

**Town Council**  
**24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: D Abbott  
J Carroll  
C Copleston  
Y Farrell  
S Goodchild  
D Jones  
M S Kennedy  
T McMahon  
R Morgan  
S Thorne  
K Wattingham

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

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillors: A Slough

Absent: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson

**11300 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr A Slough.

**11301 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

A member of the public asked the Council what problems they see at the current time and what can they say to the public.

It was advised that this question did not fall within any specific agenda item, as such was unable to be answered, however, members advised that they were aware and concerned that people and families were currently suffering.

**11302 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**11303 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

**Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**11304 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

Members were invited to consider the Local Government Boundary Commission national electoral review in relation to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members discussed the marked boundaries and felt that improvements could be made. Members suggested that any changes made now would need re-assessing later as the new building developments were completed.

The original officer recommendation read:

*To support the fundamental aims of the electoral review but object to the 2 identified variances between the CBC ward boundary and the parish boundary in Houghton Regis namely:*

- 1. The area around All Saints where the electorate would be represented at a CBC level by a ward councillor for the proposed Houghton Regis West and at a parish level by a ward councillor for Dunstable Town Council.*
- 2. The proposed boundary between Houghton Regis West and Houghton Regis East does not follow the parish ward boundary between Houghton Hall and Parkside.*

*It is felt that these discrepancies are nonsensical and may undermine the reputation of the democratic system and may lead to voter disengagement.*

An amended recommendation was proposed to read:

To support the fundamental aims of the electoral review.

To support the original submission of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) with the critical exception of combining Parkside and Tithe Farm wards to form Houghton Regis East.

To object to the proposals of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to:-

1. Combine together the current wards of Parkside and Tithe Farm to form Houghton Regis East.
2. Introduce the area around All Saints Academy, part of Dunstable Town Council, into Houghton Regis West for the purposes of balancing the electoral numbers.
3. Move the entire polling district of HH5 into Tithe Farm parish ward and therefore into Houghton Regis East.
4. Carve up the polling district of HH2 in an arbitrary manner that is inconsistent with the Commission's desire for strong, easily identifiable boundaries.

To confirm that it is felt that the LGBCE's proposals are premature and do not reflect the balance of the communities within the Town. Another local governance / warding review of the parish will be needed in the next few years anyway in view of the extensive development going on to the north of the Town. The Town Council believes that it would be better to wait for that event before dividing the Town up again, and that the present proposals may undermine the reputation of the democratic system and lead to voter disengagement.

The amendment was proposed by: Cllr Jones, seconded by: Cllr Morgan

All members were in favour of the amended recommendation. Accordingly, this became the substantive motion.

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by: Cllr Goodchild

All members were in favour.

**Resolved: To support the fundamental aims of the electoral review.  
To support the original submission of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) with the critical exception of combining together Parkside and Tithe Farm wards to form Houghton Regis East.  
To object to the proposals of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to:-**

- 1. Combine together the current wards of Parkside and Tithe Farm to form Houghton Regis East.**
- 2. Introduce the area around All Saints Academy, part of Dunstable Town Council, into Houghton Regis West for the purposes of balancing the electoral numbers.**
- 3. Move the entire polling district of HH5 into Tithe Farm parish ward and therefore into Houghton Regis East.**
- 4. Carve up the polling district of HH2 in an arbitrary manner that is inconsistent with the Commission's desire for strong, easily identifiable boundaries.**

**To confirm that it is felt that the LGBCE's proposals are premature and do not reflect the balance of the communities within the Town. Another local governance / warding review of the parish will be needed in the next few years anyway in view of the extensive development going on to the north of the Town. The Town Council believes that it would be better to wait for that event before dividing the Town up again, and that the present proposals may undermine the reputation of the democratic system and lead to voter disengagement.**

#### **11305 MEMBER IT PROVISION**

Members were invited to consider the provision of IT for members.

Members discussed the difficulties some councillors had experienced accessing committee meetings due to limited technology and the benefits of acquiring suitable equipment for council business use.

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs: K Wattingham, S Goodchild, D Jones, S Thorne, C Copleston, Y Farrell, T McMahon & R Morgan

Members against: Cllr: M Kennedy

Abstentions: Cllrs: D Abbott & J Carroll

- Resolved:**
- 1. To purchase as required by individual members, a Microsoft Surface Go 2 Tablet with a 3-year support pack and email only to support members in performing their role and undertaking their responsibilities as a councillor;**
  - 2. To be funded through 199-4026 Computer Costs.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.49pm**

**Dated this 5<sup>th</sup> day of October 2020**

**Chairman**