

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

A meeting of Huntingdon Town Council was held on Thursday 11th November 2021 in Huntingdon Town Hall at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillors: M Baker; A Beevor (via Zoom); A Blackwell; J Cole (via Zoom) C Doyle; S Gifford; M Kadewere; P Kadewere; P Kennington; B Luckham; A McAdam; S McAdam; P Pearce; T Sanderson and K Webb (Mayor).

In attendance: The Town Clerk, Mr Dennis Smith, Macebearer, Revd. Jon Randall, County Councillor Jonas King (arrived during agenda item 40), Mr and Mrs Scrivener, winners of Best Kept Front Garden, Mr Leedo George and Mr David Landon Cole.

30. **WELCOME**

The Town Mayor welcomed those in attendance. The Mayor invited the Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Jon Randall, to say a prayer.

31. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Sir Peter Brown and Samuel Sweek.

32. **BEST KEPT FRONT GARDEN COMPETITION**

The Mayor announced that the 2021 winner of Huntingdon's Best Kept Front Garden competition was Mrs Christine Scrivener. Mrs Scrivener congratulated by the Mayor and was presented with the Best Kept Front Garden trophy, along with national gardening vouchers.

33. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

34. **MINUTES**

Members had before them copies of the minutes from the following meetings:

- i) Town Council held on 2nd September 2021 (M2)
- ii) Extraordinary Town Council held on 26th October 2021 (M3)
- iii) Leisure & Community Services Committee held on 7th October 2021 (M2)
- iv) Finance Committee held on 23rd September 2021 (M2)
- v) Strategy & Corporate Plan Committee held on 26th October 2021 (M1)

The Mayor took each set of minutes in turn, and for all meetings it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve and adopt these minutes which would be signed by the Mayor at a later date.

35. **PUBLIC ADDRESS FROM COUNCILLORS OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO COUNCIL**

The Mayor asked Members and members of the public whether they would like to address the meeting.

A Member indicated that they wished to address the meeting. It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to adjourn the meeting.

Councillor Gifford explained to Members that she had been approached as former Planning Committee Chairman by Lochailort, regarding the development adjacent to the Alms houses on Brampton Road. Members heard that Lochailort was struggling to make any progress with Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) planning department, despite amending their plans in accordance with stipulated requirements. Members were told that the situation was becoming increasingly challenging for Lochailort and was putting the development in jeopardy. With Huntingdon Town Council (HTC) being in support of the development and the eco/green credentials it was offering, it was agreed that the Town Clerk would draft a letter of support to HDC, explaining why the development should be permitted. Members also noted the timeliness of COP26 and how the development would help in reducing the town's carbon footprint.

With no further addresses it was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to reconvene the meeting.

36. **REPORTS FROM COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Sanderson advised Members that there were problems with the Views Common traffic light and that a site meeting with the Highways team was going to take place. Members were told that Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) would be approaching HTC to request representation on a new Devolution Committee and that volunteers would be welcomed, Officers or Members. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor expressed an interest in representing on the Committee.

Councillor Sanderson made reference to the recent local flooding incidents in the local press (namely on the High Street and in the Commemoration Hall) and told Members that Philip Harty from Ramsey was the local representative for Huntingdon, should HTC need to liaise with a CCC contact regarding flooding issues/concerns.

Finally, Councillor Sanderson asked that Councillor Gifford forward the email from Lochailort regarding their planning issues so that he could discuss the issue directly with HDC.

Councillor P Kadewere told Members that Covid 19 figures in Huntingdonshire were increasing and that letters were going to be issued to residents by the NHS and HDC.

Although not in attendance Cllr Morris submitted a report to all Members which was received and noted.

37. TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported the following:

- That in advance of Remembrance Day on Sunday 14th November 2021, all Members were requested to robe in Court Room Two of the Town Hall and stay in there until the procession left the building, to allow for social distancing in the different areas of the Town Hall.
- That following advertising for a new Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), interviews had been conducted by Councillors Kennington and Pearce, along with Reg Williams of the Local Council Consultancy (LCC) and a successful candidate had been appointed to join the team on Tuesday 4th January 2022.
- That the Crematorium was now fully operational and that it was hoped the new Depot building would be handed over to HTC on 26th November 2021. The delays had been due to Anglian Water connecting a water supply to the site.
- That there had already been visits by other District and Borough Councils who were considering an Eco Crematoria build, and that national representatives from various bodies had visited too with many more scheduled to take place.
- That Huntingdon In Bloom and Huntingdon Town Council had been mentioned in the National RHS magazine, with reference to its submitted projects, including the Crematorium build.

With no further updates, the Mayor gave thanks to the Town Clerk.

38. ROLLING PROGRAMMES

Members had before them a copy of Huntingdon Town Council's Rolling Programmes. The Mayor asked if there were any comments or questions.

Members questioned and debated the recommendation that the Pensioners' Christmas Lunch be cancelled due to Covid 19 concerns. There was a lengthy discussion about different options to allow the event to proceed, and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to proceed with the event on the proviso that all guests could confirm they had had the three vaccines and that they would be attending the event at their own risk.

