

**HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL**  
**COUNCIL MEETING 14 MARCH 2023**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**

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

**In attendance:** Steve Kerry Town Clerk, Becci O'Reilly Administration and Events Manager and Ali Tolley Administration Officer

**C2022/23.95 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were noted from Councillor Andrews.

**C2022/23.96 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**C2022/23.97 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**C2022/23.98 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Clerk reported that he had, at the request of a member, taken the full text of the motion on voter ID from the agenda and appended it to the minutes as held in the Council's archive so either document would give a full account.

With this addition it was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Carwardine and unanimously

**RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of Council of 24 January 2023 be agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.**

**C2022/23.99 PRESENTATION BY THE COMMUNITY ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

As the CEO was not present this item was deferred.

**C2022/23.100 CORONATION CELEBRATION**

The Clerk referred to the deliberations of the Community Development Committee and the subsequent discovery that the screen they had authorised had already been booked by another venue while the owners were waiting for Council decision. Understandably demand for screens on the day of the Coronation is very high. This proposal was for the next largest screen, but as it was beyond the mandate given at Committee a fresh authority would be needed to authorise officers to proceed. In answer to questions, it was confirmed that projection from a TV would not work in open air during the day, that the screen we have been quoted for was shaded to allow it to work well in bright sunlight and that the price included a sound system and mixing desk so it would be a good coverage of the events. The screen would now be erected on Castle Green and not in Bishops Meadow as originally discussed.

It was proposed by Councillor Hornsey, seconded by Councillor Stevens and by 15 votes to 0 with two abstentions

**RESOLVED That the Council authorises the Clerk to hire a screen for £2,930 plus VAT for the morning of the Coronation Day and for this to be installed as part of the Hereford Happening.**

## **C2022/23.101 TOWN HALL FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The Clerk explained that a feasibility study into the revenue generating and business opportunities inherent in the Town Hall if it were properly managed would be a key part of any future fundraising bids by the new owners, who it was still envisaged would be a charitable trust. Shadow Trustees, i.e. people who had committed to the project but who were not yet legally constituted, had been formed but they had no official status yet, and no access to funds. Therefore, the Head of Financial Services at Herefordshire Council had agreed to propose a jointly funded study to support that process of asset transfer. This paper was that proposal worked out in detail.

A question arose as to who the trustees are. At this stage the Shadow Trustees' meeting consists of two groups, those who will commit to being trustees going forward and those who are assisting with the complex processes of the asset transfer negotiations but intend to move on after that is completed. The Clerk will ask if anyone is prepared to be publicly named as a future trustee and release that information to members when it is available. The role of Encore in a Stronger Towns Fund bid does not prevent their officer(s) from being trustees and the timing of the transfer and the progression of their project so far have not clashed.

The Chair of the Shadow Trustees has developed a specification for the study which officers of the two councils who have checked it think will be fit for purpose.

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

**RESOLVED That the Clerk is authorised to offer £20,000 to support a jointly funded feasibility study on the future of the Town Hall with Herefordshire Council, funded from the general reserve or available balances as appropriate.**

**That, subject to clarification of which authority will formally commission the study, either to make a payment to Herefordshire Council to support their commissioning of the survey or to commission it and invoice Herefordshire Council for their contribution.**

## **C2022/23.102 ELECTION OF MAYOR ELECT AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECT**

The Clerk explained that this has no legal force and does not pre-determine the outcome of the first business at the first meeting after the elections, which will be to elect a Chair and Vice Chair of the City Council. The incumbents of these two offices automatically become Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and no-one other than the Chair of the Council can be Mayor. The purpose is to give a steer to officers as to who to work with in terms of guestlists for Mayor Making, name plate on the door, etc. In a general election year this is somewhat precarious as the person nominated now must be elected to a seat on the Council in May if they are to take office as Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

After clarifying that Councillor Tillett was elected in a by-election before 2019 and was therefore the next in order of precedence/seniority, and that Councillor Tyler was the first name out of the hat from the group of members elected in 2019 at the general election, and therefore next in seniority after him.

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

**RESOLVED That the Deputy Mayor Councillor Jacqui Carwardine be recognised as Mayor-elect for the Municipal Year 2023-2024.**

It was then

Proposed by Councillor Owens, seconded by Councillor Powell and unanimously

**RESOLVED That Councillor Kevin Tillett be recognised as Deputy-Mayor elect for the Municipal Year 2023-2024.**

**C2022/23.103 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Mayor noted that this would be his last full Council meeting as Mayor and that it had been an absolute honour to serve in the role. A full speech would follow at Mayor Making in the usual way. He thanked members for their good behaviour at meetings and reminded them that the Annual Thanksgiving Service is on 16 April and RSVPs were requested as soon as possible. Pre-elections appointments were ramping up.

Councillor Oliver said he had received what appeared to be scam emails purporting to be from the Mayor and asking for help. The Clerk replied that a paper is going to Policy and Resources Committee next week on members' emails, one feature of the proposals is added security, although no system is proof against this type of abuse from time to time.

**C2022/23.104 DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES**

- a) **Climate and Biodiversity Committee 7 February 2023**, noted that a correction is needed regarding the Chair of the Committee, no further comments.
- b) **Planning and Highways Committee 12 January 2023 and 9 February 2023**, no comments or questions.
- c) **Youth Council 13 February 2023**, it was noted that some guidance is needed to the new Secretary regarding the amount of coverage required in minutes.

