

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES
of the Meeting of HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
 held at
The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich
 on
Tuesday 4th June 2024 at 7.33pm

Present:	Councillors Calver, Chable, Davidson, Fay, Fowler, I Henderson, J Henderson, McLeod, Powell, Smith, Todd and Wade
In the Chair:	Councillor P Morrison
Clerk:	Ms Lucy Ballard
Also present:	0 members of the public, 1 member of the press, Revd. Kirsty Emerson and the High Steward

012/24	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Armstrong, Richardson and Saunders
013/24	<u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u> None
014/24	<u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u> None
015/24	<u>MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS</u> Members acknowledged a list of recent engagements attended by Cllr Morrison, as Deputy Mayor and now Mayor, which had been previously circulated. Deputy Mayor Cllr Todd opened the RNLI Spring Fayre on behalf of the Mayor. Former mayor Cllr Fowler reported on the Rotary Tea dance she attended as well as the Beat the Street Awards at the Hub.
016/24	<u>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of Harwich Town Council held on 4 th April 2024 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record. FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Special meeting of Harwich Town Council for the Investiture of the High Steward held on 25 th April 2024 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record. FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Statutory and Mayor Making meeting of Harwich Town Council held on 16 th May 2024 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record.

017/24	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 163/23 – It was reported that, in relation to public questions asked at previous meetings of the council, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the condition of the highway parallel to the Low Road development has been assessed by TDC’s enforcement team and its findings forwarded to the resident concerned. 2. that a notice from ECC in relation to the continued closure of Church Street has been forwarded to the resident concerned. 3. the tufts of grass growing out of the paving along the prom and causing a trip hazard have been reported to TDC and addressed. 4. No action is to be taken regarding concerns over the replacement door at the former Barclays Bank. • MIN 167/23 – It was confirmed that all 8 local schools had requested a printed copy of the D-Day 80 Proclamation, at a cost of £57.48 and these had been delivered earlier today.
018/24	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 108/23 – It was confirmed that the missing road sign in Lee Road, as reported by a resident at the Full Council meeting in November, had been replaced. • MIN 152/23 – Members acknowledged a response from National Highways following a letter regarding improvements to the A120. Cllr I Henderson felt this response was positive and suggested the council thanks National Highways and asks for a likely commencement date for the works and confirmation of whether they have applied for the Government funding to facilitate the dualling of the A120, as our main goal for the future. Cllr Calver said we should congratulate Cllr Henderson on forcing the publication of the report that’s highlighted these issues. <p>RESOLVED: To write back to Steve Thulborn at National Highways.</p>
019/24	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT</u></p> <p>Members received the year end internal audit report. The clerk confirmed that there were no recommendations made and therefore no plan of action was required. Cllr Chable extended his thanks to the clerk and her team for all their work in keeping the council compliant.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To accept the Audit Report and agree that no further action is required.</p> <p>Members also reviewed the effectiveness of Internal Audit. The Clerk confirmed that the auditor satisfied the requirements to be competent and independent and found that an interim and year-end audit was sufficient. Cllr Todd applauded the clerk for the quality of documentation provided for the audit.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED: That the current provisions were satisfactory and effective.</p>
020/24	<p><u>EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL</u></p> <p>Members considered the findings of the review of the Council’s system of internal control, which was carried out at a previous meeting (MIN F92/23).</p>

	<p>RESOLVED: To agree with the findings that there are sufficient controls in place to effectively mitigate the risk to the Council's finances and that no immediate changes were required.</p> <p>It was FURTHER RESOLVED: to appoint Cllrs Chable, Saunders, McLeod and Wade to conduct a review of the system of internal control in 2024/25.</p>
021/24	<p><u>REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS</u></p> <p>The clerk referred to the risk register maintained for 2023/24 and members reviewed the arrangements which are in place to identify and mitigate the risks associated with certain decisions which had been considered or taken over the previous financial year. Members agreed that discussing the risks and giving full consideration of the implications of any proposal as they arise is the most effective method of addressing them and that this is supported by a written document, which can be referred back to. The Clerk confirmed that the appointed clerk for each committee would raise potential risks at the time the agenda is formulated as an additional measure. The clerks will continue to maintain the risk register which accompanies other risk assessments that the council undertakes.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the findings of the review are that the arrangements are effective in mitigating against the risks associated with the finances and reputation of the council.</p> <p>Members also considered a formal risk Management Policy to support the process and FURTHER RESOLVED: to adopt the policy for Harwich Town Council.</p>
022/24	<p><u>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)</u> <u>SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT</u></p> <p>Members discussed the assertions in Section 1 of the 2023/24 AGAR and the requirements needed to provide a 'yes' response. The Clerk referred to assertion 2 (internal control measures) which had been satisfied under MIN 020/24 and also assertion 5 (Risks), which had been satisfied under MIN 021/24.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the AGAR for 2023/24.</p>
023/23	<p><u>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)</u> <u>SECTION 2 - ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the final Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 in conjunction with the Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the accounts for year ending March 2024 and to approve the Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the AGAR.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED: To set the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights as 7th June to 18th July 2024.</p>
024/24	<p><u>STANDING ORDERS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed current Standing Orders. The clerk confirmed there were no amendments to the existing model, which had been amended last year to remove any gender-specific references.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve Standing Orders for use during the 2024/25 year.</p>
025/24	<p><u>SIGNATORIES AND BANK MANDATE</u></p>

