

Town Council
20th January 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon
D Abbott
J Carroll
C Copleston
D Dixon-Wilkinson
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
D Jones
R Morgan
A Slough
S Thorne
K Wattingham
Town Mayor

Officers: Clare Evans
Louise Senior
Town Clerk
Head of Democratic Services

Public: 2

Absent: Councillor: M S Kennedy

11112 ELECTION OF MAYOR

As Members were aware Cllr Kennedy had advised that he was unable to fulfil the role of Mayor and had resigned from this position for the remainder of the mayoral term of office 2019/20.

Members were invited to appoint to the position of Town Mayor.

The following process was followed:

- The Deputy Town Mayor invited nominations for a Town Mayor to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2020.
- Members were to elect a Town Mayor until the Annual Meeting in 2020.
- The newly elected Mayor would receive the Civic Regalia, make and sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and would make an acceptance speech.
- A vote of thanks would be proposed to Cllr Kennedy. The Past Mayor's and Past Consort's badges would be presented.
- A reply from Cllr Kennedy was invited.

Nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2019 to May 2020 were invited.

Nominee: Cllr McMahon
Nominated by: Cllr Carroll
Seconded by: Cllr Abbott

There were no other nominations.

Those in Favour of electing Cllr McMahon as Town Mayor: 11

On being put to the vote Cllr McMahon was duly elected as the new Town Mayor.

The new Town Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'. The new Town Mayor retired to receive the Chain of Office.

At this point the new Mayor adopted her role as Chairman and thanked councillors for giving her the opportunity and gave an acceptance speech.

In her speech the Mayor thanked members for their support and made assurances that she would continue to do her best for the town.

A vote of thanks to the past Mayor was given by Cllr Dixon-Wilkinson, in which members were informed of the events that had been attended and the charities that had been chosen.

A reply from the past Town Mayor was read out by Cllr Dixon-Wilkinson, in Cllr Kennedy's absence, in which thanks were offered to members for their support and to the Civic and Events Officer for her work in supporting him during his time as Mayor.

11113 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Members were invited to consider appointing to the position of Deputy Mayor.

The following process was followed:

- The Town Mayor to invite nominations for a Deputy Town Mayor to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2020.
- Members to elect a Deputy Town Mayor for 2019-20.

Nominee:	Cllr Thorne	Nominated by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr Farrell

Nominee:	Cllr Wattingham	Nominated by:	Cllr Carroll
		Seconded by:	Cllr McMahon

There were no other nominations.

Those in Favour of electing Cllr Thorne as Deputy Town Mayor: 8

Those in Favour of electing Cllr Wattingham as Deputy Town Mayor: 3

On being put to the vote Cllr Thorne was duly elected as the new Deputy Town Mayor.

The new Deputy Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' and received the Chain of Office from the Town Mayor.

11114 APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received.

Members were advised that Cllr Welch had resigned from his position as Houghton Regis Town Councillor. The vacancy would be advertised in due course.

11115 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11116 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Goodchild declared a non-pecuniary interest in items 13, Central Bedfordshire Council Community Grant Scheme, as the project sits within the Ward of Houghton Hall and item 14, HRN2 Community Building as she is an active member of the Baptist Church.

Cllr Farrell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 13, Central Bedfordshire Council Community Grant Scheme as the project sits within the Ward of Houghton Hall.

11117 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2019.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11118 COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the following committees and consider any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	2 nd December & 16 th December 2019
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

To receive the minutes of the following sub committee and consider any recommendations contained therein

Office Provisions Sub Committee	None to present
New Cemetery Sub-Committee	8th July 2019

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

11119 TOWN MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members received a verbal report on events that had been attended by the past Town Mayor. Visits had included Poplars, Sharnbrook Lodge, Santa's Grotto, a pensioners Party. Members were advised that the 'Burns Night' was going ahead as planned and promised to be a successful evening as tickets had sold out.

Members received a verbal report on events that had been attended by the Town Mayor, performed as the Deputy Town Mayor. Events had included a Christmas dinner with the Youth Council and the second anniversary of Minds Together.

11120 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Members advised there were no updates on outside organisations or training sessions.

11121 2020/21 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

Members received the officers draft budget for 2020/21 for consideration and to request that members approve a budget for 2020/21 and a precept.

An amendment to the officer recommendation was proposed to read:

To approve the budget and a precept of £886,822 for 2020/21.

The officer recommendation was:

To approve the budget and a precept of £904,518 for 2020/21.

The amendment was proposed by: Cllr Abbott seconded by: Cllr Carroll

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs J Carroll and D Abbott

Members against: Cllrs C Copleston, D Dixon-Wilkinson, Y Farrell, S Goodchild, D Jones, R Morgan, A Slough, S Thorne

Abstentions: Cllrs Wattingham, McMahon

Members voted on the officer recommendation:

To approve the budget and a precept of £904,518 for 2020/21.

The amendment was proposed by: Cllr Jones seconded by: Cllr Dixon-Wilkinson

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs C Copleston, D Dixon-Wilkinson, Y Farrell, S Goodchild, D Jones, R Morgan, A Slough, S Thorne, K Wattingham

Members against: Cllrs Carroll, Cllr Abbott.

Abstentions: Cllr McMahon.

Resolved: To approve the budget and a precept of £904,518 for 2020/21.

11122 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL 2020 BUDGET CONSULTATION

Members were formally advised that Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) had launched

their budget consultation exercise and it was open for public consultation until 30th January.

CBC had advised that the headlines from the budget proposals were as follows:

- Next year CBC anticipate spending some £212million on local public services, this was a £16million increase from 2019/20.
- CBC were also continuing to focus on efficiency with £13.6million of efficiency proposals for next year.
- CBC continued to face big increases in demands, particularly in Adult Social Care as people were living longer and with more complex needs. CBC were also seeing an increasing need to provide care and support for younger adults with learning disabilities when their family carers were no longer able to provide this care.
- To bridge the gap between what CBC needed and what CBC anticipated in terms of income, CBC proposed to:
 - apply the Adult Social Care Precept of a 2% increase on council tax to contribute towards funding care services, and
 - increase council tax by 1.95% for funding other services.
- Additionally, the consultation would highlight proposals for almost £142million of capital investments, including road maintenance, new school places and school maintenance, new care homes and new integrated health and care hubs.

A consultation leaflet had been produced to summarise the key elements of both the draft revenue and capital budgets. Additionally, a questionnaire was available for feedback on the savings strategy and the proposals for council tax. These were available on the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

Feedback from the consultation would be collated and presented to the February Executive, in advance of decision making on the finalised budget which would be recommended to Full Council.

Resolved: To note the report.

11123 FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND

To enable members to consider project options for the Future High Street Fund.

Members welcomed the opportunity to bring resources to the town and members agreed that standards and ambitions should be set high. Members acknowledged that there had been previous money available through the market regeneration scheme and Houghton Regis Town Council had declined the awarded funding. Members agreed there was a large amount of scope to improve and develop the High Street.

Resolved: To suggest to CBC a town centre project for a multi-site regeneration scheme comprising:

- 1. Redevelopment of the town centre offer including the retail, commercial services and residential offer**
- 2. Civic services such as new or refurbished town council offices, health provision and community facility provision**
- 3. Redevelopment of the former Netto's site for retail, commercial and housing uses**

11124 CBC COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME

To enable members to consider options for grant funding from the CBC Community Grants Scheme.

Members were advised that the application would require match funding.

Resolved: To support a grant application being made to the CBC Community Grants Scheme for the refurbishment of Orchard Close pavilion subject to CBC ward councillor endorsement.

11125 HRN2 COMMUNITY BUILDING

Members were advised that CBC had written to the town council outlining their position on the bringing forward of the community building within HRN2. A meeting with the churches group was scheduled for 14th January 2020.

Members were requested to nominate two representatives to meet with the Churches Group to consider a draft Expression of Interest, volunteers were invited.

Cllr Jones, Cllr Farrell and Cllr Abbott volunteered. Members agreed for all three to attend future meetings.

Resolved: To nominate Cllr Jones, Cllr Farrell and Cllr Abbott to meet informally with the Churches Group regarding the proposed community building within HRN2.

The Town Mayor, Cllr McMahon addressed members and thanked them for allowing her to step into the role of Town Mayor.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.18pm

Dated this 23rd day of March 2020

Chairman