council's response to HCC's proposals for Unitary Council – **Noted.**
- (ii) The Mayor laid a wreath on the 8 November 2020, Remembrance Sunday, on behalf of the residents of Berkhamsted – **Noted.**

STANDING COMMITTEES

To **receive and adopt** the minutes of the:

FC 148/20 Transport and Environment Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12 October 2020 were **adopted.**

FC 149/20 Town Planning Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on the 14 September, 5 October, 26 October and 16 November 2020 were **adopted.**

- (i) Dates for the Local Plan Working Group meetings need to be sent to Cllr W Conian. **Action – Deputy Clerk**
- (ii) BCA to nominate a representative for the Local Plan Working Group. **Action – Deputy Clerk**

FC 150/20 Finance & Policy Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on the 21 September and 19 October 2020 were **adopted.**

OTHER WORKING GROUPS & COMMITTEES

FC 151/20 Canal and Riverside Partnership

The minutes of the Canal and Riverside Partnership Working Group held on the 9 November 2020 were **adopted.**

FC 152/20 Allotment Management Team

The minutes of the Allotment Management Team meeting held on the 5 October 2020 were **adopted.**

FC 153/20 Swan Youth Project & Youth Town Council

An update on the Swan Youth Project and Youth Town Council was delivered by Cllr N Woolner. Points noted were as follows:

- (i) The SYP remains closed and the recruitment of a new youth worker has started.

- (ii) The original members of the YTC will be contacted to restart the meetings of the YTC.

POLICY MATTERS

FC 154/20 Climate Action Steering Group Terms of Reference

The Climate Action Steering Group Terms of Reference which were approved at Transport and Environment on 12 October 2020 were **ratified**.

FC 155/20 Local Plan Working Group 2020-2038 Terms of Reference

The Local Plan Working Group 2020 – 2038 Terms of Reference which were approved at Town Planning on 5 October 2020 were **ratified**.

FC 156/20 Employee Conduct, Capability, Grievance policy

The Employee Conduct, Capability, Grievance policy and Procedure document was **readopted**. It is next due for review in 09/2023 or when required by law.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

FC 157/20 Internal Audit review

- (i) The review of the Internal Audit process completed by Cllr's R Freedman and J Jones was **adopted**.
- (ii) The reappointment of the Internal Auditor for 2020/21, Auditing Solutions Ltd, Clackerbrook Farm, 46 The Common, Bromham, SN15 2JJ was approved. The Town Clerk would write to Auditing Solutions to confirm.
Action – Town Clerk
- (iii) The proposed Interim Internal Audit date of the 03 December 2020 was **noted**.

FC 158/20 AGAR – Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2020, Completion of Limited Assurance Review by PKF Littlejohn LLP (External Auditors).

- (i) The signed Annual Governance and Accountability Return received under cover of the External Auditor's 25 October 2020 letter was **accepted and approved**.
- (ii) It was **noted** that the certificate, notice of conclusion of audit and full return with supporting documentation were published on 02 November 2020 on the website.
- (iii) It was **noted** that the auditor's opinion that on the basis of their review the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and there are no other matters that have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

FC 159/20 Budget Preparation & Precept 2021/22 – initial draft

- i) The initial draft budget proposals and precept demand for 2020/21 were **considered**. These have been prepared pending the grant and tax base information from Dacorum, which are expected late November.
- ii) The proposed timeframe for the budget approval for 20/21 was **noted** as follows:
 - a. Proposals will be put to Finance and Policy for further consideration on the 14 December 2020.
 - b. Consideration of final budget to be completed at Finance and Policy on the 04 January 2021.
 - c. Final budget and precept to be approved at January FC meeting (11 January 2021).
- iii) Full Council agreed to hold a stand-alone meeting before the 14 December 2020 to discuss the proposed projects included in the draft 2021/22 budget. The agreed list of projects will be forwarded to the Town Clerk so that the next version of the budget can be presented to F&P on the 14 December 2020.

