

## HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Present:** The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Kath Hey and Councillors Andrews, Boulter, Dykes, Foxton, Hornsey, Kenyon, Milln, Oliver, Powell, Tillet, Toynbee, Tyler, Wilcox and Williams.

**Attending:** Steve Kerry Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Becci O'Reilly Committees, Events and Contracts Officer.

At the start of the meeting the Mayor confirmed that the meeting was being held under the provisions of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations Sections Four and Five.

#### **C2020/21.42 ACCESS FOR MEMBERS**

The Mayor asked all members present to confirm they could see and hear the proceedings. This was confirmed.

#### **C2020/21.43 ACCESS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

It was confirmed that the meeting was being live streamed and was also being recorded.

#### **C2020/21.44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Stevens.

#### **C2020/21.45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **C2020/21.46 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public had asked to raise a question.

At this point Councillor Kenyon explained that during the previous Community Development meeting, questions were taken live from Facebook and answered immediately, where possible and he suggested this approach for other meetings if appropriate.

#### **C2020/21.47 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Foxton and unanimously

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the minutes of the Council Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and the Extraordinary Council Meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> September be accepted as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.**

#### **C2020/21.48 MOTION TO COUNCIL – VINCENT MCNALLY**

Members received a statement from Councillor Brian Wilcox regarding City Council's employee Vincent McNally who was the first City Council employee to be awarded an MBE. Councillor Wilcox informed members about Mr McNally's work history in

Environmental Health at South Herefordshire District Council/Herefordshire Council and his outstanding community work at Hinton Community Centre including amateur boxing coaching, the 'Fit and Fed' programme, anti knife crime education etc. Councillor Wilcox summarised that "Vince is in inspiration, and has done so much for young people in the area, he well deserves being awarded the MBE'.

Councillors Hey and Kenyon concurred and gave personal accounts of Vince's work and ideas and acknowledged that he does everything without the desire for recognition.

It was proposed by Cllr Wilcox, seconded by Cllr Kenyon and unanimously

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Council formally congratulates Vincent McNally on being made a Member of the order of the British Empire in October 2020.**

#### **C2020/21.49 LARGE GRANT APPLICATION – CLOSE HOUSE PROJECTS**

Council received an overview from Ben Lea of Close House in respect of the large grant application for £14,950 to fund the continuation of Close House' Idle Hands 2 projects, as referred from the last Community Development Grants Committee meeting, held on 2nd November 2020.

Ben explained that Close House are applying for funding for the continuation of their Idle Hands Project for another year which City Council funded two years ago, and Close House funded themselves last year. The project targets young people most at risk of County Lines drug influence through a youth worker and using platforms that the young people use such as Snap Chat and Tik Tok. They try to give a positive alternative and are really pleased with how it's worked already. With Lockdown two and Christmas looming, they want to continue to provide positive influence through positive activities and role models.

Ben explained there was a question from Community Development Committee regarding why on the accounts for 2018/19 does it look like the income has gone up whilst the staffing levels have gone down. Councillors received a staffing breakdown document before the meeting which showed how the staff team has slightly fluctuated over the years however the general number of staffing has pretty much stayed the same. The significant increase in income in that year was because Close House took on the Live Wire music project which had a separate fund of approx. £50,000.00 however this was specifically for that project. It was also acknowledged that an increase in temporary and agency work had been employed for various reasons including maternity leave.

Councillor Tillett thanked Ben for the information and explained why he had asked the question.

Councillor Toynbee asked for clarification of the costs and Ben explained that it will cover one extra staff member for three or four days a week for a year.

It was proposed by Cllr Kenyon, seconded by Cllr Wilcox and unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

**To award Close House £14,950 to fund the continuation of Close House' Idle Hands 2 project.**

### **C2020/21.50 LARGE GRANT APPLICATION – CLIMB THE TREE**

Council considered the large grant application for £9,050 to fund a family child contact centre, as deferred from the previous Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020. No representative from the organisation attended the meeting so were unable to answer Councillors' questions.

Members' discussions included:

- There were still concerns and questions about the costs of the sessions which had been brought up at the last Council meeting – an email had been sent round with an updated pricing structure, comparing the costs to an existing contact centre in the North of the county and also showing that the sessions are slightly longer.
- Concerns about whether the amount asked for was entirely justified.
- Suggestion to fund just the equipment rather than also the salaries.
- Suggestion to use City Council funding just to help fund sessions for City residents, not County.
- Concern and disappointed raised about the wording of the email from the organisation.
- Discussions around the possibility of keeping any monies awarded to the organisation and asking the service users, resident in the City, to apply to City Council on an individual basis to access these funds – difficult to administer.
- As not paying rent, should they be making a contribution towards the running costs of the community centre?
- Concerns over the costs identified in the application such as why is furniture required when Hinton Community Centre has sufficient, what is the storage cost etc.

It was proposed by Cllr Wilcox, seconded by Cllr Williams and voted on with thirteen for and two against and

## **RESOLVED**

**To award Climb The Tree the reduced sum of £5,000 to fund equipment for a family child contact centre as set out in their application.**

### **C2020/21.51 STRONGER TOWNS BOARD – FUND BID**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the progress of City Council's bid for funding from the Stronger Towns Fund. The Clerk raised concern that applicants were originally told that at this stage, the board were just asking for ideas but then had been sent a very detailed application form from the consultants' requiring detailed financial and project information. Concern over how the board will deal with suggestions made by groups who are unable at this stage to provide this level of detail.

The Council's two ideas were put forward to the Board and the Clerk explained that the third idea of a youth provision was not put forward as more appropriate groups were considering putting such a scheme forward.

The Council's two bids put forward were to develop the Town Hall into an arts and cultural hub and to provide some electric hopper buses for the City. The clerk has indicated in the application, where he can, where partnership working is relevant. Currently it has no constitutional status, it has been submitted on the basis of discussions and it would be useful to have the support of Council.

The Mayor explained that she is heading up a sub-committee of the Board to try to ensure the local community's ideas are heard and developed where possible, where professional support has not been accessible.

All projects will be whittled down to approx. ten and then put forward to the second stage. As part of the feasibility study, the Clerk has identified what funding will be needed to take the projects forward.

Suggestion to speak in support of the youth project and potentially join with Herefordshire Council's bid for the transport hub for the buses project.

Members unanimously

#### **RESOLVED**

**To support the projects going forward to the first stage of the Stronger Towns Fund.**

#### **C2020/21.52 RATIONALISATION OF WORKING GROUPS**

The Town Clerk gave an overview of his report which identified working groups which have already completed their projects and suggestions for where groups can be merged. He explained that the Biodiversity and Climate working group had been upgraded to a sub-committee of Community Development due to the level of work required. The Chair of Community Development asked that this new group, elected at Community Development, starts work imminently and is assigned an officer – the Clerk will be the assigned officer.

All recommendations were taken together and Members unanimously

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Town Hall Working Group remain as it currently is.**

**That members wish to elect a third member to Parks and Open Spaces Working Group.**

**That the Website Group and Grants Working Group be thanked for their work and acknowledged as having completed their original remit.**

**That members wish to have an ongoing Social Media Group and direct the Clerk to bring a proposal to Council in January 2021.**

**That members note that the Climate Change Working Party will cease to meet as it has been replaced by a sub-committee of Community Development Committee.**

**That members agree to close the Enforcement Working Group down for the reason stated above.**

**That members agree that Parking, Street Scene and Markets Working Groups be merged into a single group to work with the BID and Herefordshire Council on all aspects of managing the city centre as described above.**

**That members wish to set a minimum requirement for any group to have at least two members and one officer at every informal meeting.**

#### **C2020/21.53 MERGER OF COMMITTEES**

The Town Clerk explained that both Finance and Policy Committee and Governance and Procedures Committee have decided that there would be merit in merging themselves into a single committee, however although they are both in favour, it is ultimately the decision of Council.

To agree in principle, to endorse what the two committees are recommending. Terms of Reference will need to be created for the proposed Policy and Resources Committee and the Employment Panel, to begin in the new municipal year (May), if it is finally endorsed once brought back to Council in January. Members will be elected at the meeting after Mayor-Making in May when all other committee members are elected.

It was explained by Councillor Wilcox that he and Councillor Stevens who are both either Chair and Vice-Chair of both committees, are of one mind that this is the best way forward due to the overlap of the items which will make the meetings more meaningful and efficient. The Employment Panel will be a much smaller group within that committee, which will deal with issues relating to employment such as interviews or disciplinaries, as and when necessary.

