

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.00 PM ON
MONDAY 20TH MAY 2024 AT THE CIVIC HALL POYNTON

PRESENT

Mayor to item 3 Cllr P Bailey
Mayor from item 3 Cllr H Whitaker

Cllrs: M Beanland, M Blackie, K Booth, L Clarke, S Lees, P Oakes, L Podmore, M Sewart,
T Swatridge, J Waterhouse.

Officers in attendance Haf Barlow (Clerk) Kate McDowell (Deputy Clerk)

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

The Mayor 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.

2. Election of Mayor for 2024-2025

Cllr L Clarke proposed that Cllr Hayley Whitaker is elected Mayor of Poynton 2024/25
Cllr L Podmore seconded the nomination for Mayor.

RESOLVED: That Cllr H Whitaker is elected as Mayor (NC)

The Mayor signed the declaration of acceptance of office before the Clerk as the Proper Officer.

Cllr P Bailey formally congratulated the Mayor on her appointment and the Mayor formally thanked Cllr Bailey for his work as the Mayor.

3. Election of the Deputy Mayor

Cllr M Sewart proposed Cllr Peter Oakes as the Deputy Mayor.
Cllr Simon Lees seconded the nomination.

RESOLVED: Cllr Peter Oakes is appointed as Deputy Mayor. (NC)

4. Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

5. Apologies for absence

Cllr D Belcher, Mrs J Saunders

6. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

7. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 18th March 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 18th March 2024 are approved as an accurate record (11 for, 1 abstention)

8. Immediate past Mayor's announcements

Cllr Bailey formally thanked Members and the community for their support and charitable donations during his year as Mayor. Cllr Bailey thanked the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Town Council staff for their support and Cllr Whitaker for her support as Deputy Mayor.

9. To receive the action log 2023-2024

The Clerk advised members there were 4 ongoing items and provided an update on the items.

RESOLVED: That the action log for 2023/2024 is received (NC)

10. Appointment to Standing Committees for 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the membership of the Committees is agreed as

Planning & Environment:

Cllrs, M Beanland, K Booth, L A Clarke, S Lees, L Podmore, Mrs J Saunders, T Swatridge

Finance & General Purposes:

Cllrs, M Beanland, D Belcher, L A Clarke, S Lees, P Oakes, M Sewart, T Swatridge.

Community, Order & Public Safety

Cllrs, P Bailey, D Belcher, L Podmore, Mrs J Saunders, T Swatridge, J Waterhouse. Ms. H Whitaker.

Facilities, Infrastructure & Economic Development

Cllrs, M Blackie, K Booth, S Lees, P Oakes, Mrs J Saunders, M Sewart, J Waterhouse

Appointment for Standing Committee Management & Establishment 2024/2025

The four committee chairs and Cllr David Belcher and Cllr Mrs J Saunders

11. Election of Chair and Vice- Chair of Standing Committees for 2024-2025

RESOLVED: That the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standing Committees is agreed as

Planning & Environment

Chair: Cllr L A Clarke. Vice Chair: Cllr L Podmore

Finance & General Purposes

Chair: Cllr P Oakes. Vice Chair: Cllr M Beanland

Community, Order & Public Safety

Chair: Cllr L Podmore. Vice Chair: Cllr J Waterhouse.

Facilities, Infrastructure & Economic Development

Chair: Cllr K Booth. Vice Chair: Cllr S Lees

Management & Establishment

Chair: Cllr D Belcher. Vice Chair: Cllr Mrs J Saunders (NC)

12. To consider and approve the Town Council calendar of meetings for 2024-2025
A list of meetings had been circulated prior to the meeting

RESOLVED: That the Town Council calendar of meeting for 2024-2025 is approved (NC)

13. To consider the appointment of representatives of the Town Council to outside bodies for 2024-2025

Members discussed the role of the representatives to outside bodies. It was agreed that M&E would draft a short role description which could be circulated to outside bodies to manage expectations. Representatives should be a channel of communication between the organisations and the Town Council. The role could also be to support the organisation if they needed assistance from the Town Council for example for fundraising or if they needed assistance to resolve issues.

