

MINUTES

At a Meeting of Trowbridge Town Council held in the Council Chamber at The Civic Centre, Trowbridge on Tuesday 18th January at 19.00hrs.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Allsworth, Bates (Chair), Beaver, Blackmore, Bridges, Bryant, Cave, Cavill, Cooper, Halik, Hill, Hoar, Jacob, Edward Kirk, Emily Kirk, Palmen, Piazza and Trigg.

Officers: Mr L. Allan (Town Clerk/RFO), Mrs A Quick (Minutes)

Public: (in person) 2 (on TEAMS) 3 including Cllr Vigar.

Police: Sergeant Charlotte Chilton

Press: None.

The Mayor welcomed all present, in particular members of the public. Covid restrictions were emphasised. Attendees were asked to be mindful of timings for the meeting and to follow full meeting protocol.

3543 APOLOGIES

- a) **Apologies were received** from Cllrs Blakemore, Lincoln and Vigar.
- b) **RESOLVED** to accepted apologies with reasons for absence.

3544 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- a. **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th November 2021.
- b. There were no matters to be considered.

3545 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

The Council received and considered;

- a) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Leisure & Services Committee 7th December 2021.
Cllr Bates presented the minutes.
- b) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Museum Committee 14th December 2021.
Cllr Bridges presented the minutes.
- c) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee 14th December 2021.
Cllr Cavill presented the minutes.
- d) **RESOLVED** to note
 - i) The minutes of the Town Development Committee 30th November and 21st December.
 - ii) The notes of the Town Development Virtual Consultation Meeting 4th January.
Cllr Bryant presented the minutes and notes.
- e) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee 11th January.
Cllr Palmen presented the minutes.

Cllrs Allsworth and Cave arrived at 19.05

3546 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) There were no Declarations of Interest.
- b) There were no Dispensation Requests received by the Town Clerk and not previously considered.

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3547 **COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR**

The council received communications from Mayor Denise Bates;

The Mayor presented the Civic Dinner invitations, highlighting it will be the first time this event has been held since 2019. It is a wonderful opportunity to bring the community together. It is the biggest fundraising event in the Mayor's calendar. Particular thanks were given to both sponsors of this dinner; Allsworth Flooring and Trowbridge Ford. Personal thanks were given to officers helping with fundraising over the Christmas period, including collections in the TTC Reception, by Active Trowbridge, the Civic Team holding a Carol Service and Tombola. In that month alone we raised just under £2000. Thank you to all the officers and members of TTC for their hard work. It was very enjoyable and there was a very good turnout at these events. It was announced that Mike Holden retired last Friday after 11 years of service to TTC. Thanks were given for all he has done for Trowbridge Town Council and The Mayor wished him well in his retirement.

3548 **PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

Questions from the public were received as follows:

Rob Wall – as a member of the Friends of the Down Cemetery, he asked that the Town Council consider taking over all of the maintenance works from Wiltshire Council for the cemetery.

Cllr Palmen responded that we are looking at all aspects of asset transfer and discussions are ongoing.

Cllr Edward Kirk gave thanks to those that care for the cemetery but there are lots of liability issues which TTC should not take on. He would understand any top up services which could be offered but he sees no reason to take this on as a burden to Trowbridge residents.

3549 **POLICE MATTERS**

A Police Report was received from Sergeant 2446 Charly Chilton, previously circulated;

Community Speedwatch – Every 2 weeks we hold a task meeting with an opportunity to review what has occurred over the fortnight. A number of roads have been provided with speedwatch support. December saw our force-wide drink driving campaign and 8 vehicles were seized for having no insurance. One man has been remanded in custody & jailed for 13 weeks. On 5th Dec officers were on patrol when an address was entered and drugs were found therefore the person was remanded in custody.

Cllr Edward Kirk highlighted heavy goods vehicles have been seen ignoring diversions or weight limits. Police support was requested to help control this. Sgnt. Chilton highlighted that unless it is clearly signed that it is unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles it would be difficult to stand up in court.

Sergeant Chilton left the meeting at 19.21.

3550 **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

QUESTION 220106 09:29 MUSEUM BUDGET

The Council considered the following question submitted by Councillor Edward Kirk; Please can the Town Council be provided with more detail on how exactly this mistake occurred and who was responsible for the error?

Does the Town Clerk now believe that 'assumption is the mother of all mistakes?

