

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY 6 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Councillor Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Councillor Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Councillors Sid Abbott, Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Alan Corkhill, Greg George, Peter Hollick, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Gladys Sanders 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), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager- remotely), Kelley Hallam (Business Support Manager), Jemma Candy (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer) 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.

183 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

184 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 October 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

185 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

186 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor informed the Council of a range of events and activities she had attended over the past few months. She reported she had recently attended, with Councillor Peter Hollick, a red-carpet Thanksgiving event hosted by the Kenyan Community of Luton and Dunstable. She had also visited a school to explain the role of Town Mayor. The children were very interested in the mayoral chain. Madam Mayor also commented on the Winter Lights Festival and the Carols and Torchlight procession held on 26 November. She also reported that she had been unable to carry out all of her duties and was grateful to the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Liz Jones and Councillor Peter Hollick for their assistance in carrying out civic duties.

187 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting

188 TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

189 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minute 186 Events and Marketing; Councillor Liz Jones commented that Torchlight had been extremely well organised and assisted the trading communities of the town. She was disappointed in the Winter Lights Festival. She also congratulated staff on carrying out their duties so well.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 1 November 2021 be received.

190 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 8 November be received.

191 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 November 2021 be received.

192 DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 16 September 2021 be received.

193 DRAFT BUDGET SUMMARY 2022/23

The Council meeting considered the report which was a draft budget summary for the Council for 2022/23. Members considered the council tax strategy they would like to adopt in order to agree a balanced budget at the Council meeting planned for 7 February 2022. The Council was informed that the largest impact on the year-on-year budget was staffing costs. This year it was estimated that the growth in costs for staffing could be up to £135,000. This figure was made up of incremental pay increases; 1% on the overall Council pension costs; 4.2% increases on wages attracting the Living Wage Foundation minimum wage; 1.25% increase on National Insurance costs, up to 5% cost of living pay rise allowance, plus the 1.75% pay award currently planned for 2021/22. The draft budget also included the identification of an 'up to' £50,000 contingency for anticipated loss of income at Priory House due to the planned refurbishment. It was proposed that this sum be identified from the General Reserve.

A full discussion followed that considered the need to predict a maximum staff pay award for 2022/23 of 5% and as a result, it was proposed that a £5.64 (3.1%) increase on the current Band D council tax charge be supported.

RESOLVED: that the Council work towards a maximum of £5.64 (3.1%) increase on the 2022/23 Band D council tax charge.

194 NOMINATIONS FOR REPRESENTATION ON CHARITIES

The Council meeting considered a report which requested nominations for:

- The Ashton Schools Foundation x 2 nominees until May 2023
- Lockington and Marshe Charity x 2 nominees until May 2023

RESOLVED: That Councillors Peter Hollick and Gloria Martin represent the Council on the Ashton Schools Foundation and that Councillors Liz Jones and John Gurney represent the Council on the Lockington Marshe Charity both until May 2023.

195 WEBCASTING PROTOCOL

The Council considered a report which recommended the adoption of a draft webcasting protocol that had been circulated with the report.

It was proposed the Council would broadcast meetings of the Full Council, Community Services Committee, Grounds and Environmental Services Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee. However, in the short term the meetings would be recorded and be made available for transmission after the meeting until such time that the Council was confident to broadcast their meetings live.

The protocol would allow external participants in the meeting to access sufficient information about the webcasting process, empower the Chairman of a meeting that is being webcast to suspend the process and in specific circumstances ensure the Council complied with its own constitutional and wider statutory requirements. It was further agreed that certain Council Sub-Committee meetings would also be recorded as and when the Chairman felt it important to do so.

RESOLVED: That the draft webcasting protocol be adopted for immediate use and referenced in the Council's Constitution and Standing Orders accordingly.

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

Councillor Tamara, further to the last meeting of the Town Council, raised the Central Bedfordshire Council's consultation on car parking charges. Questions were also raised about the provision of electric vehicle charging units being installed in carparks and the High Street, Dunstable.

The meeting closed at 20.03