

MINUTES of the meeting of **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL** held virtually via Zoom at 7.30pm on Monday 7th September 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Inwood (Town Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Brown, Coll, Davison, Hughes, Leggett, Perry,
P. Smith, Squire-Smith and Stanier

In attendance: Town Clerk
County Councillor Hill and District Councillor Hunter
3 members of the public

The Town Mayor welcomed everybody to the meeting and informed those present that the meeting was being recorded.

30/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

A member of the public addressed the council on the subject of equality and diversity. The chairman thanked them for attending the meeting.

31/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Harrison, Phillips and Swallow.

32/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

Members were advised to declare any interests at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. No requests for dispensations were received.

33/21 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor reported that he has been promoting the town and has received lots of positive feedback from the public when out and about.

34/21 MINUTES:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6th July 2020 (minutes 01/21 to 15/21).

The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

35/21 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

It was **RESOLVED** that the following minutes of Committee meetings be adopted into the workings of the council:

The meeting of the Planning Committee held on 13th July 2020 (minutes 16/21 to 23/21).

36/21 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:

The meeting of the Planning Committee held on 3rd August 2020 (minutes 24/21 to 29/21).

37/21 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTY MEETINGS:

- (a) It was **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the HYOC2020 Working Party meeting held on 9th March 2020 into the workings of the Council.
- (b) It was **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the Cave Advisory Sub-committee meeting held on 10th March 2020 into the workings of the Council.
- (c) It was **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the Town Centre Working Party meeting held on 18th May 2020 into the workings of the Council.

38/21 BANK RECONCILIATION AND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE:

- a) Members received and noted the bank reconciliation for June 2020.
- b) Members received and noted the bank reconciliation for July 2020.
- c) Members received and noted the June and July 2020 Income and Expenditure reports compared against budgets for 2020-2021.

In response to Members questions, The Town Clerk clarified that the £10 payment from the Museum was to an exhibitor for a sale made prior to the museum closing, and community toilet scheme payments were not currently being paid as the scheme had been suspended but regular contact was being made with the establishments with a view to restarting the scheme.

Members observed that the financial situation seemed better than they would have expected due to Covid-19.

39/21 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

- (a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the July 2020 accounts for payment and the transfers between the Town Council accounts.
- (b) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the August 2020 accounts for payment and the transfers between the Town Council accounts.

40/21 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY:

Members discussed the proposal that a statement should be issued by the Town Council on the subject of discrimination. A statement was proposed by Councillor Stanier. After a lengthy debate, Councillor Brown proposed an amendment which was voted on but not carried.

Councillor Davison proposed an amendment which was carried.

A recorded vote was requested. Councillors Brown, Coll, Davison, Hughes, Leggett, Inwood, P Smith, Squire-Smith and Stanier voted for the proposal and Councillor Perry voted against the proposal.

Members **RESOLVED** that the Council should release a statement as follows “Royston Town Council does not support any form of discrimination against any person or group on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, disability, age, or any other personal characteristic.”

Members then discussed the motion that a working group is set up to write a full policy on equality and diversity. Members voted and the motion was lost.

Members then debated the motion that a Diversity Forum be set up as an ongoing working group of Royston Town Council.

A recorded vote was requested and Councillors Brown, Inwood, Leggett, Perry, P Smith, Squire-Smith and Stanier voted for the proposal and Councillors Coll, Davison and Hughes voted against the proposal.

It was **RESOLVED** that a Diversity Forum should be set up.

Councillor membership of the forum was then discussed and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillors Inwood, Leggett and Stanier would be members of the forum.

Members **RESOLVED** to take a break at 9.10pm. The meeting recommenced at 9.20pm.

41/21 NORTH HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC CONSULTATION – THE STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY:

Members commented that they welcomed the fact that the new licensing policy strengthened environmental issues such as reducing the use of single use plastics and it also introduced improvements for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. No formal response was submitted to the consultation.

42/21 HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC CONSULTATION – SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020:

Members **AGREED** that a working party comprising Councillors Brown & Perry and the Town Clerk be set up to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Council.

43/21 REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE:

Members discussed the arrangements including the costs and the staff time required. Cllr Stanier asked for a definition of a civic event and the Town Clerk would report back to council on this.

Members **RESOLVED** to support the annual Remembrance Day parade and service by budgeting annually and providing staff to assist with the organisation. Members noted the arrangements for the parade on 8th November 2020.

44/21 BICYCLE RACKS AND SHELTER ON THE MARKET PLACE:

Members discussed the installation of a bicycle rack and shelter on the Market Place. It would require the removal of three car parking spaces. The installation will be covered by S106 funding but ongoing maintenance will be the responsibility of the Town Council. Members discussed the possibility of including solar lighting and also highlighted the issue of bikes being abandoned in the shelter. A sight meeting is due in a couple of weeks where lighting and abandoned bikes could be discussed further.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the installation of a bicycle rack and shelter on the Market Place.

45/21 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS ON TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

There were no reports.

46/21 CLERK'S REPORT:

Properties - The Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms are now open for hiring. The latest Government recommendations are being followed and changes are constantly being implemented. A few hirers have already returned and others are planning to do so in the coming weeks. Room 11 and the Committee Room are not currently being used due to the difficulties in socially distancing in small rooms.

Royston Cave – A full risk assessment was carried out on the Cave and its potential opening once heritage sites were allowed to open. The risk assessment concluded that the Cave could not be safely opened for the current Cave season and this should be reassessed early next year to see whether it can be opened for the start of the season next year.

The Cave Manager has been working very hard behind the scenes and has upgraded the website and launched an online archive and has also recently completed the “Royston Cave Virtual Experience” which is a 3D, 360 degree virtual tour of Royston Cave. The Town Clerk thanked the Cave Manager for his work on this project. **Royston Museum** - A full risk assessment was carried out on the Museum and its potential opening once museums were allowed to open. The risk assessment concluded that the museum should remain closed to the public at the current time with a reassessment being carried out in January 2021. The museum will focus on collection rationalisation and community outreach until that time.

Town Council website – This is currently being upgraded to comply with new accessibility guidelines.

Grants – £30,000 of grant money has been secured.

Budgets – A revised budget will be produced and presented to Council hopefully at the October Full Council meeting.

Members thanked the Town Clerk, her staff and the Cave Manager for all of their hard work.

47/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:

It was **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, that, in the public interest, the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960.

48/21 STAFF MATTERS:

- (a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the staff salaries for 2020-2021 as recommended by the HR Committee.
- (b) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation in the report.

Date of next meeting: 19th October 2020.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.28pm.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Chairman