The Clerk would also put an article in the PUN asking if any other organisations that wanted a councillor representative.

RESOLVED: That M&E is requested to draft a short role description which could be shared with outside bodies.

RESOLVED: That the following representatives to outside bodies are agreed as follows:

Twinning Association - Cllrs P Bailey, J Waterhouse.

Alms Houses - representative is Charles Gorst.

Projects 4 Poynton Cllrs M Beanland, P Oakes, H Whitaker, K Booth.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group - Cllr L Podmore.

Poynton Show - Cllr K Booth.

Poynton Rotary - Cllr P Bailey

Poynton Roundtable - Cllr P Bailey (NC)

14. To receive and consider the internal audit report for 2023/2024 by JDH Business services Ltd and to receive and note the action plan as prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer and approved by the F & GP Committee

The Clerk advised members there were 2 issues identified in the year end audit. The first issue is the Public Work Loan balance on the Annual, Governance & Accountability return did not agree to the Public Works Loan balance. The Clerk confirmed this had been amended. The second issue identified was that no current reserves policy had been

approved at the time of the audit. The Town Council noted that the F&GP committee approved a reserves policy on the 29th April 2024.

The Clerk confirmed there were no outstanding actions from previous years.

RESOLVED: That the internal audit report for 2023/2024 by JDH Business services Ltd is received. That the action plan as prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer and approved by the F & GP Committee is noted and approved (NC)

15. To receive, approve and sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024

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 the assertions were reviewed by the F & GP Committee on the 29th April 2024 who agreed to recommend to Town Council that it could respond “yes” to every assertion apart from 9 which is not applicable. A copy of the Clerks report on the Annual Governance Statement was also shared with councillors

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return for 2023/2024 is approved and signed by the Mayor and Clerk (NC)

16. To receive, approve and sign the Financial Statements (unaudited) for 2023/2024

RESOLVED: That the Financial Statements for 2023/2024 are approved and signed by the Mayor and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) (NC)

17. To receive, approve and sign Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/2024

Section 2 of the AGAR is the accounting statements for 2023/24. 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 her 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.

RESOLVED: That Accounting Statement in the Annual Return for 2023/2024 is approved and signed by the Mayor (NC)

18. Receive, approve and sign the Asset Register

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

19. To note that the Exercise of Public Rights for unaudited annual governance return will be from Monday 3rd June 2024 to 12th July 2024

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 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 Exercise of Public Rights for the unaudited annual governance return from Monday 3rd June 2024 to 12th July 2024 is noted (NC)

20. To approve the draft Standing Orders as recommended by the Management & Establishment Committee

The Clerk advised members there were a few minor highlighted amendments.

RESOLVED: That the draft Standing Orders as recommended by the Management & Establishment Committee are approved (NC)

21. To approve the Financial Regulations

The Clerk advised members that the NALC have just reviewed and significantly amended the Model Financial Regulations and the F&GP Committee will be asked to review the new financial regulations to determine whether or not the committee want adopt the new regulations.

Members considered the Financial Regulations and a minor amendment to clarify that it is the Chair of the F&GP Committee who could authorise emergency spending and call a meeting to discuss changes to contracts.

RESOLVED: That the Financial Regulations are approved subject to the proposed amendments (NC)

22. To approve the draft guidance for councillors on Freedom of Information as recommended by the Management and Establishment Committee

RESOLVED: That the draft guidance for councillors on Freedom of Information as recommended by the Management and Establishment Committee is approved (NC)

23. To approve the ChALC model Councillor/Officer protocol as recommended by the Management and Establishment Committee

RESOLVED: That the draft ChALC model Councillor/Officer protocol as recommended by the Management and Establishment Committee is approved (NC)

24. To consider the following memberships

a) Clerk's membership of the SLCC – due for renewal 1st August 2025 cost £418

b) ChALC Membership £1551.66

c) Campaign for Protection of Rural England £36

The Clerk confirmed to members that the memberships had been budgeted for. The Clerk advised members that the membership to ChALC had been invaluable.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council approve continued membership of the organisations mentioned (11 for, 1 abstention)

25. To approve the re-appointment of JDH Public Sector Services as Internal Auditors

The Clerk advised members that the F&GP Committee had reviewed the appointment of the auditor and agreed to reappoint JDH subject to a new auditor from within the organisation being appointed to audit the Town Council.

