



NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 18th February 2015 in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall.

| Membership Present: | Town Mayor | Cllr T Bickley JP (in the Chair) |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | Councillors | P Baggaley Mrs I Brown K Clayton M G Cope Mrs R Crowe R A Crowe Mrs G Dawn Miss R Dawn (Ap) L Goff D Jones D Lloyd D R Payne B Richardson T Roberts MBE Mrs M Tribe S Wallace C Wetton (Ap) |
| Apologies received from: | Councillors | Miss R Dawn, C Wetton |
| Town Council Staff: | Town Clerk PA to the Town Clerk/Mayor's Secretary | Alan Mellor Helen Crossland – taking notes |
| Public: | There were 4 members of the public present. | |
| Venue: | Council Chamber | Town Hall |

TC50/14/15 Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17th December 2014

The Minutes of the last Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17th December 2014 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

TC51/14/15 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared a personal interest in the Devolved Services Agenda item as they are also elected Members on Newark & Sherwood District Council:

Councillors; T Bickley, Mrs I Brown, Mrs R Crowe, Mrs G Dawn, D Lloyd, D Payne, T Roberts MBE, Mrs M Tribe.

It was **AGREED** to accept any further Declarations of Interest as they may arise during the meeting.

TC52/14/15 Planning & Regeneration Committee Minutes, Tuesday 30th December 2014

The Chairman, Cllr L Goff, presented the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning & Regeneration Committee held on Tuesday 30th December 2014.

Cllr D Payne raised a question with regard to **PR51/14/15 – Land South of Newark**, linking with **TC42/14/15 – Planning & Regeneration Committee Minutes, Wednesday 29th October 2014**.

Cllr Payne re-iterated his concern with regard to a Neighbourhood Plan and said until he had received the communication from the Chairman of the Planning & Regeneration Committee, he was unaware that the issue had been discussed and a decision made about this, at that Committee. Cllr Payne was of the opinion that it was a policy matter and should have been referred to the Finance & Policy Committee. As the six month rule had now passed, Cllr Payne proposed that this should be the case, and there should be a report about a Neighbourhood Plan at the next Finance & Policy Meeting. This was seconded by Cllr D Jones.

Cllr Mrs Dawn pointed out that recently thoughts have been with the next administration of this Town Council; perhaps the Town Clerk could start looking at the Neighbourhood Plan, in readiness for the next administration.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that this meeting was merely receiving the minutes of the planning & Regeneration Committee and such a motion was not permitted under the Town Council's Standing Orders. However, the request from Cllrs Payne and Jones was **NOTED** and the Town Clerk undertook to submit a further report on the matter to a future meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee.

Cllr M Cope asked the Chairman what the impact of the Land South of Newark and Devolved Services would have on the Council Tax levy.

Cllr L Goff said that he felt Members were playing with a 'political football' with regard to the impact of new house building would have on the Town Council's financial position; he said he would provide a written response to the question.

Cllrs D Jones and M Cope said that the Chairman's response (a written reply) was not appropriate and was unacceptable as the information would be significant to the later agenda items dealing with Devolved Services and setting next years budget.

Cllr Mrs Dawn pointed out the Cllr Goff did not have the information requested 'at his fingertips' and asked the Town Clerk if he could help.

The Town Clerk said that a clear answer was shown best on page 53 of the Agenda, under Schedule One to the Devolution Agreement. This demonstrated the tax base, based on the latest estimate, the expectation from the plans at the District Council and

the number of house completions they are anticipating.

TC53/14/15 Environment & Leisure Committee Minutes, Wednesday 21st January 2015

The Chairman, Cllr D Jones, presented the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee held on Wednesday 21st January 2015.

Cllr T Roberts MBE enquired of the Chairman what the metal pole with a solar panel on was for, at the Bowbridge Road allotments.

The Chairman informed Members that this supplied power for the gates and the locking system that was in place there.

TC54/14/15 Planning & Regeneration Committee Minutes, Wednesday 28th January 2015

The Chairman, Cllr L Goff, presented the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning & Regeneration Committee held on Wednesday 28th January 2015.

A question was raised with regard to **PR53/14/15 – Matters Arising, PR51/14/15 – Land South of Newark.**

Cllr M Cope asked the Chairman what comments from this Committee were 'largely supported', or not supported, by the District Council, as referred to in this Minute.

The Chairman replied that he would send this information to all Councillors as a written response.

