

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL Minutes

of the Meeting of Sawbridgeworth Town Council held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 8.30 pm on **Monday 05 January 2015**.

Those present

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cllr Angela Alder | |
| Cllr Eric Buckmaster – Town Mayor | Cllr Peter Mitchell |
| Cllr Ruth Buckmaster | Cllr Will Mortimer |
| Cllr Pat Coysten | Cllr Tom Reeks |
| Cllr Derek Filler | Cllr Spencer Richards |
| Cllr Barry Hodges | Cllr Andrew Wincott |

In attendance:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| County Cllr Roger Beeching | 1 Member of the Public |
| Michael Jarvis – H&E Observer | |
| R Bowran - Town Clerk | Mrs J Kenny – Town Projects Manager |

Welcome by the Mayor, prayers were read by Cllr Tom Reeks

14/115 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Cllr Joyce Vincent - Holiday.

14/116 PUBLIC FORUM

To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Town Council.
There were none.

14/117 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members
There were none

14/118 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 24 November 2014 (M07) [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Wincott*]

To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.

Minute 14/101. Cllr Beeching advised that in response to Mr Norman Manion's complaints about parking outside his house in Millfields, he was investigating the installation of bollards to prevent parking on the footway.

14/119 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and Noted: the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on:

- 08 December 2014 (P13)

14/120 FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Received and Noted: the Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee Meeting held on:

- 08 December 2014 (F03)

14/121 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

The mayor reported:

- I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a happy New year. Our last meeting was 6 weeks ago and a lot has happened since then. Among which the Christmas Lights Festival, Lights of Love, WW1 memorial football match, and my charity Christmas party, all of which were a spectacular success. Congratulations to Joanne and Cllr Filler for the Christmas lights, Gary Hansen for the football match, and my wife and friends for help with the party. We'll hear further reports on the Lights and Football match. The party raised another £1,000, approximately for Youth Create.
- On 01 January I attended a 65th anniversary of the laying of the Foundation Zone of the Memorial Hall, along with Cllr Beeching.
- We are making good progress with German Town Twinning. A date is set for weekend of 16th to 18th October. My hope is that this will continue as a full civic partnership similar to the one we have with Bry-sur-Marne.
- Finally you will have heard that Gill Abbott remains on sick leave. I'm sure you will all join me in wishing her well, and a speedy recovery.

The mayor reported correspondence:

- Thanks from the Rotary Club for the council's help in fetching and erecting their Christmas tree
- Thanks from the Citizen's Advice Service for the accommodation and service given by the council.

14/122 REPRESENTATIVES & CHAMPIONS REPORTS

To receive representatives reports from:

- **County Councillor Roger Beeching** reported:
 - That he had little to report from the Christmas period.
- **District Councillor Eric Buckmaster** reported:
 - I can now confirm that I intend to stand as a Conservative in the elections in May. As such I have now joined the Conservative Group on EHDC. I have informed the remaining Independent Group and the head of Democratic Services. This may affect the committees I may sit on but we are close to the end of term so I anticipate little if any change.
 - In anticipation of the elections many district councillors will undertake mentor training during January with a view to buddying or helping newly elected members adjust to their roles.
 - Elections 2015. A reminder that In addition to our own Farmers Market open events there will be a District and Town public information evening here in the chamber on Wednesday 25th February. Officers from EHDC and the Town Clerk will explain the process for candidate nominations and field any questions.

- **District Councillor Will Mortimer** had nothing to report,
 - but said he was attending Scrutiny Committees in January and February and would report back.
- **Herts Police** were not present.
- **Rivers Heritage Site and Orchard Cllr E Buckmaster** reported:
 - Instead of a maintenance day yesterday we had an informal get together to discuss future events.
 - The Wassail will take place at the Orchard on Saturday 10th of January. We'll be burning the seasons dead wood and the remains of the WW1 trench. There will be group singing as well some folk music performers.
- **Duckling Centre. Cllr Mitchell** reported:
 - The centre was now in a consortium with Windhill School, who act as the managing agent.
 - The statistics for registered new-borns in Much Hadham is very low and this is being chased up with Much Hadham parish council.
- **Memorial Hall. Cllr Wincott** reported:
 - 65th Anniversary celebrations to be held on 01 January
 - Acknowledgement of the contribution being made to the event by John Rider and David and Hazel Meads

14/123 **CLERK'S REPORT**

Received and noted the Clerks Report:

- Staff Arrangements: Gill Abbott continues to be absent from work and is currently in hospital.
- Farmer's Market: The December Christmas market was attended by an estimated 650 visitors. Carols were sung. We provided a platform for the Library to host their petition against closure.
- Bell Street Seating: A new seat has been installed at the exit from the Bell Street car park. It has been funded jointly By Cllr Beeching's Locality Budget and the town council. The bench is now clearly marked as the property of the town council and we will maintain it.
- WWI Commemorative Football match: We supported Rev Gary Hansen who organized the football match at Crofters. Over £600 was raised as a contribution to the fund for the memorial to the Hertfordshire Regiment to be erected in 2017 at St Julien in Belgium.
- Budget Summary: The Budget is the subject of a separate agenda item, however the key points proposed are:
 - No increase in Precept.
 - Subsidy for car parking to be continued.
 - Sawbobus operation to be continued on present basis.
 - Reserves to be increased to meet acceptable levels.
 - Band D equivalent decreased by 1.5%
 - National pay award of 2.2% but staff costs kept down to an increase of 1.6%.

BUDGET 2015-16 & DETERMINATION OF PRECEPT

The mayor reported

- It is my pleasure to present the Sawbridgeworth Town Council budget for 2015/16 as recommended by the Finance and Policy committee.
- As you will have read in your papers the recommendation is for there to be zero increase in precept for the coming fiscal year. Taking in to account the slightly higher tax base it will result in a reduction in the Band D equivalent.
- We are in the happy position of being in receipt of approximately £60,000 in New Homes bonus plus additional grants and sponsorship which will enable us to continue providing key services such as Sawbobus, community transport and first hour free parking. It will also enable us to increase our reserves to just over £96,000. The current level of new homes bonus will taper off in subsequent years so we will continue to review our service provision but for this year we recommend that we do not de-commit from our current operations.
- It is also my pleasure to confirm that we will continue to support community organisations and Associations with both direct funding and discretionary grants as we have in previous years. These are listed on page 8. The discretionary grant will be £4,000 in pots of up to £500.
- A sum has been included for the maintenance of the town conveniences for which the Town Council will be responsible for cleaning and maintenance following expected refurbishment by East Herts in late spring.
- Our Projects manager will continue to develop and enhance the Christmas Lights event, Fun on the Field, and Summer Proms concert.
- The Farmers Market is not projected to be a significant net cost to the council in 2015/16. However it is a large user of resource. The license is shortly due for renewal and visitor numbers have reduced somewhat in the last year. Council has already expressed a desire to review and consult on the format. Once this has been undertaken decisions can be taken as to its future.

Resolved 1: To accept the recommendation of the Finance & Policy Committee and to adopt the Budget for 2015/16
[prop Cllr Alder: secd Cllr R Buckmaster]

Resolved 2: To accept the recommendation of the Finance & Policy Committee and to set a precept of £223,746 for 2015/16 and instruct the principal authority accordingly.
[prop Cllr Alder: secd Cllr Hodges]

CHRISTMAS EVENT

The Town Projects Manager reported to Members on the Christmas Event which took place on Friday 28 November.

Attendance was up again on previous years with a police estimate of around 4,000 attendees.

The new configuration was deemed to have worked and there was a better flow of people. The opening of the cricket club for stalls also worked. Santa's Grotto in the council chamber was a successful innovation. The new stage was a great success as was the attendance of Martin and Su from Heart Radio. Entertainment was first class.

Police used emergency powers to close Bell Street in the interests of public safety and will do the same again next year if the situation warrants it.

A post-event review will take place early in the new year to receive feedback and comments from those involved.

The mayor asked that thanks to the Town Projects Manager and the Town Clerk be recorded.

14/126 TOWN PROJECTS

Clerk reported that a meeting had taken place with officers of EHDC on 10 December to discuss the way that the projects for the Conveniences and for Town Green could be progressed. A further review has been arranged for 27 January, this time in site.

14/127 DEPOSIT AND CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

Received a copy of a **PETITION** to Herts County Council on 15 December 2014 from some residents of The Orchards on the subject of parking in The Orchards and New Street.

County Councillor Roger Beeching responded:

- The petition had been signed by about 60 people despite Cllr Beeching having consulted with the residents and having been working on the issues raised for about the last six months.
- Phase 2 HLB funding for 2015/216 has been earmarked for an investigation and formal consultation.
- The Highways Committee have already visited the site and appraised themselves of the situation
- Under consideration are the imposition of yellow lines, bollards and parking restrictions.
- He further noted that a Private members Bill was being presented to Parliament on 09 January concerning legislation relating to parking on pavements.

14/128 FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

14/129 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment

Meeting was closed at 21:10