

MINUTES of the meeting of **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL** held virtually via Zoom at 7.30pm on Monday 29th March 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Inwood (Town Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Brown, Bylett, Coll, Davison, Harrison, Hughes, Perry, Phillips, FJ Smith, P Smith and Stanier.

In attendance: Town Clerk
County Councillor Hill, District Councillors Green and Hunter
1 member of the public

181/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There was none.

182/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Leggett and Squire-Smith.

183/21 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.

Councillor Coll joined the meeting at 7.35pm.

184/21 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor had nothing to report as his activities had been affected due to Lockdown restrictions.

185/21 MINUTES:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22nd February 2021 (minutes 150/21 to 172/21).

The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

186/21 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 1st February 2021 (minutes 144/21 to 149/21) into the workings of the council.

187/21 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE NOT ALREADY BEEN APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD:

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 1st March 2021 (minutes 173/21 to 180/21) into the workings of the Council. It was noted that minute 177/21 was missing due to a typing error.

188/21 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY MEETINGS:

- (a) It was **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the Sustainable Travel Town Working Party meeting held on Wednesday 24th February 2021 into the workings of the Council.
- (b) It was **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the Sustainable Travel Town Working Party meeting held on Wednesday 17th March 2021 into the workings of the Council.
- (c) It was **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the 4 Year Working Party meeting held on Friday 19th March 2021 into the workings of the Council.

189/21 BANK RECONCILIATION AND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE:

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

190/21 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the February 2021 accounts for payment and the transfers between the Town Council accounts.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the March 2021 accounts for payment and the transfers between the Town Council accounts.

191/21 ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021-2022:

Members discussed the current financial arrangements that the Council had in place and the possibility of negative interest rates on reserves along with diversification of the Council's funds. Members agreed to keep arrangements the same as the previous year. Members **RESOLVED** to approve the investment strategy for 2021-2022.

192/21 MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE PROCEDURE:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure Procedure into the general policies of the Town Council.

A Member suggested that the Town Council should investigate acquiring a flag pole for the Town Hall and flying the Union Flag as permission had recently been given for this for all government buildings. The Chair agreed to add this item to the next full council agenda.

193/21 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR STAFF AND COUNCILLORS:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Training and Development Policy for Staff and Councillors into the general policies of the Town Council.

194/21 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE POLICY:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy into the general policies of the Town Council.

195/21 ROYSTON MUSEUM:

Councillor Davison began by thanking Amy Judd for running the Museum since the middle of last year, with support from Nicky Paton and Gemma Papineau, Herts Museums Development Officer.

Councillor Davison presented the recommendations in the consultant's report regarding the future of the Museum and it becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. There are many advantages to this including savings on business rates and the ability to apply for substantial grant funding.

A Working Party to facilitate this would be set up to include representatives from the History Society and Town Council.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the following recommendations –

- a. To set up a joint working group to oversee the process of setting up a CIO to manage the Museum and negotiate an SLA and loan agreement with the Council and History Society.

Councillors Davison, Leggett, Phillips and P Smith were appointed to the working party to represent the Town Council.

- b. Not to renew the current agreement between the History Society and the Town Council.
- c. To enter into discussions with the museum landlord for a new 25 year lease for the building and sub-let to the CIO.

196/21 STREET FOOD HEROES:

Councillor Davison noted that these events were well received when run in 2019. There had been issues with waste and toilets at the beginning. It was suggested that Royston food retailers be invited to take part at the events under the same terms as the other vendors. Royston First BID could be involved to arrange this if it is agreed.

Members **NOTED** the plans for Street Food Heroes events to be held in Priory Memorial Gardens on 5th June 2021, 17th July 2021, 14th August 2021 and 11th September 2021.

197/21 TOWN HALL MAINTENANCE RESERVE:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of a replacement server and associated equipment for the cinema, at a net cost of £8,460.05. The current equipment had failed and the cinema could not operate without the new equipment.

