



ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Council

Time and date

6.30pm on Wednesday 13 April 2022

Place

Upper Guildhall, High Street, Andover

Cllr B Long - Town Mayor (P)		
Cllr R Hughes - Deputy Town Mayor (P)		
Cllr N Asamoah (A)	Cllr L Banville (A)	Cllr D Coole (P)
Cllr J Coole (P)	Cllr C Ecclestone (A)	Cllr L Gregori (P)
Cllr K Hughes (A)	Cllr N Long (P)	Cllr R Meyer (P)
Cllr M Mumford (P)	Cllr R Rowles (A)	Cllr J Sangster (P)
Cllr D Treadwell (A)	Cllr S Waue (P)	

Officers Present:

Wendy Coulter (Town Clerk)

Tor Warburton (Deputy Town Clerk) (Taking the minutes & managing online streaming)

County/Borough Councillors:

Councillor I Anderson

Councillor Z Brooks

Members of the Public: Unknown

Members of the Press: Unknown

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic this meeting was held in the Guildhall following Coronavirus preventative measures. The Town Council made arrangements to stream the meeting virtually to allow as much public access as possible.

C184/04/22	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
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	Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors N Asamoah, K Hughes and D Treadwell.
C185/04/22	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
	There were no Declarations of Interest in relation to any item on the agenda.
C186/04/22	MINUTES
	The Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 23 March 2022 were deferred until the next Council meeting, pending clarification of the accuracy of Minute reference C178/03/22.
C187/04/22	TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
	The Town Mayor was very pleased to announce that the Town Clerk had passed her CiLCA Qualification. Members joined the Town Mayor in congratulating the Town Clerk on her achievement.
C188/04/22	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
	<p><i>The notes below are a precis of statements/questions. They are not recorded word for word.</i></p> <p>Member of Public 1: Tonight, one item on your agenda is to approve the release of the allocated funds held for the AFest next month. It has served the community for 8 years, bringing many organisations, businesses and groups together to achieve one aim, to ensure the young people of our town to know there are options available for them to gain skills and improve themselves as individuals. AFest brings these opportunities together. The Town Council has supported AFest every year that it has been running, since the beginning. So why should this year be the exception? AFest happened because of the Town Council. After the loneliness and isolation that we've all been through during the lockdown. We need to make sure that we reconnect and bring people together. As the Town Council you have the means to support the community and a long-lasting legacy for this town, bringing together key partners and stake holders to put on an amazing event on May the 8th including the food and music stalls, entertainment and attractions. So please support this and thank you.</p> <p>Town Mayor's response: Thank you very much.</p> <p>Councillor I Anderson: The council approved the Town Youth Officer on the 29 January 2021. You allowed £35,000.00 to be put aside for this. I was wondering how much further you had got with this?</p> <p>Town Mayor's response: I will need to come back to you formally, to make sure I got the details right. It was proposed that we were going to put money aside to get somebody. I seem to remember that a working group was supposed to meet up. They were going to bring forward and pull together what was available. That working group, as far as I know, has never met. I don't think it was proposed that we were going to employ somebody, however, I need to check that.</p>

Councillor J Sangster:

I'll just speak to that. I spoke to Councillor Rowles and we did not want to duplicate efforts by Hampshire County Council. I will double check and move this forward.

Councillor R Hughes:

Hopefully Councillor Anderson will go back to Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) and I'm sure that as in the normal case that a role like that is not contracted to the Council, but is a particular purpose, that the Council would be prepared to match funds. Any funding that the other Councils would like to give on the basis that they are the principal Councils and we are only a minority Council, to help fund it and any contribution that we can make would come into it, should we decide to go along with it.

Councillor D Coole:

Just to clarify, money was never set aside. Its not in our Earmarked Reserves. That's not to say we couldn't reallocate Earmarked funds or take from CIL monies. Our Back-to-Basics strategy does not allow for expanding beyond our Basics unless we as a Council decide otherwise. Thank you.

Town Mayor's response:

TVBC has picked up on it and there is now a group meeting about Youth Provision. We do need to look at what provision there is already before we can move on with this. We will come back to you Councillor Anderson.