Cllr D Payne spoke with regard to **PR/55/14/15 – Outstanding Planning Applications, 15/00067/ADV – 36 Lombard Street.** He said he understood the cause for confusion with regard to this application (and others like it) and informed Members that he had arranged for the District Planning Officer to come to a full group of this Town Council to explain the system.

Cllr D Payne also advised members of the Planning & Regeneration Committee that if there was any doubt, or objections with regard to any applications, they should request one of the Town Councillors who is also on the District Council Planning Committee to reserve it to that Committee.

TC55/14/15 Finance & Policy Committee Minutes, Wednesday 11th February 2015

The Chairman, Cllr D Lloyd presented the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 11th February 2015.

The Chairman of the Environment & Leisure Committee informed Members that he had been surprised to see that 'Cemetery Fees and Charges' had been reported at the last Finance & Policy Committee, and a decision made – **FP47/14/15** refers.

Cllr Jones said that this was a matter for his Committee, who would then recommend to Full Town Council, as appropriate.

The Town Clerk agreed with the Chairman, and said he would ensure that in future the report was taken to the Environment & Leisure Committee in the first instance.

TC56/14/15 Doris Bainbridge Trust Fund

Cllr T Roberts MBE declared a personal interest in this Agenda item.

He also proposed that part of Recommendation 1.1 (ii) be withdrawn, as follows:

~~'Supporting the Newark Gatehouse Project through the use of the Trust's Capital Sum in 2017 and seek a legal opinion to ensure that such a use would be in accordance with the terms of the Trust'~~ as this Project has been put 'on hold' for the time being. It will go ahead, but not in the timeframe indicated in the Agenda Report.

Cllr D Payne thought that the Town council had already made a decision instructing

the Town Clerk on the legality of using the Trust Funds to support the Sunday Band Concerts as well as the use of the original Capital Sum.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this matter had been discussed before but thought it related to the Capital Sum use not the use of the interest earned from its investment. He undertook to review the previous decision in this regard.

It was felt however, that the legal opinion should still be sought with regard to the use of the fund for this, as described, and also with regard to the use of the fund for Sunday Band Concerts, which had been discussed previously.

The proposal to amend the recommendation was proposed by Cllr T Roberts MBE and seconded by Cllr Mrs G Dawn. Following a vote, the amendment was **AGREED**.

Members then dealt with Recommendation 1.1 (i) and **AGREED** to allocate the sum of £696 from the Interest Reserve Fund to meet the cost of holding the Sunday Band Concerts in the Castle Grounds in July and August 2015

TC57/14/15 Devolved Services

Cllr D Lloyd proposed the acceptance of the recommendations in the report and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs G Dawn.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn then said that this would be the start of something Newark Town Council should have been doing many, many years ago.

The next two years would be tricky; planned services would need to be followed up, monitored etc. She went on to thank the Town Clerk and the Officers at the District Council who had put an enormous amount of work into this – and of course, the amendments to the original proposals.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn also thanked Cllr D Lloyd for his involvement.

Cllr M Cope agreed with previous comments. He said this was ‘the right time to grasp the nettle and get on with it’. He said he was delighted that this Town Council is actually going to be taking on additional Services.

Cllr D Jones then spoke; he said he failed to see anything materially different to what was presented to the Town Council at the last meeting. The Town Council still ends up with £20m costs, with no increase in Services. This does not increase the benefit to the community. Cllr D Jones said it had been suggested that this was a ‘good deal for Newark’ but he felt that this was a joke. However, Cllr D Jones said that as he was on record as wanting the best for Newark, he would support the recommendations.

Cllr P Baggaley said that this idea would not have seen the light of day if Newark & Sherwood District Council had not had to save money and that he would not be supporting this. He felt that the people of Newark would see this as a ‘bad move’ and also that there needed to be devolution of resources, and the power to go with them. He asked how the Town Council could develop a plan when they are not in control of the Services.

Cllr P Baggaley was also concerned that not all S106 monies had been identified and that the devolution plan was not value for money.

Cllr D Payne asked Members to read Page 47, paragraph 8.7, with regard to the Market Charter as he thought that this was incorrect; he also pointed out on Page 40, under heading 8 – **Market Charter** – paragraph 8.3, that the District Council were suggesting that Newark Town Council would have to foot the bill for any such enforcement of the Market Charter. He felt that this needed to be either deleted, or re-negotiated.