Will the Town Council now consider receiving professional Independent Advice and undertake full professional consultation/surveys with all future projects like Doric Park?

The cost of the Museum for a Band D household was £12.75, please can the Town Clerk confirm what the Band D household cost is going to be with this proposed Museum Budget for 2022-2023?

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Town Clerk’s Response. *There has been no mistake or error. When the budget is approved in January the Council knows what has been spent in the first half of the current year and therefore has to estimate what it will spend in the second half of the year. Such estimates are incorporated into the budget. We estimated that we would have £20,000 carried forward at the end of 2020/21. Unfortunately, this did not happen. We estimated that £80,000 of the remaining grant would be claimed from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), unfortunately the majority of this was claimed in 2020/21 and was therefore no longer available to claim in 2021/22.*

I do not believe ‘assumption is the mother of all mistakes’. Believing that hindsight is something that can be used to attack people with, suggesting that they should have known what was going to happen and is only know now because it has now happened is, in my view, the mother of all hypocrisy.

It is for the Council to decide if it requires any additional professional Independent Advice in addition to the professional Independent Advice it has already received for Doric Park and arrangements for future projects.

It is for the Council to decide if it requires any additional professional consultation/surveys in addition to the professional consultation/surveys it has already undertaken for Doric Park and arrangements for future projects.

Cllr Kirk asked a supplementary question and the Town Clerk asked for it to be put in writing outside the meeting so that he could understand it.

3551 **BUDGET & PRECEPT**

The Council considered the budget section (2.1) contained in the report to Policy & Resources Committee and the RECOMMENDATION from the Policy & Resources Committee and it was;

Cllr Piazza believes there are positive points in the budget, but cannot support the increase. Comparison with those in Hilperton means village residents can still access the services which are paid for by Trowbridge residents. Cllr Cavill accepts the unfairness and appreciates that this occurs elsewhere. There is no point discussing it further unless a formal alternative is put forward. Cllr Bryant agreed this is a matter for MPs to debate, not TTC. Cllr Jacob agrees that we are never going to have equality between towns but this is about finding a positive way forward and it will be an investment well made. Cllr Cooper points out that when you have two service providers with one taking the service on and the other surrendering services with no reduction in charges it is the one taking on that should be applauded. Cllr Palmen stated the voters gave mandate for good services at the election. Cllr Hoar highlighted that suggestions weren’t put forward at the time when the budget was being created.

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the department Budgets for ongoing activities as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling	£1,558,132
That the council approves the WC transfer activities Budgets as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling	£322,313
That the council approves the loan finance Budgets as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling	£442,918
That the Council approves a contribution to General Reserves of	£46,480
That the Council therefore approves a total budget requirement of	£2,369,843
That this is funded in part through estimated income from Community Infrastructure Levy of	(£20,000)
Resulting in a net precept requirement of	£2,349,843
Which results in an increase of £5.20 or 3.1% for ongoing activities and an additional increase of £27.45 or 16.4% for WC transfer activities, giving a TOTAL INCREASE of £32.65 or 19.5% on the Trowbridge Town Council ‘Band D’ Council Tax Charge, to	£200.10

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Which is less than £3.85 per week.

This would result in the following Trowbridge Town element for each level of Council Tax:

Band A	6/9ths	£133.40
Band B	7/9ths	£155.63
Band C	8/9ths	£177.87
Band D	9/9ths	£200.10
Band E	11/9ths	£244.57
Band F	13/9ths	£289.04
Band G	15/9ths	£333.50
Band H	18/9ths	£400.20

A Recorded Vote was held.

3552 **MOTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

The Council considered motions received from councillors by the deadline: Thursday 6th January.

A. MOTION: 211130 21:03 : AIR CADETS

The council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Cave, seconded by Cllr Piazza.

MOTION:

- a) Trowbridge Town Council agrees to fund the £10 a month subscription for 10 young people a year to join Trowbridge 2196 Air Cadets who would otherwise not be able to afford the subscriptions.
- b) Trowbridge Town Council agrees to fund Annual camp for all 10 at £40 each subject to each individual meeting the requirements.
- c) Trowbridge Town Council will review the attendance records yearly and as long as they meet the requirements will continue to fund the monthly subscriptions.
- d) Trowbridge Town Council will review on an annual basis the funding of these and additional places.
- e) Total to be allocated from the 2022/23 budget £1600

THE CHAIR REFERRED THIS MOTION TO THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 1ST MARCH 2022.

B. MOTION 211208 16:11 GREENSQUARE TENANTS' HEATING ISSUES

The council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Cave.

MOTION:

- a) Trowbridge Council take a proactive approach to residents potentially in a crisis by contacting all Greensquare Accord Social Housing residents and asking the aforementioned questions.
- b) If residents respond with heating or hot water concerns, then Trowbridge Council will individually contact Greensquare Accord on their residents' behalf and ask for these concerns to be resolved as a priority.
- c) Trowbridge Council will continuously chase any reported heating/hot water concerns with Greensquare Accord until they have resolved.

THE CHAIR REFERRED THIS MOTION TO THE LEISURE & INFORMATION SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2022.

Cllr Edward Kirk asked for clarity of where the Greensquare tenants are.

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C. MOTION 220106 21: 34 GENERAL RESERVES

The council considered the following motion from Cllr Edward Kirk, seconded by Cllr Cave.

MOTION: *That; as the Town Council has received conflicting General Reserve instruction from our Responsible Finance Officer and there have been fundamental errors in our budgets;*

That the Town Council seeks assurance from our Internal Auditor regarding suitability of the proposed General Reserves contribution of only £46,480 in the 2022/23 budget.

Cllr Palmen proposed an amendment that the word 'only' is removed which was accepted by the proposer and seconder.

Cllr Edward Kirk asked whether the council would need to use General Reserves to pay back S106? The Town Clerk advised that this would be necessary if the S106 was not spent on the projects it has been specified for.

Cllr Jacob asked if there is a specific figure for General Reserves?

The Town Clerk read the following statement which is included in the budget summary:

The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between 3 and 12 months Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE). NRE (subject to any planned surplus or deficit) is effectively Precept less: any Loan Repayment and/or amounts included in Precept for Capital Projects and transfers to Earmarked Reserves. The reason for the wide range is to cater for the large variation in sizes of individual authorities. The smaller the authority the closer the figure should be to 12 months NRE, the larger the authority the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with an NRE in excess of £200,000 should plan on 3 months. In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a General Reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size and situation and plan their Budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained. Changes in activity levels/range of services provided will inevitably lead to changes in the requisite minimum level of General Reserve in order to provide working capital for those activities.

Cllr Hill stated that we agreed last year we wouldn't increase General Reserves due to Covid. If we do this now we will make life harder for those struggling financially.

Cllr Kirk asked the amount paid by other councils and that we should have increased general reserves previously.

The Town Clerk advised that he never instructs the Council and that it is for the Council to make decisions based upon the advice of officers. This is why the motion should be split in two and he would strongly advise not to approve section 1 of the motion.

The Motion was divided in two and voted on both separately;

MOTION PART 1; LOST

MOTION Part 2; It was RESOLVED;

That the Town Council seeks assurance from our Internal Auditor regarding suitability of the proposed General Reserves contribution of £46,480 in the 2022/23 budget.

A Recorded Vote was held.

Cllr Trigg left the meeting at 19.54, returned at 19.56.

D. MOTION 220106 22:07 DORIC PARK

The council considered the following motion proposed by Cllr Piazza, seconded by Cllr Edward Kirk.

MOTION: That Trowbridge Town Council issues detailed fortnightly updates on Doric Park through its newsletter, social media channels, and the town council website, also providing press releases to The Wiltshire Times.

Cllr Piazza accepted Cllr Palmen's suggestion to form a working party but insisted that members of the public should be included. Cllr Edward Kirk did not agree as it would mean not all Cllrs would be aware of all the information. Cllr Bryant is concerned about the public being involved in sensitive information. Cllr Kirk asked if it would be possible to take advice from outside bodies with expertise? Cllr Palmen agreed yes but this isn't being discussed at this stage. Cllr Jacob suggested that a working group of Cllrs will not ignore public views, they will be taken into account as we care about what our community think. Cllr Trigg stated that the original motion wouldn't accept information in from the public but it is believed that task groups work as you get confidential information, discuss the detail then feedback to the council. This can then be communicated back to the public. Cllr Cave wants to see first hand all the details before voting on spending the money. Cllr Piazza asked whether Cllr Trigg knew about the rise to £3.6million? Cllr Trigg agreed this was questioned by her at the Leisure meeting and didn't feedback which was an error on her part.