Action – Cllr G Stevens and Town Clerk

FC 160/20 Online Banking Set-up and procedures

- (i) It was **noted** that on the 21 September 2020, Full Council authorised the Town Clerk to investigate a move of the current account to an online banking facility with NatWest so that payments can be authorised online by approved signatories, which will remain in line with current regulations (one officer and two councillors to approve each payment). FC 131/20 refers.
- (ii) It was **noted** that the necessary forms have been completed and submitted to NatWest to enable this to be set up and Full Council now need to approve the use of online banking for the purposes outlined in point i above. All signatories will receive separate log ins for the NatWest account in due course.
- (iii) The set-up of online banking for the other Town Council accounts (Santander, Cambridge Building Society, Shawbrook Bank and Saffron Building Society), for the purposes of viewing statements online and making transfers, if required, was **approved**.
- (iv) The changes to the Council's Financial Regulations and Internal Control Statement and Financial Regulations which have been amended to reflect the move to online banking (section 6) were **adopted**. The Financial Regulations have been updated in accordance with NALC's model guidance (papers included as a separate attachment).

FC 161/20 Use of Electronic Signatures

- (i) The use of electronic signatures for use on mandates and online banking forms to speed up administrative processes such as the adding and removal of authorised signatories on all Town Council accounts (NatWest, Santander, Cambridge Building Society, Shawbrook Bank and Saffron Building Society) was **approved**.
- (ii) The changes to the Internal Control Statement detailing the usage of electronic signatures and the security control measures put in place to store electronic signatures were **adopted**. Note that advice on the use of electronic signatures was sought from HAPTC, Derek Kemp at DCK and other legislative sources. The Financial Regulations do not have to be updated to include to reflect this change, only the Internal Control Statement (papers included as a separate attachment).

FC 162/20 Upgrade to Berkhamsted Town Council IT Infrastructure (details attached)

It was agreed that further work should be completed to agree the new IT infrastructure for the Town Council. The current set up did not meet the requirements for business continuity.

- (i) Councillors should send any suggestions for IT business requirements to Cllr N Taylor and Town Clerk. **Action – All Councillors**
- (ii) Investigate if HAPTC has any advice or preferred suppliers for Parish/Town Council IT requirements. **Action – Town Clerk**

FC 163/20 Berkhamsted Benches and Noticeboard Replacement

The project to replace four benches at various locations in Berkhamsted was **ratified**.

FC 164/20 To **RESOLVE** 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.

STAFFING MATTERS

FC 165/20 Staff Incremental Progression

- (i) It was **resolved** by Full Council that the Clerk's pay should be increased one point from salary point 34 to 35 on pay scale LC3 (33-36) with effect from the 01 October 2020. In accordance with his terms and conditions of employment, his next incremental increase is due on the 1 April 2021.
- (ii) In accordance with her terms and conditions of employment, it was **resolved** that the Deputy Town Clerk should progress from salary point 30 to salary point 31 with effect from 01 January 2021, which is the anniversary of their appointment to pay scale LC2 (29-32).

- (iii) In accordance with his terms and conditions of employment, it was **resolved** that the Town Warden should progress from salary point 11 to salary point 12 with effect from 01 January 2021, which is the anniversary of their appointment to pay scale LC1 (9-12).
- (iv) The Town Clerk was approved to write to the staff members to confirm the details and notify payroll in time for the January 2021 payroll.

Action – Town Clerk

FC 166/20 Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 21.16 hrs.

Signed.....

Date.....

Full Council Minutes Actions – 23 November 2020

Reference	Action	Complete	Outstanding / Responsibility
149/20	Dates for the Local Plan Working Group meetings need to be sent to Cllr W Conian	✓	Deputy Clerk
149/20	BCA to nominate a representative for the Local Plan Working Group	✓	Deputy Clerk
157/20	The Town Clerk would write to Auditing Solutions to confirm reappointment as internal auditor		Town Clerk
159/20	Full Council agreed to hold a stand-alone meeting before the 14 December 2020 to discuss the proposed projects included in the draft 2021/22 budget		Cllr G Stevens & Town Clerk
162/20	Councillors should send any suggestions for IT business requirements to Cllr N Taylor and Town Clerk	✓	Cllr N Taylor & Town Clerk
162/20	Investigate if HAPTC has any advice or preferred supplier for Parish/Town Council IT requirements		Town Clerk
165/20	Town Clerk to write to staff and inform payroll of salary changes		Town Clerk