

MINUTES of the meeting of **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Heritage Hall, Town Hall, Royston at 7.30pm on Monday 14th November 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Antony (Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Adams, Brown, Compton, Harrison, Haugh, Inwood, Jani, Langdon, Lockett, Rees and Squire-Smith

In attendance: Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk
County Councillor Hill
1 Member of the Public

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. 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.

Councillor Compton joined the meeting at 7:36pm.

215/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

A member of the public spoke about the availability of grants for organisations within Royston such as the Community First Responders which she belonged to. The Chair thanked the member of the public for their presentation.

216/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Beardwell, Birch and Stanier.

217/23 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.

218/23 BY-ELECTION 8TH SEPTEMBER 2022:

The Town Clerk announced the results of the by-election for Meridian Ward held on 8th September 2022. Luke Haugh was duly elected and has completed his declaration of acceptance of office to become a councillor.

219/23 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor detailed her activities since the last Full Council meeting:

- Hosted a vigil on the eve of her majesty's funeral in Priory Memorial Gardens
- On 22nd September, she visited Johnson Matthey
- Attended the preview evening for the arts exhibition by Royston Arts Society
- Attended an honorary celebration in Cambridge
- Opened the Arts Festival in Priory Memorial Gardens
- Judged the window display competition for the Arts Festival
- Attended Roman Way First School to talk about local government with members of their school council
- Welcomed visitors from Royston's German twin town Grossalmerode and planted trees with their Mayor at Newmarket Playing Fields
- Visited Bury Lane Farm

- Attended the 2022 Sustainability Event in Priory Gardens hosted by Royston Environmental Group
- Attended and helped at the Silver Sunday event held in the Town Hall
- Visited India to attend a series of engagements at schools, churches and other venues such as a radio station
- Laid a wreath in Priory Memorial Gardens on Armistice Day
- Attended the Remembrance Day Ceremony at Bassingbourn Barracks on Saturday 12th November
- Laid a wreath at the War Memorial on behalf of the Royston community for the Remembrance Day Parade on Sunday 13th November.

220/23 MINUTES:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting on 12th September subject to the phrase in minute 154/23 “so that she could feed the council’s comments back to North Herts Council as she was executive Member for this area” being changed to “so that she could hear the council’s views as North Herts Council Executive Member for this area”.

A recorded vote was requested. Councillors Brown, Lockett, Rees and Squire-Smith voted for the proposal.

221/23 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

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

- a) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:
 - 26th September 2022 (minutes 162/23 to 174/23)
- b) The meetings of the Planning Committee held on:
 - 5th September 2022 (minutes 130/23 to 137/23)
 - 3rd October 2022 (minutes 175/23 to 180/23)

222/23 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

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

- a) The meeting of the General Purpose & Highways Committee held on:
 - 17th October 2022 (minutes 181/23 to 195/23)
- b) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:
 - 31st October 2022 (minutes 196/23 to 207/23)

223/23 NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2021-2022:

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the audited annual return for 2021-2022 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. Councillor Compton congratulated the staff for receiving a clean audit.

224/23 INTERNET BANKING:

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the council using internet banking and completing any necessary documentation.

225/23 COMMUNICATIONS WORKING PARTY:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the terms of reference for the Communications Working Party.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Adams, Brown and Rees to the Communications Working Party.

226/23 TOIL POLICY:

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the TOIL policy into the workings of the council.

227/23 SAFEGUARDING POLICY:

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Safeguarding Policy into the workings of the council subject to the term vulnerable adult/child being replaced by adult/child at risk and the term child being added to the last paragraph of the appendix.

228/23 MINUTES OF ROYSTON & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION:

Members **RESOLVED** to receive minutes of the Royston & District Twinning Association meetings held on 7th September 2022 and 19th October 2022 into the workings of the Council.

229/23 STAFF SALARIES:

Members noted that the National Employers and the Trade Unions have agreed a pay rise for the current year which will be backdated to 1st April 2022.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree that with effect from 1st April 2022, an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above be implemented.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree that with effect from 1st April 2023, an increase of one day to employees' annual leave entitlement be implemented.

230/23 GRANTS:

There was a lengthy discussion.

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to draft a grants policy which enables local community organisations and charities to apply for small grants to benefit the residents of Royston.
- b) An amendment was proposed to reduce the amount from £20,000 to £5,000 and the amendment was seconded and carried.

Members **RESOLVED** to allocate £5,000 to a grants fund in the coming Civic year 2023/2024. A recorded vote was requested. Councillors Adams, Brown, Lockett, Rees and Squire-Smith voted for the proposal and Councillors Compton, Harrison and Langdon voted against the proposal.

231/23 ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT CONTROLS WORKING PARTY:

The Town Clerk reminded members that this was an extremely important process and failure to complete it would potentially lead to the council receiving "matters of concern" on its audit.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Haugh be appointed to the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit Controls Working Party.

232/23 SENIOR COMMITTEE WORKING PARTY:

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Antony be appointed to the Senior Committee Working Party.

233/23 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE:

- a) There was a lengthy discussion and Members agreed that the proposed arrangements were not acceptable. There should not be wards with one councillor in them.
Members **RESOLVED** to respond that there should be three wards for the Town Council which should mirror the District Council wards. Heath, which would include the proposed West, Willowside and Garden Lane wards and have 5 town councillors, Palace which would have 4 town councillors and Meridian which would include the proposed Meridian and South wards and have 6 town councillors.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to support the proposal regarding the new ward boundaries and number of councillors for the Royston wards in North Herts Council. Heath 2 councillors, Meridian 3 councillors and Palace 2 councillors.

234/23 YOUTH COUNCIL WORKING PARTY:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to agree to set up and approve the terms of reference for the Youth Council Working Party.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Adams, Inwood and Squire-Smith to the Youth Council Working Party.

235/23 COUNCILLORS' REPORT ON ACTIVITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

There were none.

236/23 CLERK'S REPORT:

The Town Clerk thanked all staff for making sure that the council's protocol was implemented on the death of her majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She asked councillors that had not yet completed part 1 of the new councillor training to do so as other councillors were waiting to progress onto part 2. The Town Clerk also thanked officers with their help in organising the Remembrance Day Parade and for helping on the day. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Solar Together had provided an initial proposal for solar panels on the Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms. A fee would need to be paid to undertake a site survey which would clarify the feasibility of the proposal. However, deadlines were extremely tight and wouldn't allow enough time for more quotes to be gathered from other providers for comparison.

One quote had been received from a Royston company but they have recommended obtaining a structural engineers' report to see if solar panels were feasible on either property as a next step. The matter would be discussed further at the next General Purpose and Highways committee meeting.

Date of next meeting: 16th January 2023.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date _____