RESOLVED: That the reappointment of JDH Public Sector Services as Internal Auditors for 2024-2025 is approved. (NC)

26. To receive an update on the Strategic Plan for 2023-2024

The Clerk advised members that each committee had reviewed their actions. It was agreed that an interim review of the Strategic Plan should be organised.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Strategic Plan 2023/2024 is received (NC)

27. To receive and consider the Bus Service Review consultation and delegate a response to the bus group

The Chair provided an update. There is a small informal group looking at the bus service and liaising with Cheshire East Council, Belle Vue and also borough councillors from other affected areas.

A member suggested that rather than formalising the group, a response to the Bus Service Review could be delegated to the Planning & Environment Committee.

RESOLVED: That the response to the Bus Service Review is delegated to the Planning & Environment Committee (NC)

24.To receive a report from the Lead of the Leisure Centre Working Group

Cllr Podmore provided an update and summary of the discussions held with Cheshire East in relation to the Leisure Centre. There had been several meetings to date and Cheshire East Council and Everybody Health and Leisure had made it clear that they did not wish to relinquish responsibility for running the Leisure Centre. The High School remained open to the possibility of exploring alternative delivery models with the Town Council.

A meeting was currently being arranged with Tom Barton from Everybody Health and Leisure. The Working Group would like a number of representatives to attend but currently Everybody Health and Leisure are asking to limit it to councillors only. The Clerk has responded requesting that at the very least a representative should be invited.

The latest email from Cheshire East asked if the Town Council wishes to contribute £20,000 to Cheshire East Council support Leisure Provision in the Town. Once again, no information has been provided to justify this figure and it was noted that until recently the Town Council was being asked to contribute circa £27,000.

Members discussed how to respond to the email from Tom Shuttleworth.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council respond to Tom Shuttleworth's email as follows: The Town Council is not currently in a position to contribute £20,000 towards leisure provision having already set our budget and precept for the current financial year. The Town Council, as part of its budget setting process in autumn, will consider the request for the contribution towards Poynton Leisure Centre. Tom Shuttleworth should be asked to confirm that any increases during the contract term would be limited to inflation only increases.

That the Town Council is bound by its own financial regulations including safeguarding public money and as such it must conduct due diligence before spending taxpayers money. The Town Council cannot commit to spend £20,000 without clear information and reasoning as to how these costs have been calculated. The Town Council would be unwilling to give taxpayer's money to an organisation that is unable to provide this information. That only a few weeks ago the Town Council was asked to contribute in excess of £27,000, there has been no explanation as to why a different amount is now being requested.

It is important for transparency that Cheshire East provides full disclosure as to how much each Town and Parish has been asked to contribute towards the Leisure Centres (NC)

25.To consider which committee should lead the Leisure Centre Working Group

RESOLVED: That the Facilities, Infrastructure & Economic Development committee will lead the Leisure Centre Working Group (NC)

26.To receive and consider a report from the Clerk on the Household Waste and Recycling Centre and agree a response to Tom Shuttleworth, Cheshire East Council

The Clerk advised members, Cheshire East are requesting a funding requirement from the Town Council of £77,600 to support the continued opening of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre until April 2025. Tom Shuttleworth indicated that in all likelihood will increase significantly next year. The contract is currently out to tender, the proposals being tendered for are the current situation, either Poynton or Bollington close or both close. It was noted that Bollington Town Council were being asked to contribute significantly less to keep open the Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Bollington.

Members discussed how to respond to the email received from Tom Shuttleworth and the proposal from Bollington to explore together keeping at least one of the sites open. Members were happy to enter into discussion with Bollington.

