

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 22nd MARCH 2021 AT 7.30PM**

*	Cllr Dave Anderson		Cllr Judith Ranger
*	Cllr Terence Beckett	*	Cllr David Snowdon
	Vacancy	*	Cllr Jill Sortwell
	Cllr George Cutting	*	Cllr Norma Symonds
*	Cllr Holly Drake	*	Cllr Bob Taylor
*	Cllr Toby Garrett	*	Cllr Richard Townsend
*	Cllr Diane Hollebon	*	Cllr Keith Warnell (Town Mayor)
*	Cllr Shane Manning	*	Cllr John Wyllie
*	Cllr Tim Page		

* denotes present.

** denotes present part time

In attendance:

James Parker (Chief Executive Officer)

Mark Hughes (Northgate End Youth Centre)**

Rev Gill Hulme (Methodist Church)**

One member of the press

TC72. VIDEO-CONFERENCING OF MEETING

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic the meeting was held by video-conference. This constitutes a lawful meeting of the Council under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

TC73. RECORDING OF MEETING

It was established that nobody present intended to record the meeting.

TC74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

TC75. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

None

TC76. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

TC77. QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 5.17

None

TC78. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rev Hulme spoke about the grant application from South Street Methodist Church, explaining that a consultation had taken place with both church goers and others. The outcome was to confirm that the Church should stay in the Town Centre, having regard to the wide variety of community groups which use the facility. The facility is not let for commercial use, most lettings are not for profit.

In response to a question from a member Rev Hulme explained that the building is on two levels, separated by a non-compliant disabled ramp. The area beyond the ramp is used both for religious and non-religious purposes. The non-compliant ramp will be replaced with a circular ramp and part of the floor raised so that the whole interior is on a single level. Updated toilets and a changing places facility will be located toward the rear of the building. The area specifically for worship, Rev Hulme explained, will not be affected by the proposed works, with the exception of a doorway.

TC79. GRANT APPLICATIONS – APPENDIX 3 (Pages 27-50)

This matter was brought forward with the agreement of members.

The briefing provided by the Chief Executive Officer, outlining the ambiguity in the law as regards grants to churches, was NOTED. It was further NOTED that the venue is used by a wide variety of groups both faith based and not and that the facility is offered for these purposes without question as to faith and, following an answer from Rev Hulme, that the only impact on the area used specifically for worship is on a doorway.

It was RESOLVED to award a grant of £5000 in support of the multiple faith and non-faith organisations in the Town which use the facility and will benefit from the improved inclusivity and access that the grant will facilitate.

TC80. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 8th FEBRUARY 2021

It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the meeting the 8th February 2021 as a true record.

TC81. PRESENTATION FROM NORTHGATE END YOUTH CENTRE (MARK HUGHES)

Mark Hughes gave a short update on YCH Services for young people, and in particular the activities at Northgate End Youth Centre. At any time there would typically be 5-6 distinct projects taking place at the Youth Centre. During the Covid pandemic these have been moved online. These include 'Emotional Wellbeing' to encourage young people to make simple lifestyle changes and physical activity which will improve mental health. A second project called 'Supporting You' teaches young people up to 12 CBT techniques which they can use, providing them with a toolkit. Also important is a project ('healthy relationships') to help with safe and appropriate use of social media.

During the Summer a 'positive alternatives' project, aimed at those who are getting involved in ASB, was delivered. Partnership working is also important. On Friday evenings an early intervention and prevention activity takes place, where a variety of activities are available to the young people. There is a developing youth forum, which has been a lifeline during lockdown.

In answer to a question from a member, Mark explained that the forthcoming investment would enable the aging, but lovely, building to be upgraded. The improvements will include a 'life skills kitchen' which is a multi-purpose area aimed particularly at those with learning difficulties, together with access and other improvements.

The Mayor thanked Mr Hughes for his presentation.

TC82. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS – APPENDIX 1

The Chief Executive Officer briefly summarised the matter set out in the papers.

TC83. COMMITTEE REPORTS – APPENDIX 2

Environment and Public Amenities Committee

The Minutes of the meetings held on 1st March 2021 were NOTED.

Planning and Development Committee

The Minutes of the meetings held on 1st February and 22nd February 2021 were NOTED. The Chairman of planning advised that no reply had been received to the request to EHDC referred to in minute P110.

TC84. MAYOR ELECT

Members NOTED that Council is required by statute to elect the Mayor at the Statutory Annual Meeting of Council.

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Warnell be Mayor-elect for the Civic Year 2021-2022. No other proposals were received and Cllr Warnell was duly elected.

Members NOTED that Cllr Warnell will, if confirmed by a vote at that meeting, remain in office as Mayor at the Statutory Annual Meeting to be held on 10th May 2021.

Cllr Warnell advised that, in preparation, a number of events are being organised, obviously subject to Covid.

TC85. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

It was NOTED that the Annual Town Meeting was due to take place by Zoom on 19th April 2021. It was further NOTED that, following the resignation of Cllr Corpe (which occurred subsequent to the publication of the agenda), it would not be practical for this meeting to be organised in a way which avoids falling foul of the rules surrounding purdah.

It was RESOLVED that the meeting not take place as planned and that the customary reports would be placed on the website and questions invited in writing, all to take place after the election.

TC86. STATUTORY ANNUAL MEETING

It was NOTED that the regulations which currently permit meetings to be held remotely expire prior to the Statutory Annual meeting scheduled for 10th May and that it unclear whether they will be renewed. It was RESOLVED not to change the date of the Statutory Annual Meeting which will remain of 10th May, at a location to be determined by the state of legislation at the time.

TC87. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

None

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.