

**HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL**

An extra-ordinary meeting of Huntingdon Town Council was held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 in Huntingdon Town Hall at 6:30pm.

Present: Councillors: M Baker; A Beevor; A Blackwell; J Cole; C Doyle; S Gifford, M Kadewere (via Zoom); P Kadewere (via zoom); P Kennington (Deputy Mayor); D Landon Cole; B Luckham; A McAdam; S McAdam; P Pearce; T Sanderson and S Sweek.

Absent: Councillor Sir P Brown

51. **STANDING ORDERS**

Members were asked to approve the suspension of Standing Order 5.g. (wearing of robes) as per Standing Order 26.d. It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to approve the suspension of Standing Order 5.g. (wearing of robes).

52. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors K Webb.

53. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

54. **TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE**

The Town Clerk updated Members on the following items:

1. That with no election being called to fill the Hinchingsbrooke Park Ward vacancy, the position would be filled by co-option at the Town Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
2. That as per the Council's Standing Orders, the full Town Council needed to approve the use of the Town Seal to confirm the sale of Sallowbush Two to Hotel Chocolat. Members voted in favour of the motion. Councillors S McAdam and S Sweek abstained.
3. That Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) was holding a DMC meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 re. the planning applications for St John's Street and George Street, and for the canopy, tables and chairs at 51a High Street. Members were told that the Council could send a Member to represent the Town Council at the meeting and speak regarding the planning applications in question. Councillor Sanderson advised that he would be happy to attend and speak on behalf of the Council, and highlighted that HDC was recommending a s.106 contribution of £150,000 for the St John Street application, which would benefit the town. Members agreed that Councillor Sanderson should attend and speak on behalf of HTC.
4. That HDC had announced a new round of CIL applications, with a deadline of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The Town Clerk recommended to Members that an

application be submitted for between £60-£100k to repair further sections of the Priory Road Cemetery wall, enabling the majority of remaining repair work to be completed. The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Cemetery had been taken over by the Town Council from the District Council, so hoped that it would be a favourable project to submit. Members were asked if they had any other suggestions for applications, to contact the Town Clerk directly by Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

5. Members were reminded of the Civic Carol Service taking place at the Crematorium Chapel on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Members were encouraged to attend, however the Town Clerk explained that only the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be robed and that face masks should be worn at all times.
6. The Town Clerk highlighted that the latest government advice was that people should return to working from home where possible. Members were told that there would still be a presence in the Town Hall, but that it would be largely reduced where possible. Following on from the latest government advice, the Town Clerk told Members that Town Council staff had taken the decision to cancel their staff Christmas meal.

## 55. **ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 2022/23**

The Deputy Mayor invited Councillor Phil Pearce as Finance Committee Chairman to address Members on the recommended level of precept for 2022/23. Councillor Pearce explained that at a meeting of the Finance Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021, Members had agreed to recommend a Precept of £1,436,220.00 for the 2022/23 financial year. Councillor Pearce told Members that this figure equated to a 3.8% increase on the 2021/22 budget, which was higher than the 2.5% the Council was aiming for, but fell short of the previous two months cost of living increases, which were reported nationally at 4.6% and 5.1% respectively. Councillor Pearce told Members that the 3.8% accommodated all the ambitions of the Council for the forthcoming year, and assured Members that the Council was sitting on very solid finances, with £750,000 currently in reserves. Councillor Pearce invited Councillor Luckham as Chairman of the Finance Sub Committee to add any comments.

Councillor Luckham told Members that there had been many online sessions with himself, Councillor Pearce and the Town Clerk to put forward revised proposals that met the need of the Council, but fell within an acceptable percentage increase, in line with inflation. Councillor Luckham gave thanks to Councillor Pearce and the Town Clerk for their work in presenting a robust budget, and to Members for working hard in the Committee meetings to get to an agreed proposal.

With no further comments or questions, it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to accept the proposed level of precept for 2022/23 of £1,436,220.00, which would be submitted to HDC.

The Town Clerk thanked Members for their early adoption of the 2022/23 budget, explaining that by recommending the precept ahead of January, meant that should any new lockdowns be imposed, this wouldn't affect the Council's ability to formally approve the precept within HDC's timeframe.

## 56. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

**MAYOR**