

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY  
19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023 AT THE CIVIC HALL

PRESENT

Mayor: Patrick Bailey

Cllrs: D Belcher, M Blackie, K Booth, L A Clarke, S Lees, P Oakes, L Podmore, Mrs J Saunders, M Sewart, T Swatridge, J Waterhouse and H Whittaker

Officers in attendance: Haf Barlow (Clerk) K McDowell (Deputy Clerk)

28. To note if anyone attending, or present, at the meeting is making, or intends to make, an audio recording or film the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the meeting is recorded for the purpose of minute taking and the recording is deleted when the draft minutes are agreed. There were no other declarations of a recording of the meeting.

29. Questions from members of the public

There were no members of the public present at the meeting

30. Apologies for absence

Cllr Mr M Beanland

31. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests.

32. Approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 are approved as an accurate record (NC)**

33. To review the action log for 2023-2024

**RESOLVED: That the action log for 2023-2024 was received. (NC)**

34. To receive and note the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's engagements/announcements.

**RESOLVED: The action log is noted (NC)**

35. To receive and consider the internal audit report for 2022/2023 by JDH Business Services Ltd and to receive and note the action plan as prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer, (RFO)

The auditor had noted two issues regarding a typographical error in the AGAR and ensuring that petty cash is balance to the end of the year. The Action Plan from the RFO dealing with the issues raised was noted. The auditor made no further recommendations.

**RESOLVED: That the internal audit report for 2022/2023 by JDH Business Services Ltd and the action plan prepared by the Clerk is received and approved (NC)**

36. To receive, approve and sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023.

Section 1 is the annual governance statement. There are nine assertions which the Town Council should consider, and if in agreement, approve. The governance statement has to be completed first, before the approval of the accounts. It needs to be approved by the full Council and signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk. The Clerk advised the Town Council that a positive response for all nine statements is appropriate as follows the Clerks report provided information on each assertion.

Assertion 1 – The Town Council has in place financial management and preparation of accounting statements.

Assertion 2 – Adequate systems of internal control including measures to prevent and detect fraud are in place.

Assertion 3 – The Town Council assures against actual or potential non-compliance.

Assertion 4 – Electors were provided proper opportunity during the year to exercise elector's rights.

Assertion 5 – The Town Council carries out an assessment of risk and takes steps to manage the risk including internal controls and insurance.

Assertion 6 – Effective systems of internal audit are in place.

Assertion 7 – Appropriate action is taken by the Council on all matters raised in internal and external reports.

Assertion 8 The Town Council considers whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions either during or after the year end will have a financial impact on the Town Council.

Assertion 9 Trust funds. The Town Council is not a managing trustee.

**RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return for 2022/2023 is approved and signed by the Mayor and Clerk (NC)**

37. To receive, approve and sign the Financial Statements (unaudited) for 2022/2023.

A Member asked for clarification regarding where the loan repayment was shown on the accounts. The Clerk informed the Town Council that no loan repayments had been made in the financial year 2022/2023.

**RESOLVED: That the Financial Statements for 2022/2023 are approved and signed by the Mayor and Responsible Financial Officer (NC)**

38. To receive, approve and sign Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/2023

**Section 2** is the accounting statements for 2022/23. The statements are produced by our Accountant, DCK Beavers from the financial statement for the year ending 31st March 2024. They need to be approved by the full Council and have been signed by the Town Clerk in the role as RFO. That the accounting statements represent fairly the financial position of the Town Council and its income and expenditure is certified by the Clerk. Once these accounts are accepted, the Town Mayor will sign this section of the annual return.

**Section 3** is completed and signed by the external auditor, following their examination of the annual return and the documents that we must send with it.

**RESOLVED: That Accounting Statement in the Annual Return for 2022/2023 is approved and signed by the Mayor (NC)**

39. Receive, approve and sign the Asset Register

**RESOLVED: That the Asset Register is approved and signed by the Mayor (NC)**

40. To note that the Exercise of Public Rights for unaudited annual governance return will be from the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023

The Town Council must provide electors with the opportunity to inspect the accounts and other documents for 30 working days, including the first 10 working days of July. These will be put on the Town Council's website and made available in the Civic Hall on available from 26<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The Town Council must also publish on their website the following:

- A copy of the Accounting Statements accompanied by a declaration signed by the RFO stating that they are unaudited and subject to change.
- A copy of the Annual Governance statement
- A statement detailing the exercise of public rights.

**RESOLVED: That the dates for the exercise of public rights from the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023 is noted (NC)**

41. To approve the bank mandate.

It was noted that Cllr Jo Sewart was no longer a councillor. It was agreed that Cllr Sewart would not be replaced on the mandate as five signatories should be sufficient.

**RESOLVED: That former Cllr Jo Sewart is removed from the bank mandate (NC)**

42. To receive a report from the Mayor on his proposed chosen charity, the Mary Sunley, and to agree to the chosen charity.

