

MELTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12TH JUNE 2023

Present: Councillor Noon (Chair), Councillor's Barrowclough, Crankshaw, Haigh, Jackson, Naylor, Varley, White and Wrathall.

PUBLIC SESSION: There were no members of the public and press present.

23/71 1. NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Taken as read.

23/72 2. ADMISSION TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended.

There were no items for discussion out of the public domain.

23/73 3. APOLOGIES / REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Buchanan, Jurczynszyn and Cllr King.

Apologies and reasons for absence were duly **APPROVED**.

23/74 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

23/75 5. MINUTES

Councillors considered the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 15th May 2023 that had been duly circulated with the agenda.

Moved by Cllr Barrowclough, Seconded by Cllr Haigh and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 15th May 2023 be approved with a minor amendment for the apologies of Cllr Haigh to Cllr White.

23/76 6. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

Councillors confirmed for approval and adoption the Minutes of the under-mentioned Committees:

Moved by Cllr Noon, Seconded by Cllr Barrowclough and **RESOLVED** that the Planning, Environment and General Purposes Committee held on the 15th May 2023 be approved.

23/77 7. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM KIRKLEES ELECTED MEMBERS.

The Mayor informed the Council that unfortunately Cllr Greaves from Kirklees Borough Council was unable to attend.

He reported that a public meeting is to be held with officers from Kirklees Borough Council, Cllr Greaves and all Meltham Town Councillor's are invited to attend in relation to a number of public concerns raised around the area.

23/78 8. INTERNAL CONTROLS

8.1 To consider the internal auditors report 2023.

The Mayor reported that the Council are looking to work towards the foundation stage of the Local Council Award Scheme. At the current time the Council are meeting the legal requirements but as part of governance, transparency and a commitment to the electorate are planning to set this as one of their objectives.

The locum clerk reported that the internal auditors had made comments as detailed below -:

2. Comments arising from internal audit

2.1 Tendering of contracts

We advise that, although the supplier for the upkeep and maintenance of the park is on a rolling annual contract, formal external quotes should be obtained every 3 years as a benchmark so there is no risk of a lack of independence when reviewing the contract.

2.2 Fixed assets

During the review of the fixed asset register, it has been noted that for one of the assets the gross amount has been included on the register rather than the net, causing it to be overstated by £156.

It has also been noted that for a different asset, only part of the net value of the asset has been included on the register, causing it to be understated by £9.15. We recommend the correct asset value is included on the register to ensure the year end reporting is fully accurate.

Furthermore, it was discussed that there was an insurance claim relating to the defibrillator cabinet that was damaged resulting in £804.80 being received by the insurers. This has been accounted for as a credit in capital expenditure, which is not correct. This should be accounted for within other receipts and the original damaged defibrillator cabinet which has been replaced should be removed from the fixed asset register. The new defibrillator cabinet is correctly included on the register.

2.3 Basis of accounting

It has been noted that historically there was no consideration of accruals or prepayments, and transactions were accounted for as they were paid and received. However, in the current year this has now changed with full consideration of income and expenditure accounting being implemented. We recommend this approach is now applied consistently year on year.

The only issue which has arisen from our review of accruals is that there should be an accrual for the internal and external audit fees relating to the March 2023 year end.

2.4 Payment authorisation

For three out of ten purchases samples selected, supporting evidence of trustee payment approval relating to the purchase could not be provided. Whilst we appreciate this is likely due to the change in personnel of finance clerk at the year end, we recommend evidence of payment approval is easily and readily available for the internal audit review.

3. Conclusion on the internal audit

The internal audit progressed smoothly and no limitations in the scope of our work arose. We will therefore be in a position to complete the internal audit report contained in the Council's annual return, subject to the councillors approving the annual return as presented to us.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Tara Ball for assisting us both during and since the internal audit.

The internal audit report was duly considered and it was **RESOLVED** that this report be approved.