C189/04/22

REPORTS FROM BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS FROM THE ANDOVER WARDS

The notes below are a precis of statements/questions. They are not recorded word for word.

Councillor I Anderson:

The benches have been fixed under the underpass at Vigo Park.

The lights on Pilgrims Way have been fixed.

Councillor Long has now received his response from me following his question regarding the homeless person.

The footpath on Eastfield Road, by the Central Club, had tree roots coming up through it, is now being resurfaced.

To go back to anti-social behaviour, instances that started in St Mary's Ward on 20th January, 22nd February and 20th March, as you know Operation Assembly is now in place. I attended a meeting at the Andover Police Station last Friday evening and it was very productive. Going forward, the Police are working with the youth. There is an a well organised occasion for these youths to get together with Police at the Valley Leisure pool tomorrow and a survey will be completed to ascertain the needs of the youth.

Councillor Z Brooks:

We've been getting lots of emails regarding the Millennium Man statue.

We are still working with the artist to see how we can make him more sturdy. He is solid as a rock. We are unsure how he gets pushed over all the time.

Councillor N Matthews:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. L2 Development planning application refused. I have since spoken with the planning manager of Taylor Wimpey and they have agreed to hold a full and open public consultation meeting very soon. This will be held at the APCA, and is likely to be in early May. I am expecting confirmation of day/time in the next couple of days and will ensure you are informed. 2. The communal bin area at Harebell Road has now been cleared, again for the second time in as many weeks. I have written letters to the residents to ensure bins are not contaminated. We have also insisted the management company stay on top of Controlling it. 3. No Parking signs have now been installed in the visitor parking spaces around Dairy Rd/Atrium to prevent contractors parking there. I have further insisted TW place hard standing matting on the grass, to get them all off the road, but they still dragging their feet! 4. The new cycle/footpath and bollards have now been completed on Cricketers and looks much better. We are still awaiting Shepherd Spring surgery to renew the pathway up the side of the surgery, but understandably have other priorities at the moment. 5. Youth mental health and wellbeing support is now moving really well, with some services now in place. Also, CCG, NHS and PCN taking much more proactive and collaborative action now. It is my intention to begin to stand back from chairing the focus group, and concentrate on providing therapy and counselling support directly in to the new services. We now have a directory almost complete, new "be you" walk in centre, two social worker placements on task, with more ready to engage. The proposed new hub/network is now being taken on by local authority services. I shall write a comprehensive briefing note on all details by the end of May.
C190/04/22	QUESTIONS FROM THE ANDOVER TOWN COUNCILLORS TO THE BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS
	<p>Councillor L Gregori to Councillor I Anderson: I asked Councillor Anderson to shed some light on the long term plans that TVBC have for the Chantry Centre. I was wondering whether there was any update.</p> <p>Councillor I Anderson: I am still working on it. I have asked Councillor Phil North to come back to me with the answers you required.</p>
C191/04/22	GRANTS PANEL
	<p>Members noted that the Picket Piece Baby and Toddler Group and Andover Youth Football Club, had been notified of their successful grant applications and the funds had been paid.</p> <p>Members discussed the request from AFest to release the allocated funds in the Events (AFest) budget line for 2022/2023.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor J Sangster that the request to release the allocated funds in the Events (AFest) budget line for 2022/2023, be approved.</p> <p>A vote was taken: FOR – 9, AGAINST – 0, ABSTENTION – 1</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the request to release the allocated funds in the Events (AFest) budget line for 2022/2023, be approved.</p>

