

**RWBTC/5/2016-2017**

8<sup>th</sup> December 2016

**ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 7.30pm at Manor House, Lime Kiln, Royal Wootton Bassett.

PRESENT: Councillors: Sue Hughes, Susan Doyle (late), Paul Heaphy, Mike Leighfield, Janet Georgiou, Steve Bucknell, Mary Champion, Marion Sweet, John Wilks, Mike Farrow.

Also in attendance: Wiltshire Councillors Chris Hurst and Allison Bucknell.

Officers in Attendance: Johnathan Bourne, Town Clerk, Michelle Temple, Administrative Services Manager, Kalpesh Patel, Accountant, John MacIndoe, Grounds Maintenance Team Leader, Emily Maiden, Committee Clerk and Administrative Officer.

**58. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Linda Frost, Stephan Jarvis, Michael Page, Audrey Wannell, Chris Wannell, and Steve Watts.

**59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with sections 10 and 12 of Wiltshire Council's Members Code of Conduct, as adopted by Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council at a meeting held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

RESOLVED to note that no Declarations of Interest were made.

**60. WRITTEN REPORTS**

Members received written reports from Wiltshire Police and James Gray MP which were noted.

**61. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED to confirm and sign minutes of a meeting of the Council held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 [RWBTC/4/16-17]. Copies previously circulated.

**62. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

*Councillor Sue Doyle joined the meeting, 7.35pm*

The Mayor informed Members that she has been very busy in recent weeks, attending a number of festive events. The Christmas Lights Switch-on was well attended, and the Mayor thanked all those who helped out on the night and contributed to its success.

**63. TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS**

There were no questions either with or without notice received under Standing Orders.

**64. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED to note the report on a meeting of the Planning Committee held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 [P/4/16-17], copies previously circulated, and Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 [P/5/16-17], copies previously circulated.

**65. AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED to note the report on a meeting of the Amenities Committee held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 [A/4/16-17]. Copies previously circulated.

**66. REVENUE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED to note the report on a meeting of the Revenue and Resources Committee held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 [R&R/4/16-17]. Copies previously circulated.

**67. TOWN TEAM**

Councillor John Wilks gave a verbal report on a meeting of the Town Team held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, copies of the minutes were previously circulated. Particular attention was drawn to work undertaken to measure the footfall count over the festive period to assess the effectiveness of the free parking Saturdays.

**68. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

A verbal update was provided by the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group, Councillor Mike Leighfield. It was noted that a successful funding application had been made for just under £6000 to cover the cost of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Steering Group are pleased to have been awarded the grant.

**69. COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY APPOINTMENTS**

At a meeting of the Town Council held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Councillor Stephan Jarvis was co-opted onto the Council as a result of a Casual Vacancy arising in the North Ward. At present, Councillor Jarvis has not been appointed to any of the Town Council's Committees or Working Parties, therefore there are vacant positions on the following Council bodies: -

Planning Committee  
Revenue and Resources Committee

Repatriation Effects Archive Working Party  
Communications Strategy Working Party  
Economic Development Working Party  
Town Council Investments Working Party

Councillor Jarvis has attended a number of Committee and Working Party meetings in order to ascertain which Working Parties he is able to assist.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) Appoint Councillor Jarvis to the Planning and Revenue and Resources Committees,
- b) Appoint Councillor Jarvis to the Communications Strategy, Economic Development and Town Council Investments Working Parties. The Repatriation Effects Working Party will continue without the appointment of another member.

## **70. WILTSHIRE COUNCIL LIBRARY ALTERATIONS**

In September 2016 the Revenue and Resources Committee was advised of Wiltshire Council's proposal to create a community hub at Royal Wootton Bassett Library as part of its campus programme. This was consistent with the original consultation which had identified the preservation of the Library, at its current location, as being a key priority.

Members advised that any alterations must provide the appropriate level of facilities for the Town Council and community groups if a financial contribution was to be expected by Wiltshire Council.

At the last meeting of the Revenue and Resources Committee, Laurie Bell, Associate Director of Communities and Communications at Wiltshire Council, gave a presentation detailing the proposals. She explained that the scheme follows the model that has been successfully piloted at Calne Library. Calne Library is now a multi-use space, and several community rooms have been created for groups to hold meetings. This approach has been very popular, with demand for community space outstripping supply. The book shelves can be moved

to create a large floor space, with smaller meeting rooms and a kitchen facility also available.

