

ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 11th October at 6.30 pm

Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs David Allan, Leeford Allen, Janet Cairns, Derrick Griffin, Maria Hewett, Charlotte Hodivala (Chairman and Mayor) Clare Horrocks, Christopher Ives, Owen Jenkins, Paul Long, Ewan Mackey, Jane Mosson, Liz Parry, Louise Passey, David Pears (Deputy Mayor and Deputy Chairman), John Perks, Rob Pocock, Manish Puri, Rachel Okello, Keith Ward, Simon Ward and Terry Wood.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Olive O'Sullivan - Interim Deputy Town Clerk, Mrs. Mary Watkins, Administration Assistant (Job Share), Ms. Janet Eustace, LGRC.

There were thirteen members of the public and two members of the press present.

The Mayor welcomed people to the meeting and invited the public to ask questions of the Council. Comments included the perceived lack of consultation with the residents of Vesey about proposals contained in the document at item 97; concern about the future of Wylde Green Community centre; an invitation to attend the inaugural meeting of the Mere Green Neighbourhood Forum to be held on 27 October; concerns about the maintenance of the Lindridge Road Cemetery; the Neighbourhood Plan; the refurbishment of the Town Hall and the possible closure of libraries.

86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk had received apologies from Cllr Joanne Ellis and Cllr Claire Bennet.

RESOLVED: To accept the apologies received.

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Wood declared an interest in Wylde Green Community Hall; Cllr Puri in the Boldmere Neighbourhood Forum and Futures Partnership and the Mayor in item 95, members' allowances. The Mayor advised that she would leave the room for this item.

88. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor mentioned Question Time and Sutton Coldfield Expo. She reported that she had attended the Orchid Society, the opening of the newly refurbished Empire cinema, an award presentation at the library, the handover of medical equipment to treat prostate cancer at Good Hope Hospital and the launch of the Mayors Challenge. The Mayor thanked Cllr Horrocks for all the help she had given with this. The Mayor also noted that a number of Councillors had been involved in local litter picks and clean ups.

The Deputy Mayor mentioned the libraries consultation currently underway on the BCC website and two forthcoming events of 20 October at the Clifford Road Youth Centre and Autism training at the Harvester in Boldmere.

89. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Interim Deputy Clerk reported that item 103 would be closed to the public due to the confidential nature of the staffing agenda item.

RESOLVED: That due to the confidential nature of the business of item 103 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3, members of the public and press be excluded during discussion of this item.

90. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council held on Wednesday 14th September 2016 (previously circulated) be signed as a true record of the meeting.

91. THE FUTURE OF THE TOWN HALL

Cllr S Ward (Chairman of the Town Council working group on the Town Hall) gave a verbal update on the work of the group advising that a meeting with senior officers of Birmingham City Council (BCC) was scheduled for the following day. Negotiations were moving forward but it was crucial that BCC provided the necessary funds to bring the building up to acceptable standard before it was passed to a Trust.

RESOLVED: To note the update from the Working Group.

92. PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUDGET

The Mayor stated the report had been scrutinised by Finance and General Purposes Committee the previous week and invited questions on the report. No questions were raised.

Cllr Pears advised that the unallocated budget for the year had been reduced from £894,698 to £842,698.

RESOLVED: To note the financial performance to the end of September 2016.

93. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered the payments listed at Annex A to these Minutes. Cllr Pears queried the payment for office cleaning and it was explained that the figure was for both rent and cleaning.

RESOLVED: That the accounts should be paid and that Cllrs Pocock and Griffin should visit the Council offices to sign the cheques later in the week.

94. RECOMMENDATION FROM AMENITIES, LEISURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Cllr Perks reported that he would like to suggest an amendment to the Community Awards Scheme to include a separate category for an award for an outstanding primary and secondary teacher. In response to a question, the Interim Deputy Clerk explained that the Council would invite nominations for the award and then hold a vote.

RESOLVED: To note the report and proceed with the arrangements to implement a Community Awards Scheme.

95. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

The Interim Deputy Clerk presented a report which summarised the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Committee (IRP). The Town Council working group on members' allowances had presented evidence to the Independent Remuneration Panel on the level of expenditure incurred by Town Councillors. The Independent Panel recommended a basic allowance of £715 pa to cover travel within the Parish boundary, telephone, computer and administrative expenses. Other costs, such as carers expenses, travel outside of Royal Sutton Coldfield, subsistence and expenses incurred re carers, would be reimbursed separately. There was a discussion about the need for, and the size of, the allowance and the Clerk explained that it was not remuneration but rather to ensure that nobody should be precluded from standing to serve as a Town Councillor because of the expenditure that would be incurred in office. It was noted that the sum was likely to be subject to tax.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel: -

1. A Basic Allowance of £715 per annum should be made for all Sutton Coldfield Town Councillors in order to cover necessary expenses. The allowances should be applied with effect from 5th May 2016.
2. A Town Councillor should be entitled to claim a mileage allowance or a reimbursement of actual travel expenses outside the Sutton Coldfield area, wholly and necessarily incurred when undertaking the range of approved duties specified in Section 5 of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
3. The mileage rates paid should be in line with those applicable to officers in Birmingham City Council and receipts should be provided to support any claim for directly incurred expenses unless they would ordinarily not be available or their provision was disproportionate to the amount claimed.
4. A Town Councillor should be entitled to claim reimbursement of reasonable subsistence costs that were wholly and necessarily incurred when attending as the authorised representative of the Parish Council at a meeting, conference or seminar that was held outside the Sutton Coldfield area.
5. A Town Councillor should be entitled to claim reimbursement of reasonable carers' expenses wholly and necessarily incurred when undertaking the range of approved duties specified in Section 5 of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
6. Allowances and expenses should be reviewed prior to the elections in May 2018.

The Mayor left the meeting at 7:13 and the Deputy Mayor took the chair.

The Clerk explained that the IRP was not able to advise on the Mayor's Allowance as the legislation provided for the Town Council to decide on this matter. The Town Council working group on allowances had considered the functions fulfilled by the post holder both in their role of Chairman of the Council and in their role as Mayor. The working group on members' allowances recommended an allowance of £6,215. Councillors expressed conflicting views that this was too high and too low. The Clerk explained that the figure could be reviewed at a later date.

RESOLVED: - That a sum of £6,125 is approved for the Mayor's Allowance.

The Mayor returned to the meeting at 7.28 pm and took the Chair.

96. Notice of Motion – Proposed by Cllr Paul Long on 14th September 2016, "That this Town Council will make representation to the Boundary Commission for England at its public hearing for Birmingham on 3rd or 4th November to request that the constituency of Sutton Coldfield be renamed Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield or Royal Sutton Coldfield in line with the decision made in parliament and recorded in Hansard. The Town Clerk is asked to consult with our MP and members of the original Royal Town campaign group to put forward the case."

It was noted that there had been a long running campaign for changes to be made and that the MP had already made representations to the Boundary Commission.

RESOLVED: That this Town Council will continue to support our MP Andrew Mitchell in his existing representation to the Boundary Commission for England, that the constituency of Sutton Coldfield be once again named Royal Sutton Coldfield in line with the decision made in Parliament and recorded in Hansard. The Town Clerk is asked to write to the Boundary Commission in support of the Sutton Coldfield MP in his representation to the Commission.

97. Notice of Motion – Proposed by Cllr Simon Ward on 21st September 2016, "This Town Council commits to, as far as possible, deliver the projected plan of works titled "Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council - Founded in our past. Working for our future. 6 pillars to build that future; to make a difference and improve Royal Sutton Coldfield.

- Cleaner and Greener.
- A Safer Sutton.
- Proud to be Sutton.
- Healthier and Happier.
- A Bright Future.
- Summer in Sutton.

A Commitment for Our Future. Project Plan 2016-2017 and beyond.

As far as possible each of the activities or projects within the various pillars of the plan will be worked up into individual deliverable work streams as directed by the most appropriate committee and as designated within a time period to be determined – but with the expectation that in all cases work will commence immediately on approval.

The plans in respect of each work stream will then be brought back to the Town Council as they are ready to be signed off for implementation. This will happen by the end of October 2016 and in advance of budget planning for the next fiscal year".

Cllr S Ward summarised his report and said that residents had given the Council a clear mandate to progress an ambitious programme of improvements for the town. General discussion focused on the need to take action now, especially on road safety issues and continued engagement with residents. It was noted that a lot of the proposed work fell to the Amenities Committee and it was agreed that some of the work could be transferred to other committees.

RESOLVED: That the motion be approved subject to reallocating street signage, road safety measures, 20 mph zones, and footway landscaping to Planning and Highway Committee.

98. Notice of Motion – proposed by Cllr Maria Hewett on 28th September 2016, "That this council will create, develop and implement a campaign raising awareness of littering, with the aim to reduce the amount of litter that finds its way on to our streets. The council will instruct the amenities committee to progress this, to make our Royal Town a cleaner place."

RESOLVED: That this motion be approved.

Cllr Hewett advised that she would be happy to lead this campaign.

99. Notice of Motion - proposed by Cllr Rob Pocock on 2nd October 2016 - "This Council welcomes the progress made in establishing our administrative foundations over the summer, but recognises the need to now move swiftly on to implementing the large scale projects that will start to make a positive impact for residents of the Town. Accordingly, we will now take rapid action to commit funding from this current Financial Year to the major schemes identified in the Summer School and which also reflect the election manifestos of the parties in the May elections. Noting that the unallocated annual revenue budget for the current year is still some £¾ million, we resolve to prioritise our collective cross-Council efforts over the coming weeks to implementing a programme of major schemes along these lines, to ensure we have effectively used the resources the citizens of Sutton Coldfield have placed in our hands"

Councillor Pocock said that he recognised there was a good deal of overlap between this proposal and the motion discussed at item 97. There were questions amount the amount of unallocated funds in the current year and whether or not there might be double counting.

RESOLVED: To approve an amended Motion that the spirit of the original Motion be considered by the various Committees in taking forward the work plan outlined at item 97.

Cllr David Pears proposed, that in accordance with Standing Orders the meeting be extended for a further period of one hour from 8.30pm.

RESOLVED: That the meeting be extended until 9.30pm.

100. Appointments to Outside Bodies

RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr Mackay as the Council's representative on the Sutton Coldfield Business Improvement District (BID).

To appoint Cllrs Jenkins and Hewett as the Council's representatives on the Sutton Coldfield Community Sport and Physical Network Committee.

101. Use of Town Clerk's Delegated Powers

The Interim Deputy Town Clerk advised she had nothing to report on the use of delegated powers.

102. Reports from Working Parties.

- a. Logo and Branding Working Party.

The Interim Deputy Clerk circulate examples of the branding and logo designs that had been prepared by Louise Chorley, designer of the logo for the Town Council.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommended designs for letterheads, business cards and agendas and to proceed with the preferred options.

- b. Engagement with Youth Working Party – nothing to report.
- c. Community Fund Working Party – now wound up.
- d. Councillors Allowances – now wound up
- e. Staffing Working Party.

Cllr Pears, Chairman of the staffing working group read out a prepared statement on the resignation of the Interim Town Clerk and announced that the Interim Deputy Clerk would step up to the role of Acting Clerk pending the appointment of a permanent Clerk. Councillors agreed that it was important to move on and offered their congratulations to Ms O'Sullivan.

RESOLVED: To note the statement in relation to the resignation of the Interim Town Clerk and to approve that Ms. Olive O'Sullivan be appointed Acting Town Clerk pending the appointment of a permanent Town Clerk.

103. Exclusion of the Press & Public The following agenda items, subject to agenda item #89 will most likely be heard with the Public & Press excluded. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

In the break The Mayor presented Cllr Horrocks with flowers to thank Cllr Horrocks for her help over the summer and introduced David Kuczora who is her new Diary Secretary.

Cllr Pears reported that a new Administrative Assistant would be starting on 17 October and asked Council to approve her membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

RESOLVED: That Natalia Gorman be admitted to the West Midlands Pension Fund with effect from 17th October 2016.

It was reported that LGRC would be continuing to support the office staff and that the Clerk had been asked to contact Legal and HR companies with a view to the Council appointing advisors.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

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Chairman

8 November 2016

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