	<p>RESOLVED: To retain existing signatories as follows: Cllr P Morrison (Chairman), Cllrs Fowler, I Henderson and Powell (Member). The Clerk is to remain a signatory for items up to £500 only (excluding salaries). The signatory basis for authorisation is any two signatories. Signatories are not to authorise any payment for either themselves or another member they have a close relationship with. Appointed signatories are in force for the remainder of this council (until 2027).</p>
026/24	<p><u>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS</u> RESOLVED: To appoint Cllrs Smith and Chable as independent members to periodically review the bank reconciliation in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2. The Clerk mentioned that Cllr Smith did a sterling job in fulfilling this role during the previous four financial years.</p>
027/24	<p><u>DATA PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENT</u> Members reviewed the risks associated with the processing of personal data within the council and the measures taken or required to mitigate these risks. RESOLVED: that the risks were being properly identified and managed.</p>
028/24	<p><u>DISPOSAL OF GUILDHALL ASSETS</u> Members were asked to consider a recommendation from the FGP Committee regarding the disposal of the following assets: Chiffonier, Bureau and swivel chair in Gaol and 2x Alderman's chairs in Parlour. Cllr Calver mentioned that items have been identified which are surplus to requirements. They no longer serve any practical purpose and the archivists have confirmed that they are of no historical significance. The Harwich Museum would be interested in the Bureau and swivel chair but didn't have enough room to house the other items. Cllr McLeod asked if we could have the chairs valued and it was confirmed that valuations had been carried out. Cllr I Henderson suggested we see if anyone wishes to take them first before discarding them. RESOLVED: to gift the bureau and swivel chair to the Harwich Museum. FURTHER RESOLVED: Put the Chiffonier up for auction. FURTHER RESOLVED: To dispose of the Alderman's chairs in an appropriate manner (by first offering them to any interested party), but to remove the plaques and donate these to the Harwich Museum.</p>
029/24	<p><u>DLUHC VISIT</u> Members considered an offer of a visit from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which is an initiative intended to gather information and build knowledge of best practice in the sector from those who know it best. The clerk confirmed that this would be led by the council and would therefore require commitment from members. RESOLVED: To take up the offer, appointing Cllrs Fowler and I Henderson to represent the council, but ask if a date can be deferred until after the General Election.</p>
030/24	<p><u>BRIEF REPORTS BY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES BY THE COUNCIL</u> • Cllr Powell attended a meeting of Harwich International Port where he brought up the issue of the increasing number of parked lorries around the port</p>

	<p>and asked if the port could do anything about it, which they agreed to investigate. The port offers 6 hours free parking on site during certain hours.</p> <p>Cllr Morrison also mentioned that throughput is down on the previous year, however the Rotterdam route is running well operationally. The Britannica and Hollandica ferries, which service the Hook route have undergone major refurbishment, with 165,000 vehicles using the route. They are investing in electric vehicles and have installed charger points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr J Henderson reported that Teen talk activity is picking up nicely. Some trustees had stepped down due to retirement but they've since recruited two more so it's looking very positive. • Cllr McLeod attended a meeting of TDALC where they continue to discuss the pylons project and re-routing of lorries through villages as a result of works on the A120.
031/24	<p><u>COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES</u></p> <p>Members received the Minutes of the following meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraordinary F&GP Committee – 12th April 2024 • Extraordinary F&GP Committee – 19th April 2024 • Extraordinary Allotments Committee – 7th May 2024
032/24	<p><u>ACCOUNTS</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: To accept the financial report and to approve accounts for payment as per the schedule (circulated separately).</p>
033/24	<p><u>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN THE POST OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted receipt of latest report(s) issued by PCSO Sue Groves, <i>for information</i>. • Members acknowledged an update from the Harwich Festival that they'd had the Year 5 Arts Conference for 290 local children, representing 7 primary schools locally. Cllr I Henderson attended and said it was a fantastic day with a vast array of activities including playing with a rock band, book illustration, song writing, dance and drama. • Cllr J Henderson reported on the success of the skatepark festival. The local Pedal Power team donated 60 safety helmets which were handed out at the event. She thanked those members who attended, staff at Dovercourt Lifestyles who assisted with an incident, and the clerk and Estate Supervisor for their involvement.
034/24	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The next meeting of Harwich Town Council will be held on Wednesday 17th July 2024 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich at 7.00pm, or at the rise of the Town Planning Committee, whichever is the later.</p>

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.51pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE