

Minutes of a meeting of CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square commencing at 18.45 on Monday 30 September 2024.

PRESENT

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

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

051 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

24/25

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Ashton and Nathan (both personal).

052 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

24/25

Cllr. Head declared an interest in the agenda item relating to Crewkerne in Bloom's request to locate a planter outside Town Hall by virtue of her position as Chair of Crewkerne in Bloom.

053 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29 JULY 2024

24/25

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2024 were AGREED as a true and accurate record.

054 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

24/25

Representatives from Awe & Wonder, a local free-to-access preschool art group, gave a short presentation on the first year of the Awe & Wonder project in Crewkerne. Councillors heard that over 100 families were taking part in the fortnightly activities, and 130 local children had accessed the creative 'Under the Sea' day in the summer holidays. The artwork had been exhibited by the Museum which had resulted in increased footfall. Councillors were thanked for their valued support and the group hoped to apply again to the Town Council for grant support to continue the project in 2025.

Representatives from Crewkerne in Bloom spoke in support of their request to locate a tiered planter at the front of the Town Hall, which was due to be considered later in the meeting.

055 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

24/25

a. Somerset Councillors

Cllr. Best reported that:

- Somerset Council was still predominantly dealing with its redundancy programme, reducing staff by approximately 1200. Once this stage was concluded, roles would be defined and reallocated where appropriate.
- Shortages of planning officers in Area South was proving to be a real issue, with support being required from officers from other areas.

b. Local Community Network (LCN) representative

None.

c. Crewkerne Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)

A written update was noted.

056 **CLERK'S PROGRESS REPORT**

24/25

The Town Clerk reported that:

- A lilac tree in the churchyard had come down over the weekend and contractors had visited site to assess the options for the tree.
- The closing date for electors of the parish to call a by-election for the vacant position on the Town Council was 4th October.
- The community grant applications scheme deadline was also 4th October.

057 **FINANCE**

24/25

a. To approve the accounts for payment for August and September 2024 as listed

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Best had verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Accounts for payment for 31st August 2024 in the sum of £64,225.95 and for 30th September 2024 in the sum of £37,011.76 were APPROVED.

b. To report the bank reconciliations for July 2024 and August 2024 have been completed

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Best had verified the bank reconciliation for July 2024. It was noted that cash in hand as of 31st July 2024 was £810,619.67, and cash in hand as of 31st August 2024 was £778,846.74.

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

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Best had verified the Trust accounts and that cash in hand as of 31st July 2024 was £4,883.70 and as of 31st August 2024 was £5,474.58.

d. To note the conclusion of the External Audit for 2023/24 with no issues raised.

It was noted that the External Audit for 2023/24 had been concluded with no issues raised. Councillors expressed thanks to the Town Clerk and Finance Officer for their efforts.

Cllr. Head left the room for the following agenda item.

058 **MARKET SQUARE PLANTER**

24/25

To consider a request from Crewkerne in Bloom to locate a tiered planter on the land in front of Town Hall

A request to replace the bicycle currently used as a planter with a tiered planter was AGREED, noting that it would be wholly funded by Crewkerne in Bloom and moved in advance of events such as the Charter Fair, and for the market and Christmas events if necessary.

Cllr. Head rejoined the meeting following the conclusion of this agenda item.

059 **LUCOMBE OAK AREA**

24/25

To consider quotations for a light installation around the Lucombe Oak

Quotations for both temporary and permanent lighting installations were considered. Councillors expressed a preference for the lights to be located on the ground on a permanent basis, with the 150-watt option felt to be the more effective of the two options. It was AGREED that, providing the quote for the 150-watt installation could be altered to a ground installation, the contract be awarded to Relay Electrical Services for £4,614.95, to be funded predominantly from the underspend on the town centre lights installation and the remainder from the Christmas lights earmarked reserve.

060 **WELCOME TO CREWKERNE SIGNAGE**

24/25 **To consider requests for improvements to town signage**

An approach from the business group to clear verges around 'Crewkerne' entry signs and replace with larger, more detailed signs, was considered. It was AGREED that initially the Town Council team would clear the verges and clean these signs. Councillors noted that not all the verges were wide enough to accommodate the suggested size of signs, but Cllr. Head agreed to continue to liaise with the business group to determine which could potentially accommodate new signs within the size guidelines provided by Somerset Council.

061 **TOWN CRIER**

24/25 **To note that the Town Crier has resumed duties on an informal basis and to agree payment of membership of the Town Criers Guild**

It was noted that the Town Crier was attending ad hoc events and had requested payment of Guild membership (£50) in place of an honorarium to provide him with public liability insurance. This was AGREED, with the appointment and renewal in future years delegated to the Town Clerk to review with the Town Crier on an annual basis.

062 **DEFIBRILLATORS**

24/25 **To receive an update on the status of the town's defibrillators**

Cllr. Head provided a verbal update on the status of the town's defibrillators, noting that the previously out of order unit in the George Shopping Centre was now operational again, having been relocated to the wall of McKinleys Estate Agents. The League of Friends of Crewkerne Hospital had funded a new unit which had arrived and would be installed on the wall of West One Surgery in due course. There are nine external defibrillator units in the town, all monitored by the owner of Footprintz, except the GRC unit, which is monitored by Crewkerne Rangers Football Club. Businesses and organisations had started to donate towards an earmarked fund held by the Town Council to cover the cost of consumables required by each unit.

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

24/25

- a. Planning and Highways Committee 2 September 2024.
- b. Amenities Committee 13 May 2024.
- c. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 25 June 2024.
- d. Reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies.

All minutes above were duly noted and any recommendations contained therein AGREED. A report from Cllr. Head who had attended a meeting of the Heritage Centre had been circulated.

064 **MATTERS OF REPORT**

24/25

Councillors raised the following points:

- Cllr. Rawe reported that she had recently attended a meeting of Birds Almshouses which was interesting.
- Cllr. Stuart stated that there was currently a vacancy for a member of the public to join the Town Council, noting that a positive and constructive contribution would be appreciated. This was echoed by other Councillors, who also noted that they give up time freely to prepare for and attend meetings, undertake site visits, sit on outside bodies and carry out other duties associated with the role.
- Cllr. Samuel raised concerns regarding people turning right out of Hermitage Street junction with Market Street, and parking around the junction of Bradfords/Crewkerne Station with Station Road obscuring visibility.

065 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

24/25

Monday 28 October 2024, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall.

It was AGREED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable that the public and press be excluded and were instructed to withdraw.

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION: EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC – Staffing and Commercially Sensitive Matters.

066 **ADDITIONAL MOWER**

24/25

To consider quotations for an additional mower

It was AGREED to purchase an additional mower from Loxstons for £27,789 +VAT.

A proposal to use £20,000 from the Grounds Maintenance (Vehicle) budget line for this purpose was AGREED, with the remainder of the money to be drawn from the Grounds Maintenance earmarked reserve.

067 **STAFFING MATTERS**

24/25

To approve the recommendations of the Staffing Sub-Committee as contained in the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2024

The recommendations from this informal meeting were AGREED.

The meeting closed at 20.15.

Signed:

Dated:

TC30September2024