



Atherstone Town Council

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DOCUMENT	MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
VENUE	North Warwickshire Borough Council, Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1DE
DATE AND TIME	Wednesday 31st January 2024 7.00pm
IN ATTENDANCE	Cllr's K Barnett, R. Collins, C. Jones, D Pickard, J. Smith, A. Wickham-Young & D. Wilkinson, D Wright
GUESTS	County Cllr: M Singh Borough Cllr/s: D Clews & R Jarvis PC Stephen Taylor Members of the public / press: 2
CHAIRMAN	Cllr K Barnett
CLERK	Kate Clover (minutes) Sally Oldham also in attendance.

Item	The Chairman acknowledged the sad passing of Honorary Citizen, Howard Vero. Cllrs acknowledged his achievements in relation to Owen Street Community Arts Centre, the Heritage Centre and as an ambassador for the town.
1.	APOLOGIES: Cllr's S. Bishop, J. Braithwaite, J. Chambers, C. Evans, A. Forwood, G Short & M. Short had sent apologies, which were noted.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS: None
3.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Concerns raised regarding how correspondence is now dealt with now this is no longer on the agenda. The clerk advised that general items of correspondence are responded to by the Clerks, relevant correspondence is circulated to Councillors throughout the month and any items which require decision are placed upon the agenda for consideration. Further concern was expressed regarding the guidance on the agenda for the public participation item, the Chair confirmed that if residents contact the Clerk in advance, then there is an opportunity to prepare the Council and potentially a response. Comments raised at the meeting will be considered, however the Council may be unable to provide a response at the meeting. Cllr Jones raised concerns regarding incidents at the Ratcliffe Centre, PC Taylor advised this was a matter that Warwickshire Police were tackling. .
4.	REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS: Borough Cllr Jarvis advised that the consultation for the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is now live, concerns raised by ATC at a prior meeting regarding potential issues of the order interfering with 'social drinking' and events were not concerns he shared. Paper copies of the consultation were provided for Town Councillors who wished to respond. PC Taylor advised that Warwickshire Police were not looking to target licensed premises or scheduled events. Currently, the police have to obtain a criminal behaviour order (CBO) to take action, this takes up significant time and resources and the Crown Prosecution Service are generally not supportive of CBO's. The PSPO will improve the ability for Warwickshire Police to tackle anti-social behaviour caused by substance abuse which unfortunately has been prevalent in the Town due to a minority of individuals. Borough Cllr Wright is supportive of the PSPO intended to support Warwickshire Police and improve the Town by ensuring that anti-social behaviour caused through alcohol / substance abuse can be addressed. Borough Cllr Barnett expressed reservations regarding the wording of the agreement which he felt was too broad in scope and the potential implications of this. Borough Cllr Clews provided an update from a meeting she had attended regarding transport at Ridge Lane, including Atherstone, she advised there is a 'dial-a-bus' service which is currently underutilised. She has requested further information on the scheme and will circulate this to the Clerks with a view to raising the profile of this service and ensuring residents are aware of this.

	<p>County Cllr Singh advised the Town Council that there was a consultation session at Atherstone Memorial Hall on Thurs 8th Feb 2024 at 6:30pm regarding the proposed plans from Warwickshire Fire & Rescue (item 17.) The event is free, however booking is required to attend. County Cllr Singh had requested a map of the dropped kerbs and crossings in Atherstone on behalf of Cllr Pickard however WCC advised that they do not keep a complete record of these. Borough Cllr Taylor had sent her apologies.</p>
5.	<p>REPORT FROM WARWICKSHIRE POLICE REPRESENTATIVES: The written report provided by Warwickshire Police was noted (attached) PC Taylor mentioned concerns regarding the siting of the ATM at Tesco (Item 8b) PC Taylor also mention that the Police presence / standby will be at a higher level in the town on Tuesday 13th February for the Ball Game, decisions regarding the future of the event are taken at a higher level. This will be the first Ball Game PC Taylor has attended having recently transferred to the area. Police want to ensure the stewards are carrying out their duties and that violence does not get out of hand. There is no desire from Warwickshire Police to be heavy-handed or stop the ball game, they also have a duty to protect the public; a common sense approach will be applied.</p>
6.	<p>ATHERSTONE PARTNERSHIP: No written report received. Reminder provided that there is an open meeting of Atherstone Partnership on 28th February (5:30pm)</p>
7.	<p>MINUTES: It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 13th December 2023.</p>
8.	<p>PLANNING: a) New Applications: PAP/2023/0551 3M Factory – no comment PAP/2023/0566 – 27-29 Long St – no comment PAP/2023/0572 – 28 Church St – no comment PAP/2023/0573 – 93 Long Street – no comment PAP/2023/0574 – 93 Long Street – no comment PAP/2023/0581 – 90 Coleshill Road – no comment PAP/2024/0003 – 32 Holte Rd – no comment PAP/2024/0004 – Nationwide – no comment PAP/2024/0009 – 33 Sheepy Road – no comment</p> <p>b) The decisions on previous applications were noted.</p>
9.	<p>COMMITTEES, SUB COMMITTEES (WORKING GROUPS) & REPRESENTATIONS a) The Arcade Working Group notes from 12/12/2023 were noted. b) i) The Town Mayor Report was noted c) It was RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Wickham-Young to represent the Town Council as a Community Governor at Outwoods Primary School.</p>
10.	<p>BUDGET SETTING 2024-2025: a) The draft budget was proposed by Cllr Barnett, seconded by Cllr Pickard and it was RESOLVED to adopt the proposed budget for 2024-25. b) It was RESOLVED to set the precept for 2024-2025 at £193,707. This represents an increase of £6.33 per annum (9.9%).</p>
11.	<p>UPSTAIRS ARCADE PROJECT / ACTION PLAN: a) The annotated documents from the Clerks regarding updates / actions from 12/12/2023 were noted. b) The advice from Anstey Energy regarding suggestions to improve the EPC rating was noted. c) It was RESOLVED to remove the stated action for the Arcade development plans referring to ceasing any further work or time on this. d) It was RESOLVED to add an action to recommence work on the development plan for the Arcade. e) An amendment to the motion to limit officer time to four hours per month was proposed by Cllr Barnett, seconded by Cllr Wilkinson, and was CARRIED. It was RESOLVED to provide up to four hours per month of clerical support to the Arcade Working Group.</p>

