

Minutes of a meeting of CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square following a meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee on Monday 18 December 2023.

**PRESENT**

Cllrs. A. Samuel (Mayor), S. Ashton, N. Draycott, K. Head, J. Morris, A. Stuart and S. Woodland.

In attendance: Town Clerk K. Sheehan, Deputy Town Clerk G. Hughes.

**OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public were in attendance.

**110 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

23/24

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. Best (unwell), Bond (unwell), Livesley (personal), Nathan (personal) and Wakeman (work commitments).

**111 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

23/24

No declarations of interest were made at this point in the meeting.

**112 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2023 AND 27 NOVEMBER 2023**

23/24

The minutes of the meetings held on 30 October 2023 and 27 November 2023 were AGREED as a true and accurate record.

**113 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK REPRESENTATIVE**

23/24

Cllr. Ashton reported that:

- Financial problems at Somerset Council were ongoing and a capitalisation directive was being sought to allow capital funds to be used against running costs.
- Somerset Council had now formally written to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enquire about borrowing options.

No further LCN information, details of the next meeting would be circulated as soon as they were received.

**114 CLERK'S PROGRESS REPORT**

23/24

The Town Clerk reported that:

- The Town Council offices would close to the public at 1pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December and reopen at 9am on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.
- She had received a response to the letter sent at the request of the Town Councillors to the owner of the land adjacent to Henhayes Recreation Ground, noting that the owner had declined to consider a sale of this land to the Town Council.

- On behalf of the whole Town Council staff, the Town Clerk wished the Councillors well for the festive break.

115 **FINANCE**

23/24

- a. To approve the accounts for payment for December 2023 as listed

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Head had verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Accounts for payment for 18 December 2023 in the sum of £53,270.01 were APPROVED. No questions were raised.

- b. To report the bank reconciliation for November 2023 has been completed

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Head had verified the bank reconciliation for September 2023. It was noted that cash in hand as of 30 November 2023 was £546,816.39.

- c. To note that the monthly accounts for the War Memorial Commemoration Trust have been checked

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Head had verified the Trust accounts and that cash in hand as of 30 November 2023 was £2,915.05.

- d. To note the report of the internal auditor and clarify that the accounts for payment for August 2023 were considered and resolved at the September 2023 Full Council meeting (as per report recommendation)

Councillors noted the report of the internal auditor and AGREED that the accounts for August 2023 were resolved at the Full Council meeting held on 25 September 2023. Cllr. Samuel extended her thanks on behalf of the Council to the Finance Officer and Town Clerk for another excellent audit report.

- e. To consider adopting minor amendments to Standing Orders

The proposed amendments to Standing Orders were AGREED. Cllr. Ashton reported that Somerset Council was preparing to alter its limits on gifts and hospitality.

- f. To consider adopting minor amendments to Financial Regulations

The proposed amendments to Financial Regulations were AGREED.

116 **MEETING DATES JANUARY 2024**

23/24

- To note changes to scheduled meetings in January 2024

The proposed change to meeting dates in January 2024 was noted.

This would mean no meetings would be held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January. Planning & Highways, Amenities and Policy and Resources Committees would now meet on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January, and the Full Council meeting would take place on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January.

117 **SOMERSET COUNCIL ASSETS AND SERVICES**

23/24

- To note initial feedback from the Crewkerne Town Council survey on priorities in Crewkerne

The data collated from the survey on priorities in Crewkerne in terms of assets and services currently delivered by Somerset Council was noted.

118 **BINCOMBE BEECHES NATURE TRAIL**

23/24 To resolve to apply for Wellbeing funding towards updated nature trail artwork, leaflets and interpretation boards at Bincombe Beeches

It was AGREED to ask the Deputy Clerk to submit a funding application to the SALC Wellbeing fund in support of the updated nature trail information, as detailed in the report.

119 **OPEN SPACES MANAGEMENT POLICY**

23/24 To adopt an Open Spaces Management Policy

The Clerk reported that all suggested changes had now been incorporated into the policy.

It was AGREED to adopt the Open Spaces Management Policy, which included the first consideration of the Council's biodiversity duty as required by the Environment Act 2021.

120 **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES AND APPROVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN:**

23/24

- a. Planning & Highways Committee 13 November 2023.
- c. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 1 November 2023.
- d. Joint Burial Committee 3 October 2023.
- e. Reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies.

All minutes above were duly noted and any recommendations contained therein AGREED. No reports from representatives to outside bodies were received.

121 **MATTERS OF REPORT**

23/24

Councillors raised the following issues:

- At a recent Council surgery it had been highlighted that pedestrian access to the recycling centre was no longer permitted. The Clerk would write to the resident to let them know that Cllr. Ashton would raise this with the relevant Somerset Council officer.
- An overflowing bin on Cossins Lane was highlighted for reporting to Somerset Council.
- Cllr. Ashton reported that Somerset Council's Scrutiny Committee had passed a motion of no confidence relating to the proposals for stroke services in Somerset. It was hoped that stroke consultants would propose an alternative model.
- Two street lights opposite Cloverleaf Row remained broken, the Deputy Clerk would chase up this matter which had been previously reported to Somerset Council.
- Thanks were expressed to the local Brownies who had raised over £400 towards the replacement accessible swing, recently set on fire at Henhayes.

122 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

23/24

Monday 29 January 2024, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall.

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 Matters**

123 **STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE**

23/24 To receive the minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and agreed the recommendations contained therein

The minutes of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and all recommendations contained therein were AGREED. No queries were raised.

The meeting closed at 20.15.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

TC18December2023