

Minutes of a meeting of CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square following a meeting of the War Memorial Commemoration Trust on Monday 24 October 2022.

PRESENT

Cllrs. K. Head (Mayor), S. Ashton, M. Best, T. Bond, N. Draycott, D. Livesley, J. Morris, J. Nathan and D. Wakeman.

In attendance: Town Clerk K. Sheehan and 6 members of the public.

OPEN FORUM

A member of the public raised questions relating to progress on the proposed car park at Millers Garage, East Street, noting that:

- The minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee 10 August 2020 state that a District Council officer had told a councillor “the tendering process had been delayed (due to COVID) but was now underway”. However, at the SSDC District Executive meeting in August 2022 a senior SSDC officer said, “there remain 2 identifiable steps before definitive costs (for the car park) are known.....the first is the production of detailed drawings, and the second is the tendering process”. The member of the public queried if the tendering process was ever underway at any point in the last 8 years.
- At the Planning and Highways Committee on 9 November 2020, it was reported that two councillors had met an SSDC officer at the site and “some trees in Henhayes need to come down to allow machinery onto the site to begin work”. Shortly after this meeting 12 trees were felled and two years on no work has commenced. In response to an FOI request SSDC has confirmed “as far as current officers are aware no construction company was approached (in the last 8 years) and thus far no contract has been entered into”. The member of the public asked that the Town Councillors make enquiries into progress and procedure.

A representative of Crewkerne Community Kitchen (CCK) spoke in support of the group’s request to locate a Community Fridge in the George Reynolds Centre (GRC) stating that they were looking for a more permanent home to continue to promote reuse, reduce and recycle messages and prevent chilled and dry food from going to landfill.

A representative of the Somerset Farmers’ Markets (SFM) updated Councillors on the monthly market in Crewkerne, noting that it needed to be able to accommodate more producers to remain viable. With this in mind SFM had applied to the County Council for a road closure for the side road for eighteen months, which would enable additional stalls to be sited in the road. She hoped that it would be approved in time for the December market. Cllr. Best noted that there is an existing right to close the road in respect of a Wednesday market, should it ever be required.

86 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

22/23

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs. Maxwell, Samuel and Stuart (all personal).

87 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

22/23

Cllr. Head declared a personal interest in item 13b) as a member of Crewkerne RFC.

88 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26
22/23 SEPTEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 26 September 2022 were AGREED as a true and accurate record.

89 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS
22/23

Cllr. Best reported that:

- Over 600 responses had been received in the Local Community Networks consultation so far.
- Land at Vinney Bridge Mill was now under new ownership and works, primarily to remove vegetation and make the site safe, were underway.

90 CLERK'S PROGRESS REPORT
22/23

The Town Clerk reported that:

- Fixy, the County Repair Bus, would be in Crewkerne for another session, hopefully in the New Year.
- Preparations for the Lighting Up event and Christmas Market were under way – stallholders and any willing volunteers should contact the Deputy Clerk.
- Launch events for the Neighbourhood Plan would be taking place in the LIC on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November – all welcome.

91 FINANCE

22/23 a. To approve the payments for October 2022

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Nathan had verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Accounts for payment for 24 October 2022 in the sum of £54,050.18 were APPROVED.

The Clerk responded to a query from Cllr. Bond regarding stickers for the South West in Bloom civic event, which had been sponsored by Ballantine Wealth Management.

b. To report the bank reconciliation for September 2022 has been completed

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Wakeman had verified the bank reconciliation for September 2022. It was noted that cash in hand as of 30th September 2022 was £587,561.26.

c. To note the conclusion of the external audit for 2021/22 with no issues raised

Councillors noted the conclusion of the previous year's external audit process, offering thanks to the Town Clerk and Finance Officer for the work involved.

d. To consider external audit arrangements until 2026/27

A report from the Town Clerk regarding the next five-year appointing period for external auditors until the 2026/27 was considered.

Councillors AGREED to remain opted into the central procurement regime as managed by the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA).

92 CHRISTMAS COMMITTEE

22/23 To consider a report on bringing the functions of the outgoing 'Christmas Committee' under the umbrella of Crewkerne Town Council by establishing a Christmas Working Group

Councillors considered a report from the Town Clerk, noting that banking arrangements for the 'Committee' (not a CTC Committee) had now been withdrawn. The Town Clerk had taken advice from both the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and Licensing Officers at South Somerset District Council (SSDC) which had clarified that, if it resolves to do so, CTC can take on a function previously run by a voluntary group, along with agreeing terms of reference.

The following recommendations were AGREED:

- a. Crewkerne Town Council formally resolves to take on the functions previously discharged by the town's Christmas Committee, forming a Christmas Working Group in order to do so.
- b. Crewkerne Town Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Christmas Working Group attached at APPENDIX A.
- c. Crewkerne Town Council appoints members to the Christmas Working Group as per the above Terms of Reference.
- d. Crewkerne Town Council creates an Earmarked Reserve for the purposes of holding the funds received from the outgoing Christmas Committee and for future Christmas events.

(NB: existing Town Council members of Christmas Committee to continue on the Christmas Working Group).

93 TENNIS COURTS AT SEVERALLS

22/23 To ratify a proposal from the War Memorial Commemoration Trust regarding the refurbishment of the tennis courts in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and South Somerset District Council (SSDC)

The recommendations of the War Memorial Commemoration Trust from the meeting of the Trustees held on 24 October 2022 to:

- a) proceed with the planned refurbishment project of the Severalls Tennis Courts as outlined by the LTA and SSDC; and
- b) agree to adopt operating model B outlined in the supporting report; and
- c) authorise the Clerk to sign a non-binding offer to enable the project to move to the next stage.

Were AGREED. Councillors requested that progress updates continue to be shared at meetings.

94 HENHAYES

22/23 a) To consider a wayleave request from National Grid for cable installation works

A request from National Grid to carry out cable works to an area of Henhayes Recreation Ground was AGREED and the Town Clerk was authorised to sign the wayleave agreement, subject to obtaining the following assurances from National Grid:

- That reinstatement of the recreation ground surfacing is to a good standard;

- That efforts are made to carry out the works so as to not impact sports fixtures;
- That there will be no power interruptions to local businesses without prior notice and alternative arrangements being made to support them;
- That National Grid confirms that the works do not go across the pitches.

b) To consider a location for the Platinum Jubilee commemorative plaque

It was AGREED that the commemorative plaque would be installed on the external wall of the George Reynolds Centre facing the Henhayes car park.

95 LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORKS CONSULTATION

22/23 To agree the CTC response to the consultation on Local Community Networks (LCNs).

The response prepared by Cllrs. Bond, Best, Maxwell and Ashton in consultation with the Town Clerk was AGREED for submission.

96 COMMUNITY SAFETY STEERING GROUP (CSSG)

22/23 To consider a proposal to restart the CSSG

Councillors noted that following recent meetings with the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT), it had been suggested that regular meetings of relevant local agencies might be useful. Cllr. Best recalled that the CSSG had folded due to the unavailability of key officers to attend. Councillors agreed that it would be useful to investigate whether it would be possible to restart meetings, and Cllr. Best agreed to send the previous CSSG terms of reference to the Clerk for updating. Councillors requested that a representative of the NPT attend November meeting to give an update on local issues.

97 OPEN SPACES ASH DIEBACK

22/23 a) To note the receipt of a report on ash dieback disease at Crewkerne Town Council-owned sites and to consider associated financial implications

A report prepared by the Council's arborist was noted by Councillors. It outlined short term works required to ash trees as well as a ten-year plan for maintenance, estimating costs of approximately £10,000 p/a. Cllr. Nathan highlighted that consideration of replanting was important.

b) To consider a quotation for urgent tree works identified in the report above

A quote was ACCEPTED from Fern Tree and Garden Services for £1100 +VAT for the immediate works identified in the report as necessary at Bincombe Beeches.

98 GEORGE REYNOLDS CENTRE

22/23 a. To consider a request from Crewkerne Community Kitchen (CCK) to locate a Community Fridge in the lobby of the GRC

Councillors congratulated the members of CCK for their efforts, as well as Bar 5 for providing a location to this point. They were keen to support this initiative to expand further, particularly in the current financial climate. A proposal to delegate the arrangements to locate a Community Fridge in the lobby of the GRC to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Amenities Committee was AGREED.

b To consider a request from Crewkerne RFC to hang honours boards and framed photos in the Oak Room

Councillors asked the Town Clerk to look at alternative locations in the Centre to provide an allocated space for each sports club to use for honours boards or other display purposes.

99 OUTSIDE BODIES

22/23 To appoint a Town Council representative to the Henhayes Centre

Cllr. Wakeman was APPOINTED as the CTC representative to the Henhayes Centre.

100 TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES AND APPROVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED
22/23 THEREIN

- a. Planning and Highways Committee 8 August 2022
- b. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (various)
- c. Joint Burial Committee 7 June 2022
- d. Policy & Resources Committee 8 August 2022
- e. Reports from Town Council representatives to Outside Bodies

Items detailed above were received, and recommendations agreed. Cllr. Head reminded Councillors attending meetings of outside bodies to submit a report form to the Town Clerk.

101 MATTERS OF REPORT

22/23

Cllr. Head noted that Matters of Report should be brief points of information only, casework issues should be reported directly to the Town Clerk for actioning.

Cllr. Wakeman reported that Crewkerne Health Centre had been able to provide Covid vaccinations for housebound patients unable to travel to vaccination centres further afield.

Cllr. Bond raised concerns about the overflowing dog waste bin on Ashlands Road and Cllr. Nathan noted that the dog waste bin at the top of Westover View was buckled and required attention. New bins would be listed for the new financial year, as the bin budget for the current year was already committed. The issue with the Ashlands Road bin was whether an additional or larger bin would be emptied by the District Council – the Clerk was asked to ascertain whether more frequent collections could be made.

Cllr. Ashton reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Patient Participation Group for Crewkerne Health Centre, where two new GPs, two new receptionists and an additional nurse had recently been recruited.

102 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

22/23

Monday November 28th, 2022, 18.45, Council Chamber.

It was AGREED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable that the public and press be excluded and were instructed to withdraw.

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION: EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC – STAFFING MATTER

103 DEPUTY CLERK RECRUITMENT UPDATE

22/23 The Clerk reported that following the closing date, no suitable candidates for this role had been identified. She would organise a meeting of the Staffing Committee to find a way forward.

The meeting closed at 20.20.

DRAFT

Signed:

Dated:

TC24Oct2022