

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Council

30 January 2024

Meeting commenced: 6.30pm Meeting ended: 8.40pm

Minutes

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Rolfe) in the chair

Councillors:

Alcock	Cleeve
Coles	Dowling
Fojtik	I Fradgley
J Fradgley	Hunter
MacDonald	McNaught Barrow
Petrovic	Vos

Clerk: Town Clerk

Press: Absent

In order for the efficient conduct of business it was required to alter the consideration of the agenda items. These Minutes reflect the order they were considered.

83 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Duck, Harding, Lee, Rashwan and Smith and were noted for the reasons given.

84 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Cleeve disclosed personal interests in respect of Minute 97 as a levy business payer and also as a member of Escape Arts, who were also BID levy payers. Councillor Cleeve indicated she would not take part in the discussion or voting on the matter.

Councillor Cleeve disclosed a Personal Interest in Minute 98 as a member of the Town Trust.

Councillors Alcock and Rolfe disclosed personal interests in Minute *as member of the Christmas Lights Committee.

Councillors Fojtik and Petrovic disclosed personal interests in Minute 95 as representatives of the project

Councillor J Fradgley disclosed a personal interest in Minute 96 as a member of Stratford-in-Bloom.

85 **To receive written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests**

There were none.

86 **To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate**

There were none

87 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

88 **To receive a presentation from Michelle Baker, Interim BID Manager**

The Mayor reported to the meeting that, regrettably, the BID had been unable to attend.

89 **Mayors Announcements**

The Mayor reported on:

The recent retirement of Mrs Pat Bojczuk who had retired from the Town Council after 26 years as the Town Council's Housekeeper. Councillors wished to record thanks to her to for her service.

The forthcoming joint ball with the Chair of the District Council, Councillor Alcock on 24 February 2024 and the Fashion Show at the Town Hall on 14 March 2024.

Her attendance at Civic Service for the Nicholas Fogg, Mayor of Marlborough.

90 **To approve the draft Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 28 November 2023**

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 28 November 2023 be adopted.

91 **To adopt the draft Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held**

on 21 November 2023

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 21 November 2023 be adopted.

92 To adopt the draft Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023 be adopted.

93 To adopt the draft Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 19 December 2023

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 19 December 2023 be adopted.

94 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Kerbing of Cemetery, Evesham Road

Consideration was given to a request from the Community Services Committee for funding to cover a project for kerbing to be installed to address the pressing issue of increased erosion of the cemetery verges and damage to headstones, primarily caused by irresponsible driving within the cemetery premises. The deteriorating condition of the cemetery verges had negatively impacted the landscape and compromised the stability of some graves.

This had not formed part of the budget setting process for 2024/25 and would require inclusion within the budget item considered later in the meeting. However, following the Community Services Committee meeting it had been identified that the project fulfilled the criteria for CIL expenditure.

*CIL monies can be spent on the **provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure**, or anything else that is concerned with addressing demands that development places on an area.*

Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That funding of £29,470, for the repair and enhancement of cemetery kerbing, be met

from Community Infrastructure Levy funds.

95 **Community Builder Initiative**

The Town Council had recently been made aware that the Community Builder Project which had been jointly funded by the Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Stratford Town Trust and Orbit, was nearing the end of the initial pilot period in June 2024. The District Council had asked whether the Town Council wished to continue with its contribution to the project. As this request had not been received as part of the budget setting process, funding of this had consequences on the budget considered later in the meeting.

This request had been raised as a verbal item at the recent Finance and Audit Committee, where there had been concerns about the original project's intention to investigate whether the post would become self-funding and the report outlined the reasons why this has not been possible in this instance.

In order to continue the contract for a further year, it was

RESOLVED: That £5,000 be included in the 2024/25 Budget for the Community Builder Project.

96 **Budget and Precept 2024/25**

In the absence of Councillors, The Town Clerk read out some statements Councillors Duck, Rashwan and Smith

Councillor Coles as Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee gave an account of the budget review undertaken at the Finance & Audit Committee meeting earlier in the month, which resulted in the recommendations contained in the Responsible Financial Officer's Report.