Cllr Palmen proposed the following

AMENDMENT and it was RESOLVED:

That Trowbridge Town Council sets up a working group of 4 Councillors to help oversee the Doric Park project and issues detailed monthly updates through its newsletter, social media channels, and the town council website, also providing press releases to The Wiltshire Times.

Suggested Members of the Working Group to be Cllr Denise Bates, Cllr Mel Jacob, Cllr Stephen Cooper and Cllr Antonio Piazza.

A Recorded Vote was held.

Cllr Bridges left the meeting at 20.20, returned at 20.22.

E. MOTION 220106 22:08 LEADER

The council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Piazza, seconded by Cllr Cave.

MOTION: That Trowbridge Town Council:

a) Amends its Standing Orders to clarify that the role of Leader, as well as the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, should remain politically impartial in the discharge of their respective roles;

b) Amends its Standing Orders further to clarify what responsibilities the 'Leader' actually has (as currently this is rather vague), providing a detailed description: my recommendation would be 'The leader of the council has no delegated powers, but offers a link between the majority group views and the council's policy direction and decision making'.

Town Clerk's Response: I do not consider it would be necessary or probably desirable to agree the first part but I have no issues with the second part of the MOTION. To clarify, with regards to the Leaders New Year statement 2021 – This was published by Cllr Palmen on his own social media and forwarded to me. I then edited the statement to remove all references to political parties so that it could be included on the council website. I have edited this year's New Year statement from the Leader so that it can be published on the town council website. To my knowledge neither the Leader nor other individual councillors have taken any decisions on behalf of the council.

initials.....dated.....

Cllr Bates quoted from Section 2 of the Mayor's Protocol documentation given to each incoming newly elected Mayor and read out the following: 'Being a Mayor is different from being a Councillor. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use his/her office to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector, mould social cohesion etc. With this in mind, the Mayor will need to exhibit a keen and genuine interest in those he/she meets, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, **ensure he/she acts independently of party-political influence**, speak up for the town's interests and always be mindful of the dignity of the Office.' Cllr Cave stated that often the Leader and Mayor roles are shared by 1 person but Cllr Palmen stated this is not the case in larger councils.

An AMMENDMENT was made to split the motion into two parts which was agreed by the proposer and seconder.

Separate Recorded Votes were held on (a) and (b) and:

a) LOST.

b) RESOLVED: That Trowbridge Town Council; Amends its Standing Orders further to clarify what responsibilities the 'Leader' actually has (as currently this is rather vague), providing a detailed description: my recommendation would be 'The leader of the council has no delegated powers, but offers a link between the majority group views and the council's policy direction and decision making'.

Cllr Palmen left meeting at 20.45, returned at 20.47.

3553 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

None.

3554 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15th March 2022.

Agenda to include; Quarter 3 Accounts and Likely end of year earmarked reserves

3555 MEDIA RELEASES

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following press/social media releases:

- The Budget
- Doric Park

3556 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

That; in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted; and therefore the meeting should resolve that the public and press be temporarily excluded and be instructed to withdraw.

3557 CIVIC AWARD

RESOLVED to approve the **RECOMMENDATION** of the **Policy & Resources Committee** for the annual **Civic Award** to be presented at the **Civic Dinner**.

Meeting Closed at 21.06

Initials.....dated.....

Signature

APPENDIX RECORDED VOTES

Councillor	PRECEPT	MOTION C GENERAL RESERVES a	MOTION C GENERAL RESERVES b	MOTION D DORIC PARK
Allsworth	Green	Red	Green	Green
Bates	Green	Red	Green	Green
Beaver	Green	Red	Green	Green
Blackmore	Green	Red	Green	Green
Blakemore				
Bridges	Green	Red	Green	Green
Bryant	Green	Red	Green	Green
Cave	Red	Grey	Green	Grey
Cavill	Green	Red	Green	Green
Cooper	Green	Red	Green	Green
Halik	Red	Grey	Green	Red
Hill	Green	Red	Green	Green
Hoar	Green	Red	Green	Green
Jacob	Green	Red	Green	Green
Edward Kirk	Red	Grey	Green	Red
Emily Kirk	Red	Grey	Green	Grey
Lincoln				
Palmen	Green	Red	Green	Green
Piazza	Red	Grey	Green	Red
Trigg	Green	Red	Green	Green
Vigar				

Initials.....dated.....

	For	Against	Abstain
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Initials.....dated.....