Clerk's Note: Due to rising Covid 19 figures and the risk assessment in place at the Coneygear Centre, the event was split across two dates to reduce the number of guests in attendance.

Finally, the Town Clerk reminded Members that the Civic Carol Service on the 15th December 2021 would take place at the Crematorium Chapel, with refreshments served at the neighbouring Sapley Lodge.

Clerk's Note: Due to rising Covid 19 figures, the outbreak of the Omicron variant and guest concerns, the decision, in agreement with the Mayor was taken at short notice to cancel the Carol Service and Reception.

With no further comments or questions, the Mayor gave thanks for the reports and the contents were noted.

39. **CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR**

The Mayor welcomed Mr Leedo George and Mr David Landon Cole to the meeting and thanked them for their interest in becoming co-opted as a Councillor for HTC. The co-option was to fill a vacancy in the East Ward, following the death of Councillor Trish Shrapnel. The Mayor invited the two candidates in turn to address the meeting as to why they should be co-opted.

Mr Leedo George told Members that he had lived in Huntingdon since 2009 and that in 2015 he had been elected as a Councillor for HDC and HTC. Mr George therefore explained that he knew a lot of Council procedures. Mr George told Members that he worked in the healthcare profession and enjoyed sport with cricket being a passion of his. Members were told that Mr George was involved with the Alliance for Indians and helped to organise lots of local events.

Mr David Landon Cole told Members that he lived on Sapley Road in the East Ward of Huntingdon and moved there three years ago from St Neots. Members were told that Mr Landon Cole was involved with the Huntingdonshire Community Group, offering covid support services during the pandemic. Members heard that the main reason Mr Landon Cole wished to be co-opted was to give something back to the community and represent community views. Mr Landon Cole explained that he had a career in politics and therefore was familiar with the duties of Councils. He expressed his support of community groups and organisations, which he felt were hugely important to the town, and he told Members that he had expertise in Communications, which he felt would be beneficial to the Council.

The Mayor thanked the candidates and asked Members if they had any questions.

Mr George was questioned on his previous suspension as a Councillor due to breaching the Council's Code of Conduct. Mr George apologised for the situation, which he said was due to miscommunication. Mr George said that he wanted to prove himself to be the best Councillor.

With no further questions, the Mayor took the co-option to a vote and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to co-opt Mr David Landon-Cole as a Councillor for East Ward of Huntingdon Town Council. The Town Clerk advised that the Declaration of Office would be signed at a later date.

Clerk's Note:

Mr George: 1 vote

Mr Landon Cole: 11 votes

40. **REPRESENTATION TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members were invited to give reports on the outside bodies they represented:

1. BID Huntingdon – Members were told that the current BID Manager and Assistant Manager had resigned and would leave BID on the 31st December 2021. *Clerk's Note: since the Town Council meeting, it was announced that the replacement BID Manager would be Mr Paul Sweeney.*

2. Cromwell Museum – Members were told that regular meetings had taken place via Zoom and that the Museum Curator had kept everyone up to date with Museum news and events. Members were told that Kristina, the new Education Officer was settling in well and that the Trust had taken on a freelance fundraiser.
3. Hartford Conservation Group – Members were told that not much activity had taken place with the group due to Covid 19, but that a bulb planting activity had been completed as part of Huntingdon In Bloom.
4. Friends of Coneygear Park – Members were told that no meetings had taken place during the pandemic.
5. HBAC – Members were told that no contact had been made regarding meetings.
6. Huntingdon Freemans – Members were told that grants were being awarded to local organisations and project, particularly for those affected by the pandemic. Members were further told that projects surrounding mental health were being championed.
7. Commemoration Hall – Members were told that the Hall was greatly improving, with events taking place, and the new Arts Café opening. Members were told however that the building had recently fallen victim to the local flooding and that repairs were needed. *Clerk's Note: Councillor Jonas King joined the meeting.*
8. Huntingdon & Godmanchester Twinning Association – Members were told that meetings of the association had recently started again following the pandemic.
9. Civic Society- Members were told that meetings weren't taking place and it was suggested that until the Society convened its meetings, it should be removed from the reporting list.
10. Huntingdon In Bloom- Members were told that due to the pandemic, no meetings had taken place. However, Huntingdon had been entered into the RHS National Community Awards and entered the virtual Anglia In Bloom competition.
11. St John's Alms Houses – Members were told that Zoom meetings were taking place, and that more recently, face to face meetings had taken place too. Members were told that Trustees were keeping a watchful eye, particularly during the pandemic to make sure that everything was in order and that tenants were supported. Finally, it was reported that regretfully, the Christmas afternoon tea had been postponed due to the pandemic.
12. Huntingdon Volunteer Centre – Members were told that the Community Car Share Scheme was running successfully, as well as the community shop.
13. Coneygear User Group – Members were informed that no meetings were taking place, but that representatives of the group were kept informed of news and events at the centre.
14. Devolution – Members noted that no meetings were taking place, but Councillor Sanderson reminded Members that CCC was setting up a Devolution Committee.
15. Huntingdon Library – Members were told that no invitations to meetings had been received.
16. Huntingdon History Festival – Members were told that the 2020 programme had been carried forward and was hoped to take place in 2022.
17. Shopmobility – Members were told that Shopmobility recently celebrated its 15th anniversary and that it continued to be a vital service for the town centre.
18. Local History Society – Members were told that no invitations to meetings had been received and it was suggested to check that the Society was still running.

19. Hunts Forum – Members were told that Hunts Forum did a fantastic job and represented the voluntary sector at a national level. Members were told that volunteers were being vaccinated via the Forum, and that there were ongoing negotiations with HDC about providing more volunteer training. The AGM was due to take place in December 2021.
20. Huntingdon Community Centre – Members were told that there had been no contact regarding meetings, and it was suggested that contact was made to see whether any future meetings were planned.

A Member highlighted that the Citizens Advice Bureau was still not on the list of outside bodies and explained that a recent meeting with the regional manager had taken place. Members were told that a half page article had been placed in Huntingdon magazine telling residents how to access support if required. Members passed on their thanks to the St Neots branch of CAB for their donation of office furniture, which was being utilised in the Crematorium and Depot.

41. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor thanked Members for maintaining a high standard in their conduct and expressed how important it was as public figures to give residents confidence in the Members they elected.

The Mayor ran through some of the recent events attended, and thanked those Members who attended the Armistice Day Service earlier that day. Members were reminded of the forthcoming Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 14th November, and the three-day Christmas Market from Friday 19th – Sunday 21st November. Members were told that the Mayor would be hosting a charity stall at the Christmas Market on the Friday and Saturday, and that both volunteers and donations would be gratefully received.

42. **COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

The Town Clerk verbally updated Members of the process to be followed to fill the Town Councillor Vacancy in Hinchingsbrooke Park Ward following the passing of Councillor Veronica Hufford. Following the guidance as outlined in the LGA 1972 S87(1 & 2) – Although the vacancy would occur on the date of death it would not be declared until the first working day following the funeral. Therefore, the vacancy was declared and posted on 10th November, following which 10 electors, within 14 days, would have the right to call for an election. If an election was called, this must be held within 60 days. If no election was called, the Town Council could then proceed to co-opt to fill the vacancy, which would be done at the Town Council meeting on 13th January 2022.

43. **CRESTED CHINA**

Members had before them a report on the opportunity to purchase a collection of Huntingdon Goss Ware China. The collection had been owned by former and late Town Clerk Ted Bocking. One Member questioned what would be done with the collection and the Town Clerk advised that with the advice of the Cromwell Museum Curator, the china would be put on display in a wall mounted cabinet in the Town Hall.

Members agreed that purchasing the collection would be a lasting memory of Ted Bocking's commitment to the Town Council, and to Huntingdon, and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to purchase the Huntingdon Goss Ware China collection at a price of £1,000.

44. **CIVIC ROBES AND TIES**

Councillor Pearce told Members that the protocol was for all branded Council ties to be offered to Members on election. Members were advised that currently the Council had black 'mourning' ties, but no standard Council ties featuring the Town Crest. Councillor Pearce explained that following the recent National SLCC conference, the Town Clerk had obtained information about ordering ties and that for a minimum order of 50 units, silk ties would be £10 each and polyester ties would be £7 each. One Member advised that several years ago, Male Councillors were invited to purchase a tie at a cost of £10 and that this could be done again to make the cost to the Council neutral.

Members debated and agreed the need for the Council to look smart and therefore credible, which led on to discussions about the purchase of new robes. A suggestion was made that there should be different robes for Former Mayors, and that the Macebearer should have a new robe too.

The Town Clerk explained that consistency and decorum was important to the Council, and that as a Council, Huntingdon prided itself on its traditional values. Members were told however that a reason for the inconsistency of the current robes was due to Members historically taking their robes home and not returning them.

With no further comments, it was agreed that the Town Clerk would look into costings and report back at a future meeting.

45. **WAR MEMORIAL WREATH POLICY**

Members had before them a report regarding the removal of remembrance wreaths at Huntingdon's war memorials. Members were in agreement that there needed to be a timeframe agreed on the display of remembrance wreaths before being recovered to avoid them becoming weathered and or/losing their prominence.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED that

- i) All Armistice Day/Remembrance Day wreaths would be recovered from the War Memorials ahead of 1st December each year
- ii) That wreaths laid for other remembrance services/anniversaries throughout the year should be recovered after two weeks
- iii) That if there are to be wreath laying ceremonies in quick succession, i.e. within the two week period, the first set of wreaths should be removed ahead of the next ceremony

46. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Mayor asked Members whether it was their wish to move that the public and the press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and it was

RESOLVED to do so.

47. **FREEDOM OF THE TOWN**

This item can be found in a private & confidential appendix.

48. **SALLOWBUSH TWO**

This item can be found in a private & confidential appendix.

49. **READMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

The Mayor asked Members whether it was their wish to readmit members of the public and the press to the meeting and it was

RESOLVED to do so.

50. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 13th January 2022 in Huntingdon Town Hall, subject to Covid 19 guidance.

Clerk's Note: In light of the increasing Covid 19 figures locally, the meeting on the 13th January 2022 was changed to a virtual meeting.

MAYOR