A working group would be set up to deal with the issue of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre and membership was agreed. Cllr Mrs J Saunders would also be invited to join the group. The committee would sit under the remit of the Planning & Environment Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk responds to Tom Shuttleworth as follows:

The Town Council has already carried out its financial planning and settled a budget for 2024-2025, the request for a contribution of £77,600 is extremely challenging in this context as no money has been set aside for this. You state that you are not prepared to provide any further information relating to the costs we are being asked to contribute to. The Town Council is bound by its own financial regulations including safeguarding public money. The Town Council cannot consider committing to spend over £77K without information as to how these costs have been calculated. The Town Council would be unwilling to give large sums of taxpayer's money to an organisation that is incapable of providing this information.

In addition, in safeguarding public money the Town Council has to understand why Bollington Town Council is being asked to contribute a significantly lower amount. The Town Council would ask that in the interests of transparency that Cheshire East should provide proper information in relation to how these various amounts have been calculated and also how much Middlewich has been asked to contribute to keep their site open.

The Town Council would ask if possibilities of reducing operating costs at these sites for example opening the Poynton and Bollington sites 3 or 4 days a week with rotating Saturdays has been explored as part of the emergency closure package in order to reduce the costs Councils are being asked to contribute. At present we understand that Cheshire East currently contract to ANSA who then contract to Martins, in all likelihood increasing the management costs paid by Cheshire East for these sites. Has the council considered if savings could be made if double contracts were eliminated?

RESOLVED: That the Town Council set up a Working Group for the recycling centre which will sit under the Planning & Environment Committee. Membership of the Working Group will include Cllr's, Sewart, Clarke, Swatridge, Whitaker, Beanland and Mrs J Saunders will be asked if she wishes to join (NC)

27. To note that the Cabinet Office has now approved naming the unnamed road to the Civic Hall the Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Way

The Clerk advised members that the Town Council will have to get permission from Cheshire East before approaching Royal Mail.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council notes that the Cabinet Office has now approved the naming of the unnamed road to Civic Hall to be named the Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Way and that Cllr M Sewart will approach Cheshire East Council to progress matters (NC)

28. To note the response received from David Rutley in relation to the petition to remove Macclesfield and surrounding areas from Cheshire East.

Members discussed the initial petition and the response from David Rutley MP noting the Town Council's concerns. Neighbouring towns and parishes were all experiencing similar issues and whilst the North East Cheshire Community Partnership (NECCP) was no longer functioning, it was proposed that the Clerk contacts former members of the NECCP to see if they would like to meet to discuss issues and possible ways to mitigate them.

RESOLVED: That the response received from David Rutley in relation to the petition to remove Macclesfield and surrounding areas from Cheshire East is noted. That the Town Council contact the original members of the NECCP - Pott Shrigley, Kettlethulme, Adlington, Disley Bollington, Prestbury and Mottram St Andrew with the aim of setting up a meeting to discuss current issues and negotiations involving Cheshire East (NC)

29. To receive and consider the email regarding the launch of the Poynton Artisan Market and to agree a response.

Members considered the email.

RESOLVED: That the email regarding the launch of the Poynton Artisan Market is received and the Town council responds noting the event is taking place and wish them all the best for their venture. (NC)

30. To receive and adopt the Minutes of Committees

Community Order and Public Safety Committee 22nd January 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community Order and Public Safety Committee held on the 22nd January 2024 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the Full Council (NC)

Finance & General Purposes Committee 26th February 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on the 26th February 2024 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the Full Council (NC)

Management & Establishment Committee 15th January 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Management and Establishment Committee held on the 15th January 2024 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the Full Council (NC)

Planning & Environment Committee 11th March 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on the 11th March 2024 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the Full Council (NC)

Planning & Environment Committee 8th April 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on the 8th April 2024 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by the Full Council (NC)

31. To consider any communication messages from this meeting

RESOLVED: That the bus and household waste and recycling centre consultations and the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor communication messages are agreed

Meeting end time: 9:45pm

Chair

Dated.....