**C2022/23.105 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

- a) **Municipal Charities**, Councillor Boulter reported that there is a meeting on Friday.
- b) **Twinning Association**, in view of the demise of this group this item will be taken off the agenda.
- c) **Hereford in Bloom**, Councillor Boulter reported that there had been a meeting but she had been unable to attend. Notes to be circulated when Councillor Boulter receives them.
- d) **Close House**, Councillor Hey reported that there had been an away day for staff and board members. Councillor Boulter added that as the Dave Benjamin Cup was now full of winners' inscriptions Close House had decided that the new ward would be called the Julie Woodward Cup which she greatly appreciated. It was noted that the Mayor would be awarding this to one of the EPICs later this week.
- e) **Hereford Business Improvement District**, Councillor Stevens confirmed he would send copies of notes via Ali Tolley for members. The next big event after the Christmas Nutcrackers would be the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe trail at Easter.
- f) **Stronger Towns Fund**, Councillor Hey noted that this was largely covered in the report on the Hereford Zipper project later on this agenda. The Board are looking for new members and three serious contenders are being considered. They are also looking to recruit a communications specialist as activity picks up.

- g) Bishop of Hereford's Blue Coat School Charity**, Councillor Wilcox reported recent grants. One was to the school for students to make their own computer for an E-sports club for inter-house virtual sports. Two others had been made to St. Thomas Cantilupe, where 60% of students do not have English as their first language, one to help with texts in various languages on foundation subjects and one to help all the children to learn about the natural world.
- h) Community Land Trust**, Councillor Milln reported that the trust is working on one small scheme in Barton Road, struggling against less than supportive officers at Herefordshire Council, and the fact that the land is designated for highways. The upcoming revised National Planning Policy Framework would place a duty on planning authorities to support and assist CLTs, which should change things for the better.
- i) Hereford Allotment & Leisure Gardeners**, Councillor Kenyon reported that all was quiet, which is an indication of no problems and that the Society were looking at ways of improving natural composting by providing suitable bins.

#### **C2022/23.106 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

**RESOLVED That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s 1(2) the press and public be excluded as the following item involved the disclosure of commercially sensitive information.**

#### **C2022/23.107 HEREFORD ZIPPER PROJECT**

After discussing a confidential report giving details of the tender received from Yeomans, and various measures to flex the balance of capital and revenue spending within the overall project as well as achieving some additional income or operational cost reductions,

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

**RESOLVED That the Council continues to support the Hereford Zipper project and endorses the efforts of the Clerk and project working group to close the revenue funding gap as reported in the confidential debate.**

**That the Council creates the Hereford Zipper Committee with the delegated authority to make decisions regarding the service contract with a provider and to determine any other matters on which a decision is required to progress the Hereford Zipper, within its previously agreed project plan.**

**That members of the Hereford Zipper Committee be Councillors Hey, Stevens and Hornsey.**

#### **C2022/23.108 READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was resolved without a formal vote to readmit the press and public, confidential business having been concluded.

#### **C2022/23.109 TOWN CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk said he had been approached by one of the members who is standing down to see if there was a space on the agenda for a farewell address. He had contacted the other member known to be standing down and would therefore give way first to Councillor Oliver and then to Councillor Wilcox.

Councillor Oliver said he had been a City Councillor for over twenty years, having previously been involved in campaigns for the District Council of the City which had been a much bigger and more influential body than a parish council. As a new parish, the problem had been to be relevant other than as the keepers of the Mayoral traditions which many in Hereford seem to value. Through grants we have done that, at the Skatepark, the Cycle Track, now possibly with the Athletics Tack as well. The Council is no longer a talking shop but is doing useful things, and we have always worked well together which has made being a councillor a happy experience. He especially thanked Becci O'Reilly for her help and support and quoted extensively from Shakespeare to express his admiration for her.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Oliver for his many contributions to the work of the council over the last twenty years.

Councillor Wilcox said he had been a councillor since 2003, first at the County then later as a City Councillor. However, before that he had been a local government officer for 35 years so had accumulated something over fifty years in one sort of council role or another. He felt it was time for a rest, (applause in the Chamber). The City Council was much more friendly than the County and operated without people acting in political groups all the time. This made it much more effective. He thanked Councillor Stevens with whom he had worked closely as Chair of the old Governance and Procedures Committee (with Councillor Stevens as Vice) and as Vice Chair of Finance and Policy (with Councillor Stevens as Chair), and more latterly as Vice Chair to him on Policy and Resources. He also thanked Councillor Boulter for chairing the Community Development Committee on which he had served for several years. He recalled shortly after he took office that David Fleet was asked what the City Council does, and he had said that they were still working that out. He felt that over the last eight to ten years that had been worked out and we now have a distinct role. He wished the new administration well for another four years and thanked the City for making him Mayor, which had been the best year of his life. He acknowledged that both he and Councillor Oliver had been in office before the present Clerk arrived, since then we have increased staffing, raised our profile and become much more involved in the life of the community. This was the right direction in which to be heading. He said he would be thinking of the Council, briefly, on 23 May when the new members form committees, etc. as he would be sailing around the Greek islands at that time.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Wilcox for his over fifty years of public service, especially his time with the City council.

**C2022/23.110 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 16 May 2023 –Annual Meeting of Council and Mayor Making

Tuesday 23 May 2023 – Full Council

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed.

Signed .....

Date .....