

MINUTES of the meeting of **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Hardwicke Hall at the Town Hall, Royston at 7.30pm on Monday 17th January 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor Hughes (Town Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Beardwell, Brown, Bylett, Davison, Harrison, Leggett,
Phillips, Squire-Smith and Stanier

In attendance: Town Clerk
County Councillor Hill
District Councillor Green

Cate Hall from Trinity Life Church led the meeting in prayer.

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

Members **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3i for the remainder of the meeting allowing members to remain seated when speaking.

244/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

245/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Inwood, Perry and P Smith.

246/22 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.

247/22 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor delivered a brief eulogy in memory of Cllr F Smith and then a minutes silence was observed.

The Mayor reported that he had hosted the Civic Reception in October, visited Royston Library, judged the Halloween Trail, attended the Town Twinning Committee, laid wreaths on both Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday, switched on the Christmas lights and attended the annual Town Twinning dinner. Sadly, due to COVID restrictions, some of the usual visits such as to care homes, were unable to take place. The Mayor hoped these could begin again in the near future.

248/22 MINUTES:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27th September 2021 (minutes 133/22 to 149/22).

The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

249/22 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 meeting of the Planning Committee held on:
 - 4th October 2021 (minutes 159/22 to 165/22)
 - 1st November 2021 (minutes 188/22 to 193/22)
 - 6th December 2021 (minutes 206/22 to 211/22)
- (b) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:
 - 27th September 2021 (minutes 150/22 to 158/22)
 - 18th October 2021 (minutes 176/22 to 187/22)
 - 22nd November 2021 (minutes 194/22 to 205/22)
- (c) The meeting of the General Purpose and Highways Committee held on:
 - 11th October 2021 (minutes 166/22 to 175/22)

250/22 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 meeting of the Finance Committee held on:
 - 13th December 2021 (minutes 212/22 to 226/22)

At the Chairman's discretion item 9 was brought forward and was discussed next.

251/22 ROYSTON MUSEUM:

Councillors Bylett, Davison and Leggett declared an interest in this item.

Councillor Davison exercised his councillor's right to speak and updated members on the actions of the Museum Trust.

Councillors Bylett, Davison and Leggett then left the room and took no part in the debate or vote.

There was a lengthy debate. Amendments were proposed that the budget should be removed from the SLA document and also the line on page 3 referring to the budget. Also, that a statement should be added to section 9 of the SLA stating "Adjustments to the annual funding can be made with the agreement of the Council and Trust." These proposals were seconded and carried.

An amendment was proposed that the level of funding should be increased to £95,000 per annum, the motion was seconded but not carried.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to sign the Royston Museum Trust service level agreement with the amendments and annual funding of £91,000.

Councillors Bylett, Davison and Leggett then returned to the room.

252/22 BUDGET AND PRECEPT APPROVAL 2022-2023:

Members noted that expenditure was lower overall than expected and that a small surplus was forecast for the current year. It was explained that part of the reason for this however, was due to staff shortages in the year.

In response to a Member's question on the precept, the Town Clerk noted an error in the current year's precept figure which would be corrected. Members were pleased to note that the precept would not increase by a large amount.

The Chairman commended the Budget Working Party and staff for maintaining an increase which was well within inflation and showed the Council worked within its means.

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the 2022-2023 budget proposals from the Finance Committee.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** that the precept demand be set at £356,266, representing a 2.45% increase per Band D household for 2022-2023 which equates to £52.15 per band D property for the year.

253/22 NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2020-2021:

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the audited annual return for 2020-2021 and the External Auditors Report and Certificate into the workings of the Council.

There are no matters to report requiring any attention and no issues arising giving cause for concern. The annual return and notice of conclusion of audit have been published on the Town Council's notice board and the website as legally required. Members thanked the Town Clerk and Finance Assistant for their hard work and congratulated them on receiving another clean audit.

254/22 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES:

Members noted the vacancy in Meridian Ward due to the death of Councillor F John Smith and the vacancy in Palace Ward due to the resignation of Councillor Coll.

Members **RESOLVED** not to co-opt to fill these vacancies before the election on 5th May 2022.

255/22 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT:

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the interim internal audit report 2021-2022 into the workings of the council.

Councillor Harrison commended staff on obtaining another clean audit.

256/22 MEMBERS REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT CONTROLS:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Councillors' Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control report.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Royston Town Council Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control report.
- c) Members **RESOLVED** to agree the level of Fidelity Guarantee insurance for the year 2022-2023 at £1 million.
- d) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Risk Management 2022 document.
- e) Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the working party to enter into a new 3 year long term agreement for insurance with Zurich PLC.

257/22 ROYSTON COUNCILLORS SURGERIES:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve that the councillors surgeries can be held on Royston market on Saturday mornings.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to waive the market pitch fee for the councillor surgeries.

258/22 DIVERSITY FORUM WORKING PARTY:

- a) Cllr Stanier proposed an amendment to the terms of reference to change the number of members that constitute a quorum to three instead of four. The motion was seconded and carried. Members **RESOLVED** to approve the revised terms of reference for the Diversity Forum Working Party.
- b) Member **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Cllr Squire-Smith to the Diversity Forum Working Party.

259/22 STATEMENT OF CIVILITY AND RESPECT:

Members **RESOLVED** to formally adopt the statement on civility and respect and place it on the council's website.

260/22 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS ON TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

Councillor Harrison gave a summary of reports from the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils.

Councillor Phillips gave a report on the Coombes Community Centre. Their bookings have increased since the relaxation of COVID restrictions as have the number of children at the Wonderland Day Nursery on site. Thanks to a NHC initiative some trees have also been planted in the grounds.

261/22 CLERK'S REPORT:

The Town Clerk reported that the refurbishment of the kitchen in the Town Hall was nearly complete. Funding has been successfully obtained from the Queen's Green Canopy for a specimen tulip tree to be planted in Priory Memorial Gardens which will be 'pinned' as part of the campaign and appear on the website. The May Fayre will be happening on 2nd May this year. The Town Clerk asked councillors to volunteer for marshalling and litter picking in order for the event to go ahead.

Date of next meeting: 28th March 2022.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.53pm.

Signed: _____