C192/04/22	RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE
	<p>Members received and considered the new Chicken Keeping Policy which had recently been agreed by the Allotment Committee.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor B Long and seconded by Councillor N Long that the new Chicken Keeping Policy be approved.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor D Coole that an amendment be made to remove the Bee section from the Chicken Policy.</p> <p>Councillor J Coole seconded the motion.</p> <p>A vote was taken: FOR – 8, AGAINST – 1, ABSTENTIONS – 1</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Bee section be removed from the Chicken Keeping Policy.</p> <p>Members returned to the original proposal to approve the Chicken Keeping Policy with the Bee section removed.</p> <p>A vote was taken which was unanimous.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Chicken Keeping Policy with the Bee section removed, be approved.</p>
C193/04/22	FINANCE
	<p>It was proposed by Councillor N Long and seconded by Councillor R Meyer that the List of Payments up to 31 March 2022 be approved.</p> <p>A vote was taken which was unanimous.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the List of Payments up to 31 March 2022 be approved.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor S Waue and seconded by Councillor R Meyer that the List of Payments up to 6 April 2022 be approved.</p> <p>A vote was taken which was unanimous.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the List of Payments up to 6 April 2022 be approved.</p>
C194/04/22	STAFFING REVIEW
	<p>Members received the terms and conditions of the contract with the independent HR Consultant.</p> <p>Members noted that once the contract was signed, the elected HR Working Group would meet with the consultant to start the Staffing Review.</p> <p>Members debated the contract terms and conditions.</p> <p>It was noted that the hourly costings would be £90 and it had been estimated that the review would take 64 hours to complete.</p> <p>It was clarified that there was no specific budget set aside to cover the relevant costings and therefore, consideration of taking monies from Reserves, would be required.</p> <p>Members debated the lack of a limit on the costings involved and the hours charged by the HR Consultant. It was reiterated that all aspects of the contract would be managed by the Officers and the urgency to move forward with the review was made clear.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor M Mumford that £6,000.00 be set aside from Operational Reserves to cover the costs of the HR study.</p> <p>A vote was taken: FOR – 6, AGAINST – 1, ABSTENTIONS – 3</p>

	<p>RESOLVED: That £6,000.00 be set aside from Operational Reserves to cover the costs of the HR study.</p> <p>The Town Clerk clarified that the contract did contain the terms and conditions that the HR Consultant would be working under. Now that a motion had been passed to set a ceiling of £6,000.00, the HR Panel could request confirmation from the HR Consultant of the hours involved, what would be delivered and the specific details of the contract. It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor S Waue that the terms and conditions of the contract be agreed, in order to work with the external consultant.</p> <p>A vote was taken: FOR – 8, AGAINST – 2, ABSTENTIONS – 0</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the terms and conditions of the contract be agreed, in order to work with the external consultant.</p>
C195/04/22	OFFICE MOVE
	<p>Members noted that the tenancy with Incuhive had started and Officers would be visiting the site to determine how much space there was and what would be needed to be transferred to the new office site, . Once this information had been obtained, a report would be brought back to Council.</p>
C196/04/22	QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS
	<p>Councillor R Meyer: Why are we continuing to run our Council counter to the Transparency Act, when an email was received by all Councillors in November 2021 indicating this?</p> <p>Town Clerk response: The items you have highlighted have been picked up by the Internal Auditor already. They are being addressed and we will be submitting a report to the Policy and Resources Committee next month, on the progress of those completions.</p> <p>Councillor R Meyer: What are your plans to ensure we are fully compliant with the Transparency Act and what is the time frame for that completion?</p> <p>Town Clerk's response: We will take that to Policy and Resources and work with them to get that completed. It should be done within the next couple of months.</p> <p>Councillor R Meyer: When do you plan to ensure we are fully compliant with sections 6 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014?</p> <p>Town Clerk's response: Section 6 that I found, are you referring to the meaning of the smaller authority?</p> <p>Councillor R Meyer: I'd need to check my notes on that. I'll come back to you on that one. So, when will we be allowing our Councillors access to all paperwork, as was advised by the solicitor who gave us training?</p>

Town Clerk's response:

The Councillors do have access to the relevant paperwork within the bounds of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act. If there are specific papers that you are referring to, I will answer that further. But under the GDPR and Data Protection, we do make sure you have access.

Councillor R Meyer:

When will we be following the Accounts and Audit Regulations of 2015, specifically category 2, Authority must in following order, consider the statement of accounts by the members at a meeting as a whole? It is pretty clear that approval of the right of all Council Members at a Minuted meeting ultimately and not a panel. Consideration can mean asking for evidence of a process that were used to approve grants and being able to view receipts, if necessary, prior to resolving them. Such evidence can be included in agenda papers.