The Mayor provided an overview of his chosen charity.

**RESOLVED: That the Mayor's chosen charity for 2023-2024 is approved (NC)**

43. To consider and agree a response on the Cheshire East Library Service consultation.

Cllr Saunders explained that on receipt of the consultation, she had visited the library and spoken to staff. There was a suggestion that the library could be closed on a Thursday which is currently their busiest day. Up to 90 toddlers attend the Rhyme Time sessions on a Thursday. Monday is the quietest day and that would be the best day to close. It was also suggested that instead of closing for an additional half day that the library should open earlier by one hour every day. This would equate to a half day.

It was noted that the specific details around what the closures would mean for each individual library were not set out as part of the consultation. In addition, Poynton which is one of the busiest libraries is facing similar cuts to libraries which are not well used.

The Clerk explained that Cheshire East were inviting Towns and Parishes to consider "topping up" their library service. It is unclear from the email whether the Cost is between £9,000 - £28,000 for half a day or one and a half days.

Following discussion, the following response was agreed:

That the Town Council is extremely concerned about the proposed closure of Poynton library for additional one and a half days each week. We do not support the closure and we would encourage Cheshire East to rethink the reduction of hours for this valuable, well used community asset.

In making any decisions to close the library we would ask that the usage of the library is taken into account. We understand that Mondays are the quietest days, whilst Thursdays are busy with up to 90 toddlers attending "Rhyme Time". Having considered this matter

carefully, the Town Council would ask Cheshire East to consider opening later by one hour each day, which we believe would eliminate the necessity to close for a further half a day a week.

Members were encouraged to respond to the consultation as private residents

**RESOLVED: That the Clerk drafts a response to the consultation as set out above. Enquiries are made with Cheshire East regarding the cost of “topping up the service”. That the consultation and the Town Council’s response is publicised (NC)**

44. To receive the recommendation from FIED regarding the purchase of land for allotments, and subject to obtaining s106 money, that the Town Council approves the purchase of the land subject to contract.

Cllrs considered the report from the Clerk. A member how many plots would fit on the site. The Clerk explained that the Operations Manager thought 15-20 plots might be achievable.

**RESOLVED: That the recommendation from the FIED Committee is received. Subject to obtaining s106 money, the town council approves the purchase of the land subject to contract (NC)**

45. To receive and consider an update from the Clerk on Poynton Pool and to agree any recommendations contained therein.

The Clerk provided an update on Poynton Pool and shared with Councillors the proposed text of an email to the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology.

**RESOLVED: That the report from the Clerk is received and the Clerk is requested to contact the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology as set out in the report (NC)**

46. To receive and consider a report from the Town Clerk on the Town Council’s involvement with Christmas Fest.

The Clerk explained that the person who has largely been responsible for organising Christmas Fest over the last few years has stepped down from her role. The Communities Co-ordinator attended a meeting last week, but only three other volunteers attended. Christmas Fest will be asking the community for volunteers to attend committee meetings and help to organise this popular event.

Cllr Booth, Cllr Oakes and Cllr Whitaker all agreed that they would be happy to join the committee. The Clerk will let the Communities Co-ordinator know.

**RESOLVED: That the report on Christmas Fest is received. That the Clerk informs the Christmas Fest Committee that Cllr Booth, Oakes and Whitaker would be happy to be involved and attend the committee meetings (NC)**

47. To consider a report on Heritage Open Days and to agree the recommendations set out therein

The concept of Heritage Open Days was explained by the Clerk. Cllr Booth, Podmore, Whitaker and Waterhouse expressed an interest in joining the Working Group.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council runs a Heritage Open Day in September and supports other local assets and community groups to take part. That a Working Group is set up including community groups, asset managers/owners, councillors and Sharon Duke and Jenny Lippmann (NC)**

48. To receive and adopt the Minutes of Committees:

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Facilities, Infrastructure and Economic Development Committee held on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the full Council (NC)**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the full Council (NC)**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the full Council (NC)**

49. Urgent item of business

The Clerk requested that an urgent item of business is added to the agenda. The Clerk had received an email this morning from Cheshire East requesting suggestions for cycle parking in the Town Centre. A response is required by the 30<sup>th</sup> June before the next Town Council or FIED meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the item in relation to cycle parking is added to the agenda (NC)**

50. Suggested locations for cycle parking

Locations suggested Queensway and Fountain Place. Members suggested that the Clerk asks residents via Facebook to suggest suitable locations.

**REOLVED: That the Clerk asks residents to suggest suitable locations. The list will be circulated to the Town Council for comment prior to it being submitted by the Clerk (NC)**

51. To consider any communication messages from this meeting.

The library reduction in hours  
Accounts and Annual Return  
Cycle Parking  
Mayor's Charity

**RESOLVED: That the communication messages arising from this meeting, as stated, are agreed (NC)**

Meeting end time: 9:15pm

Chair.....

Dated.....