

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING 21 June 2022

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Mark Dykes and Councillors Carwardine, Kenyon, Oliver, Owens, Hornsey, Powell, Andrews, Wilcox, Stevens, Hey, Toynbee, Boulter, Williams and Milln.

In attendance: Steve Kerry, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

C2022/23.15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported apologies from Councillors Tillett, Tyler and Foxton.

C2022/23.16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

C2022/23.17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

C2022/23.18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A member had reported a punctuation correction to the Clerk and a corrected version had been prepared for the Mayor. To this it was added that Councillor Tyler had presented the minutes of Planning Committee not Councillor Andrews. With that correction, it was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Oliver and unanimously

RESOLVED That the minutes as corrected of the meeting of 24 May be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

C2022/23.19 ANNUAL GOVERNANANCE AND ACCOUNTING REPORT

The Clerk and RFO introduced the draft responses suggested for Council to the AGAR questions, and asked members to note the variances and the reasons given for them. He confirmed that the word “restated” at the top of the summary information did not mean an error had been corrected, it meant in fact that a mid-year revaluation of the civic treasures had resulted in a different figure for the left-hand column box 9 from that which appeared in the right hand column at the end of the previous financial year. That is, the fixed asset value had changed, not because an asset had been acquired or disposed of, but that the valuation had altered the final figure. This was an important part of bringing the Council’s asset register up to date. Other variances were explained in the attached report.

The closed annual accounts for 2021/2022 and the internal auditor’s answers on the appropriate page of the AGAR were also presented. Councillor Oliver noted that the final out-turn had come in within £1,000 of the Clerk’s mid-year projection.

The Clerk took members through the questions they must answer before approving the AGAR and positive answers were affirmed to all questions.

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

RESOLVED That council accepts the final accounts for 20221-2022 and the draft AGAR, and authorises the Mayor and Clerk/RFO to sign the AGAR and publish the accounts for public scrutiny.

C2022/23.20 FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2021/22

The Clerk and RFO presented the final internal audit report and drew members' attention to the fact that there were no recommendation or adverse comments. This has been achieved despite bedding in a new system of BACS payments and showed that the staff concerned had managed a good level of procedural accuracy and attention to detail throughout that process. Cllr Stevens added that the Policy and Resources Committee had been pleased with the report and repeated the suggestion he had made there that the staff responsible should be congratulated on good work done.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hey and unanimously

RESOLVED That the final internal audit report is accepted and that the staff responsible for managing the Council's financial processes be thanked for their work in producing an unqualified audit.

C2022/23.21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Carwardine and unanimously

RESOLVED That the press and public be excluded from the meeting pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960 s 1(2) to enable the discussion of a confidential item that would disclose personal information about a living person.

C2022/23.22 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

A proposal was brought to the meeting to consider an award of Freedom of the City to an individual based on their contribution to the life of the community over many years. In confidential discussion this proposal was agreed, and subject to their agreement to accept the honour, a public statement will be made, and an award ceremony arranged.

C2022/23.23 READMISSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed by affirmation without a vote to readmit the press and public as the remaining items were not confidential.

C2022/23.24 HEREFORDSHIRE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION NEWS AND ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Members noted the report and the confirmation contained within it about the usefulness of this service. It was noted that the only logo appearing on the front was Herefordshire Council which in view of the joint funding was not appropriate. It was also felt that a pie chart indicating who the funding partners are, and how much each contributes, would also be helpful. The Clerk was asked to convey these points to the responsible officer at Herefordshire Council. Concern was expressed about the level of consultation with the whole City Council as opposed to directly affected county ward members who happened also to be City Councillors, on the future developments. It was also noted that the BID had not been consulted, but an unelected body, Vennture, had been. The Clerk was asked to raise these with the other issues noted.

Councillor Andrews recalled many years of lobbying to have CCTV coverage in the Venn Cemetery (a known hot spot for illegal drug use and trading, and various forms of anti-social behaviour including heavy drinking and assaults). She asked if this site was included in the proposed revised coverage.

Cllr Milln reminded members of the facility to visit the CCTV room by appointment and see the system in operation.

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

RESOLVED That the Clerk writes to the appropriate officer at Herefordshire Council to suggest that when Amy Pitt visits the next Council Meeting to talk about community hubs and defibrillators, the issues raised in the CCTV report be added to that discussion, and in the interim to seek answers regarding consultation and responses to the specific concerns regarding the Venn cemetery.

C2022/23.25 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported that a few Saturdays ago he had been out with Superintendent Williams to a briefing by Vennture and Hereford Against Night-time Disorder, followed by a walk through the City Centre for the first patrol with the Street Pastors. He had been impressed by the professionalism and skill of the door staff at many venues.

The Mayor, in response to a question, confirmed that he had written to the Leader and Chief Executive of Herefordshire about the state of the City streets, and thanked the Clerk for drafting a very good letter. Dan Guerche and Cllr Hitchiner had expressed interest in following this up. More good quality bins were needed, and a much better system for emptying as they fill up before the early morning collection so in the afternoon and early evening they are often over-flowing.

The Mayor had attended the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands, special ceremony for survivors of HMS Antelope at the Cathedral which had been attended by the last Captain of the vessel and many of his shipmates, along with an impressive collection of senior military personnel.

He had attended the Armed Forces Week flag raising at the start of the week and would attend the closing ceremony in Ross-on-Wye on Sunday. He concluded by reminding everyone of the forthcoming Three Choirs Opening Event in Hereford.

Cllr Kenyon asked for Pauline Strong and the Hit Squad to be complimented on the excellent work they did on providing refreshments of the Falklands event.

Cllr Hey reminded all present that it was the Mayor's birthday today, which was celebrated chorally.

In answer to a question, the Mayor confirmed that the zoom conference with the President of Jaworzno Municipality had not happened yet and needed to be prioritised.

C2022/23.26 DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

Climate and Bio-diversity Committee 7 June 2022, Councillor Owens (Vice Chair) presented the minutes, there were no questions. It was noted that there are some corrections required before the next meeting.

Community Development Committee 29 March 2022, Councillor Boulter presented the minutes, there were no questions.

Planning Committee 5 May 2022, Councillor Milln (Vice Chair) presented the minutes, there were no questions.

Youth Council 16 May 2022, Councillor Hornsey presented the minutes, there were no questions.

C2022/23.27 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- a) **Municipal Charities** Nothing to report.
- b) **Enterprise Stakeholders** This had been retained as there was a rumour of a meeting, but Cllr Andrews reported she had heard nothing. This will be deleted from the agenda in future.
- c) **Three Choirs** Cllr Hornsey reported that problems in the travel industry appeared to have depressed ticket sales, everything else was going well. In answer to a question, it was confirmed that on the night of each concert any unpurchased tickets are made available free on the door. Cllr Hornsey will advise Encore of this option for their members.
- d) **Hereford Twinning Association** Nothing to report.
- e) **Hereford in Bloom** Councillor Boulter reported that the next meeting is next week. In answer to a question, it was confirmed that judging will be on 20 July this year and the route is being finalised. It was suggested that new tree and wild planting areas of King George's Park should be included, as well as the new gardens in Hinton and Hunderton and central wards.
- f) **Close House** Nothing to report.
- g) **Hereford BID** Cllr Stevens had circulated a report by email, there were no questions.
- h) **Stronger Towns Board** The Clerk reported that since the last meeting things have improved, with a lot more focus on getting business cases finished rather than repeated questioning. At a meeting with Herefordshire's Head of Finance the questioning had come down to three areas of concern. The first was how bids coped with inflation. In the case of the Hereford Zipper the price of buses was actually falling and as a hedge against other costs rising, the Council had a new earmarked bus reserve of £300,000, i.e. twice the estimated annual running cost of the project. This was a very strong position. The second area was professional verification of costs for complex multi-stage building projects, which it was universally acknowledged did not apply to the Zipper project. The third was a cash flow forecast which could be done in terms of how many months after agreement items would be coming up for payment, but the date of agreement by the government was not fixed. Herefordshire's officer had indicated that would not be a problem. With a few days to go before the deadline, the focus was now on the projects where business cases had not yet been agreed, and unless there were any last minute questions, work on the Zipper appeared to be complete at this stage. A response from the government was expected in September/October.

- i) **Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Charity** Nothing to report.
- j) **Youth Council** Councillor Powell reported a very positive and enthusiastic meeting including input from new members. The Youth Council was in good shape.
- k) **Community Land Trust** Nothing to report.
- l) **Hereford Allotment and Leisure Gardeners** Nothing to report, although there is a comprehensive item on the next Community Development agenda.

C2022/23.28 TOWN CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk gave a brief account of recent discussions between parish clerks and Herefordshire Council's new client side project officer about ongoing issues with communication and responsiveness from Balfour Beatty Living Places. It appeared that Herefordshire Council were keen to alter the balance of control within the contractual relationship, which was to be welcomed.

C2022/23.29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 27 September 2022 at 6pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.09pm

Signed

Date