

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

A meeting of the Town Council was held in the Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon on Thursday 7th January 2016.

Present: Councillors: A Beevor; A Blackwell; D Brown; J Dyne; T Forster; S Gifford; W Hensley; J Jacobs; P Kadewere; A Mackender-Lawrence; S McAdam; B Morrell; S Mulcahy and T Sanderson.

In attendance: Sophie Day of The Hunts Post, Doug McIlwain, a Magpas representative, a Haines Watts representative and three representatives from Krafty Kats.

61. **WELCOME**

The Mayor welcomed those in attendance and before the commencement of proceedings, invited the Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Andrew Milton, to say a prayer.

62. **BEST DRESSED CHRISTMAS WINDOW CHEQUE PRESENTATION**

The Mayor welcomed Krafty Kats as the winner of the 2015 Best Dressed Christmas Window Competition to come and claim the £100 for Magpas. At this stage during the meeting, the owner of Krafty Kats had not yet arrived but a representative of Magpas collected the cheque.

Robert Goddard and James Cox were both invited to claim their charity cheques coming 2nd and 3rd place but neither had sent a representative.

A representative from Haines Watts was in attendance at the meeting but it was clarified that the prizes for the best non-retail best dressed Christmas window displays were awarded by BID Huntingdon. Photographs were taken with the Mayor and the owner of Krafty Kats who had subsequently arrived.

63. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors A Dovans; L George; S Hassell; B Manning and R Valatka.

64. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

65. **PUBLIC ADDRESS/ADDRESS FROM OTHER COUNCILLORS TO COUNCIL**

There was none.

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

District Councillor Tom Sanderson advised Members that a Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Scrutiny Panel meeting was taking place simultaneously to the current Town Council meeting, whereby a figure of £282,000 was being negotiated for use at Coneygear Park. A further £100,000 was under discussion for use on Doorstep Greens. Councillor Sanderson informed that the money may be able to be spent on projects across Huntingdon, suggesting that the restriction of using the £282,000 at Coneygear Park could be lifted, making it available for use elsewhere.

67. **MINUTES**

Members had before them minutes of the Town Council Meetings held on Thursday 5th November 2015 (M5).

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt these minutes and they were duly signed by the Mayor.

68. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

Members had before them minutes from:

- (i) Planning Committee, 19th November 2015 (M4)
- (ii) Leisure and Community Services Committee, 12th November 2015 (M4)
- (iii) Finance Committee, 29th October 2015 (M4), 26th November 2015 (M5) and 17th December 2015 (M6)

The Town Clerk advised the Chairman that the minutes of the Finance Committee from 17th December 2015 (M6) could not be adopted, due to them being presented to the Finance Committee for approval following the current Town Council meeting.

The Mayor asked Members whether they were happy to approve and adopt the remaining sets of minutes and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve and adopt all four sets of minutes.

69. **TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE**

The Town Clerk reported that payment from Huntingdonshire District Council had been received to the amount of £48,000 for the Coneygear Park Play Area.

Members were also advised that during the Christmas break, the Town Council offices received zero phone calls, four bits of promotional/supplier post and 40 items in the main Town Council inbox, all of which were standard mailing list items.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for the updates and they were noted by Members.

70. **COUNCIL AND CIVIC ROLLING PROGRAMME**

Members had before them copies of the Town Council's rolling programme and the Town Council's civic events rolling programme. One Member questioned the figures listed for the capital projects in the rolling programme, asking how they had been calculated. The Town Clerk explained that the figures were based on estimates provided by contractors for the works.

Another Member questioned why the Town Hall furniture wasn't contained within the rolling programme and the Town Clerk explained that this was a new project, which was appearing later on in the agenda for discussion.

Members gave thanks for the reports and both items were noted.

71. **CAPALC MEMBERSHIP**

The Mayor invited Councillor Kadewere to provide an update on Cambridge and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC) following his attendance to the AGM, held on 10th December 2015.

Councillor Kadewere explained that he had attended CAPALC's AGM as a representative of Huntingdon Town Council. He advised Members that CAPALC was a body, which was in place to provide advice and support to Councils. Members were informed that the main reason for the update was due to a 3% increase in CAPALC's annual membership.

Councillor Kadewere moved on to explain that CAPALC worked under the umbrella organisation National Association of Local Councils (NALC), which was there to represent local Councils. Members were informed that NALC was there to support Town and Parish Councils where money from central government hadn't been passed down to local level. Councillor Kadewere explained that there was a grant funding pot of £4.7million available for Town and Parish Councils to apply for, to build the stability of local Councils.

72. **CIL MONEY – CONDITIONS OF USE**

- i) Members were advised that the use of available CIL money had been discussed at a previous meeting, and that Members had requested clarification on how CIL money could be spent. In light of this, Members had before them a report from Huntingdonshire District Council, which outlined the conditions of use. One Member suggested that the report was incorrect and highlighted the infrastructure deficit in Huntingdon. The Mayor asked if there were any further questions and the report was noted.

Clerk's Note: Councillor Jacobs arrived at the meeting 7.20pm

- ii) Members had before them a report with recommendations for CIL expenditure, highlighting the need for new furnishings in the Town Hall. A Member argued that with the infrastructure deficit in Huntingdon, the CIL funding available should not be used to purchase furnishings in the Town Hall. Another Member argued that with the Town Hall now being licenced for Wedding Ceremonies, the furniture in the building was very important to draw people into using the venue.