198/21 4 YEAR PLAN WORKING PARTY:

Councillor Davison reported that the cycle racks were going ahead and that repainting the white lines at the car parks had been included in the costs. Ideas for encouraging the use of the racks would be welcome.

Working party members would now focus more on the creation of safe walking trails for leisure use around the area. Councillor Perry added that these were the sort of ideas that would fit well into the Sustainable Travel Plan and it would be good to build a bank of ideas for the later stages of the plan.

A new site for the bandstand had been recommended and the contractors have quoted £6,000 to £8,000 for removing the old stand, much less than originally thought.

It is important to have an online and paper-based consultation with members of the community regarding the spending of s106 monies. The consultation will include the question of the bandstand and ring-fencing precept to support Therfield Heath. Members were asked to suggest other questions to be included in the next two weeks. The working party would make detailed proposals to Full Council at a later meeting.

199/21 TOWN HALL S106 MONEY:

Councillor Davison and the Town Clerk have been working on a project to improve the facilities at the Town Hall using s106 money which has been allocated specifically for this purpose. Plans include refurbishing the kitchen area and improving access as there is currently no disabled access. It would also include adding a permanent hearing loop to the halls. Councillor Davison said that there will be additional money to spend and any further ideas from members would be welcome.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve making a s106 application for the improvement of access to the kitchen, refurbishment of the kitchen and bar area and to install a permanent hearing loop in the hall.

200/21 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS ON TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

Councillor Phillips attended virtual meetings of Creative Royston in February and March. The theme for 2021 is 'Renewal' and applications are invited online and the deadline is 30th April. The town enjoyed the Window Walk during half-term, several households participated.

Councillor Phillips reported that the Coombes Community Centre is doing very well, keeping open for permitted activities. The refurbished Rainbow Room and play facilities will become home to Wonderland Day Nursery. The Royston Community Association who run the centre are looking for new trustees to join the committee.

Councillor Harrison gave a report regarding a recent meeting of HAPTC. He advised them that Royston was working towards being Plastic Free and a Sustainable Travel Town. A representative from HCC informed that they are working towards getting rid of single use plastics with the supermarkets, more electric charging points and a new public transport strategy including electric buses.

Councillor Brown had attended the meeting of the Conservators of Therfield Heath. They are recruiting for a new warden, their funding has been impacted by COVID and their reserves are dropping year by year. Priorities for the next year include litter on the Heath, fixing potholes in the car-park, resurfacing paths and restructuring the governance which is out of date.

Councillor Brown reported on Citizens Advice North Herts. They have an increasing demand on their services due to the pandemic. NHDC have offered them an additional £50,000 for this year only. They are trying to recruit more volunteers and to diversify their funding.

Councillor Brown reported on Town Twinning. Although no trips have happened this year, they are managing to maintain links with their partners virtually.

Councillor Stanier reported on the Plastic Free Royston Initiative. They now have 4 businesses signed up so now need two more to become accredited.

201/21 CLERK'S REPORT:

The Clerk reported that the current legislation regarding remote meetings expires on 6th May 2021. The Government has decided not to extend the legislation therefore from 7th May 2021 the Town Council will have to meet face to face. This is a legal requirement. The Clerk will be working on plans for meetings to go ahead in the Town Hall with social distancing, ventilation and other COVID safety measures. Town Council meetings have to be open to members of the public.

Councillor FJ Smith left the meeting at 8.55pm.

Members **RESOLVED** to take a 5 minute break.

202/21 EXCLUSION OF 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.

203/21 STAFF MATTERS:

a) Royston Museum:

Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Helen Giles to provide curatorial support at Royston Museum for the next six months when a review will take place.

b) Town Council Offices:

Members **RESOLVED** to recruit a part-time Finance Assistant and a full-time Assistant Town Clerk.

Councillor Inwood thanked the Clerk and her staff for all their hard work.

Date of next meeting: 26th April 2021.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Signed: _____

Date _____

Chairman