



MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL 24 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT

Councillor: R Williams (In the Chair)

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Ten Members of the Public

APOLOGIES

46. Councillors G Olley, S Wolfensohn and (Mrs) K Barber



DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

47. None

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

48. **RESOLVED THAT THE MINUTES FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2020 BE ADOPTED** (The Minutes were duly adopted and are to be signed).

MATTERS ARISING

49. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny has requested that the Swindon Borough Council Director of Area respond to the Christmas Trail request for advice from the Event Safety Advisory Group.

UPDATE ON THE DOVECOTE

50. A replacement Dovecote is being designed by two residents in Sevenfields. The investigation into land ownership is ongoing.

TO ACCEPT THE EXTERNAL AUDIT AND TO CONFIRM THE NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

51. Councillors accepted the External Auditors Report on the Annual Governance and Accountability Report. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit is to be published on the 25 November 2020.

The Councillors congratulated the Office Team on a clean Audit.

TO DEBATE THE REQUIREMENT FOR AN AUDIT

52. Councillors unanimously agreed an Audit of the Council would be beneficial.

The Deputy Clerk is to enquire of the National Association of Local Council (NALC) for recommendations to undertake an Audit. Councillors would like this to include an assessment of workloads, staffing level requirements and identify strengths and weaknesses in the day to day operation of all parts of the organisation. Expected timeframes, quotations, availability and the expected office resources required are then to be requested.

Councillor S Weisinger is to contact Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Internal Audit Department, along with Grant Thornton to request a quotation, expected timeframes, availability and office resource required to use as a comparison.

Councillor Weisinger advised that the SBC Audit Team would be unable to Audit the Grounds Team.

This information is to be brought back to Council in January 2021 for consideration and decision.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

53. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny: The Questions posed were taken under item 9 of the Agenda on the grounds of avoiding disclosure of personal information.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM AGENDA ITEM 9

54. a. Resolved by Councillor K Smith and Seconded by Councillor K Saunders to exclude the Public and Press from Agenda item 9 on the grounds of avoiding disclosure of personal information. Councillors unanimously agreed.
- b. In response to the questions asked by Councillor (Mrs) M Penny, letters were read out to the Councillors, and advice is being sought regarding the Clerks Retirement Gratuity.
- c. The position of Town Clerk is to be advertised once the Council has agreed the Person Specification which is to be compiled by the Staffing Committee. HR support by Monahans is to be enlisted to undertake the recruitment process.
- d. Councillors unanimously agreed that a Locum Clerk could be engaged if required, using Society of Local Council Clerks, to support the office to ensure that staffing levels are adequate to cover Annual Leave.
- e. All future Committee Meetings are to be Public Meetings with Agendas and Minutes circulated to all Councillors and published on the Highworth Town Council Website. All Councillors and Members of the public will be permitted to attend Committee Meetings. Any Councillor who is not a Member of a Committee may attend any Meeting of the Committee but their right to participate in the Meeting is to be equal to the Public's right to do so. Councillors are permitted to attend Working Party Meetings of the Council under the same restrictions as the Committee Meetings, these Meetings will not be Public but the Minutes are to be published on the Highworth Town Council Website.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

55. **RESOLVED THAT THE MINUTES FOR THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 6 OCTOBER AND 17 NOVEMBER 2020 BE ADOPTED** (The Minutes were duly adopted and signed).

The Meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

Action Points: -

- Establish the ownership/responsibility for the land at Sevenfields
- The Deputy Clerk is to contact NALC regarding an Audit – to be an Agenda item in January 2021
- Future Committee Meetings to be open to all Councillors and the Public