	<p>f) It was RESOLVED to obtain a budget quotation for the installation of LED lighting, Heat insulation & a Heat Pump to assist in the development of a project brief.</p> <p>g) It was RESOLVED to obtain any other budget quotations for this project as and when required.</p>
12.	<p>COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME APPLICATION: Decisions on applications received for the 2024-25 Community Grant funding in November 2023 had been deferred by the Council until the budget setting process was completed.</p> <p>a) The application from the Atherstone Partnership was deferred so further information could be obtained.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED to approve the application from the Dickens Committee and award grant funding of £2,600 for the Dicken's Event.</p> <p>Community Grants for up to £1000 will be considered at the May meeting, the application deadline is 1st May 2024.</p>
13.	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS:</p> <p>a) The Q3 Budget Monitoring Report was noted.</p> <p>b) The accounts and bank reconciliation to 25/01/2024 were approved.</p> <p>c) It was RESOLVED to approve the payment list from 01/04/2023 (attached)</p> <p>d) It was RESOLVED to approve the list of regular payments for 2023-24 (attached)</p> <p>e) It was RESOLVED to approve the authorisation of a Direct Debit Mandate for HMRC for the collection of PAYE & NI contributions.</p> <p>f) It was RESOLVED to pay a lump sum to BNP Paribas of £4019 to clear the remaining balance on the photocopier contract terminated in Dec 2020.</p> <p>g) It was RESOLVED to terminate the existing servicing & maintenance contract for the photocopier.</p> <p>h) It was RESOLVED to approve the payment schedule for late December / January and Cllr's Barnett & Wright were nominated to authorise these payments on Unity Trust.</p> <p>i) It was RESOLVED to add Cllr Jones, Wickham-Young & Wilkinson to the Unity Trust Bank Mandate.</p> <p>j) It was RESOLVED to appoint Alan Toplis Associates as the Internal Auditors for 2023-24</p>
14.	<p>REQUESTS FOR EXPENDITURE ABOVE APPROVED BUDGET 2023/24:</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED to approve up to £1200 for the urgent replacement of the Clerk's laptop & docking station.</p> <p>b) The upgrade to Microsoft 365 Business Basic licenses from Exchange online for 15 x Councillors at a total additional cost of £24 per month was deferred.</p> <p>c) It was RESOLVED to allow an overspend of up to £200 for expenses incurred by the mayor in the course of his duties to allow further attendance at Civic Events in February & March 2024.</p> <p>d) It was RESOLVED to allow an overspend of up to £200 for room hire to allow for additional in-person meetings and workshops of the Council and any of its committees or Sub Committees (working groups) Cllr Wright declared an interest as leader of NWBC and abstained from the vote & discussion.</p>
15.	<p>CEMETERY:</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED to approve the quotation received from Perennial Landscapes for the specified Grounds Maintenance tasks. The prices quoted would be held by the supplier from 2024-2027.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED to approve in principle a small landscaping project to extend the existing baby section within the cemetery utilising the four trees funded by Green Shoots for Spring 2024.</p>
16.	<p>CLERK REPORTS:</p> <p>a) The Deputy Clerk report was noted.</p> <p>b) Deputy Clerk advised that the graffiti wipes found had worked well, a risk assessment was in place and a date for a graffiti clean-up day will be arranged with volunteers as the weather improves.</p>

17.	<p>CONSULTATIONS:</p> <p>a) Councillors will provide responses as individuals to the Warwickshire County Rights of Way Improvement Plan.</p> <p>b) Councillors will provide responses as individuals to draft responses to the Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Services consultation on their proposed service delivery model for consideration at the next meeting.</p>
18.	<p>TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT:</p> <p>a) This item was deferred, Clerk to source an alternative training provider.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED to schedule an in-person Action Plan workshop within the next six weeks for all available members and officers.</p>
19.	<p>ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING: Graham Beale Photography Competition</p>
20.	<p>CLOSED SESSION:</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to move into closed session and exclude the public and press, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed for items 21-23.</p>
21.	<p>CCTV:</p> <p>a) The confidential draft minutes of the CCTV Joint Committee meeting held on 11th January 2024 were noted.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED to approve the draft partnership agreement to March 2025</p> <p>c) Item to discuss the sustainability of continuing Active Monitoring beyond March 2025 and the ongoing maintenance of the CCTV equipment owned by the Town Council was deferred to the February meeting.</p> <p>d) The quotation received from Warwickshire County Council for the installation of the Camera 3 pole at a cost was deferred to the February meeting so complete costs of the replacement pole, and an updated quote from Synectic's for the camera placements and planning application fees and planning approval can be considered together.</p>
22.	<p>MEREVALE ALLOTMENT SITE LEASE:</p> <p>The update from the Clerk was noted, it was agreed for the Clerk to liaise directly with Merevale Estates with a view to concluding this matter swiftly.</p>
23.	<p>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS:</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED to allow the approval of 2.5 additional hours per week for the arcade cleaner to open the arcade from 10th January 2024 on a trial basis.</p>
<p>The meeting closed at 21:14pm the next meeting is on Wednesday 14th February 2024</p>	

Signed Chairman of Atherstone Town Council