Town Clerk's response:

The Accounts and Audit Regulations to which you refer is about the sign off of the Year End accounts and the Annual Governance Accountability Return, which is the AGAR. It is a specific process that Council has to follow. It doesn't refer to individual payments or receipts. The payments and receipts are submitted to the Council on a monthly basis and signed off as per the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. It was agreed by Full Council in August 2021, that the Grant Panel will be formed to consider the grant applications and ensure they met the Grant Policy criteria and make recommendations to that Full Council. The report that is submitted, contains that information sufficient for the Members to make a decision. It is a standard practice for most Parish Councils. It's also just been through the CILCA and passed. So, no fault was found with the way that we deal with our grants.

Councillor R Meyer:

How is it an asset to Andover Town Council and the public that when Councillors attempt to quote laws, which the Council and all Councils in England must follow, they're not allowed to?

Town Clerk's response:

I don't think I can answer that as Clerk.

Town Mayor:

I'm not quite sure what you are referring to.

Councillor R Meyer:

Ok, I just know that these are meant to be up for discussions and so per Standing Orders, a question shall not require a response at the meeting or start a debate with a question. So, I can write you privately about how you wouldn't allow me to quote a law last time.

According to our own Financial Regulations, which I can quote for you below;
"Only Full Council can approve Earmarked Reserves and Virements."

Why when a Councillor has repeatedly asserted this, the Councillor has been repeatedly advised they are making it up? This is directly for the Mayor.

Town Mayor's response:

I think I need to come back to you on that because again I'm not quite sure what you are referring to.

Councillor R Meyer:

I can quote it for you.

"No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the recorded budget for that class of expenditure, other than by resolution of the Council or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council, having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or Earmarked Reserves as appropriate."

I've heard at least one Councillor quote this twice during meetings. Why do you not allow this and why do you say they are making this up?

Town Mayor's response:

Any virements are approved by Council for going from Earmarked Reserves.

Councillor R Meyer:

Ok. I think you'll have to come to back to me on that.

Have we ticked all the yes boxes in Part 3 of AGAR for 2021 and 2022?

If we had, the report should stipulate that we made a false declaration to AGAR, with respect to "We maintained through the year, an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems and we took all responsible steps to ensure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance of laws, regulations and proper practices, that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances."

Town Clerk's response:

We are due to have our final internal audit for the year 2021/2022. The auditor is due to come in May. So, he will go through all of the processes and I will await his report. We won't tick any boxes until he has done that report.

Councillor R Meyer:

Do we as a Council and the public as a tax payer that fuels this Council and expect it to follow each and every law, have to wait until a new Chair and Vice Chair of this Council are appointed, before any proper care of the law will be enforced?

Deputy Mayor:

If said Councillor believes that the Deputy Mayor has committed anything illegal or wholly wrong, I suggest you report it to the Police and have them investigate it.

Councillor R Meyer:

That's not what you do. You don't report this to the Police. I think you need to look at our Financial Regulations and the Act.

Councillor J Coole:

	<p>Please can you provide an update regarding the Freeman of Andover certificate, for the late Alex Holloway, which was due to be presented to his daughter Felicity Holloway? Also, which business is currently framing it?</p> <p>Town Mayor's response: It has been framed. I understand it is with Councillor Rowles at the moment. I am chasing this up.</p> <p>Councillor L Gregori: I raised 2 questions. One was the accessibility of the Annual Report to the Electors, which I attended. I did ask that it was publicised on our website. It is on the website but at the bottom, quite difficult. So, I suggest that we send it to the press for a start and it should be front and centre of our website. The other question was regarding the easements of reports. We can talk about offline.</p> <p>Deputy Clerk response: Thank you for your question. We are following it up.</p>
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C197/04/22	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
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	<p>Members noted the date of the next meeting: Wednesday 11 May 2022, at the Guildhall, High Street, Andover, starting at 6.30pm.</p>
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The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7.26pm.

<p>Town Mayor</p>	<p>Date</p>
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