

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 21st June 2021 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: J Carroll
E Cooper
C Copleston
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
D Jones
T McMahon
R Morgan
A Slough
C Slough
S Thorne
K Wattingham

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

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillor: M S Kennedy

Absent: Councillor: D Dixon-Wilkinson

11669 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Kennedy.

11670 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

An email had been received from a member of the public in support of the recommendations of agenda item 14, Digitalising Documentation.

Members agreed to speak on agenda item 14, Digitalising Documentation before item 5, Committee Minutes.

11671 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Councillors T McMahon, S Goodchild, J Carroll and S Thorne declared an interest in agenda item 14, Digitalising Documentation, as they were all members of the Houghton Regis Heritage Society.

11672 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2021.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2021 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11673 DIGITALISING DOCUMENTATION (*Agenda item 14*)

Members received a paper prepared by Houghton Regis Heritage Society (HRHS) suggesting the digitalisation of Minutes and other documentation of the council.

Roger Turner, HRHS, addressed members and highlighted the value of having Houghton Regis Town Council's minutes digitalised, enabling increased accessibility to anyone with an interest in the history of Houghton Regis. Members had been provided with a link to view a sample of how the minutes would look, and be accessed, on the website.

Members were advised that there would be an initial cost to the council with additional ongoing maintenance costs. Members agreed for costs to be investigated and fed back to the council.

Members were in support of this project in principle.

Resolved: The support the project in principle subject to further information being provided.

11674 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Corporate Services Committee	1 st March and 15 th March 2021
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	22 nd February 2021
Planning Committee	19 th April and 4 th May 2021
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
Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee	None to present

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the recommendations contained therein as follows;

- **11532: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Stress Policy**
- **11535: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Leave Entitlement Policy**

11675 TOWN MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members received a verbal report on events that had been attended by the Town Mayor who had attended a total of 19 events, which included:

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- Thanksgiving Service of councillor Maria Lovell, a presentation to students at Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Morrisions to draw a raffle
 - launch of La Bella restaurant
 - appeared on a daytime TV show aired in New York
 - Brew with the Crew fire service event
 - Marathon start, ambulance service raising money for Samaritans Children
 - World environmental day at All Saints Church
 - Addressed Year 6 students at Thomas Whitehead School
 - Presented a certificate of appreciation to the Fire Station in Dunstable in appreciation of National Frontline workers day
 - Students awards day at Central Bedfordshire College
 - Mayor of Luton's Bake-a-smile event
 - And would be attending Central Bedfordshire Academy to give an assembly.

In appreciation of National Frontline Workers day also visited were doctors' surgeries, dentists, pharmacies, Healthcare Centre, Central Bedfordshire College.

11676 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Members provided verbal reports from meetings they had attended of outside organisations or from training courses they had attended on behalf of the Council.

Cllr Jones advised members that he had attended BATPC meeting with two main points of interest, an appointment to replace Louise Ashmore had been confirmed as Robin Thomas and preparations for the Queens Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy had been brought forward with the availability of additional funding.

Cllr Farrell provided members with an update on the Memorial Hall, grants had been awarded to the Memorial Hall for the new Car Park which had now been completed, with further grant applications completed for a new P.A. system, big screen, railings at the front of the hall and replacement windows in the foyer.

11677 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Due to the timing of the last meeting and of the by-election it was not possible to complete the membership on Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups at the AGM on 5th May 2021.

As such Members were requested to approve membership on the Town Council's Committees, Sub-Committees, Working and other Groups.

It was highlighted that at the Environment & Leisure Committee on 7th June it was agreed to establish an Allotments Working Group. Membership on this has been included in the attached and 5 members had put themselves forward. As this was a Working Group it was suggested that the meetings be scheduled to be held on a 6-week basis at 3pm on a Tuesday: the following list of meeting dates will be inserted into the Council Calendar of Meetings and Events:

6th July 2021 (*changed from 13th July 2021*)
24th August 2021
5th October 2021
16th November 2021
4th January 2022
15th February 2022
29th March 2022
10th May 2022

If meetings were required more frequently, they would be arranged on an as required basis.

Resolved: To approve membership on the Town Council's Committees, Sub Committees, Working and other Groups as attached.

11678 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Due to the timing of the last meeting and of the by-election it was not possible to complete the nominations of representatives to outside organisations at the AGM on 5th May 2021.

Members were requested to appoint a further representative to the Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils. Cllr M Kennedy had offered to fill this nomination. Members discussed a member to represent Houghton Regis Town Council on CHEWS as Cllr A Slough had to step down due to meetings being held during the working day, Cllr E Cooper agreed to fill this post.

Resolved:

- **To appoint Cllr M Kennedy as the third representative on the Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils**
- **To appoint Cllr E Cooper as the representative on CHEWS**

11679 YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Members received a report providing brief outline of the year end accounting process. Members were offered the opportunity to raise any queries relating to the process, however, no queries were raised.

11680 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2020/2021 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2020/2021

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, Members were presented with the completed Annual Internal Audit Report (to follow) and supporting paperwork as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2020.

Members were advised that the internal auditor completed the year end internal audit on 24th May 2021.

There were no recommended actions to be considered. However, one issue relating to the petty cash records was discussed with the Clerk and it was agreed to reinstate the use of the summary record of petty cash expenditure. The maintenance of this record allows easy

recording of the type of expenditure so it can be coded appropriately. The expenditure of petty cash during 2020/21 was very limited due to home working. As office working was now resuming it was anticipated that petty cash transactions were likely to increase. Members were advised that the recording of petty cash expenditure had been actioned.

Resolved: To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/2021.

**11681 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2020/2021
SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, members received a draft completed version of Section 1 –the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2021.

Resolved: To approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2021.

**11682 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2020/2021
SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, Section 2 – members received Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return and the supporting Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021.

A query was raised regarding a budgeted amount agreed to be moved from the New Office Provision Earmarked Reserve to General Reserves, which had not been reflected in the Statement of Accounts. Members were advised that the Town Clerk and RFO had sought the advice of the Council’s accountants on this matter and that it had been considered that, because of the unexpected healthy surplus of funds for the year, the reason for the original need for the transfer no longer applied.

Resolved: To approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2021 subject to external audit.

11683 BANK MANDATE

In order for the bank mandate to be updated, members were advised that NatWest require the council to confirm:

- The Signing Rules in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 1.3, be replaced in accordance with section Account Signing Rules.
- The Authorised Signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 1.3, be changed in accordance with section Authorised Signatories.
- And the current mandate will continue as amended.

Members were reminded that the mandate was set up to be 2 signatories from Group A (members) and 1 signatory from Group B (officers). The following was suggested:

Group A - current serving councillors

Group B – Clerk & RFO, Head of Democratic Services, Head of Grounds Operations, Corporate Services Manager

- Resolved:** **To confirm the above and to approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:**
- **2 signatories from Group A (members) and 1 signatory from Group B (officers);**
 - **Group A to comprise current serving councillors**
 - **Group B to comprise Clerk & RFO, Democratic Services Officer, Head of Grounds Operations, Corporate Services Manager**
- To remove all other signatories.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.12pm

Dated this 4th day of October 2021

Chairman