

MINUTES of the meeting of **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Heritage Hall, Town Hall, Royston at 7.30pm on Monday 23rd September 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor Rees (Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Adams, Antony, Brown, Freeman, Harrison, Haugh, Inwood, Jani and Lockett

In attendance: Town Clerk
County Councillor Hill
6 members of the public

Peter Chapman from the 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.

125/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

A member of the Royston Indian Society gave a detailed talk in support of their grant application.
Members thanked the representative for their presentation.

Members **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3i for the meeting so that councillors did not need to stand to speak.

126/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Beardwell, Birch, Compton, Langdon and Squire-Smith.

127/25 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.

128/25 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor reported that he attended the Royston First Business Awards and that the Town Council's Market Manager, Rob Mills had won an award at the event for community engagement. As he wasn't present at the event to accept the award, the Mayor accepted it on his behalf. The Mayor then presented the award to the Market Manager who was at the meeting.

The Mayor then detailed the other engagements and events that he had attended since the last Full Council meeting on 17th June 2024:

- Summer Barbeque at the Margaret House Care Home in Barley
- Bow Books' 1st birthday event
- Buntingford Mayor's Civic Reception
- Home Start's Got Talent
- Indian Food Festival at St Mary's Church
- Chamber of Commerce Summer Barbeque
- Essex and Herts Air Ambulance 'Helebration' at Hatfield House
- Herts County Council Summer Event at County Hall
- Memorial Event in honour of Dr John Hedges in Priory Memorial Gardens
- Allotments Open Day
- Tour of Mettler Toledo

- Community First Responders training session
- Melbourn Springs Care Home Summer Event
- Garden House Hospice Event in Letchworth
- Mayor's Charity Dinner at Thai Rack which raised £261.00.
- Royston Health Walks Open Day
- Royston Leisure Centre Open Day

The Chair brought forward item 11, Grant Application for discussion as the next item.

129/25 GRANT APPLICATION:

Councillors Antony and Jani declared an interest in this item and left the room and took no part in the debate or vote.

Members discussed the grant application. Cllr Brown announced that it didn't meet the criteria in the council's policy as two quotes had not been provided. The Town Clerk clarified that two quotes were only needed for capital purchases and this application was for the provision of services.

Members **RESOLVED** to award a £500.00 grant to the Royston Indian Society from the Community Grants Scheme.

Councillors Antony and Jani then returned to the room for the remainder of the meeting.

130/25 MINUTES:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17th June 2024 (minutes 58/25 to 77/25).

131/25 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

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

- a) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:
 - 24th June 2024 (minutes 78/25 to 85/25)
- b) The meetings of the Planning Committee held on:
 - 1st July 2024 (minutes 86/25 to 92/25)
 - 5th August 2024 (minutes 118/25 to 124/25)

132/25 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 and Highways Committee held on:
 - 15th July 2024 (minutes 93/25 to 107/25)
- b) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:
 - 29th July 2024 (minutes 108/25 to 117/25)
- c) The meeting of the Planning Committee held on:
 - 2nd September 2024

133/25 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTY MEETINGS:

Members received the notes of the Communications Working Party meeting held on 4th June 2024 into the workings of the council.

134/25 ROYSTON MUSEUM TRUST'S REPORT:

The manager of Royston Museum delivered a report detailing the activities and achievements of the Museum over the last three months as well as upcoming events at the Museum. Councillors thanked the Museum Manager for all of her hard work.

135/25 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR STAFF AND COUNCILLORS:

An amendment was proposed to add that employees training should be booked by the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk in the employees' section and to add Deputy Clerk as well as Town Clerk in the Members section to make training bookings.

The amendment was seconded and duly carried.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree the Training and Development Policy for Staff and Councillors subject to the amendment.

136/25 BANNERS POLICY:

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Banners Policy into the workings of the council.

137/25 OFFICIAL PORTRAIT OF KING CHARLES III:

Members **RESOLVED** to mount the portrait of King Charles III in the Heritage Hall.

138/25 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE:

Councillor Brown declared an interest in this item and then spoke giving her views on the consultation.

Members then started debating the matter.

The Chair reminded Councillor Brown that she had declared an interest and Councillor Brown then left the room for the remainder of the item.

There was a lengthy debate.

Members agreed that there should be three wards as detailed on the agenda and 15 councillors spread across those wards. The Town Council should also request a change in the electoral cycle to be brought into alignment with North Herts Council to encourage voter numbers and reduce costs for the town.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to respond to the Community Governance consultation with the following:

There should be three wards in Royston rather than the six parish wards that were agreed after the LGBCE review -

- Royston Heath Ward – to include the wards for Royston West, Royston Willowside and Royston Garden Lane - allocated 5 Town Councillors.
- Royston Palace Ward – to remain as is - allocated 4 Town Councillors.
- Royston Meridian Ward – to include the wards for Royston Meridian and Royston South - allocated 6 Town Councillors.

The electoral arrangements for Royston Town Council should be brought into line with North Herts Council whereby the town councillors elected in 2026 would have a shortened term of office (2 years) and their term of office would expire in 2028.

Councillor Brown then returned to the room.

139/25 TOWN CRIER:

Members began to debate this matter.

Councillor Brown announced that she needed to leave the meeting but would like to give a report on the Conservators of Therfield Heath before she left.

Councillor Brown delivered a brief report which included that the Conservators of Therfield Heath had failed to fill a vacant post after receiving no nominations.

Councillor Brown left the meeting at 8.55pm.

Members then recommenced the debate about the Town Crier.

Members **RESOLVED** to advertise for a new Town Crier and the HR committee would be responsible for arranging the interview procedure. The Town Clerk added that it would be nice to include the retiring Town Crier in this matter and Members agreed.

140/25 TO APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE TO COMMBES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION:

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Adams was appointed as a representative to the Coombes Community Association for the current civic year.

141/25 CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY ACTION WORKING PARTY:

Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Rees to serve on the Climate and Biodiversity Action Working Party.

142/25 NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2023-2024:

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the audited annual return for 2023-2024 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 Harrison thanked the Town Clerk and her team for achieving another exemplary audit.

143/25 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS ON TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

Councillor Harrison reported that he had attended the Day Centre's Annual General Meeting and committee meeting in which a new Treasurer was elected.

144/25 CLERK'S REPORT:

The Town Clerk reminded Members that Remembrance Sunday was approaching and that there will be a service on Sunday 10th November to mark this. She reported that the War Memorial had been deep cleaned and looked fantastic. Going forward, this will be cleaned by specialist stone masons as recommended. Finally, she informed Members that the bicycle repair stand had been installed on the Market Place for members of the public to use.

Date of next meeting: 11th November 2024

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

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date _____