Following this, the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) had been asked to present to the meeting various budget scenarios, which took into account the Town Council reserves, the desire of Members to support local initiatives and also to deliver a balanced budget. Revised figures for Town Hall Hire and the Cemetery were also presented.

Councillors were reminded of the earlier decisions for the Community Builder Initiative and the CIL Project, which required adjustment to the budget. Due consideration was given to the initiatives which members had indicated their support for and the level of funding to be given to these.

At the forefront of every member's mind was the desire to keep the Town Council's precept as low as possible but members acknowledged that the rising costs and the desire to support initiatives for the benefit of the Community could not be ignored. There was recognition of the very small increases over previous years in precept which had not

satisfied the Council's Financial Reserve Policy.

Following detailed debate two proposals were tabled:

A £3.98 increase in a Band D precept was proposed and by 5 votes to 8 votes, this was not supported

A £4.61 increase in a Band D precept was proposed and by 8 votes to 3 votes with 2 abstentions (Councillors I Fradgley and Vos) was supported.

Accordingly, it was

- RESOLVED:
- (1) That a Precept request of £661,678 be submitted to the District Council, which is based on the rate charge per Band D household, which was an increase of £4.61 to £46.49.
 - (2) To approve and adopt the fourth draft (amended) of the 2024/2025 budget.
Appended to the Minutes

97 **Stratford-upon-Avon Business - Ballot**

Consideration was given to the ballot of the Business Improvement District (BID) for Stratford-upon-Avon and whether or not to support the BID for a further five years (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2029) for the vote taking place between 26 January and 22 February 2024.

BID was a legally prescribed scheme where businesses within a precisely defined geographical area fund local service improvement to enhance their trading environment and provide and facilitate a number of activities and business promotions.

The financial impact on this Council in supporting the BID in the first year would be £739.37 although this may increase by up to 3% from year two onwards.

The options available to the Town Council were to vote in favour, against or to abstain.

During the debate, a proposal to vote in favour of the continuation of the BID was duly seconded, following which, it was

- RESOLVED:
- That the Town Clerk be instructed to vote in favour of the BID proposals.

98 **Stratford Town Trust**

The Council were requested to appoint three representatives to the Town Trust for a four year term which would commence on 1 June

2024.

Councillor Cleeve as a current trustee was seeking re-election for a second term. Trustees usually serve a four-year term, with the opportunity to stand again once more only.

Councillors had been notified of the request and timescale to consider any nominations. In accordance with the protocol Members were reminded that there was no requirement that our appointed representatives needed to be Councillors, *namely three persons appointed by Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council ("the Council") who may (but need not) be members of the Council ("the Nominated Trustees")*; Accordingly, with Councillor Cleeve the only Councillor indicating that she was willing to seek re-election, the Town Clerk had engaged in conversations with two additional members of the community who have conveyed an interest in serving as the Town Council's appointed representatives on the Town Trust.

Details of these nominations were presented to the meeting for consideration. Following consideration, it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Cleeve, Mrs Sarah Summers and Mr Lewis Barrow be appointed as the Town Council representatives to Stratford Town Trust for a four year period commencing 1 June 2024.

Thanks be recorded to Councillors Cleeve, Coles and former Councillor Jackson for their service over the past four years.

99 **Calendar of Meetings**

Following discussion, and the suggestion that the Annual Photograph be moved to November to avoid school holidays, it was

RESOLVED: That the Calendar of meetings for 2024/25 be approved.

100 **Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elect 2024/25**

It was Proposed by Councillor Dowling and Seconded by Councillor Alcock and unanimously

RESOLVED: To affirm Councillor Jason Fojtik as the Mayor Elect, to take office for 2024/25.

Deputy Mayor

This item was deferred to the next Council meeting.

101 **To receive written update reports on Outside Bodies from the**

Councillors:

The following written reports were received and there were no questions raised by Councillors.

Councillor MacDonald - Friends of Shakespeare's Church,
Town Transport Group and Historic Spine Working Group

102 **Verbal Ward Reports**

Councillor Rolfe reported on the highways issues in her ward.

103 **Town Clerk's Verbal Report**

There was no verbal report.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 26 March 2024

Chairman: