

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held at 6pm on Wednesday 24th January 2024
In the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House**

Present:

Councillor D.Chambers (Chair)
Councillor J.Aston
Councillor R.Bishop
Councillor G.Connolly
Councillor H.Dyke
Councillor K. Gale
Councillor N. Gale
Councillor D.Hine
Councillor B.Hopkins
Councillor S.Miah
Councillor T.Muir
Councillor F.Oborski (MBE)
Councillor S.Rook
Councillor D.Ross
Councillor J.Smith
Councillor E.Stokes
Councillor M.Rayner

Chief Executive
HR/ Office Assistant

C.048/23-24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Councillor Phillips

C.049/23-24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Nil

C.050/23-24 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
Nil

C.051/23-24 **MINUTES**

- 1) **RESOLVED:** To approve the minutes of the meeting of Kidderminster Town Council held on Wednesday 18th December 2023.
- 2) Members noted the draft minutes of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 19th December 2023. PL/07/23-24

C.052/23-24 REVISED BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members received a report and noted that revised arrangements were required due to the level of expenditure arising from the Town Hall Transformation project.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Town Council signs up to additional banking services with Barclays Bank, and
- b. Register as a user for Barclays.Net

The CEO confirmed that the use of these services would be subject to the Council's Financial Regulations and any relevant procurement requirements.

C.053/23-24 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED: To suspend Standing orders and take agenda item 7: Town Hall Update at this point of the meeting.

C.054/23-24 TOWN HALL UPDATE

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting Mr. Richard Smith, of Gleeds, the Council's project management consultants and Mr. Richard Clarke, from the contractors, Speller Metcalfe.

They gave a presentation on the works to date, including project programmes and costing.

The CEO confirmed that a monthly update would be sent to members after the project team meetings and that the Council would also update the public on the project, through press releases and social media.

The meeting thanked Mr. Smith and Mr. Clarke for the content of the information and the clarity of the presentation.

C.055/23-24 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Members received a consultation document from the Local Government Boundary Commission containing draft recommendations for revised electoral parish arrangements for Kidderminster Parish. It was noted that the consultation was open until 18th March 2024.

RESOLVED: To write to the District Council Returning Officer and to respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission as follows:

The "New Electoral Arrangements for Worcestershire County Council- Draft Recommendations" published by the Local Government Boundary Commission in January 2024 propose revised electoral arrangements for Kidderminster Town Council (Page 28).

The proposals are to change from the current arrangement of 6 wards each electing 3 members of the Town Council (total membership of 18 Councillors), to 10 wards, with 5 electing 1 member each, 2 wards electing 2 members each and 3 wards remaining the same, electing 3 members each (total membership of 18 Councillors).

These draft recommendations were considered at a meeting of Kidderminster Town Council, held on Wednesday 24th January 2024. Members were disappointed that the Commission had not consulted the Town council before publishing these proposals.

In considering the proposals, the Town Council had regard to the number of electors in each ward at 2023 (The Electoral Roll) and projections to 2029 (The Boundary Commission) and formed the opinion that a review was not required at this time.

Kidderminster Town Council regards the recommendations as unnecessary, confusing, and complicated. The proposals are likely to cause confusion for the electorate and to result in lower turnout for Town Council elections.

No review of Kidderminster Town Council Wards should be carried out until the next Wyre Forest District Council Ward Boundary Review at which time the Kidderminster Wards of both Councils should be reviewed at the same time and kept as coterminous boundaries. The electoral wards for elections to Kidderminster Town Council are currently aligned with those for the Wyre Forest District Council elections. The Town Council strongly recommends that these arrangements should remain in place.

C.056/23-24 COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2024/25

The meeting agreed that the Annual Meeting of the Council (Mayor-making) should take place on Thursday 16th May 2024, in St. George's Church, if available.

RESOLVED: To approve the schedule for meeting dates for the municipal year 2024/25.

C.057/23-24 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

The meeting noted that the Councils SLA's with Wyre Forest District Council were due to expire on 31st March 2024. The meeting noted that there were good working relations between the District Council and the Town Council and members were happy to continue these arrangements. The CEO agreed and said that he would negotiate extended agreements, with a view to achieving best value for Kidderminster Town Council.

RESOLVED: To delegate to the CEO to negotiate and sign the following SLA's:
IT, Facilities Management, Finance and Legal

C.058/23-24 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded for the following item as personal information would be discussed.

C.059/23-24 **STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Members received a confidential update on staffing appointments.

Meeting closed 6.55pm

DRAFT