



**MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY FULL COUNCIL  
(GENERAL PURPOSE AND FINANCE)  
8 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**PRESENT**

Councillor: K Smith (In the Chair)

Councillor: (Mrs) K Barber  
A Bishop  
(Mrs) J Bishop  
G Evans  
N Gardiner  
(Miss) J Murphy  
P Newton-Smith  
(Mrs) M Penny  
K Saunders  
(Mrs) L Vardy  
R Williams  
S Wolfensohn

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Four Members of the Public and one Member of the Press and Mr S Rolfe (CEO of Halo)

**APOLOGIES**

15. Councillors S Weisinger, G Olley



Highworth is a Fair Trade Town



Twinned with Wassenberg



Twinned with Pontorson

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

16. Councillor R Williams, as the Chairman of Highworth Recreation Centre Trustees, together with Councillor N Gardiner as a Trustee of Highworth Recreation Centre Trust, declared a financial interest in the agenda item "To Re-Appraise the HALO Agreement" Their pecuniary interests are limited to £10.00 each. Councillors R Williams and Councillor N Gardiner were excluded from the debate on this item.

## MINUTES OF MEETINGS

17. **RESOLVED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL (GENERAL PURPOSE AND FINANCE) MEETING HELD ON 18 AUGUST 2020 BE ADOPTED.** The Minutes were duly adopted.

## MATTERS ARISING

18. Minute 14a. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny also offered Councillor (Mrs) K Barber the details for speed watch, but the request had already been made to Councillor (Miss) J Murphy.

## HALO – HIGWORTH REC DEFECIT

19. Councillors unanimously agreed to Rescind the Resolution made on the E&L Meeting of 4 August 2020 (Minute 7) to subsidise HALO for Highworth Rec Leisure Centre up to £181,000 over a maximum of two years. The sum to be adjusted downwards by any outside funding secured by HALO, following the submission of 6 signed letters from Councillors as per Standing Order number 11 requesting the Resolution be Rescinded.

The applicants are concerned that the decision which was made was not sustainable and due diligence was not shown in the decision process.

The Recreation Centre buildings ownership is split between Swindon Borough Council (SBC) and the Trustees on behalf of Highworth Community 40/60 and therefore the offer from SBC of £30,000.00 towards the deficit seems unreasonable. There was an element of confusion with the grant offered by SBC and whether this was match funded or not. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny confirmed the details were sent to the Deputy Clerk and would be forwarded again to the Town Clerk.

A three-way split between SBC/HTC and HALO was never considered, along with the possibility of using CiL monies.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Scott Rolfe (CEO of HALO) to speak.

SBC advised Halo to approach the Town Clerk for support with the financial issues. £210,000.00 deficit was forecast to the point of recovery. Most of the deficit is in the year 2020 due to the centre having to close with 5 hours' notice. HALO is only requesting sufficient financial support to assist the Rec Centre to remain afloat and not a penny more. The actual performance for July 2020 against the forecast is £10,000.00 higher than anticipated, however, on the back of The Council's previous decision, the pool was reopened and has brought additional costs. Unless a support package can be agreed, the Centre will have to look at closing the doors in the next 4-6 weeks.

Should any further grants be received by HALO, they guaranteed that they would be used to offset the amount requested from HTC and would be clearly shown in the accounts. The forecast figures are being replaced with actuals at every month end dating back to April 2020. This information will be shared with Councillors again. HALO is a management company and, as such, has no assets and no other financial options.

Standing Orders were re-instated

It was formally agreed that a meeting is to be scheduled between Scott Rolf, the Town Clerk, the Chairman of GP&F and the Chairman of E&L to work out a new proposal for financial support which will be put before the Councillors at the next GP&F Meeting on 22 September 2020. Any sums of money offered will have to be recovered from future precept demands.

**The Meeting closed at 9:55pm.**

**Action Points: -**

- Meeting to be arrange for Monday 14 September with Scott Rolfe, the Town Clerk, Chairman of GP&F and Chairman of E&L