All recommendations were taken together and it was proposed by Councillor Powell, seconded by Councillor Wilcox and unanimously

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the joint recommendation of Finance and Policy and Governance and Procedures Committee be merged into a single committee be approved in principle.**

**That, to give effect to this, from May 2021 the Finance and Policy Committee and the Governance and Procedures Committee will be abolished and a new Policy and Resources Committee will be established and members will be elected to it.**

**That the Clerk be mandated to draw up terms of reference for the new committee and the Employment Panel for presentation to Council in January 2021.**

**That until May 2021 the current committees will continue their roles.**

#### **C2020/21.54 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Clerk informed Councillors that the 2020/21 Interim (6 month) Internal Audit Report was once again very successful and explained that as well as the usual process of reviewing our spending, management of spending, control of income etc, that this year it also reviewed the temporary governance arrangements put into place when we couldn't hold Council meetings and weren't yet set up for Zoom meetings instead (due to the Covid-19 pandemic). This governance arrangement delegated all authority

to the Town Clerk who only took decisions once he had taken polls from Councillors and had either received a unanimous or very large in favour result. The Council quickly moved onto Zoom meetings with all correspondence through email which has been very successful. The Council has been through two upheavals in the way it works and the internal auditor has issued a report with no qualifications or exceptions which means he is happy with the process followed.

For information, the Town Clerk then went onto explain what Madam Mayor had alluded to at the start of this item, which refers to questions from the company contracted by Government to complete the external audit for the 2019/20 accounts. There are currently discussions on how to show in the annual income and expenditure, the transaction which involves the purchase of the new Mayoral car, partly with the lump sum from the part exchange of the old car (which was not income but a discount on the purchase price) and partly through leasing – partly a capital purchase and partly a revenue cost. He is also in discussion about the section on exercise of public rights due to a mistake made in the financial year 2018/19. All has been resolved to the point where a slightly modified AGAR is being submitted to the external auditor. He is anticipating an unqualified external audit report as well.

Members unanimously

**RESOLVED**

**To receive and accept the Interim Internal Audit Report for financial year 2020/21.**

**C2020/21.55 EMERGENCY DONATIONS**

The Town Clerk wanted to start by stressing that Members were not making law which was binding to future Councils; a future Council meeting could decide, even if some of the criteria set out in the report is not present, that the emergency is sufficiently urgent and there is sufficient evidence to make a donation. This would not be unlawful provided they have given reasonable and proper consideration to available information. However what this report does, is set out some guidelines for officers to work to, so that when they are preparing reports about emergency donations, or when communicating and guiding people asking about donations, they have a template of what Council would expect to see.

Members unanimously

**RESOLVED**

**That the Council agrees to the definition of an emergency set out above.**

**That the Council agrees to the proposed process set out above for the guidance of officers and those wishing to make applications for emergency donations and as the basis for sound consideration of such applications.**

## **C2020/21.56 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

Madam Mayor wanted to start by paying tribute to Councillor Bernard Hunt who sadly passed away a few weeks ago. She attended Bernard's funeral and spoke about his contribution to the City Council; his family were very touched.

Councillor Hey wanted to personally thank all City Council staff who had risen to the challenge of working flexibly in response to Covid-19 and to cover unexpected staff absence.

The Mayor updated Members on Councillor Stevens' recovery and had been asked to pass on his thanks for all get well cards, wishes and support received. She also wanted to highlight his and Euan McPherson's success in winning two accolades at the recent Hereford Times Health and Social Care Awards for the work their Hereford Mens' Mental Health group does. They won the Mental Health Champions category and the Overall Outstanding Contribution Award. Kath gave her personal congratulations for their hard work and continued dedication of mens' mental health in the City.

Councillor Hey went on to update Members about the successful launch of the new website, linked to various social media platforms in order to develop the City Council's communications to try and reach more City residents. She thanked Connor Powell for all his hard work in communicating what we and associated groups do.

The Mayor recently attended a photocall for the work carried out on the flower beds at Morrisons by Hereford in Bloom and appreciated seeing the work that the Council's funding pays for.

A big thank you to the Mayor's Officer John Marshall on filming and producing the virtual Remembrance Day Service and it is believed that 20,000 people have viewed it on the various platforms it was shared on. She shared a thank you from a member of the public who very much appreciated the opportunity to still be able to pay his respects during the pandemic.

Madam Mayor then acknowledged the approach of the festive period and the difficulty some may find this year. She felt it's important we send out a message of hope into the community and has done so in her Mayoral Christmas card this year. She finished by saying thank you to everyone for all the help and advice given this year, and we should all give ourselves a pat on the back for how we've managed.

## **C2020/21.57 DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

The minutes of Governance and Procedures Committee for 29<sup>th</sup> September were received for information.

