



NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, NORTHAMPTON GUILDHALL

Monday 25 October 2021 – 18.00

PRESENT: Councillor R Ashraf (Town Mayor);
Councillor D Meredith (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillors: J Alwahabi, J Birch, M Brown, N Choudary, R Connolly,
J Fuchshuber, E Haque, K Holland-Delamere, G Eales, T Eales, S Hibbert,
F Ismail, A Kilbride, J Lane, L Marriott, B Purser, D Soan,
A Stevens, W Tarasiewicz

In attendance: S Carter (Town Clerk)

The Mayor's Chaplain led the Council in prayer before the formal start of the meeting.

The Town Mayor then led a minute's silence in memory of Sir David Amess MP who had recently been killed whilst attending his MP's surgery

The Town mayor welcomed newly elected Councillor Jackie Fuchshuber to her first council meeting

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Hallam, Joyce, Russell and Miah had all submitted apologies.

25. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

There were no questions or statements submitted.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. MINUTES

It was noted that Cllr Hibbert had submitted apologies for the meeting but that these had not been recorded.

RESOLVED: That with the above amendment, to authorise the Town Mayor to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19th July 2021 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

28. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE UNDER MENTIONED COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee – 26th July 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee – 18th August 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Environmental Services Committee – 6th September 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee – 13th September 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community Services Committee – 20th September 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and appendices of the Policy and Finance Committee – 4th October 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee – 11th October 2021 be received, approved and adopted.

29. Membership of Committees

RESOLVED: That Cllr Miah move from Community Services Committee to Planning Committee. That Cllr Alwahabi move from the Planning Committee to the Policy and Finance Committee. That Cllr Fuchshuber be appointed to the Planning Committee and Community Services Committee.

It was noted that Cllr Joyce wished to step back as Chair of the Environmental Services Committee at the present time and it was proposed that Cllr Stevens be appointed as Chair. In response to a question about the Deputy Chair stepping up the Town Clerk suggested that this was a change in appointment and that Standing Orders did not prevent this from happening in his experience.

Cllr Eales highlighted that a change in the Chair was common midway through, and that WNC had recently done something similar.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Stevens be appointed as Chair of the Environmental Services Committee.

30. Appointment to outside bodies – Trustees to the Charity of Emma Rice and WEJ Knight Almshouses

It was reported that it was common for town and parish councils to appoint representatives and trustees to outside bodies. In this instance, the Town Council had been approached by a representative of the Charity of Emma Rice and W. E. J. Knight Almshouses. The Almshouses were located on Collingwood Road in the Phippsville ward.

The following had been provided by the charity:

The Charity is run by Trustees, who are all volunteers. The Trustees meet about 6 times a year. The Almshouses are run for us by East Midlands Homes on a 5-year contract. The responsibilities of the Trustees are to review the progress of the Management Contractors, produce accounts and maintain the fabric of the properties, which comprise 15 flats.

The Trustees are all getting old, with the eldest 91, and the rest of us over 70. We are in need of new volunteers to join us. We have had little luck in finding new Trustees.

There are right now five trustees all over 70. Being a trustee is not onerous BUT requires sense, some knowledge of housing in all respects and curiosity.

In response to a question, the Clerk stated that he did not know if the meetings were held in the day or the evening.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Soan and Cllr Lane (subject to meetings being held at a suitable time) be appointed on behalf of the Town Council as a trustee of the Charity of Emma Rice and WEJ Knight Almshouses

31. Notice of Motion

The following motion was proposed by Cllr Soan and seconded by Cllr Hibbert:

“This council resolves to resume face to face meetings for all meetings of the council including committees and sub-committees in line with the standing orders of the council. Due regard will be given to the health a safety of all members and officers in line with current official guidance. This motion supersedes all previous decisions taken by this council with regard to the suspension of face to face meetings.”

Cllr Soan explained that all councils had returned to face to face, and that with the easing of restrictions, this council should too.

It was explained that the Council had delegated authority to the Clerk and used the meetings to inform the decision making process and held them on zoom to protect officers and staff. There were benefits in that they were accessible to the public via YouTube. However, it was noted that the ending of restrictions meant that it was not really possible to maintain the current arrangement.

It was commented that if the Council were to return to face to face meetings that it would need to be done in as safe a way as possible, with face masks, sanitiser available and well ventilated rooms.

It was agreed that an amendment be made to the motion that 'subject to government advise changing on meeting in person, that the council return to face to face meeting.' This would allow the Council to return to online meetings without having to come back to council should the advice from the government change.

RESOLVED: That the Council resume face to face meetings for all meetings of the council including committees and sub-committees in line with the standing orders of the council, unless otherwise advised by the government. Due regard will be given to the health a safety of all members and officers in line with current official guidance. This motion supersedes all previous decisions taken by this council with regard to the suspension of face to face meetings

32. Notice of Motion

A notice of motion regarding the limiting precept rises for the Town Council was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

33. Update for information

The Town mayor permitted Cllr Birch to highlight WNC's consideration of bidding for city status on behalf of Northampton. It was iterated at the meeting that the Town Council could have an important role in this and asked to be kept briefed on the progress.

The Town Clerk stated that it would be possible to debate this proposal, however, because it was not on the agenda it could not make a decision on it. It may be possible to arrange an Extraordinary meeting to discuss it, though clarity would be needed on exactly what WNC would need from the Town Council with regards to this.

The meeting concluded at 18.45.

Cllr R Ashraf
Town Mayor