



Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8th April 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom.

PRESENT: Councillor Eames-Petersen (Deputy Mayor in the Chair)

Councillor Mark Bolitho	Councillor Hazel Laming
Councillor Lenny Brandon	Councillor John Percival
Councillor Jackie Brennan	Councillor Tristan Wiltshire
Councillor Richard Brisbin	

OFFICERS: Carrie Lloyd (Town Clerk)
Sam Frake (Head of Operations)
Ali Ogilvie (Head of Estates)
Jane Anderson (Office Manager)

88. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Linda Mendez (unable to get online), Cllr Richard Griffiths (unable to get into Zoom), Councillor Caron Juggins (no internet connection) and Councillor Lee Newman.

89. MINUTES

Councillor Eames-Petersen advised that at Minute 72. HCC PLANNING APPLICATION 5/0394-16, the £800 for the consultant would not only pay for his attendance at HCC Development Control Committee but also paid for his report which had been submitted to the County Council and was available to view on their website at

<https://planning.hertfordshire.gov.uk/Planning/Display?applicationNumber=5%2F0394-16>

Subject to the above amendment and update the Minutes of 4th March 2020 were approved and will be signed as a correct record after the CoVid 19 lockdown has been lifted.

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wiltshire declared an interest in the Local Plan as a potential owner of a nominated site.

91. RESPONSE TO WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

Concern was raised at the possible suggestion that Hatfield would be expected to take an additional 1,100 dwellings. With a number of key sites already passed through Development Control and having received permission Members were cautious of responding prior to further investigation.

It was also considered necessary to discuss the Plan with Cllr Mackay.

RESOLVED that the Planning Committee be authorised to respond to the Local Plan on behalf of the Council. The next meeting of the Committee to be 7.30pm on 21st April via Zoom.

92. MEMBERSHIP OF DE HAVILLAND WORKING GROUP

Members confirmed that they wished the Working Group to reflect political proportionality and **RESOLVED** that that a Working Group of Cllrs Brennan, Eames-Petersen, Brisbin, Wiltshire and Brandon meet within the next two weeks to draw up a residents' consultation plan and report back to the next meeting.

(Action: Town Clerk)

93. TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE ON CO-VID 19

Members noted the report of Officers.

Members **RESOLVED** that the Annual Meeting of the Council (Mayor-making) would be postponed and a new date reconsidered at the end of May with the hope that it could be re-scheduled for June.

Members **RESOLVED** that the following changes be made to the Council's Standing Orders;

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- (i) Voting be by means of roll-call to allow for members who phone into meetings so they may hear who has voted;
- (ii) Member access to documents will be via email and post as at present, public access will be via the Council's website and during the meeting the Clerk will screen share when appropriate.
- (iii) The Council will use Zoom for video conferencing which allows Members without technology to phone into meetings. The app can be used from smart phones or tablets or it can be accessed via a http link emailed from the Town Clerk. The public can also contact the Clerk for details on how to join in the meeting. For reasons of privacy and hacking the "chat" facility will be turned off during meetings and only the Clerk will be able to screen share, therefore if a Councillor wishes to include a document on an agenda it should be included in the agenda pack sent out to Councillors.

Members noted that a link to the Town Council's meetings page was now on the Borough Council's website.

It was noted that the Council would have an extra 2 months to complete its year end accounts for 2019/20 and that a meeting would need to be held before 31st August 2020 for approval of the audited accounts.

Councillor Eames-Petersen lost internet connection. Councillor Percival was elected to Chair the meeting.

Members noted the current financial position and refunds made so far. It was noted that the situation regarding furloughing Town Council staff directly employed in its business activities was still unclear, however, Members felt that to avoid redundancies they had no option other than to consider furloughing staff from 1st May. Some Members were not in favour of topping up salaries with the additional 20% especially as the Council did not know if it could afford it.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Head of Operations commence discussions with staff regarding furloughing from 1st May and any decision to top up salaries with the additional 20% be made at the end of April when the Council's financial position was clearer.

Councillor Eames-Petersen resumed chairing the meeting.

The Head of Estates advised Members that the grounds staff were continuing in most of their duties, using distancing and appropriate PPE. Hall Managers were undertaking necessary checks to ensure that our insurance was still valid and our buildings remained compliant.

Members asked that their thanks be passed onto the staff who continued to work during the lockdown.

(Action: Town Clerk, Head of Operations and Head of Estates)

94. DELEGATION TO TOWN CLERK

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be authorised to comment on all Planning applications received during the Co-Vid 19 lockdown, following discussion with at least 3 members of the Planning Committee.

(Action: Town Clerk)

95. REQUEST FOR £500 GRANT

Members noted the request but were generally concerned that the charity was not just Hatfield based and required assurances that the money would only be spent on Hatfield residents. As the intention was that when lockdown was lifted the money could be repaid by the residents, it was suggested that perhaps this should be a loan rather than a grant.

The Town Clerk was requested to find out more information and report back to Members.

(Action: Town Clerk)

96. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Virtual Planning Committee 21st April at 6pm
Virtual Meeting of the Council 29th April at 7.30pm

Closure: 9.15pm

Mayor