MINUTES of the Meeting of ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL held on Monday, 27th June, 2016 in Room 11, Town Hall, Royston at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Dingley (Town Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Burt, Davidson, Davison, Harrison, Hughes, Inwood, Kennedy, Leggett, Swallow & Turner
Town Clerk
Assistant Town Clerk

The Reverend John Fidler led the meeting in Prayer.

77/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There was none.

78/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors Lewis, Hulström-Allen & Smith

79/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

There were none.

80/17 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor reported that she had had a fun month and attended the following events:
• Open Secrets Event on the Heath
• Royston & District Scouts AGM
• Splash Park opening
• Meridian Art Exhibition
• Town Twinning AGM
• Royston In Blue

For her fund raising she is planning to organise a Royston’s Got Talent competition and suggested that the Town Council may like to consider entering.

81/17 MINUTES:

It was RESOLVED to approve as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 9th May 2016 (minutes 01/17 to 25/17).

82/17 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

It was RESOLVED that the following minutes be adopted into the workings of the council.

(a) The meetings of the Planning Committee held on:
• 14th March 2016 (minutes 332/16 to 340/16).
• 11th April 2016 (minutes 361/16 to 366/16).
• 9th May 2016 (minutes 42/17 to 46/17).
• 16th May 2016 (minutes 52/17 to 57/17).

(b) The meetings of the Finance Committee held on:
• 21st March 2016 (minutes 348/16 to 360/16).
• 25th April 2016 (minutes 377/16 to 389/16).
83/17 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE NOT ALREADY BEEN APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

It was RESOLVED to receive minutes of Committee meetings, which have not already been adopted as a correct record, into the workings of the Council.

(a) The meetings of the General Purpose and Highways Committee held on:
   • 18th April 2016 (minutes 367/16 to 376/16)
   • 9th May 2016 (minutes 47/17 to 51/17)

(b) The meetings of the Finance Committee held on:
   • 9th May 2016 (minutes 26/17 to 41/17)
   • 23rd May 2016 (minutes 58/17 to 68/17)

84/17 INTERNAL AUDIT MAY 2016:

The report from the Internal Auditor was received and it was noted by members that there were no issues to report.

85/17 ANNUAL RETURN 2015-2016:

i. Members received and approved the Year End Accounts and Supporting Statement for signing by the Chairman

ii. Members agreed and approved the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the Annual Return for signing by the Chairman.

iii. Members agreed and signed the Accounting Statements 2015/2016 (Section 2) of the Annual Return.

86/17 SILVER SUNDAY – 2ND OCTOBER 2016:

Members agreed to repeat last year’s Silver Sunday event of showing a film for free for the over 65’s and agreed funding up to £550 towards the events. Town Clerk gave her apologies as she would be away on the 2nd, it was therefore agreed to look for a date either before or after the 2nd October. It was also agreed that the cinema goers be asked to give a donation to the Mayor’s Trust Fund.

87/17 WICKER HALL CEMETERY PROJECT (Notes and maps with minutes)

Cllr Burt explained the back ground to the recommendations made from the Working Party which were:

1. The project to create a Royston cemetery at Wicker Hall is stopped.

2. The Town Council Properties Advisory Sub-Committee is charged with recommending what to do with the land at Wicker Hall.

3. Royston Town Council resumes the search for a suitable site for a Royston Cemetery.

The cemetery design had been completed, tender documents prepared and discharge of the pre-commencement Planning Conditions had been applied for.

One of the pre-commencement Planning Conditions was set by the Environment Agency (EA) which has responsibility for ensuring the safety of water supplies.
At the time of the Planning Approval in 2012, the Wicker Hall cemetery was outside of “SPZ1” and the EA granted planning permission.

However, the EA advised they have now remodelled the groundwater SPZs based on an improved understanding of the catchment, aquifer properties and abstraction regime. This has resulted in a significant increase in the size SPZ1 area in Royston and now means that the entire site at Wicker Hall now lies in SPZ1.

If this was a new application, the EA would refuse permission not allowing a cemetery in SPZ1 but recognising that they had previously granted permission, the EA offered to consider an evidence-based risk assessment to demonstrate that the cemetery would not contaminate water supplies together with ongoing monitoring of water quality.

The Cemetery Working Party concluded that to undertake such a risk assessment would be complex, costly, iterative and protracted with no guarantee that it would be approved by EA. Therefore sadly the Council is asked to approve the recommendations from the Working Party as above.

Councillor Kennedy asked for an apology from the working party as he felt his concerns over the contamination of the water supply was ignored and he proposed a motion that the current members of the Working Party should stand down. This was not seconded therefore the motion was not upheld.

Councillor Kennedy said there was evidence of badgers on the site and the Working Party had failed to arrange a survey as specified in the Planning Conditions. Councillor Davison said there had been no evidence of badgers and that the Town Council had fully complied with the requirements set out in the Planning Conditions. Councillor Dingley suggested perhaps Councillor Kennedy would like to join the working party and help with finding an alternative site. Councillor Kennedy said he would not and did not wish to work with people he could not trust.

Councillor Hughes asked for details of expenditure for the project so far, the Town Clerk presented these.

After various comments from members, the recommendations from the working party were approved and a Press Release will be issued to inform members of the public.

Councillor Burt said that a member of the public had approached him about joining the working party and he proposed this, this was seconded by Councillor Turner but was not voted on, it was suggested that in the Press Release about the Wicker Hall project being stopped to ask for any members of the public who were interest in joining the working party to contact the Town Clerk or come forward with suggestions for an alternative site, this was agreed.

Once again Councillor Kennedy was asked to join the working party and he declined.

88/17 TOWN COUNCIL BY-ELECTION – PALACE WARD:

The Town Clerk notified members that NHDC have received a request from ten electors of the Palace Ward to hold an election to fill the casual vacancy. If the vacancy is contested, then a by-election will be held no later than 4th August 2016. Members were asked whether or not they would like polling cards issued to everyone in the ward. It was agreed that if an election did go ahead, then polling cards should be issued. Cllr Hughes stated that UKIP would not be contesting the election and Councillor Dingley reported that the Conservatives would not be contesting it either.
89/17  CLERK AND COUNCILLOR’S REPORTS:

The Town Clerk reported:

- Mayor’s Civic Reception will be held on Friday 14th October 2016
- Mayor’s Civic Service will be held on Sunday 5th March 2017
- Keir Homes had pulled out of the project to clear the ivy at Green Walk Plantations.
- Town Twinning are requesting that a road/ street is named after La Loupe to celebrate 30 years of Twinning, as they had just named a square in La Loupe ‘Royston Square’. Members said this is something they could look into but it may be sometime before something suitable comes up.
- The Council office will be closing at 4pm each day due to staff shortages. Phones will still be answered until 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 4.45pm on Fridays.
- A representative of the Town Council is required for Royston & South Cambs Homestart, please contact the Town Clerk if any councillor was interested.

90/17  REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

Councillor Swallow reported on the Royston & District History Society. There is a book launch at the Museum on Saturday 2nd July of their new publication, Royston’s Call to Arms. They continue to produce quarterly newsletters and give talks to members of the public between October and May and are a hard working team.

Councillor Davidson reported on the Royston Youth Network (copy of report with minutes)