Cllr T Roberts MBE said that he was hoping to be celebrating the ‘coming of age’ of Newark Town Council tonight, but it appeared that some people still wanted to stay in

the past; some Members were only interested in Music Festivals and flower baskets.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn then replied to Cllr D Jones' comment and stated that this 'idea' had not started because the District Council needed to save money – it had come about because the District Council had wanted to charge the Town Council £10k to use the Riverside Park.

Cllr K Clayton felt that this was a transfer of assets, not devolution. If Newark Town Council took this on, it would 'waste' all of the reserves that it has at present. The reserves would fall below an acceptable level and there would be no money to improve any of the services that were taken on.

The Town Clerk spoke at this point; he said that this package could be seen as either as an opportunity, or a threat. He pointed out the major changes which had been negotiated since the Agreement was considered by the Town Council at its last meeting. In particular there were now two financial safeguards which guaranteed the Town Council would receive income during the 20 year period of the agreement to ensure that it did not get into a revenue deficit. In addition if, at the end of the Agreement, the level of new houses had not achieved the numbers anticipated the District Council would continue to pay an annual grant until the numbers were achieved. He also emphasised that the financial plan submitted with the report was predicated on the assumption that the Town Council would increase its Band D Council Rate by 1% per annum throughout the 20 year period. The financial forecast was very sensitive to small increases in the Council Tax Rate and a 1.5% annual increase would ensure that the minimum level of Reserve Fund balance would be around £150,000 with over £2m in Reserves by the end of the period.

Cllr S Wallace said that the reserves should be used to provide some free car parking, as he had suggested many times before.

Cllr P Baggaley proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk; this was seconded by Cllr D Jones.

Cllr D Lloyd then summed up the discussion; and requested a named vote.

A named vote was taken by the Town Clerk as follows:

FOR

Cllr P Baggaley

Cllr T Bickley

Cllr Mrs I Brown

Cllr K Clayton

Cllr M G Cope

Cllr Mrs R Crowe

Cllr R A Crowe

Cllr Mrs G Dawn

Cllr L Goff

Cllr D Jones

Cllr D Lloyd

Cllr D R Payne

Cllr B Richardson

Cllr A C Roberts MBE

Cllr Mrs M Tribe

Cllr S Wallace

Two Councillors had sent Apologies for Absence – these were Cllr Miss R Dawn and Cllr C Wetton.

- (i) Members **AGREED** to accept the devolution package as outlined in the report.
- (ii) Members **AGREED** to give the Town Clerk delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee, to take such decisions as may be necessary to facilitate the transfer of services contained in the agreed package.
- (iii) It was **AGREED** that any employment of additional staff be directly by the Town Council thus reducing any Employer Superannuation costs.
- (iv) Members **AGREED** to set up a new temporary Committee specifically to review the new services.

It was therefore **AGREED** that proposed appointments to this Committee be included on the Agenda for Mayor Making on 17th May 2015, following the elections.

Cllr D Payne left the meeting at this point.

TC58/14/15 Medium Term Financial Strategy

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr D Lloyd and seconded by Cllr S Wallace. A vote was taken and it was **AGREED** that the Medium Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2014-2022, as contained in the Agenda Report be **APPROVED**.

TC59/14/15 Revenue Budget and Precept 2015/2016

Cllr D Lloyd started the discussion on this item.

He proposed the recommendations as set out in the Agenda, but with no increase in the precept.

This proposal was seconded by Cllr S Wallace.

Cllr D Jones said he was surprised that the Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee had decided to ignore the advice of the Town Clerk, with regard to a 1% increase in Council Tax. Cllr D Jones said that he would not ignore the advice, and would not therefore support this proposal.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn asked what the consequence would be of not raising the Council Tax by 1%; the Town Clerk said that one year, would not make a huge difference, but it could not carry on, year after year.

Cllr P Baggaley pointed out that taking on significant expenditure had just been discussed, and that the Town Clerk had warned of the possible implications of not putting up the Council Tax.

Cllr M Cope said that he supported the proposal and requested a named vote.

Cllr D Lloyd then summed up the discussion; he said he was confident to make this proposal whilst heeding the Town Clerk's advice.

A named vote was then taken by the Town Clerk, as follows:

FOR

AGAINST

Cllr P Baggaley

Cllr T Bickley

Cllr Mrs I Brown

Cllr K Clayton

Cllr M G Cope

Cllr Mrs R Crowe

Cllr R A Crowe

Cllr Mrs G Dawn

Cllr L Goff

Cllr D Jones

Cllr D Lloyd

Cllr B Richardson

Cllr A C Roberts MBE

Cllr Mrs M Tribe

Cllr S Wallace

Two Councillors had sent Apologies for Absence; these were Cllr Miss R Dawn and Cllr C Wetton. Cllr D Payne had left the meeting earlier.

1. The budget proposals as revised for the financial year 2014/15 in respect of all services and functions operated by the Town Council, giving rise to a projected net expenditure of £657,690 were **APPROVED**.
2. The budget proposals a submitted for the financial year 2015/16 in respect of all services and functions operated by the Town Council, giving rise to a projected net expenditure of £927,640 were **APPROVED**.
3. The projected aggregate net expenditure on Town Council services for the financial year 2015/16 be met by way of the levying of a precept of £801,913 on Newark & Sherwood District Council was **APPROVED**. This represents a nil increase in the Band D Council Tax charge from the 2014/15 figure.

TC60/14/15 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor, Councillor Tom Bickley JP, had no announcements.

TC61/14/15 Town Council Leader's Announcements

The Town Council Leader, Councillor Mrs Gill Dawn, informed Members of how sorry she was that the Youth Council is no longer meeting. The Members that had joined had now moved on and there had not been any replacements made yet. Cllr Mrs Dawn asked the Town Clerk to start the process again, before the Elections and suggested that Cllr T Roberts MBE might assist as he had been so successful previously.

TC62/14/15 Town Clerk's Announcements

The Town Clerk, Mr Alan Mellor, had no announcements.

TC63/14/15 Notice of Motion

The Town Clerk received the following motion in accordance with Standing Order 6 (1):

Robin Hood Hotel

The Potterdyke Town Centre redevelopment in Newark Town Centre should be evidence of the strength of Newark in challenging economic circumstances. However, the remaining derelict Robin Hood Hotel continues to blight the Town Centre. This Council and its Planning Committee has urged the developers to find a solution which retains the frontage of the Hotel but it is increasingly clear that this will not happen. This eyesore continues to plague Newark. It is time to move on. Local people want this matter address and they want action now.

This Council welcomes the grant offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund to the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust to explore the feasibility of restoring the premises to working use and to establish a future economic purpose for the building.

In addition the Town Council would ask the District Council to establish a Joint Working Party to assess the outcome of the feasibility study in order to achieve a solution to the future use of this building as speedily as possible.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs G Dawn, Seconded by Councillor Mrs I Brown.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn started the discussion; she informed Members that at a District Council Meeting previously, they had been informed that the feasibility study (being carried out on behalf of the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust) would take 3 months. However, she had heard a radio interview with the relevant District Councillor since that this study would take 6 months.

Cllr Mrs Dawn went on to say that in 2011, English Heritage had said that it would cost in the region of £719,000 to refurbish the Robin Hood Hotel. The developer (Strawson) has until December of this year, to fulfil the terms of the contract to restore the frontage of the Hotel.

Cllr T Roberts MBE felt that the only feasible solution was to knock it down. The vernacular of the building is required – the question is, how far do we go back? A result is needed, a way forward.

Cllr D Jones responded and said it was time that it 'disappeared'. The sensible way is to not suggest something that we do not want anyway; they are an eyesore and too close to the road. Cllr D Jones said he supported this motion – the issue needs to be moved on quickly.

Cllr Mrs I Brown urged Newark & Sherwood District Council and the Town Council to get the Working Party together as quickly as possible, as in the motion above.

Cllr L Goff suggested that the people of Newark could attend the Parish Meeting of this Council on 22nd April 2015; perhaps a Question and Answer session would be appropriate?

Cllr D Lloyd informed Members that English Heritage had said that nothing can happen until the feasibility study had been completed.

Cllr Mrs M Tribe said that she supported the motion.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn then summed up the discussion.

Cllr T Bickley JP declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item.

A recorded vote was requested; the Town Clerk recorded the vote as follows:

FOR

Cllr P Baggaley

Cllr Mrs I Brown

Cllr K Clayton

Cllr M G Cope

Cllr Mrs R Crowe

Cllr R A Crowe

Cllr Mrs G Dawn

Cllr L Goff

Cllr D Jones

Cllr D Lloyd

Cllr B Richardson

Cllr A C Roberts MBE

Cllr Mrs M Tribe

Cllr S Wallace

Two Councillors had sent Apologies for Absence; these were Cllr Miss R Dawn and Cllr C Wetton. Cllr D Payne had left the meeting earlier.

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| Meeting Closed: | 9.15pm | Next Meeting: | 22nd April 2015 |
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