Members debated the best use spending the available funds, with areas such as the Medway and Maple Centres being highlighted as areas in need of attention. Members suggested that better ideas for spending the money needed to be raised and that if there were no other feasible areas to spend it on, then the Town Hall could be considered. Another Member argued that the money shouldn't be spent on the Council's own infrastructure; it should be spent in the wider community.

The Town Clerk informed Members that a number of Town Council Staff members had recently undertaken hand and vibration tests, with one Caretaker being referred to Occupational Health for problems with manual handling. From a caretaking point of view, this was going to mean that with the current tables in the Town Hall, both Caretakers would need to be on duty to do any lifting or moving of furniture, which would prove to be very costly for the Council. By purchasing new furniture, this would not only mean improved health and safety for staff, but also act as a cost saving tool. The Town Clerk also advised that only half of the CIL money had been recommended for the purchase of Town Hall furniture, leaving an additional £13,000 for other infrastructure projects in the town.

One Member suggested that the local community should be consulted as to what they would like to see the money spent on. It was highlighted that this could be done via the Council's website, through the Council's newsletter and via any other communication channels available to the Council. The Mayor suggested that in light of there being a Reporter from the Hunts Post in attendance at the meeting, perhaps it could be asked to include something in the forthcoming paper to ask residents how they would like to see the £26,000 spent. It was agreed that this would be an effective way to communicate with the public and it was

RESOLVED to run the consultation for a one month period.

73. **STREET LIGHTING**

Members had before them a report regarding a street light being replaced on Church Lane in Hartford. One Member questioned why the responsibility for the street light had been passed onto the Town Council, suggesting that it stood in a conservation area.

Another Member highlighted to the meeting that in light of no costs having been obtained from Cambridgeshire County Council, no decision could be made. The Town Clerk advised that the deadline for comment was the following day, but Members were in agreement that with no costings, no comment could be provided.

One Member questioned what would happen if Huntingdon Town Council wasn't to fund the street light. The Town Clerk advised Members that as the street light wasn't a heritage post, it would be removed and replaced with a standard column. If Huntingdon Town Council was to cover the costs of replacing the column for an ornate street light, Cambridgeshire County Council would fund the running costs, but Huntingdon Town Council would be responsible for covering the maintenance costs.

Members debated the pros and cons of the standard vs. ornate column and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to let Cambridgeshire County Council replace the column with a standard street light.

Clerk's note: 11 Members voted in favour, 3 Members voted against.

74. **PARKING PERMITS**

Ahead of the meeting, Members had been provided with individual parking permits for the Town Hall, along with terms and conditions of use. The Town Clerk explained that there had been a series of meetings between Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council to discuss parking and misuse of the Market Square. In order to make policing of the area more effective, it had been agreed that all Council Members would be issued with vehicle registration permits for use at Council events and meetings only. Members were further advised as to the allocated area of land in which vehicles should be parked.

Members argued that the new permit system was flawed, with the allocated piece of land to the side of the Town Hall not being sufficient for all 19 Members to park. The Town Clerk clarified that the Town Council was not under any obligation to provide parking spaces for Councillors and that nearby town centre car parks were all free after 6pm for evening meetings.

One Member questioned being a blue badge holder and whether the same restrictions applied. The Member was informed that they would be able to park in the designated area.

Members moved on to discuss the issue of Market Traders being informed that their vehicles needed to be removed from the Market Square, which sparked concern amongst Members for the vibrancy of the town. It was suggested that if this was implemented, it could affect both trade and footfall in Huntingdon.

A Member suggested that the Market Square should fall under the responsibility of the Town Council and that devolution should be looked into once again for the specific area.

Another Member asked whether the parking spaces to the side of the building would be marked, but the Town Clerk advised that this had been refused by HDC's Conservation Officer. Members were informed that Huntingdon Town Council had requested a trial closure of the Princes Street gates onto the Square, making it a safer area for pedestrians but that Cambridgeshire County Council were responsible for the current Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in place, and that it would be extremely costly to amend it. A Member asked what the associated costs were and the Town Clerk explained that the legal costs would be roughly £1000 with the additional cost of changing all related signage. Another Member questioned whether this could be funded by the CIL money available but the general consensus was that the whole issue should be discussed further, with a meeting scheduled to look into devolution. The Town Clerk told Members that a meeting was to take place between HTC, HDC and

CCC on Tuesday 12th January, where amending the TRO for the Market Square would be discussed. It was

RESOLVED to accept the parking permits allocated, but to set a meeting to discuss devolution following the Leisure and Community Services Committee meeting on Thursday 4th February.

75. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that fundraising for the Mayor's Charities was going very well, with the total amount raised over the last three years set to reach the £50,000 mark. The Mayor told Members that he was very proud of this figure, but that thanks needed to go to Doug McIlwain as Chairman of Fundraising for all the work he had done over the last three years. The Mayor asked Members to support any future fundraising events and handed over to Mr McIlwain for an update on forthcoming events:

- Quiz at the Medway Centre – Saturday 6th February
- Court Play in Huntingdon Town Hall – Murder at the Meads – 8th to 12th March
- Mayor of Huntingdon's Charity Ball at the Marriot Hotel – Saturday 19th March
- Mayor of Huntingdon's Easter Race at Jubilee Park
- Mayor Making – Thursday 12th May

The Mayor gave thanks to Mr McIlwain and concluded the Mayor's announcements.

76. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE 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.

77. **ASSET TRANSFER**

Members discussed a report, which can be found in a private and confidential appendix.

78. **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.

79. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Town Council was noted as Thursday 14th January 2016.

MAYOR