

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES
of the Meeting of HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
 held at
The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich
 on
Tuesday 6th June 2023 at 7.01pm

Present:	Councillors Calver, Chable, Davidson, Fay, I Henderson, J Henderson, McLeod, Saunders, D Smith, Todd and Wade
In the Chair:	Councillor P Morrison
Clerk:	Ms Lucy Ballard
Also present:	0 members of the public, 0 members of the press and Revd. Kirsty Emerson

012/23	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Armstrong, Fowler, Powell and Richardson
013/23	<u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u> None
014/23	<u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u> None
015/23	<u>MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS</u> Members acknowledged a list of recent engagements attended by the mayor since being elected, which had been previously circulated. The Deputy Mayor referred to the schools visits she undertook following Mayor Making and the commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic (80 th anniversary) which she had attended on 28 th May. On Saturday 3 rd June she also attended the Luney Club Annual Dinner and Dance on behalf of the Mayor.
016/23	<u>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of Harwich Town Council held on 4 th April 2023 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record. FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Statutory and Mayor Making meeting of Harwich Town Council held on 25 th May 2023 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record.
017/23	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u> MIN 150/22 – The Clerk confirmed she was awaiting confirmation from TDC on when they will review their decision to extend the agreement for part funding of

	<p>the Harwich-based PCSO and that once know she would bring this back to council for consideration.</p> <p>MIN 161/22 – The Clerk provided an update on the drain repair at the Hill School Site and confirmed that the project was progressing and would be referred to F&GP Committee for further consideration.</p>
018/23	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u></p> <p>Cllr Todd raised the issue of the Train Ferry Gantry and referred to the minutes of the last HIP meeting. He said that cruise ships were cancelled this year due to unsafe bollards on Quay but he's of the opinion that the quay is crumbling and it's time TDC were involved and he'd like to know what their plans are for HIP as a whole, since it's important for the town to get the cruise ships back in. He was informed at the meeting, that works will come under maintenance but the minutes suggest there is no funding available. Cllr Fowler is now arranging an informal meeting with Gary Guiver of TDC to bring members up to speed with matters.</p> <p>Cllr Todd referred to a meeting about 4 years ago when it was estimated it would cost about £2m to carry out the necessary works on the gantry.</p>
019/23	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT</u></p> <p>Members received the year end internal audit report. The chair read from the audit report and commended the clerk and her team, asking member to acknowledge all the hard work which is put in to ensure the council remains compliant. The clerk confirmed that there were no recommendations made and therefore no plan of action was required.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To accept the Audit Report and agree that no further action is required.</p> <p>Members also reviewed the effectiveness of Internal Audit. The Clerk confirmed that the auditor satisfied the requirements to be competent and independent and found that an interim and year-end audit was sufficient.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED: That the current provisions were satisfactory.</p>
020/23	<p><u>EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL</u></p> <p>Members considered the findings of the review of the Council's system of internal control, which was carried out at a previous meeting (MIN F106/22).</p> <p>RESOLVED: To agree with the findings that there are sufficient controls in place to effectively mitigate the risk to the Council's finances and that no immediate changes were required.</p>
021/23	<p><u>REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the arrangements which are in place to identify and mitigate the risks associated with certain decisions which had been considered or taken over the previous financial year. Members agreed that discussing the risks and giving full consideration of the implications of any proposal as they arise is the most effective method of addressing them and that this is supported by a written document, which can be referred back to. The Clerk confirmed that the appointed clerk for each committee would raise potential risks at the time the agenda is formulated as an additional measure. The clerks will continue to maintain the risk register which accompanies other risk assessments that the council undertakes.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the findings of the review are that the arrangements are effective in mitigating against the risks associated with the finances and reputation of the council.</p>

022/23	<p><u>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)</u> <u>SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT</u></p> <p>Members discussed the assertions in Section 1 of the 2022/23 AGAR and the requirements needed to provide a 'yes' response. The Clerk referred to assertion 2 (internal control measures) which had been satisfied under MIN 020/23 and also assertion 5 (Risks), which had been satisfied under MIN 021/23.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the AGAR for 2022/23.</p>
023/23	<p><u>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)</u> <u>SECTION 2 - ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the final Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 in conjunction with the Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the accounts for year ending March 2023 and to approve the Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the AGAR. AT/MS</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED: To set the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights as 12th June to 21st July 2023.</p>
024/23	<p><u>STANDING ORDERS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed current Standing Orders. Cllr I Henderson suggested that any references to 'him' or 'his' are amended to 'their'.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve Standing Orders for use with immediate effect with all gender specific references amended on this document and any other council policy as they're found.</p>
025/23	<p><u>MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the new LGA model Code of Conduct, which has been adopted by Tendring District Council and considered the merits of adopting it for HTC.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To adopt LGA Model Code of Conduct with immediate effect.</p>
026/23	<p><u>GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE (GPC)</u></p> <p>Members considered the eligibility requirements to enable adoption of the GPC and the Clerk confirmed that the 2 criteria (a qualified clerk and 2/3 of members are elected) is met. Members then considered the merits of adopting GPC. Cllr Calver felt it wasn't beneficial at this time.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Not to adopt the GPC at this time.</p>
027/23	<p><u>SIGNATORIES AND BANK MANDATE</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: To retain existing signatories as follows: Cllr M Fowler (Chairman), Cllr P Morrison (Deputy Chairman), Cllrs I Henderson and C Powell (Member). The Clerk is to remain a signatory for items up to £500 only (excluding salaries). The signatory basis for authorisation is any two signatories. Signatories are not to authorise any payment for either themselves or another member they have a close relationship with.</p>
028/23	<p><u>SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES</u></p> <p>Members reviewed allowances for the forthcoming year, paying reference to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel. Cllr Calver suggested the council retains the councillors allowances at current levels and freezes these for the lifetime of the council.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To retain the existing councillor allowance of £768 per annum, payable in two instalments (June and December) and retain the Mayoral</p>

