

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the TOWN COUNCIL

held on Monday 17th June 2019

PRESENT Councillor Q. Chaudhry – Town Mayor (presiding)

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	R.C. McCulloch
"	J.L. Baum	"	N.T. Southworth
"	N.L. Brown	"	Mrs D.M. Varley
"	Miss E.A. Culverhouse	"	N. Varley
"	A.W. Franks	"	F.S. Wilson
"	M. Fayyaz		P.W. Yerrell
	Mrs J. E. MacBean		

Officers: Mr W. Richards - Town Clerk
Mr S. Pearson – Finance and Contracts Manager.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.Z. Bhatti MBE, D. MacBean, P.J. Hudson, M. W. Shaw and S.P. Willmoth.

15. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on the 20th May 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

16. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as a Member of Buckinghamshire County Council and left the Chamber during its discussion thereof.
Councillor Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 9 and 12 as a Cabinet Member of Chiltern District Council.

17. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Ms Vicki Mistry, on behalf of the Chesham Extinction Rebellion Group, enquired whether, in light of the serious issues arising from climate change, the Council would be prepared to:

- Declare a binding climate emergency and engage with local residents to get their support.
- Lobby Buckinghamshire County Council to do the same
- Lobby Buckinghamshire County Council to take actions to facilitate Buckinghamshire being carbon neutral by 2025.

- Lobby Buckinghamshire County Council to establish a Citizens Assembly to oversee this process.

Members had a lengthy discussion on this request. There was unanimous agreement that climate change was a very important matter affecting people and wildlife locally and globally and it was not something which could or should be ignored. Some Members were of the view however that they needed further information on how best the Council could help arrest climate change before committing to a significant decision. Accordingly it was agreed to set up a special meeting of the Council on the 29th July to specifically discuss this topic and, in the interim, Ms Mistry was invited to meet with officers to understand better the Council's role in the community and its current environmental initiatives.

18. **MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members had before them and duly noted the list of the Town Mayor's engagements from 21st May – 17th June 2019.

19. **RESOLUTIONS MOVED ON NOTICE**

Pursuant to 'Resolution Moved on Notice' in accordance with Council's Standing Orders no. 10, the Council considered the following motions moved by Councillor Bacon:

'The Council notes that the County Council, in accordance with its long-standing policy, declined to pay Chesham Town Council to plant highway trees in replacement of approximately 20 trees felled in Chesham in March. Accordingly, Council agrees to seek permission from the County Council for this authority to replace these trees at its own expense.'

In proposing the motion, Councillor Bacon re-emphasised that this was now a long-held County Council position not to replace and the loss of the trees had been remarked upon by many local residents. He highlighted a recent Committee on Climate Change report saying that three billion trees needed to be planted in the UK by 2050 and he opined that this Council ought to be proactive in such a matter.

Councillor Mrs Varley, in replying to the motion, stated that, while no-one doubted the importance of trees, the Chesham Town Council taxpayer should not be the ones paying for this because of the County Council's decision not to fund any replanting. She, and other Members, argued that discussions were still on-going with local County Councillors about other funding options and therefore it was premature to agree to this motion. Councillor Yerrell added that he had concerns also about the precedent it would set and it would be prudent to wait until the new unitary authority was operational.

After some debate, the Mayor moved the motion to the vote and the motion was **LOST** by 2 votes to 10.

20. **CHESHAM YOUTH COUNCIL**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham Youth Council held on the 13th May 2019.

Arising from the Minutes, Councillor Miss Culverhouse advised that, contrary to the attendance list, she was not at the meeting. She also took the opportunity to welcome Councillor Baum to his first Council meeting.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

21. **ANNUAL RETURN 2018/19**

The Statutory Annual Return for 2018/19 was presented to the Council. Members were reminded that these needed to be agreed legally by the Council before the end of June.

Having noted the Finance and Contracts Manager report and accounts, it was duly

RESOLVED

1. That, in respect to the Annual Governance Questions numbered 1 to 9 on Section 1 page 4 of the Annual Return, the Council responds in the affirmative, except for number 9 which is 'not applicable' and that it is then signed by the Chairman presiding at this Council meeting and the Town Clerk.
2. That the Accounting Statement as shown in Section 2 on page 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return be approved and signed by the Chairman presiding at this Council meeting together with supplementary Financial Statement which remains not subject to audit.

22. **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The Annual Performance Plan for 2018/19 was considered by Members.

The Clerk highlighted that the objectives for 2019/20 had alluded to the likelihood of the Council objecting to some or all of the revised Local Plan but more recent discussions had suggested this may no longer be the case. Accordingly he proposed that the Annual Plan be agreed subject to references to the Local Plan aligning with the findings of the Local Plan Working Party. This was agreed.

Councillor Yerrell suggested that, in light of earlier discussions, the 2019/20 objectives also make some reference to considering how best to combat climate change. This too was agreed.

Council Wilson added that it would desirable to have any acronyms changed to an organisation's full name where applicable.

It was

RESOLVED

that the 2018/19 Annual Performance Plan, subject to the proposed amendments and suggestions agreed at the meeting being incorporated, be approved and adopted.

23. **PAYMENTS NO. 1**

Following consideration of Payments Sheet No. 1, it was

RESOLVED

that Payments Sheet No. 1 in the grand total of £352,092.45 be approved and the various payments and transactions set out therein be confirmed.

24. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

It was moved by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

that the public and the press be excluded from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Access to Meetings) Act 1960, as matters which are considered to be confidential are about to be discussed.

25. **FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be authorised to proceed in connection with this matter in the terms expressed at the meeting.

26. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Publication Date: 21.6.19.

CHAIRMAN