

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 6pm on Wednesday 4th September 2024 In the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House

Councillors George Connolly (Town Mayor), John Aston, John Beckingham, Liam Carroll, Darren Chambers, Bernadette Connor, Helen Dyke, Nicky Gale, Doug Hine, Steve Hollands, Mary McDonnell, Shazu Miah, Mary Rayner and Daniel Round.

In Attendance:

Wyre Forest District Councillor Tracey Onslow, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety and Mr. Steve Brant, Head of Community & Environment Services.

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive, Adam Stockhall, Operational Services Manager and Rob Beeston, Operational Services Officer.

45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Ben Brookes, Vicky Caulfield, Fran Oborski (MBE) and Mike Smith

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

47. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None

48. MINUTES

The draft minutes as circulated were amended to remove A) and B) from minute No. 40.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes, as amended, of the meeting of Kidderminster Town Council held on 29th July 2024.

49. DEVOLUTION PROGRAMME

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting Wyre Forest District Councillor Tracey Onslow, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety and Mr. Steve Brant, Head of Community & Environment Services.

The Mayor invited Councillor Onslow to advise the Town Council of the District Council's views on further devolution of assets or services. Councillor Onslow told the meeting that this was part of the WFDC Localism Strategy, partly due to budgetary issues. WFDC was looking at ways to generate income and reduce expenditure, while at the same time safeguarding vital services to the community and to this end, the District Council was collaborating with town and parish councils. She emphasised that there was no threat of closure of parks but that the District Council was looking to explore the best options for the delivery of these services.

Councillor Onslow and Mr. Steve Brant answered Members' questions regarding the condition of the parks and equipment outlined in the proposed transfers, the impact on Council taxpayers, the best deal for Kidderminster residents and any employment/ redundancy implications arising from the transfers.

Mr. Adam Stockhall outlined the Town Council's objectives and answered Members' questions regarding the costings and other arrangements that might arise.

RESOLVED:

- A) To authorise officers to negotiate the transfer of the four parks in Phase A of the proposals (King George V Park – Marlpool Lane, Willowfield Park – Willowfield Drive, Forester Way Park – Forester Way and Jerusalem Walk Park – Broad Street.)
- B) Agree for the Public Realms Operations Manager and Officer to continue negotiations with the remaining Parks and Assets through a phased approach.
- C) Any final agreements in operational matters to be brought to the Operational Services Committee for approval
- D) Any budgetary considerations would need to be approved at Full Council.
- E) Before negotiations progress any further, ward members are to be consulted for their views/ comments. Group leaders will be advised of any upcoming meetings re negotiations and invited to send a member of their group to attend.

The Mayor thanked Cllr. Onslow and Mr. Brant for their attendance.

50. Operational Services Office Re-location

The Mayor pointed out that this matter had been deferred from the previous meeting, as Members felt that it would be more appropriate to consider this when the Council's future devolution plans were decided.

Rob Beeston, Operational Services Officer, gave an presentation to the meeting outlining the role and current services delivered by the Council's Operational Services Team. This included the vehicle, the equipment and the staffing resources of the team and the problems they were dealing with at the moment. It was pointed out that it would not be possible to deliver the Town Council's operational services from the Town Hall and that an alternative location would need to be found before the Town Council vacates its current accommodation at Wyre Forest House. He told the meeting of the options explored and the reasons why members were being asked to approve a 10 year lease on the unit at Silverwood's Forest Park Industrial Estate.

Adam told the meeting that the proposal represented value for money and officers had negotiated a very good rent, with the first 12 months free.

Members thanked Mr. Beeston for the updated presentation and the clearer information.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approves a 10-year lease of the building located on Silverwood's Forest Park Industrial Estate.

Councillors Beckingham, Carroll, Connor, McDonnell and Round abstained.

51. SEALING OF DEED

The Mayor referred members to the report sent by the CEO asking for approval to affix the Council's seal. Members thanked the CEO for securing a good deal in this matter.

RESOLVED: To affix the Council's seal to the Deed of Surrender of Part and Variation of the Town Council's lease of offices at Wyre Forest House.

52. THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25

The Council noted the Forward Work Programme

The Mayor concluded the official business of the meeting at 8.14 pm.