

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 4 OCTOBER 2021

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

Members of the public: Nil

Before the commencement of the meeting, John Hassall the Mayor's chaplain led the Council in prayer.

150 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Philip Crawley and Cameron Restall

151 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

152 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lee Roberts declared a pecuniary interest at minute 129 of the Community Services Committee minutes in relation to a property he rented being in the High Street Heritage Action Zone. He took no part in the debate nor the ensuing vote.

153 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor spoke in support of a report that had been circulated. She reminded the Council of the NHS and Frontline Workers Day held on 5 July. At the event the NHS flag and banner had been raised and a two-minute silence was held for all those that had died of Covid-19 in the past year. In addition, a garden party had been held with thirty representatives of the NHS and frontline workers attending. The Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis, had taken part in all the morning events. She had visited the Leading Ladies exhibition at Priory House. She had met representatives of Dunstable in Bloom and commented on the Physic Garden and the In Bloom Group had presented her with a medieval nosegay made from plants from the Garden. After the event Madam Mayor had sent Helen Nellis a selection of teas from Priory House.

Madam Mayor commented on the successful Civic Event held on 9 September. She also commented on the highly successful Around the World and Festival of Archaeology events held on 18 September. On the same day she had attended a County Girl Guiding event at

Whipsnade Zoo. The girl guides had been fundraising for food for the zoo animals during Covid.

154 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting

155 TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

156 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minute 129 - The Council Meeting was advised of a meeting of the HSHAZ Working Group held that morning. The meeting considered a number of grant applications from Middle Row retail unit owners for repairs and improvements to shop fronts. Members of the Working Group had approved the applications and recommended that the Council resolve their approval as agreed and set out below.

Minute 131 - The Chairman of the Committee took the opportunity to summarise the issues relating to minute 131 on the foreseeable future of the Dunstable Fireworks Display. During the ensuing discussion, Councillor John Gurney was accused of using foul and abusive language against another member of the Council. The Chairman was advised of the incident and Councillor John Gurney was asked to leave the meeting. Councillor Gurney left the meeting at 19.33. Councillors Lee Roberts and Kenson Gurney also left the meeting, returning at 19.34.

RESOLVED: i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 6 September 2021 be received.

ii) that subject to final approval from Historic England, three grants covering five individual properties on High Street South / Middle Row, totalling £590,585.80 be made to relevant owners of the properties as part of the Council's High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme .

157 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 September be received.

158 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: i) that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 September 2021 be received.

ii) that the amended and updated Financial Regulations as submitted be approved

159 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Council meeting was invited to consider the consultation Central Bedfordshire Council was undertaking on car parking charges. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive went through individual survey questions and secured a majority consensus on all answers that were

largely in opposition to any increases in parking charges. Members also made various comments which would be captured in the Council's response including making the suggestion to Central Bedfordshire Council that the freehold to all town centre car parks should be devolved to the Town Council along with the management of the car parks. In addition, all members were encouraged to make individual responses to the car park charges survey.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive submits a response to the survey on behalf of the Council in line with the answers given and the comments made by Council members.

160 REPORTS / UPDATES BY MEMBERS OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor Tamara reinforced the importance of all Council members to make individual responses to Central Bedfordshire Council's consultation on car parking charges and Councillor Sanders reminded members of the current Central Bedfordshire Council consultation on the location of the town centre taxi rank.

The meeting closed at 20.10.