8.2 To consider any actions required in relation to the internal auditor's report 2023.

The locum clerk reported that adjustments will be made as advised by the internal auditor and these are to be restated in the accounts for 2023 to 2024. She advised that with financial acumen and awareness the inputting of financial transactions would address the matters raised.

She noted that the review of contractors should be completed every three years. This was **AGREED** to be reviewed as part of the park project.

The locum clerk advised that due to the size of the council it would be good practice to have internal audits twice a year to enable any matters to be acted upon through the year and in a timely manner. This would aid with internal controls and governance. She recommended that the Chair of Finance and Vice Chair to attend the office on a quarterly basis to complete a spot check on bank statements and financial records with an internal control report completed every six months.

8.3 To approve the fixed asset register 2022 to 2023.

The clerk reported that it had been agreed to review the fixed asset register inline with the insurance schedule once the new council had been elected at the Properties and Finance Committee meeting.

She advised that a site visit with the new clerk would assist with the location setting of the asset register and would improve awareness of the actual siting of assets.

Move by Cllr Haigh, Seconded by Cllr Naylor and it was **RESOLVED** that the fixed asset register for 2022 to 2023 be approved.

23/79 9. CORRESPONDENCE

The below items of correspondence were noted and received -:

9.1 Community ownership fund information – emailed 15.5.23.

9.2 Upgrade to Zebra Crossing – Kirklees – emailed 18.5.23.

9.3 Meltham Memories audit report – emailed 30.5.23.

9.4 South Pennine Annual Branch Meeting – 7th June – YLCA – emailed 31.5.23.

9.4 Cllr Naylor reported that she had attended the South Pennine Annual Branch meeting and gave an overview of what was discussed. Cllr Naylor is to send the presentation and her notes to the locum clerk for circulation to the Council.

MAYORS INVITES

Yorkshire Day – Tuesday 1st August.

This was duly **NOTED** and **APPROVED**.

23/80 10. FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

10.1. To consider whole council training by the YLCA.

The locum clerk and Mayor had circulated prior to the meeting details of whole council training to be conducted by the YLCA.

Proposed by Cllr White, Seconded by Cllr Jackson, and it was **APPROVED** that the council and the clerk are to attend a whole council training session at The Carlile Institute, and that the costs are to be incurred by Meltham Town Council.

10.2. To consider the training budget 2023 to 2024.

The locum clerk advised the council that the current budget for 2023 to 2024 had been set as £300. She reported that this would not be sufficient for the year due to the whole council training costs and training for the new clerk and gave an updated estimated budget of £1700.

It was **APPROVED** that the training budget be increased from £300 to £1700 and vired from general reserves.

23/81 11. COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR 2023/24.

The locum clerk had circulated a draft timetable of committee meetings for the Municipal year.

Cllr White noted that historically the planning meetings had been held every three weeks to aid with responding to planning applications. The locum clerk advised that the clerk could also be given delegation in conjunction with the Chair of planning to respond to any urgent planning matters.

It was **AGREED** that the schedule of meetings be approved with the exception of planning meetings to be held every three weeks and cancelled accordingly if there were no items to consider.

23/82 12. PARK DEVELOPMENT

12.1 To receive any update on the current position.

The Mayor reported that the tender package had now been circulated to the new council. He noted that the last tender had now been received after the granted extension, with an update pending from Michelle Stevens, Kirklees Council at the end of the week.

It was **AGREED** that a meeting is to be arranged by the Park working group as soon as possible to review the budgets and any updates received. This will then be reported back to full council.

12.2. To consider any further resolutions that are required to progress matters.

There were no further resolutions made.

23/83 13. MERCURY NEWSLETTER

The Mayor gave an overview of the current position in relation to the production of the Summer 2023 newsletter. He advised that there are still a number of key items that are required to be included in this publication, therefore an extension is to be requested for the second week in July for distribution.

The meeting closed at 19.07.

Signed _____

Date _____