Laurie Bell further explained that a similar scheme could be implemented at Royal Wootton Bassett Library, with two options proposed for creating the required space. One of the options available would be to increase the current footprint of the library building with an extension, the other to remodel the library within the existing footprint.

The Committee asked for Councillors Mike Leighfield, Marion Sweet and the Town Clerk to meet with Laurie Bell to establish which of these options would best suit the Town Council.

Members received a report from Councillors Mike Leighfield, Marion Sweet and the Town Clerk on a meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016. It was recommended that the extension scheme did not offer good value for money, but that reuse of the existing floor space could work well. Precise details of this would need to be the subject to further negotiations and would be likely to include a partnership contribution of up to £150K.

RESOLVED to authorise Councillors Mike Leighfield, Marion Sweet and the Town Clerk to negotiate further on the smaller scheme in order to determine what could be secured in return for the Council's partnership funding.

## **71. REVISED CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

All Town and Parish Councils are required to produce Corporate Governance documents, outlining the principles, regulations and processes by which a Council conducts its business. Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council's full suite of Corporate Governance documents is separated into 15 sections, running to a lever-arch file of papers. The last full review of these documents took place in 2008, although a number of individual sections have been reviewed and updated since this time.

Over the past 6-months an independent advisor has been reviewing the full Corporate Governance documents, and has produced a short report detailing suggested amendments, copy previously circulated with the Revenue and Resources agenda. All Councillors will receive electronic

copies of the full Corporate Governance pack once the documents have been approved.

The independent advisor's report was considered by the Revenue and Resources Committee on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, and the proposed changes were approved. Following the meeting, the Town Clerk noticed one reference to the Civic Centre had been made in the Policy Plan section. This reference has now been removed.

RESOLVED to approve the revisions made by the independent advisor, noting the removal of the reference to the Civic Centre in the Policy Plan section; and adopt the revised Corporate Governance documents, as recommended by the Revenue and Resources Committee.

## **72. ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

*Councillors are advised that the effect of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982 is that if, when considering budgetary items, any Councillor is in arrears for more than two months with his/her Council Tax, he/she must declare that Section 106 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1982 applies and neither speak nor vote on the matter before Council. Failure to observe this renders the Councillor liable for prosecution by the Director of Public Prosecutions.*

It is the responsibility of the Town Council to levy a precept on Wiltshire Council to cover its costs for the 2017/2018 financial year. Wiltshire Council is the charging authority and will collect this on behalf of the Town Council.

Although Standing Committees make budgetary bids and the Revenue and Resources assesses these in making its recommendations to Council, it is the Council alone that has the power to levy the precept. The Town Council can only levy its precept once per year and this must be submitted to Wiltshire Council no later than 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

At the meeting of the Revenue and Resources Committee held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, it was recommended that a Precept of £877,520 be levied.

As the Revenue and Resources Committee did not propose any changes to the proposed budget for the setting of the 2017/2018 Precept, Members were asked to bring the budget documents from the R&R meeting of the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to the Full Council meeting to save on photocopying costs. The page showing the final calculation of the Precept 2017/2018 was previously circulated.

It is recommended that the Council formally set the Precept for 2017/2018 at £877,520. This would mean that the charge for a Band D property would be £194.81, which represents an increase of £5, or 2.63% from the previous financial year. This increase is required in order to account for the loss of the Wiltshire Council precept grant, and the cost of taking on the public toilets in Boroughfields after they were closed by Wiltshire Council.

RESOLVED to set the precept at £877,520.

**73. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2015-2016**

RESOLVED to note the External Audit report for the 2015- 2016 financial year, copy previously circulated.

**74. CIVIC AWARD**

At the Revenue and Resources meeting held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 it was resolved to make three nominations for Civic Awards. Each of the three people nominated have been approached and have accepted their nominations. In all cases, the nominees are anxious to ensure that the award also reflects the hard work and dedication put in by their respective sports clubs. Such assurances have been given, being mindful that this was the Council's original intent.

RESOLVED to confirm the nominations and authorise the Town Clerk to make arrangements for a suitable presentation ceremony in early 2017.

**75. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Council was asked whether it wishes to issue any Press Releases or other Communications in respect of the Agenda items.

RESOLVED to issue communications on the reasons for the Precept increase. A press release regarding the Civic Awards to be issued nearer the date of the ceremony.

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

The Council was asked that members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting to allow discussion of the establishment, property and finance matters as it is considered the publicity would be prejudicial by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.