

Kidderminster Town Council
MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday 26th January 2022 at 6:00pm in the
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Kidderminster

Present: The Mayor (Councillor J. Smith)
Councillors R. Bishop, D. Chambers, G. Connolly, H. Dyke, K. Gale, N. Gale, D. Hine,
B. Hopkins, S. Miah, T. Muir, F. Oborski MBE, J. Phillips, M. Rayner, S. Rook, D. Ross
and E. Stokes.

C.674 Apologies

Councillors J. Aston.

C.675 Minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2021

RESOLVED: - that the minutes of the meetings held on 1st December be agreed as a correct record.

The meeting heard with sadness news of the death of Past Mayor, Tony McKenzie-Farmer; condolences were expressed and the news marked by a minute's silence.

The Mayor welcomed three new officers to the meeting; Mr Curtis Fudge employed as a temporary member of Town Council staff – Mrs Tracy Predeth employed as Locum Town Clerk & RFO and Mrs Louise Steele employed as a consultant to support the Locum Town Clerk role particularly in respect of financial matters.

C.676 Mayor's Engagements & Announcements

The Mayor listed her December engagements and explained that multiple planned engagements were cancelled due to Covid.

RESOLVED: - that the engagements be noted.

C.677 Declarations of Interests by Members

None.

C.678 Public participation

None.

C.679 Town Hall Development

Councillors received a written update on the Town Hall Development from Mr Peter White Fresh Life Consultancy.

Concerns were expressed about the following matters:

- the plinth design and whether it would be accessible;
- whether Kidderminster Town Council would have have permission to build the plinth as it may not own the relevant land;
- that there is no office space in the new design for Town Council staff;
- that office space outside the Town Hall would have a cost;
- that the projected costs may exceed the available funds; and
- whether the projected completion date was achievable.

RESOLVED: that there be a separate meeting with Mr White present to discuss the project in more detail.

C.680 An update on Artefacts belonging to Kidderminster Town Council which are being transferred by WFDC to Bewdley Museum.

The Mayor updated members on the background of the artefacts belonging to the Town Council being transferred to Bewdley Museum.

On behalf of Wyre Forest District Council Cllr Dyke explained that all artefacts being transferred will remain the property of the original owners but concerns were expressed about obtaining relevant paperwork as proof of ownership.

The Mayor suggested that officers further investigate the transfer of artefacts

RESOLVED: that an investigation into the Artefacts be reported at a subsequent Council meeting.

C.681 To agree a delayed budget and resolve to set the precept for the 2022/23 financial year.

Members considered the budget papers circulated in advance of the meeting and a presentation from Mrs Steele. Members raised concerns over a lack of budget for the Platinum Jubilee, office space and highlighted perceived poor IT. It was explained that the budget includes a contingency as yet unallocated and that the Council might decide to allocate funds for the Platinum Jubilee from that contingency when its plans became clear.

A proposal from Cllr Oborski that ward grants be increased to £1000 was not carried.

RESOLVED: - that Council

- agreed the 2022/23 budget as set out in the budget papers considered at the meeting;
- requested that further details on grant income and matching expenditure be provided by 1 April 2022;
- set a precept of £831,160 for the financial year 2022/23; and
- requested that the Locum Clerk & RFO make the precept request of Wyre Forest District Council immediately.

C.682 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED: - that, under Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with Standing Order 3(b), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the disclosure of categories 1, 2 and 3 of “exempt information” as defined in the appendix to the standing orders.

C.683 Staffing Update from the Chairman of Staffing Committee

Councillors received a staffing update from the Chairman of Staffing Committee which included an update on the planned departure of the Town Clerk and the costs of employing a part-time Locum Town Clerk and other support.

Members were briefed on the status of staff members currently employed on a freelance basis.

RESOLVED: - that the staffing update be noted and that freelance contracts be ended with immediate effect.

C. 684 To receive and consider quotations from three recruitment agencies for appointment of new Town Clerk

Council considered three quotations from recruitment agencies.

RESOLVED: - that the Town Council note the costs and appoints Faerfield as the recruitment agency to lead the recruitment of a new Town Clerk.

The meeting ended at 7.55pm

Mayor

Date