The minutes of Finance and Policy Committee for 13<sup>th</sup> October were received for information. The intention to avoid a precept increase for the following financial year was explained and will come to the next Committee.

The minutes of Community Development Committee for 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 3<sup>rd</sup> November and Grants Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> November were received for information. The Chair, Councillor Kenyon highlighted how the new way of live streaming the committees has really improved people's ability to view the decisions made, especially in relation to grants.

The minutes of Planning Committee for 10<sup>th</sup> September, 8<sup>th</sup> October and 5<sup>th</sup> November were received for information. Councillor Andrews also informed Members that a planning application in Three Elms, originally for 300 houses, a primary school, a doctor's surgery and employment land had resurfaced again five years later and that the developer had been invited a number of times to give a presentation to the committee however had proven extremely reluctant to come forward and share their plans.

The minutes of the Youth Council for 24<sup>th</sup> September and 22<sup>nd</sup> October were received for information.

## **C2020/21.58 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Municipal Charities** – Councillor Boulter informed Members that she and Councillor Foxton had attended a meeting but since the second lockdown these had been postponed again. They have arranged for all residents to receive Christmas presents instead of going out for their usual Christmas lunch. Councillor Foxton said the group are well organised, a lovely group of people, that there's lots going on, and plenty of support for residents needing support in Alms Houses. She clarified in response to Councillor Kenyon's question and the support required, that residents have available to them good neighbour visits, phone calls and counselling.

**Market Towns Forum** – No meetings however the Town Clerk had recently emailed the Clerks in the market towns to see what interest there was in restarting the group. He had only had a reply from one, Leominster, who are keen, but silence from the others is perhaps telling. If there is a future, might be more appropriate to have as and when more informal meetings rather if there's a need.

**Enterprise Stakeholders** – Councillor Hornsey informed Members that there had been a Zoom meeting but will have to update Members when the minutes are available – to be circulated.

**Three Choirs** – No meetings and no updates until the Covid-19 and events situations are clearer.

**Twinning Association** – No updates until after the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Tourism Group** – No communications.

**Hereford in Bloom** – The Mayor spoke about recent activity in her communications. Councillor Boulter has not had correspondence from the group in quite a while.

**New University Working Group** – No updates from Councillor Powell. The Mayor had met with David Langley (through Stronger Towns Fund) about skills development in the City and will send an email about the outcome of meetings about how the Council can get involved.

**Close House** – Councillor Boulter informed Members that they are still doing what they can and adapting to new ways of working with the young people. The Clerk explained that they have been in touch very recently about their activities regarding their annual report for funding.



**The BID Group** – Councillor Stevens was not present however will be asked to circulate any relevant information to Members.

**Hereford Area Plan** – The Clerk updated Member that he is attempting to put together a meeting next week. He has received correspondence that HC have decided to discontinue the HAP with a note of the decision paper. Given it's worked on by ourselves, to other parish councils, NMITE, the Youth Council, Civic Society and the Wildlife Trust, he was dismayed and concerned that they had unilaterally decided to stop the process. The reason for stopping is that the Core Strategy is being redrafted to take into account policy decisions around the bypass, and also that the Government have issued a white paper suggesting that in future, area plans must be briefer, simpler and possibly little more than maps with permitted and zoned areas. Informed HC that if not able to proceed with HAP, HCC would like to proceed with the policy for homes with multiple occupation, the design guide and to look at the conservation area, hence has requested the meeting. Councillor Milln concurred and reiterated the importance of the design guide.

**Community Land Trust** – Councillor Milln informed Members that since the Summer, and since the withdrawal of the grant application for the St Andrews Close site due to Connexus who own the site blowing hot and cold, they have now decided they are interested in working with the CLT. Submitted a bid to STF for development of a site on West Street, as did Encore.

**C2020/21.59 TOWN CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Clerk reported that Councillors should have received an email from Anne Harbour about Blackfriars Rose Gardens working days.

He has received confirmation from electoral services that there have been petitions for elections in Bobblestock and Newton Farm, which means there will be an election. However the Government have already ordained that election will not take place anywhere for anything until May next year, therefore those vacancies remain with us until then.

The Clerk also informed Members that they are able to claim printer cartridges as a legitimate expense due to Agendas now being sent out by email.

He is in touch with Tracy to keep in touch but not about work.

**C2020/21.60 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 6 pm

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.06 pm.

Signed .....

Date .....