

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

**HELD VIRTUALLY ON MICROSOFT TEAMS AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS
(CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020**

ON MONDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2021 COMMENCING AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Councillor Peter Hollick (Town Mayor); Councillor Gloria Martin (Deputy Town Mayor); Councillors, Sid Abbott, Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Matthew Brennan, Mark Cant, Philip Crawley, Alan Corkhill, Greg George, Pamela Ghent, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Liz Jones, Cameron Restall, Lee Roberts, Gladys Sanders and Johnson Tamara with David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), David Brough (Senior Finance Officer), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager).

Members of the public; Nil

Before the commencement of the meeting, Revd Rachel Phillips led the Council in prayer.

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that there was 100% attendance of Members

23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7 December 2020 were approved as a correct record and arrangements would be made for the Town Mayor to sign them.

24 DECLARATIONS

There were no specific declarations of interest.

25 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor spoke in support of a report he made at the meeting relating to his activities up to the beginning of January 2021. He informed the Council that he was continuing to support local family businesses with regular articles in the Dunstable Gazette.

He also advised the meeting he was continuing with his weekly diary which was published on the Town Councils' website. The meeting was advised the Mayor had;

(a) undertaken the following;

- the delivery of over 300 Mayor's Christmas cards to shops and businesses
- visited local schools
- attended the Bedfordshire Scouts virtual AGM
- attended the Christmas markets that had been highly successful and had been popular with stallholders and the public and he recorded his thanks to Annette Clynes

- Town Centre Services Officer for her work over a very difficult year
- Attended the launch of the Town Council's first electric vehicle
- Attended employee long service awards
- Officially opened the new residential outlet in West Street
- Visited the Salvation Army Christmas Present Appeal
- Visited Staff at Grove Corner
- Published an article reviewing all the Dunstable Family Businesses published to date in the Gazette
- Attended virtual meeting of the trustees of South Beds Dial a Ride

(b) Commented on the following;

- He could not visit the majority of Town Council employees at Christmas because of the Covid - 19 lock down – he would visit all staff when it was safe to do so
- The Town Mayors' Raffle tickets were being printed and he hoped all Councillors would be able to assist in their sale
- The Town meeting would be held virtually on Monday 29 March and all electors would be invited to submit questions to the Mayor
- If the virtual meeting regulations were not continued from 1 May 2021 it was likely the Town Council would have to review its arrangements for holding Committee and Council meetings

26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting

27 TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

28 DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 3 December 2020 be received.

29 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 4 January 2021 be received.

30 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 11 January 2021 be received.

31 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Budget Proposals 2021/22 and Town Council Precept 2021/22 (Minute 19/2021)

Councillor Sid Abbott, Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee was pleased to move that the budget recommendations be adopted.

In what he described as an extraordinary year he thanked all Council Committee Chairmen, the Mayor and all Councillors for their support and commitment shown to the

Council over the past 12 months. He also thanked all officers of the Council for their endurance that had resulted in the Council ending the year in good shape despite all the issues that had to be faced as a result of the pandemic. He also reported that the Councils' finances, considering all the uncertainties still to be faced, were in good shape and the budget being recommended reflected a sensible approach and he was pleased to present a budget that meant the Council would be in a position to resume full service provision as soon as it was possible to do so.

The Band D council tax increase proposed of ninety-one pence for the year would ensure a full programme of services could be delivered whilst creating a small contingency to help the Council address any unforeseen circumstances. This had been made possible, as a result of the Councils' finances continuing to be well managed; a testament to the hard work and creativity of the Senior Management Team; the Chairman gave special thanks to David Ashlee, John Crawley, Becky Wisbey and the Finance Team for their ongoing work in making sure that the Council delivered high quality, value for money services for the residents of Dunstable.

The Chairman further reported that although no one could have anticipated the past year he was pleased to report that the Council had still achieved a great deal for the residents of Dunstable. As well as helping Central Bedfordshire Council with the emergency response effort for vulnerable households in the town; the Town Council had secured a virtual 'In Bloom Award', a Heritage Flag for Priory Gardens, help build and launch a second ATP at Creasey Park, launched the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project, secured funding for and created a new gaming suite at Grove Corner, secured IIP silver accreditation, as well as getting used to virtual democracy on Teams.

He was particularly pleased to see progress made on the environmental agenda, by purchasing the first electric vehicle for the Town Council and ensuring that all flood lighting at Creasey Park was LED.

The Meeting was reminded that the Town Council cost most Dunstable ratepayers less than £3.50 a week and he believed that demonstrated tremendous value for this charge. He therefore recommended a precept to Central Bedfordshire Council of £2,393,969.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 January 2021 be received.

RESOLVED: (1) that the proposed budget for 2021/22 presented to Council be approved:

(2) that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be authorised to incur the various items of expenditure detailed in the budget, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations:

(3) that the revised scale of fees and charges, set out in the report be approved with effect from 1 April 2021 or the start of the 2021/22 winter playing season, as appropriate;

(4) that, in consequence of the foregoing recommendations, the Town Council issue a precept upon Central Bedfordshire Council in the sum of £2,393, 969 resulting in a Dunstable Town Council (Band D) at the rate of £182.02 [per annum)

The Council had been circulated with the details of the final recommendations of the Electoral Review as they affected Dunstable. The recommendations provided for the Town Council to have 18 councillors as at present representing 5 wards as follows:

Central ; 2 Councillors

East ; 5 Councillors

North : 4 Councillors

South; 2 Councillors

West; 5 Councillors

The Council acknowledged the work of Councillor John Gurney in responding to the review in detail and the Mayor thanked him for his contributions to the draft findings that had influenced the final recommendations Review. The Mayor also thanked Councillors Abbott, George and Ghent for their responses

RESOLVED: that the final recommendations of the Electoral Review of Central Bedfordshire be received.

The meeting closed at 7.33 p.m.