

MINUTES of the meeting of **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Heritage Hall, Town Hall, Royston at 7.30pm on Monday 12th September 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Antony (Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Adams, Brown, Harrison, Inwood, Jani, Langdon, Squire-Smith and Stanier.

In attendance: Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk
2 Members of the Public

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

The Mayor expressed her sadness and sincere condolences on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Members then observed a two minutes silence in the Queen's memory.

Jonathan Scott from the Evangelical Church led the meeting in prayer.

The Chair reminded Members to be mindful of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency declared by Royston Town Council when making decisions on behalf of the Council.

138/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There was none.

139/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Beardwell, Birch, Compton, Lockett and Rees.

140/23 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.

141/23 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor announced that she had attended a number of events and venues including Royston Golf Club, Richard Cox House for their 30th anniversary celebration, British Raj Restaurant for their re-opening, Tesco Community Garden for a party and Sisters of Providence for their Community Event. The Mayor was also invited to King James Academy to inaugurate their wellbeing centre, the Allotment Open Day to judge jams, pickles and chutneys and a pre-season barbeque hosted by Royston Women's Football Team. The Mayor additionally joined the community at Royston Football Club to watch the Lionesses win the 2022 Women's World Cup and presented runners-up medals to the Royston Women's Football team for last year's season on another occasion. Finally, The Mayor attended the Royston Kite Festival and judged the kite design competition organised by Homestart.

142/23 MINUTES:

Councillor Brown proposed that the minutes be accepted subject to minute 69/23 being rewritten. The proposal was seconded but the motion was lost. Councillor Inwood proposed to accept the minutes as they stood. The motion was seconded and carried. It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20th June 2022 (minutes 62/23 to 85/23).

143/23 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

It was **RESOLVED** that the following minutes, which have already been adopted as a correct record, be adopted into the workings of the Council:

a) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:

- 27th June 2022 (minutes 86/23 to 93/23)

b) The meetings of the Planning Committee held on:

- 4th July 2022 (minutes 94/23 to 99/23)
- 1st August 2022 (minutes 124/23 to 129/23)

144/23 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

It was **RESOLVED** that the following minutes, which have not already been adopted as a correct record, be adopted into the workings of the Council:

a) The meeting of the General Purpose & Highways Committee held on:

- 18th July 2022 (minutes 100/23 to 114/23)

b) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:

- 25th July 2022 (minutes 115/23 to 123/23)

145/23 TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FOLLOWING BODIES FOR THE ENSUING YEAR:

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Members be appointed as representatives to outside bodies for the ensuing year:

- a) Royston Day Centre – Councillor Inwood
- b) Royston Girl Guiding – Councillor Squire-Smith
- c) Royston First BID – Councillor Antony
- d) Plastic Free Royston – Councillor Langdon

146/23 COMMUNICATIONS WORKING PARTY:

a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the creation of a Communications Working Party

b) Members **RESOLVED** to instruct the clerk and staff to draw up Terms of Reference for the working party.

147/23 MANAGEMENT OF ROYSTON CAVE:

Councillor Langdon expressed her gratitude to the Cave Manager for his work over the last year and was happy to propose to extend the current management arrangement until 31st December 2023. Councillor Harrison reported that he and Councillors Langdon and Beardwell were all in favour of extending the agreement at the last Cave Advisory sub-committee meeting and seconded the motion.

Councillor Brown made a proposal to reduce the extension of the agreement to 31st March 2023 and before that time a service level agreement should be drawn up.

Members **RESOLVED** that the Royston Museum Trust maintains the responsibility for the management of the Cave until 31st December 2023, on the existing terms & conditions, when a further review of the management agreement will take place.

148/23 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:

Cllr Brown proposed that the word “councillor” was taken out of the Social Media Policy and it was only approved as a staff policy. The proposal was seconded but the motion was lost. Cllr Langdon proposed to adopt the Social Media Policy into the workings of the Council. The motion was seconded and duly carried.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Social Media Policy into the workings of the Council.

149/23 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY:

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy into the workings of the Council.

150/23 DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY:

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Dignity at Work Policy into the workings of the Council.

151/23 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY:

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Whistleblowing Policy into the workings of the Council.

152/23 MINUTES OF ROYSTON & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION:

Members received the minutes of the Royston & District Twinning Association meeting held on 6th July 2022 into the workings of the Council.

153/23 COUNCILLOR EQUIPMENT:

Members **RESOLVED** to purchase six Chromebooks from the recommended supplier. Members reviewed and **RESOLVED** to adopt the Information Technology Usage and Security policy for Councillors into the workings of the Council.

154/23 PROPOSED INFLATIONARY PARKING TARIFF INCREASES 2022/23:

Councillor Brown asked for permission to exercise her councillor's right to speak and be present during the debate so that she could feed the council's comments back to North Herts Council as she was Executive Member for this area. The Chair granted permission to speak and Members voted in favour of Councillor Brown being present during the debate. Councillor Brown then explained North Herts Council's plan to increase parking charges in Royston in more detail.

There was a lengthy discussion.

Councillor Stanier proposed to support the proposed car parking increases in Royston. Councillor Squire-Smith seconded the proposal but the motion was lost.

Councillor Inwood proposed to strongly object to any increase in car parking charges in Royston and to reduce Princes Mews car park charge to 60p per hour in line with the other car parks in Royston. The proposal was seconded and duly carried.

Members **RESOLVED** to strongly object to any increase in car parking charges in Royston and to reduce Princes Mews car park charge to 60p per hour in line with the other car parks in Royston.

155/23 SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS:

Members **RESOLVED** to remain opted-in to the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements for 2022-2027.

156/23 COUNCIL SEAL:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the use of the Council's seal on the new lease for 30 Kneesworth Street.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the use of the council's seal for the surrender of the lease on Royston Museum.

157/23 SOLAR TOGETHER SCHEME:

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to register an interest in the scheme for the Town Council's properties at the Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms.

158/23 COUNCILLORS' REPORT ON ACTIVITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

Councillor Harrison reported on his attendance at the last two HAPTC meetings. All future HAPTC meetings will be conducted on Zoom to save travel costs for members and to cut carbon emissions. Councillor Harrison also reported that the Herts Internal Audit Scheme has been launched and there is a pilot scheme involving 9 councils and 6 auditors. The partnership between HAPTC and Herts County Council has informed the committee that there are no plans for unitary authorities to be serving in Hertfordshire.

Councillor Squire-Smith reported that she had attended her first Town Twinning committee meeting and advised that delegations from Germany will be visiting in 3 weeks' time, there is a visit scheduled for the French Town of La Loupe next May and a visit to Spain at another point. A date has been set for a Christmas dinner on 25th November and she encouraged any councillors that were available on this date to attend the event and the others that are currently being organised.

159/23 CLERK'S REPORT:

The Town Clerk asked Councillors Adams, Jani and Lockett to complete their new councillor training as soon as possible. Members were informed that Silver Sunday arrangements were almost finalised and Councillors were asked to spread the word as there are still tickets available. The Town Clerk reported that there was a shed fire at a property neighbouring the allotments which spread asbestos over the allotments. An investigation was carried out with advice from Environmental Health and the subsequent report identified that there was a presence of low grade asbestos which will need to be cleared by a specialist firm. The Town Clerk advised that the work required in a recent tree survey carried out on both plantations has now all been completed. The council's contractor will soon be clearing the paths inside and on the boundary of the plantations.

160/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:

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

161/23 STAFF MATTERS:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to agree the proposal in the confidential report.
- b) Members **NOTED** that the Assistant Town Clerk has successfully passed her CiLCA qualification and has been promoted to Deputy Town Clerk on salary point SCP 21 from 1st September 2022.

Date of next meeting: 14th November 2022.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.01pm.

Signed: _____

Date _____

Chairman