



Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Full Council Meeting

24th March 2020

6:30pm via Zoom

(due to COVID-19 it was not possible for Council to meet in person – it is understood that Government plans to legislate to enable councils to officially meet via remote technology)

Present: Cllrs Duncan Jack (Mayor), Tom Astell (Deputy Mayor), Peter Astell, David Boynton, Ian Gow, Denis Healy, Chloe Hopkins, David Horsley, Linda Johnson, Margaret Pinder, David Tucker, Clare Wildey and Ann Willis.

In Attendance: Helen Watson (Town Clerk) and Matthew Snowden (Deputy Town Clerk)

Prior to the formal start of the meeting the Mayor welcomed Cllr D. Tucker to his first Council meeting following the by-election in St Mary's West.

Public Forum – due to COVID-19 this could not take place.

162/19: To receive apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

163/19: Declarations of Interest

162.1: To record declarations of interest by any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below. Members declaring interests should identify the agenda item and type of interest being declared.

Cllr M. Pinder declared a pecuniary interest in item 5.a.iv regarding discussions relating to the Beverley Puppet Festival, as she works as their Event Coordinator for which she receives payment.

162.2: To note dispensations given to any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below.

There were no dispensations.

164/19: To confirm and sign the minutes of Full Council held on Monday 23rd February 2020.

Proposed: Cllr I. Gow

Seconded: Cllr D. Healy

Resolved: *The Minutes of this meeting are approved and signed as a true and correct record.*

165/19: To approve and sign the following minutes

165.1: Planning, Property and Services Committee held on 18th February 2020 (previously approved and signed at the Planning, Property and Services Committee held on 10th March 2020)

Proposed: Cllr P. Astell

Seconded: Cllr C. Wildey

Resolved: *The Minutes of this Meeting are noted.*

165.2: Planning, Property and Services Committee held on 10th March 2020.

Proposed: Cllr P. Astell

Seconded: Cllr C. Wildey

Resolved: *The Minutes of this meeting are approved and signed as a true and correct record.*

165.3: Grants Committee held on 16th March 2020.

Resolved: *This meeting was inquorate.*

166/19: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Precautions

166.1: Council Meetings, Duties and Services

166.1.a: Delegation of Duties

The following motion was originally tabled following advice from NALC, SLCC and ERNLLCA:

“To enable Beverley Town Council to comply with National Government advice and guidance during the COVID-19 crisis, and to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all Councillors, Officers, Volunteers and members of the public, all committee meetings and working groups be suspended and the Council offices be closed to the public until this advice changes.

In order that essential business of the Town Council can still be carried out the powers of committees and working groups, along with powers to award contracts, shall be delegated to Officers. Upon the first meeting of Full Council when health and safety advice and guidance from Government allows for such a gathering, these powers will revert to the committee and working group structure.

Government have indicated that they intend to legislate in order to allow 'remote meetings' i.e. meetings that do not require the physical attendance of participants to take place. Such legislation could mean that committee meetings could take place. However, this is not guaranteed and may not be practical, as some Councillors and Officers might not have access to the required technology. In the absence of such legislation and / or technology, a back stop is required in order for business to be transacted. Officers will consult with the Mayor and Chairs of relevant committees where appropriate and possible.

The intention is not to exclude the public or circumvent the democratic process, but simply to ensure that the business of the Council is not impeded during the current restrictions.”

Councillors discussed the above motion which had been put forward by Officers following advice from NALC, SLCC and ERNLLCA. Councillors felt that it was their duty as democratically elected representatives to maintain their decision-making and community leadership responsibilities, especially during this difficult and unprecedented time, whilst still working closely with Council Officers.

Councillor D. Healy proposed an alternative resolution.

Proposed: Cllr D. Healy

Seconded: Cllr M. Pinder

Resolved:

This Council resolves that during the COVID-19 outbreak, all full Council meetings and decision-making committee meetings continue to be held where possible remotely using virtual meeting technology platforms such as Zoom or similar.

In so doing, this council is following the example of our parent body, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, in ensuring that decision making meetings remain with Councillors throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Government has indicated that they intend to legislate in order to allow such remote meetings to take place.

The passage of this legislation is imminent, and this Council resolves to embrace that technology to ensure that powers remain with elected representatives and not delegated to officers.

166.1.b: Meetings and Projects

Full Council

Proposed: Cllr D. Jack

Seconded: Cllr D. Healy

Resolved: *This Council resolves that meetings of Full Council will continue to take place as scheduled using Zoom to enable them to be carried out remotely where possible.*

Committee and Working Group Meetings

Proposed: Cllr D. Jack

Seconded: Cllr D. Healy

Resolved: *This Council resolves that Council Committees will take place as scheduled using Zoom to enable them to be carried out remotely where possible. However, working groups, such as Christmas Lights and Beverley in Bloom, will be suspended until Government relaxes self-isolation rules and enable such groups to meet again.*

Annual Town Meeting

Proposed: Cllr D. Jack

Seconded: Cllr D. Healy

Resolved: *The Annual Town Meeting be postponed until such a time that it is able to meet (following direction from Government).*

Mayor Making and Honorary Freeman

Proposed: Cllr D. Jack

Seconded: Cllr D. Healy

Resolved: *This Council resolves that the annual Mayor Making meeting on 11th May 2020 be held remotely with a vote taken to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2020/21 Municipal Year. In addition, the Honorary Freeman/women the Council has already resolved to honour will be informed of their selection by letter, with an event incorporating both the bestowing of these titles and the ceremonial aspects of Mayor Making being held once it is safe to do so.*

Hanging Baskets Scheme

Proposed: Cllr D. Jack

Seconded: Cllr P. Astell

Resolved: *Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown, and if it is operationally possible, the Town Council to cover costs to enable the town to look its best at this difficult time for both residents and businesses. This matter will be discussed further by the Planning, Property and Services Committee on Tuesday 31st March 2020. It was also agreed that this would all be reliant on Plantscape being able to carry out the installations and ongoing watering given the Covid-19 situation and related health and safety matters.*

Potential purchase of the former Post Office Building

Proposed: Cllr D. Boynton **Seconded:** Cllr D, Jack

Resolved (1): *Whilst acknowledging that other suitable buildings may become available in the future, this Council resolves that it looks further into the possibility of purchasing this property and that a Town Council working group liaise with the agents to ascertain what is happening with the sale during the current lockdown. The working group will consist of Cllrs D. Boynton (Lib Dem), M. Pinder (Lab) and D. Jack (Ind) and discuss (remotely) how best to move forward with potential surveys, etc. and report back to Full Council or an appropriate committee (whichever is the most suitable given limitations connected to COVID-19).*

Proposed: Cllr P Astell **Seconded:** Cllr M. Pinder

Resolved (2): *That up to £5,000 be allocated to cover related costs of structural survey work, specialist advice, etc. regarding this process.*

A Recorded Vote was requested by Cllr D. Healy

For: Cllrs P. Astell, T. Astell, D. Boynton, I. Gow, D. Healy, C. Hopkins, D. Horsley, D. Jack, L. Johnson, M. Pinder, D. Tucker, C. Wildey and A. Willis.

Against: None

Abstentions: None

Community Support in relation to COVID-19

Proposed: Cllr M. Pinder **Seconded:** Cllr C. Wildey

Resolved: *This Council unanimously resolves to allocate £5,000 to the East Yorkshire Food Bank to support it through this unprecedented time, when it will be providing a food parcel service delivered to homes over the coming four months (£2,500 transport/mileage costs, £1,500 packaging that is will not carry COVID-19 and £1,000 additional administrative costs as reported by Cllr P. Astell). In addition, the Town Clerk will produce an official, non-partisan press release promoting this support, which at the request of Councillors will encourage the residents of Beverley and beyond to give financial donations to the Food Bank with the hope of matching the allocated sum.*

166.1.c: Staffing

It was reported that staff were working from home where possible and that new laptops are in the process of being purchased to enable enhanced remote working.

Proposed: Cllr C. Hopkins **Seconded:** Cllr P. Astell

Resolved: *That a thanks to Council Officers be recorded in these minutes, for their hard work at a difficult time and for which Councillors are very grateful.*

166.1.d: Events

It was reported that the Mayor's Volunteer Tea, V.E. Day 75th Anniversary and related church service of thanksgiving, and the Great Get Together have already been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Proposed: Cllr T. Astell

Seconded: Cllr C. Hopkins

Resolved (1): *That the Beverley Pride event scheduled for the 1st August 2020 postponed until 2021 and that the Beverley Food Festival 2020 be discussed at the June 2020 meeting of Full Council when it is hoped national advice regarding public gatherings may be available.*

Proposed: Cllr D. Jack

Seconded: Cllr I. Gow

Resolved (2): *That financial support for the Beverley Puppet Festival be considered at the next meeting of Full Council on Monday 6th April 2020.*

166.1.e: Scheme of Delegation and Grants Process

Proposed: Cllr P. Astell

Seconded: Cllr A. Willis

Resolved: *For Officers to update the Scheme of Delegation and Grants process and bring back to a future meeting of the Policy Committee.*

166.1.f: Town Council Website

Proposed: Cllr L. Johnson

Seconded: Cllr M. Pinder

Resolved: *This Council resolves that following responses from five web development companies, the commission for a new Beverley Town Council website be allocated to Aubergine and for the Town Clerk to proceed with this as soon as possible.*

166.1.g: Finances

Councillors asked why so much had been spent on postage in March 2020. The Town Clerk explained that in several instalments, bundles of stamps had been purchased as the office had run out and the cost of stamps was due to rise, so a stock had been purchased before this. In addition, more than usual had been purchased in preparation for allotment rents and communications regarding the increased number of events the Town Council had planned for the coming year. The purchases had been made the COVID-19 lockdown came into force, resulting in the cancellation of these events, which could not have been predicted at the time. The Town Clerk also explained that the Town Council could consider the virement of the 2020/21 allocated finances for postage to another budget line and then reduce the postage budget line considerably in 2021/22.

Proposed: Cllr D. Jack

Seconded: Cllr P. Astell

Resolved: *That the March 2020 payments as tabled are approved.*

The meeting finished at 8:26pm

Signed: RWD Jack

Date: 06/04/20

