

Minutes of a meeting of CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square commencing at 18.45 on Monday 24 June 2024.

PRESENT

Cllrs. A. Samuel (Mayor), M. Best, N. Draycott, K. Head, D. Livesley, J. Nathan, C. Rawe, A. Stuart and S. Woodland.

In attendance: Town Clerk K. Sheehan, Deputy Clerk G. Hughes and four members of the public.

017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

24/25

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Ashton, Bond and Morris (all personal).

A request from Cllr. Bond for a six month leave of absence was AGREED.

018 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

24/25

No declarations of interests were made.

019 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2024

24/25

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2024 were AGREED as a true and accurate record.

020 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

24/25

No one wished to speak.

021 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

24/25

a. Somerset Councillors

Cllr. Best reported that:

- A single-issue Full Council meeting had been held to agree the planned battery site in Bridgwater, which would be supported by a government grant.
- The pre-election 'purdah' period was now being observed.

b. Local Community Network (LCN) representative

Cllr. Head reported that the recent Annual Meeting of the Crewkerne and Ilminster LCN had not been quorate, so decisions on electing the LCN Chair and Vice Chair were deferred to a later meeting. Some progress updates had been received. She highlighted that any councillor was welcome to attend these meetings.

c. Crewkerne Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)

A written update was noted. It was noted that there had been recent incidences of squirry cream being sprayed on benches at Severalls, and this had been reported to the Police.

022 **CLERK'S PROGRESS REPORT**

24/25

The Town Clerk reported that:

- That the tennis courts access gate was now working again and the court booking system was now live.
- The new hearing support system was working well but had necessitated a change in software, which meant that meetings would be recorded and uploaded rather than streamed.

023 **FINANCE**

24/25

a. To approve the accounts for payment for June 2024 as listed

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Head had verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Accounts for payment for 24 June 2024 in the sum of £82,990.22 were APPROVED.

b. To report the bank reconciliation for May 2024 has been completed

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Head had verified the bank reconciliation for May 2024. It was noted that cash in hand as of 31 May 2024 was £899,146.88.

c. To note that the monthly accounts for the War Memorial Commemoration Trust have been checked

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Head had verified the Trust accounts and that cash in hand as of 31 May 2024 was £3,597.12.

d. To receive and approve the second report of the Internal Auditor and note no matters of concern raised

The report of the Internal Auditor was APPROVED. The Mayor extended thanks to the Council Officers for their efforts in the audit process, achieving a completely clear internal audit.

e. To formally approve the internally audited accounts for 2023/24

The accounts for the 2023/24 financial year were APPROVED.

f. To approve the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2024:

i. Section 1: To approve the Annual Governance Statements

The Annual Governance Statements were APPROVED.

ii. Section 2: To approve the Accounting Statements

The Accounting Statements were APPROVED.

iii. To authorise the signing of the Annual Return

The Annual Return was AGREED for signature by the Mayor.

iv. To note that the period of public inspection rights will commence on 25 June and finish on 5 August 2024

The period of public inspection rights was noted. Notifications would be placed on the public noticeboards and website.

g. To consider a revised grant application from Somerset Farmers' Market

Following discussion, a grant award of £500 was AGREED.

024 COUNCILLOR MOTION: IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN TOWN CENTRE PREMISES

24/25 To receive and consider a motion from Councillor Woodland

A motion to raise awareness and highlight opportunities for improving accessibility to town centre premises was introduced by Cllr. Woodland. The motion proposed:

- Liaising with local businesses to promote awareness and best practice
- Collaboration with disability advocacy groups and support joint initiatives
- Support the creation of an accessible premises checklist
- Include representations from residents with disabilities when town centre improvements are proposed.

Councillors discussed the motion, noting that the local Disability Forum (which had since disbanded) had previously been very proactive in these areas. An accreditation scheme had been established, and Councillors felt that it could be reintroduced, working with the local business group. It was noted that there would be constraints imposed by the high number of listed buildings and conservation area. It was suggested that this could also be reflected in the updated Council Action Plan.

The motion was AGREED, and Cllr. Best agreed to raise this with the business group at the next meeting.

025 COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-27

24/25 To confirm the updated Council Action Plan

The updated Action Plan was reviewed, with progress highlighted at the end of the first year. The updated plan and suggested inclusions were AGREED, alongside a request that the plan be reviewed three times a year.

026 COUNCIL SURGERIES

24/25 To consider current arrangements and future dates of surgeries

Following discussion, it was AGREED to move future surgeries to the fourth Saturday in the month to coincide with the Farmers' Market, with effect from September 2024. A 'Meet your councillors' stall would be held at the Family Fun Day on 27 July, and no surgery would be held in August.

027 CEMETERY LODGE

24/25 To consider quotations for repointing and guttering works

This item was deferred to the July Amenities Committee meeting.

028 SOMERSET COUNCIL CHAIR'S AWARDS

24/25

Councillors were asked to suggest nominees to the Town Clerk by Thursday 27th June for submission to Somerset Council.

029 **CHRISTMAS EVENT ARRANGEMENTS**

24/25 To consider quotations for the installation of the Christmas lights

It was AGREED to award the contract for the installation, monitoring and removal of the Christmas lights to Relay Electrical Services for £3,114 + VAT.

030 **GEORGE REYNOLDS CENTRE (GRC)**

24/25 a. To consider quotations for replacement fire escape door and frame

It was AGREED to award the contract for the replacement door, frame and integrated window to the Windowman for £4,110 + VAT.

b. To receive a verbal update from the GRC management working group

Cllr. Best reported that the group had met again and a prospective board of directors had reviewed draft articles of association for the management company. An appointment with a solicitor had been made, following which a business plan and formal proposal would come to Council.

031 **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES AND APPROVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN:**

24/25

- a. Planning and Highways Committee 13 May 2024
- b. Policy and Resources Committee 12 February 2024
- c. Joint Burial Committee 9 April 2024
- d. Road Markings and Parking Working Group 11 March 2024
- e. Reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies.

All minutes above were duly noted and any recommendations contained therein AGREED. No reports from outside bodies were received.

032 **MATTERS OF REPORT**

24/25

Councillors raised the following points:

- Cllr. Best reported that the next stage of the South Street roadworks would likely close Kithill completely, but contractors would keep it open if at all possible. He agreed to raise queries about diversion signage at the next meeting with Somerset Council and Wales and West Utilities.
- The Town Clerk clarified that an item relating to a requested letter of support for the Community Kitchen's proposal to acquire town centre premises would be on an agenda post-election.
- Cllr. Woodland noted that the hanging baskets and planters were looking particularly good; thanks were extended to Crewkerne in Bloom.
- Building materials left in Rose Lane had been removed; no repairs to the wall had been made yet.
- The heras fencing outside 2 Church Path remained in place; Cllr. Head requested a letter be sent asking for it to be removed.
- An overflowing bin on Cossins Lane had been reported to Somerset Council.
- The British Legion were planning a Bat Walk at Bincombe Beeches in August, further details would follow.



033 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

24/25

Monday 29 July 2024, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall.

Signed:

Dated:

TC24June2024