

**HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th March 2020

Councillors: Christopher Ash-Edwards
Richard Bates
Clare Cheney
Rachel Cromie**
Sandy Ellis
Christopher Evans
Stephanie Inglesfield
Matthew Jeffers
James Knight**
Clive Laband
Jack Langley
Alastair McPherson
Howard Mundin**
Richard Nicholson
Mike Pulfer**
Sujan Wickremaratchi**

Apologies Absent***

Also, present: Town Clerk

76. Council Prayer

Members stood for the Council prayer, which was read by the Town Mayor.
At this point Cllr Bates left the room and returned at the end of the Prayer.

77. Public Forum

None

78. Apologies

Rachel Cromie - self isolation.
James Knight – self isolation.
Howard Mundin - self isolation.
Mike Pulfer - self isolation.
Sujan Wickremaratchi - holiday.

79. Declarations of Interest

None.

80. Minutes

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27th January 2020 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Mayor.

81. Mayor's Engagements and Announcements.

The Town Mayor referred Members to his list of engagement and had nothing to add as he wished to move as quickly as possible to the main item (9) Covid 19 preparation.

82. To receive and consider the adoption of the Minutes of Council standing committees.

- (i) **Planning Committee - MINS. 113 - 129**
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Planning Committees, dated 10th February 2020 **Mins 113 – 121** and 2nd March 2020 - **Mins 122 – 129** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.
- (ii) **Environment & General Purposes Committee - MINS. 49 - 59**
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Environment & General Purposes Committee dated 24th February 2020 **Mins 49 - 59** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.
- (iii) **Policy & Finance Committee - MINS. 47 - 57**
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 9th March 2020 **Mins 47 - 57** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

83. Town Council's Email Protocol

The Town Clerk introduced the protocol and thank Cllr Cromie for her advice and assistance in making the additions to the protocol. It had also suggest by Cllr Cromie by email to the Town Clerk that all councillors should make their password as complicated as possible use number and symbols with the password. Members made no comment on the policy and unanimously

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Adopt the revised Email Protocol for Haywards Heath Town Council.

84. Covid – 19 Policies and Approach

The Town Clerk introduced proposed business continuity matters in relation to Covid-19 for Haywards Heath Town Council in light of the latest Government and Public Health England advice, which was **AGREED to be in place until the end of May 2020, which would then be reviewed and either relaxed or extended by delegated authority to the Town Clerk and Town Mayor.**

First it was agreed that the Town Hall be closed to hirers for the foreseeable future (until end of May 2020) with the clear message that;

Please note that Haywards Heath Town Hall is closed to hirers for the foreseeable future. This is line with Government Advice regarding social distancing.

****The Town Council is still operational and open for business, at the present time, with stringent arrangements in place for dealing with the public***.*

*We wish to continue to support our community and the Town Council is urgently creating community resilience plans by Council Ward****

If your query is not urgent, we would urge you to call 01444 455694 (between the hours of 9am & 5pm) or email town.clerk@haywardsheath.gov.uk and not visit the Town Hall.

This notice and the position of the Town Council will be reviewed and updated on a weekly basis and daily if required. We thank you for your patience and understanding during this difficult time.

Further measures include;

Meetings;

- Planning Committees; 23rd March 2020, 14th April 2020, 4th May 2020 and 26th May 2020 to be managed remotely as comments are to be made not resolutions.
- Environment and General Purposes Committee 20th April 2020 - Cancelled
- Annual Town Meeting – 27th April 2020 - Cancelled

- Annual Meeting of the Town Council - 11th May 2020 still programmed pending advice and could be held in a different situation and venue.
- Working group business can be undertaken via email or skype.

Finance

- End of year still set as needing to be signed off by the 30th June 2020. *Advice could change from National Association of Local Council via the Government.*
- Internal Auditor has already informed HHTC of remote service to complete the Internal Audit process.
- Agreement by email to sign off payments before release subject to back dated signage with email confirmation attached.
- End of year payroll, Members allowances, loading of new payment runs to be actioned.

Events

- Spring Festival April 26th April 2020 - Cancelled
- VE Commemorations – 8th and 10th May 2020 - Cancelled.

Staff

- The Town Clerk has discretion to manage the Town Hall staff and Groundstaff.
- All office staff will have access to a laptop – except Mayor's Secretary who is set up at home already.

Members then RESOLVED to adopt the High Consequence Infectious Disease Policy, which includes matters relating to staff attendance in the work place.

Critical Service Delivery

- Only Service that is required is burial. Cemetery could be administered remotely.
- Service depends on contractors and funeral directors. Graves will be marked.

Most of the above is managed and allowable under Standing Orders and delegation to the Town Clerk, but in addition to this;

Members RESOLVED the following;

"In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Council or standing committee in a reasonable time, the Town Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such a decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible by consultation with Members by electronic means or telephone where possible but not exclusively. The Town Clerk will consult with the Town Mayor and Leader of the Council for guidance as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the Council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation will be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the Council after the Council meeting at which the delegation was put in place."

It was further RESOLVED that;

Delegation to the Clerk to act reasonably on behalf of the Council will be reported if required by weekly update or daily update for call in by Cllrs to be agreed by 8 Cllrs including the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Leader plus 5 others.

In the event of the Town Clerk being unable to undertake task the Deputy Clerk takes over delegated authority. In the event of both being unable to undertake such the Assistant to the Clerk takes over responsibility.

In the event of an office closure all responsibility would pass to the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor in liaison with authorised signatories.

Members then discussed the Town Council's external response to Covid-19 and agreed that a community mapping would be undertaken with a Councillor from each Ward taking the lead. The Town Mayor Cllr Mcpherson and Deputy Mayor Cllr Jeffers (Lucastes and Bolnore) would lead with the Town Clerk and Cllrs Ellis (Heath), Inglesfield (Ashenground), Langley (Bentswood), Evans (Franklands would lead on such with the Community and Events Officer pulling information together. As part of this approach to community resilience it was;

RESOLVED that a hardship fund would be put in place, against a criteria delegated to the Town Clerk and Town Mayor, using Ward Budget Monies to be distributed by the Town Council exercising its adopted General Power of Competency (13th May 2019).

85. To consider any urgent items.

None.

Meeting Closed at 8.37pm.
