

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL AND COUNCIL 18th May 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Kath Hey and Councillors Polly Andrews, Sue Boulter, Jacqui Carwardine, Mark Dykes, Elizabeth Foxton, Cat Hornsey, Jim Kenyon, Jeremy Milln, Aubrey Oliver, Rob Owens, Dan Powell, Paul Stevens, Kevin Tillet, Diana Toyne, Ange Tyler, Brian Wilcox, Rob Williams

In attendance: Steve Kerry, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Revd Andy Morgan Mayor's Chaplain

Before the meeting, the Mayor asked her Chaplain Revd Andy Morgan to share some thoughts with the members and to lead prayers. Revd Morgan reflected on how the Covid pandemic has placed all sort of relationships – family, work, political etc – under great strain and that simple acts of kindness and community support had become much more important than previously.

The Mayor asked the meeting to observe a moment's silence in memory of Jack Daw the paramedic from Hereford recently killed in a road accident whilst answering a call and to recognise the sacrifice of many in the health services during the pandemic.

C2021/22.1 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND CHAIR OF THE CITY COUNCIL

The Mayor asked members to nominate one of their number to serve as Mayor and to Chair the City Council during the municipal year 2021-2022. Councillor Wilcox proposed that the Deputy Mayor Councillor Paul Stevens be elected Mayor. He made a brief speech, indicating that he would have more to say when the ceremonial inauguration of the new mayor took place when Covid restrictions were over. Cllr Wilcox alluded to Cllr Stevens' work as Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee, and as Vice Chair of Governance and Procedures, his high level of activity across many issues and that he was an eminently suitable person to take over the office of Mayor. The current Mayor Councillor Kath Hey seconded the proposal, adding that she would not have been able to get through the extended term she has served without the support and assistance she has receive from Cllr Stevens in his role as Deputy Mayor, a function he was forced to carry out for more than twice as long as usual.

There being no other nominations it was formally proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Hey and unanimously

RESOLVED That Councillor Paul Stevens be elected as Mayor of the City of Hereford and Chair of the City Council.

The Mayor's Officer took the chain from the former Mayor and while it was prepared to be placed on the incoming Mayor, the Clerk administered the declaration of acceptance of office by the incoming Mayor.

The Mayor's Officer then placed the chain on the incoming Mayor.

The Mayor spoke briefly of the difficult times the Council and City have been through and his own recent health issues. He thanked members for their support and for the honour of being made Mayor, and also thanked Cllr Hey for her two years and eight days as Mayor, holding that office in exceptionally trying times.

C2021/22.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

With all members present, there were no apologies for absence.

C2021/22.3 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor called for nominations for a member to serve as Deputy Mayor and Vice Chair of the Council. Councillor Kenyon nominated Councillor Mark Dykes. Councillor Kenyon referred to their shared background as cadets in Hereford, although he claimed he had made a better choice of regiment than Councillor Dykes, who had joined the Royal Marines. He indicated he would leave the rest of his comments for the ceremonial inauguration before adding that Councillor Dykes was an excellent representative of his ward and in every way a suitable person to be deputy mayor. Councillor Tillett seconded the proposal, noting it was the first time he had said Mr Mayor since 2017. He indicated that although he did not share a service background, he and Councillor Dykes did have much in common, of which he would say more at a later date.

There being no other nominations, it was then formally proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Tillett and unanimously

RESOLVED That Councillor Mark Dykes be elected as Deputy Mayor of the City of Hereford and Vice Chair of the City Council.

The Town Clerk then administered the declaration of acceptance of office by the incoming Deputy Mayor.

C2021/22.4 CHAPLAINCY TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

The Clerk briefly introduced the report on this item. The Mayor added that he had spoken to Revd Morgan who would be acting as his Mayor's Chaplain this year, with a brief to reach out across the faith community. Prayers at the next council meeting would be led by a Roman Catholic priest and in due course representatives of the Jewish and other faiths would be invited to do so. The proposal before members was for a general chaplaincy support service to all members, and members of staff, which would be ongoing whereas the choice of Mayor's Chaplain might change from year to year. Councillor Milln added that through his ward work he has come to know Revd Morgan very well and that he warmly endorsed this proposal. Councillor Hey added that the proposal had come up during her second year in the Mayoralty as there was so little civic life but so much need becoming apparent in so many areas.

It was then proposed by Councillor Dykes, seconded by Councillor Wilcox and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the offer by the Revd Andy Morgan to act as Chaplain to the City Council be accepted.

That each Mayor be asked, upon taking office, if they wish to appoint a personal Mayor's Chaplain in addition to the Chaplain to the City Council.

C2021/22.5 MAYOR'S CHARITIES

The Mayor announced that his charities would be Phoenix Bereavement Service (which is a continuation from the previous Mayor and recognised their ongoing important work among bereaved families) and United in the Community recognising their contribution to community sports. In addition, he would do events to support Prostate UK and MacMillan Cancer Relief as a way of thanking them for their support and for Services for Independent Living as a thank you for their support in setting up the Hereford Men's Mental Health group.

C2021/22.6 WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Mayor welcomed Councillors Jacqui Carwardine and Rob Owens to their first meeting and congratulated them on their success in the recent by-elections in Newton Farm and Bobblestock. He added that it was good to see the Council back to its full membership again.

C2021/22.7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ange Tyler declared a pecuniary interest in item 22 on the agenda, the large grant to the Greyhound Rugby Club. This was noted and recorded in the register of declarations.

C2021/22.8 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none. In answer to a question from a member the Clerk said that when the legal position of public and online meetings was clarified by the government he would look into the possibility of some form of live streaming of council and committee meetings as the level of interest in the streamed zoom meetings during the pandemic had been remarkable.

C2021.22.9 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councillor Tillett noted some corrections to typing which had been sent to the Clerk and a revised set of minutes had been prepared for signature.

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

RESOLVED That the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council of 13th May 2019 and of the Council Meeting of 9th March 2021 as amended be accepted as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

C2021/22.10 NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Clerk introduced the report, explaining that both Finance and Policy Committee and Governance and Procedures Committee had agreed that their work could usefully be combined. Council had also approved this in principle in the past. The purpose of this report was formally to create the new Policy and Resources Committee and agree terms of reference which were recommended to Council by Governance and Procedures Committee.

In addition, after the first few meetings of the Climate and Biodiversity Sub-Committee that group had suggested it should be a committee in its own right. This was also recommended for acceptance by Council and draft terms of reference were included in the proposal.

Councillor Kenyon, in supporting the proposals for a new Climate and Biodiversity Committee recalled that this had grown from the work of the Community Development Committee but merging the other two would give space for a new committee in what he felt was a very good structure for getting things done to benefit the community.

It was noted that the existing terms of reference for Community Development and Planning and Highways Committees remained unchanged.

It was then proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Powell and unanimously

RESOLVED That Council accepts the Committee structure and terms of reference set out in the report.

C2021/22.11 RESOLUTION REGARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Clerk explained that this was a brief motion to transfer all duties formerly held by either Finance and Policy or Governance and Procedures Committees to the new Policy and Resources Committee. In due course as various policies are updated, the committee reference would be changed. This single resolution would mean that the position was clear from the start of the new Committee's existence.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Williams and unanimously

RESOLVED That in all policies and procedures with references to Finance and Policy Committee or Governance and Procedures Committee shall henceforth be read as referring to Policy and Resources Committee.

C2021/22.12 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Mayor reminded members that this item was simply to appoint members of committees. The election of Chairs and Vice Chairs would be the first business at the next meeting of each of the Committees once Council had appointed members to them.

The Mayor then asked for members wishing to serve on each Committee to identify themselves.

Climate and Biodiversity Committee: Councillors Toynbee, Tyler, Powell, Oliver, Milln, Owens, Hornsey and Boulter.

Community Development Committee: Councillors Wilcox, Tyler, Oliver, Owens, Williams, Kenyon, Hornsey, Carwardine, Boulter and Hey.

Planning Committee: Councillors Tyler, Powell, Williams, Milln, Foxtton, Boulter, and Andrews.

Policy and Resources Committee: Councillors Wilcox, Toynbee, Oliver, Tillett, Williams, Hornsey, Boulter, Andrews, Dykes and Hey (Councillor Kenyon withdrew his interest).

The Mayor is under the Standing Orders also an ex-officio member of all Committees.

It was then proposed by Councillor Powell, seconded by Councillor Toynbee and unanimously

RESOLVED That the membership of Committees be as set out above and that where vacancies remain a member may seek election to any of them at a future meeting of Council.

C2021/22.13 STANDING ORDERS

The Clerk explained that the standing orders are renewed annually at Council. This year an amendment was recommended by Finance and Policy committee regarding the notice for

amendments to the budget at Council which would affect the overall Council Tax level. This was to require a member wishing to move such an amendment to give the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer time to prepare a note for members on the budgetary implications of the amendment, so that members could be properly advised as to the implications of their decisions. The new standing order did not prevent amendments at the meeting to move money from one budget heading to another within the overall precept.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Standing Orders be amended with a new paragraph regarding notice for amendments to the annual budget and thereafter that they be accepted for the Municipal Year 2021/2022.

C2021/22.14 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Clerk noted two amendments as part of the annual renewal of the Financial Regulations, namely the updating of the amounts for contracts to be covered by the former European Union Procurement Directive which remains in place in British law, and to set a £50,000 approval for transfers to and from reserves. Otherwise, the Regulations were recommended for acceptance.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Williams and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Financial Regulations as proposed be accepted for the Municipal Year 2021/22

C2021.22/15 CODE OF CONDUCT

The Clerk explained that there is a new version of the Herefordshire Code being drafted, and a proposed new one from the Local Government Association. Governance and Procedures Committee had considered this and recommended that Council continues with the current Herefordshire Code until the new one is ready, when it would be possible to compare to the LGA model and see which fitted the City Council best.

The Clerk also reminded members that it must have a code of conduct in place and that it could adopt one from the principal authority or write its own, but if it chose the latter path the end result would be very similar to the Herefordshire one, as so much of the code was a statutory requirement anyway.

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

RESOLVED To adopt the Herefordshire Council Code of Conduct for the City Council in the Municipal Year 2021/22, subject to a review when the new code is ready for consideration.

C2021/22.16 CHEQUE SIGNATORIES

The Clerk reminded the meeting that the current arrangements for cheques to be signed are that he signs as an officer and then two members of Council sign, or that three members of Council sign. There are currently four signatories, Councillors Andrews, Boulter, Hornsey and Kenyon. It would be helpful if they would remain but one more would also be useful. The four signatories all indicated they would be happy to continue. The Mayor said he would be willing to be added to the list.

There being no other suggestions for signatories it was affirmed without a vote

That the cheque signatories be Councillors Andrews, Boulter, Hornsey, Kenyon and Stevens.

C2021/22.17 COUNTER-SIGNATORY FOR BANK RECONILIATIONS

The Mayor reported that Councillor Wilcox, who has done this diligently for several years wishes to stand down, and asked Councillor Oliver if he would be willing to take this on, the signatures now being required quarterly following the latest audit advice. Councillor Oliver agreed.

It was affirmed without a vote

That Councillor Oliver shall now be the member to counter-sign quarterly bank reconciliations.

C2021/22.18 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor apologised that due to Covid restrictions he would not be able to invite members to the Parlour after the meeting, but that instead he would be welcoming the Deputy Mayor, the former Mayor and the newly elected members. A social event and ceremonial inauguration was planned as soon as Covid restrictions allowed.

The Mayor reported his first civic engagement for 24th May which is the re-opening of the Museum of Cider. Councillor Kenyon presented a plaque from the Pilgrim Bandits in recognition of the Council's support for their charitable work, and asked that it be found a place in the Parlour.

C2021/22.19 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

The Mayor stated that the confidential minutes of Governance and Procedures Committee listed under this item would be held over for consideration until after the exclusion of the press and public. The following minutes were presented for information and noted by Council.

Finance and Policy Committee 27th April 2021

Climate and Biodiversity Sub-Committee 4th March 2021

Climate and Biodiversity Sub-Committee informal notes 15th April 2021

Community Development Committee 30th March 2021

Community Development (Grants) Committee 19th April 2021

Governance and Procedures Committee 23rd March and 28th April 2021 (non-confidential items)

Planning and Highways Committee 11th March and 1st April 2021

Youth Council 18th February and 18th March 2021

It was noted that there would be one more set of planning applications to be considered under the arrangements for delegated decision making as the officer who clerks the

meetings had not yet been vaccinated. It was also noted that the Mayor would attend the meeting of the Youth Council immediately after their next one.

C2021/22.20 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The following representatives were appointed to outside bodies:

- a) Municipal Charities – Councillors Foxtan and Boulter to continue.
- b) Market Towns Forum – this group is defunct, no representative appointed.
- c) Enterprise Zone Stakeholder Group – Councillor Hornsey was happy to pass this on if someone else wanted to do it. Councillor Andrews volunteered and was appointed by affirmation.
- d) Three Choirs – Councillors Hornsey and Foxtan to continue, noting that everything has been delayed one year by Covid. This year the festival is in Worcester, where arrangements regarding the civic side had not yet been clarified, next year in Hereford, hopefully back to normal.
- e) Twinning Association – no travel plans as yet but communication was being maintained. Councillor Dykes will continue as the representative to the Association.
- f) Hereford City Tourism Group – this group was not functioning and there were other groups with a tourism brief. Agreed that the Tourism and Communications Manager would represent the Council on all groups relating to tourism and marketing of the City as a destination.
- g) Hereford in Bloom – Councillor Boulter will continue, noting a lack of communication from HiB, the Mayor would invite their officers to meet him and Councillor Boulter in the Parlour to develop the future of the project.
- h) New University Working Group – Noted that this had not been particularly effective and that the university was now open for business. In future it was agreed that Councillors Hey, Hornsey and Powell would form a working group to liaise with all further and higher education providers in the City and would invite the Youth Council to be involved too.
- i) Close House – the current representative Councillor Boulter suggested Councillor Hey who agreed to take on the role. This was affirmed. (Noted that Councillor Boulter remains involved with Close House as a private individual anyway.)
- j) Hereford Business Improvement District – currently the Mayor, who wishes to continue. There was some debate as to whether the two roles were compatible, as the Mayor is also the Chair of the BID Board. The Mayor confirmed that if the pressure of mayoral duties becomes difficult with the BID responsibility he had already alerted the Vice Chair of the BID Board that he would stand down. It was put to the vote and with 15 in favour and 3 abstentions it was

RESOLVED That the Mayor continues as the Council’s representative on the BID Board.
- k) Hereford Area Plan – This is not progressing, and meetings have stopped. The Mayor suggested, and it was agreed, that all HAP matters be referred to Planning Committee to monitor and comment upon.

- l) Stronger Towns Board – The Clerk summarised the position with the pause for a government decision on the amount to be awarded and the possibility that if funds were set lower than anticipated there might be a considerable argument as to which projects from the Town Investment Plan would actually carry on. The City Council had been represented by the then Mayor, Councillor Hey, and he felt continuity might be important to ensure the City’s case was well put and the project we had supported for electric buses would thereby have the best chance of being included. Councillor Kenyon suggested he should take the role over and that a more assertive approach was required when dealing with the Stronger Towns Board. Several other members spoke to thank Councillor Hey for what she had done in her time as Mayor to promote the City’s interest on the STB, to note we have strong project list in the TIP and that the local MP is optimistic that the City will receive close to the £25m sought.

On being put to the vote it was, by ten votes to two with six abstentions

RESOLVED That the City Council’s representative on the Stronger Towns Board continue to be Councillor Hey.

- m) Youth Council – currently Councillors Hornsey and Powell, agreed they would continue.

C2021/22.21 LARGE GRANT APPLICATION – GREYHOUND RUGBY CLUB

Having declared a pecuniary interest, Councillor Tyler left the meeting for the duration of this item.

The Clerk explained that with the prospect of a long delay before a large application could come to Council, and recognising the need to act quickly to support the Club, the Community Development Committee had resolved a complex solution, involving a grant, a payment from another Council budget towards the cost of the mower (which would have meant joint ownership) and the possibility of a second top-up grant. Now that this meeting, which had originally been scheduled as a ceremonial Mayor-making with a business meeting in June, was taking other business it was possible for a large grant recommendation to be considered and for a single decision to be made on the whole funding issue. This would be easier to administer and avoid any confusion about different budgets being used to support the same project. He then suggested that the Chair of Community Development Committee might, on behalf of the Committee, wish to move a proposal for a large grant as the majority of the committee had been very keen to see this project go ahead.

Councillor Kenyon agreed it would be an easier solution, now the meeting dates had changed, to consider a single large grant. He commended the application to council and asked for support for a grant for the full cost of the mower and ancillary equipment, £7,879.

The Mayor indicated he would second the proposal after discussion noting that this was the only ladies’ rugby club in the City.

A lengthy discussion then took place, the main point of contention being whether it was reasonable for the whole amount to be paid as a grant, or whether it was reasonable to expect the Club to make some contribution from its bar revenues or member subscriptions to the project. Some members felt the Club should have used its income to build a fund for equipment, others felt that with the total cessation of funding from the Rugby Football Union to grass root clubs and the closure of the bar and the club’s operations for over a year it was unrealistic to expect the Club to have been able to save money for equipment when every penny of very limited income had been needed to pay essential bills.

It was also suggested that funding the whole of this application might open the Council up to a series of applications from sports clubs, other members felt each would be considered on its merits, and, if this proposal had sufficient merit, it should be supported now, and later applications from other clubs considered then.

After the debate it was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by the Mayor that the Council should award a large grant of £7,879 to the Greyhound Rugby Club for the purpose specified in the application.

Councillor Oliver then proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Wilcox, that a grant of £6,000 be made with the balance to be found by the Club.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost by 3 votes in favour to 12 against with 1 abstention.

It was then proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by the Mayor and by 12 votes in favour, none against and with 4 abstentions

RESOLVED That the Council makes a large grant of £7,879 to the Greyhound Rugby Club for the purpose set out in their application.

C2021/22.22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Council will be 22nd June 2021 at 6 pm.

The meeting briefly adjourned.

C2021/22.23 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Noted that Councillor Tyler had returned to the meeting.

As the following items would involve the disclosure of personal information about identified members of staff it was proposed by Councillor Powell, seconded by Councillor Kenyon and unanimously

RESOLVED That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2) the press and public be excluded to enable the discussion of confidential matters.

The Revd Andy Morgan left the meeting.

C2021/22.24 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

The minutes of the confidential business of Governance and Procedures Committee of 23rd March 2021 and 28th April 2021 were noted.

C2021/22.25 CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING MATTER

This item is minuted under separate cover.

There being no further business, the Mayor thanked all members for their attendance and diligence during what had been a very long meeting, and declared the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed

Date