	<p>allowance of £2400, payable in two instalments (in consultation with the mayor). The justification for the higher than recommended amount for the Chairman is due to the Mayoral position incurring many costs throughout the year to support engagements. Members agreed that should a member resign mid-term or die in service, then the allowance would not need to be repaid. These allowance levels will remain in force for the lifetime of this council.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED: To accept the report recommendations in terms of mileage and subsistence allowances.</p>
029/23	<p><u>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS</u> RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr D Smith as an independent member to periodically review the bank reconciliation in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2. The Clerk mentioned that Cllr Smith did a sterling job in fulfilling this role during the previous three financial years.</p>
030/23	<p><u>DATA PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENT</u> Members reviewed the risks associated with the processing of personal data within the council and the measures taken or required to mitigate these risks. RESOLVED: that the risks were being properly identified and managed.</p>
031/23	<p><u>REQUEST FOR COPIES OF IMAGES OF THE 1604 CHARTER</u> Members considered a request for use of images of the 1604 Charter, for use in a book about Griffith Powell, Steward of Harwich from 1727-1758. The clerk confirmed that HTC was the copyright holder of the images. Cllr Wade asked why a charge wouldn't be levied. Cllr Calver said any financial benefit would be negligible and the book would be promoting Harwich which is invaluable. It was suggested that a donation to the Mayoress' fund might be a suitable alternative. RESOLVED: Grant permission for publication with Copyright acknowledgement.</p>
032/23	<p><u>OLDER PERSONS CRUCIAL CREW</u> Cllr Morrison asked members to consider organising and funding an 'Older Persons Crucial Crew' event for Harwich in 2023. This would facilitate a 'speed dating' style event to provide support to older and vulnerable people on issues concerning fire safety, personal safety and security, keeping warm etc. Costs incurred would be room hire, refreshments, a goody bag etc. and would be in the region of £2k. RESOLVED: To commence initial arrangements for an event for 2023, appointing Cllr Morrison as lead member. Funds to be expended from the Grants & Contributions budget heading. Details will be brought back to could for agreement before proceeding.</p>
033/23	<p><u>THE HARWICH & MANNINGTREE STANDARD REPORT ON MINISTERIAL MEETING TO CONSIDER LOCAL G.P. SHORTAGE</u> Members referenced a recent newspaper article on the action taken so far to address the issue of GP shortages within Harwich. Cllr Morrison relayed concerns on behalf of Cllr Richardson. Cllr Calver confirmed that the meeting comprised the MP, local GPs and health professionals and the minister responsible for primary care, but HTC needs to be aware of any action to be taken. RESOLVED: To write to Sir Bernard Jenkin MP and ask him to advise HTC of any immediate outcomes from the meeting and also keep the council regularly updated as to any progress made resulting from the meeting.</p>

034/23	<p><u>BRIEF REPORTS BY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES BY THE COUNCIL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Todd attended a dementia friendly meeting in Thorrington in May where they discussed actions which the council could take to remain dementia friendly and which could be considered in due course. • Cllr J Henderson reported on a recent Teen Talk meeting and they've been successful in a Lottery bid as they were struggling for fund previously. <p>The Clerk confirmed that she's been made aware that the council may appoint two representatives on TDALC and would be speaking with the chairman about discussing this at a future meeting.</p>
035/23	<p><u>COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES</u></p> <p>Members received the Minutes of the following meetings:</p> <p>None</p>
036/23	<p><u>ACCOUNTS</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: To accept the financial report and to approve accounts for payment as per the schedule (circulated separately).</p>
037/23	<p><u>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN THE POST OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted receipt of latest report(s) issued by PCSO Sue Groves, <i>for information</i>. Cllr J Henderson asked if the reports could be a little more detailed. It was agreed that we will wait until an extension to the contract is decided. There was further discussion on current ASB concerns and the clerk agreed to re-circulate the Community Policing Team email so that matter can be reported promptly. • Members noted receipt of the latest Harwich Festival Report, <i>for information</i>. <p>There was much discussion about the work of the Harwich Festival and the clerk agreed to send a letter of thanks on behalf of the council for their informative report and the successes they've had in enhancing their social value within the community.</p>
038/23	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The next meeting of Harwich Town Council will be held on Tuesday 18th July 2023 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich at 7.00pm, or at the rise of the Town Planning Committee, whichever is the later.</p>
039/22	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS</u></p> <p>Pursuant to Sub-section 2 of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the meeting was closed to the press and public for the transaction of the under-mention business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotment Clearance – Cost Recovery

The Chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 8.36pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE