

Minutes of a meeting of CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square commencing at 18.45 on Monday 16 December 2024.

PRESENT

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

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

106 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

24/25

None.

107 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

24/25

None.

108 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2024**

24/25

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2024 were AGREED as a true and accurate record.

109 **PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

24/25

A member of the public spoke on behalf of Action Against Foxhunting (AAF), commenting on the annual Boxing Day meet of the Seavington Hunt in Crewkerne, highlighting that pro-hunt lobby groups claim councils support hunting where they do not actively condemn it.

Some discussion took place around the issue of foxhunting, with town councillors noting that:

- The land at the front of town hall was a public open space where spectators gather on Boxing Day.
- The Town Council was not able to ban any groups from the highway, any issues relating to the road closure or use of the highway was a matter for Somerset Council as the Highways Authority, any illegal activities should be referred to the police.

AAF members felt a survey of Crewkerne residents would demonstrate that a high proportion of the town's residents were opposed to the Seavington Hunt Boxing Day parade. Town Councillors stated that whilst such a survey might be useful, it would need to be carried out by an independent party.

Cllr. Samuel thanked everyone for their contributions. The two AAF members left the meeting.

110 **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

24/25

a. Somerset Councillors

Cllrs. Ashton and Best reported that:

- An additional Full Council meeting was planned for January to deal with ongoing redundancies and restructuring.
- Planning changes from central Government would represent a challenge to Somerset Council in its role as the Local Planning Authority.

- Moves towards a Mayoral Combined Authority for Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset were underway, following the recent resubmission of a combined Expression of Interest from these three areas to Somerset Council.

b. Local Community Network (LCN) representative

Cllr. Head reported that the next LCN meeting had been deferred until January. Cllr. Best noted that the LCN Highways sub-group had met recently.

c. Crewkerne Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)

A written report had been circulated; no questions were raised. Councillors requested that the reports be supplied along with the preceding two months' reports to assist with identifying trends. Cllr. Best highlighted other areas in Somerset where policing teams were holding monthly surgeries and asked the Town Clerk to make enquiries with the Crewkerne team about doing so.

Cllr. Ashton highlighted that a spate of burglaries had recently taken place in rural areas surrounding the town.

111 **CLERK'S PROGRESS REPORT**

24/25

The Town Clerk reported that the Awe and Wonder art group had been successful in securing grant funding for the planned winter 'warm hub' activities and further details would follow.

112 **FINANCE**

24/25

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

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Nathan had verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Accounts for payment for 16th December 2024 in the sum of £33,635.52 were APPROVED.

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

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Nathan had verified the bank reconciliation for November 2024. It was noted that cash in hand as of 30 November 2024 was £640,107.00.

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

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr. Nathan had verified the Trust accounts and that cash in hand as of 30 November 2024 was £6,556.81.

d. To review the rents and hire charges for 2025/26

Cllrs. Best and Head noted that ordinarily they would declare interests in this item as members of CUDOS, but this year no changes were included for CUDOS as a new licence was being drawn up.

The proposed rents and hire charges for 2025/26 were AGREED.

e. To receive the interim report of the Internal Auditor and note the following changes:

- That Full Council minute 181/2425 and Staffing Sub-Committee minute 002/2425 refer to the meeting of Staffing Sub-Committee held on 14 April 2024.
- That minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee of 10 June 2024 be received and approved by Full Council (see minute 120/2425).
- That Amenities Committee minute 55/2324 be clarified to refer to the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 12 February 2024.

The recommendations and proposed responses in the report were AGREED.

113 **PLANNING**

24/25 To consider applications requiring comment before the next Planning and Highways Committee meeting:

- a. 24/02399/LBC 23 Market Street Crewkerne Somerset TA18 7JU
Proposed signage installation and re-decoration of existing shopfront fascia and glazing mullions to include an A-frame position on the pavement (implemented).
- b. 24/02730/ADV 23 Market Street Crewkerne Somerset TA18 7JU
Display of 1 No. non-illuminated fascia sign, 2 No. non-illuminated 'other' LH and RH window signs and 1 No. non-illuminated chalkboard A Board on the pavement (retrospective).

Recommendation: Support all aspects of the applications outlined at a. and b. above, except for the A-board, which Crewkerne Town Council objects to on grounds of possible obstruction on the pavement. The Deputy Clerk was asked to seek official guidance from Planning Officers on A-boards generally, and Cllr. Ashton noted that anything without appropriate consent should be reported to Planning Enforcement.

- c. To note receipt of amended drawings pursuant to s.78 appeal against refusal of Reserved Matters consent for 145no. dwellings at Land at Kithill, Crewkerne - Somerset Council reference 23/01295/REM and consider any comments.

Cllr. Ashton highlighted that this was a consultation being conducted by the applicant prior to appeal, focusing on amended plans. He noted that the existing decision on this application was not based on these plans, and details of the appeal had not yet emerged. Councillors noted that the amended plans contained very little change and agreed to respond to Pegasus to outline the Council's continuing opposition to this application.

114 **STATION ROAD**

24/25 To consider an approach from Misterton Parish Council regarding a joint application for parking restrictions

Councillors considered a proposal from Misterton Parish Council to apply for parking restrictions along the length of Station Road, from the former Stagecoach Inn to the end of the houses along this stretch of road (before Hellings Farm). As this length of road was partly in Misterton Parish and partly in Crewkerne, a joint approach was considered necessary. Councillors commented that it was becoming increasingly dangerous at this location due to the number of parked cars obscuring visibility.

It was AGREED to join Misterton Parish Council in a joint application for parking restrictions along Station Road.

Cllr. Best noted that parking provision at the Station was inadequate and that he had approached a representative of Network Rail for a meeting to discuss further. Councillors recognised that these restrictions may, unfortunately, cause problems elsewhere in Misterton.

115 COUNCIL SURGERIES 2025

24/25 To identify Councillors to support 2025 Council surgeries

Date of surgery	Councillor 1	Councillor 2
Saturday 25 th January	Cllr. Rawe	Cllr. Ashton
Saturday 22 nd February	Cllr. Stuart	Cllr. Best
Saturday 22 nd March	Cllr. Nathan	Cllr. Woodland

Cllrs. Samuel and Head indicated they may be able to support the April surgery.

116 TOWN INTERPRETATION BOARDS

24/25 To note that CIL funds have now accrued to cover scope of project and determine features for inclusion

It was noted that sufficient CIL receipts had accrued to cover the refresh of the three town centre information boards located at Town Hall, and South Street and West Street car parks. Following a suggestion from the Chair and Vice Chair of the Amenities Committee, it was AGREED to use the same artist as the Bincombe information boards for continuity purposes, with all arrangements delegated to the Deputy Clerk.

117 REPTILE TRANSLOCATION

24/25 To consider a proposal to translocate reptiles from the Key Site to Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve

A report from the Town Clerk regarding the proposed translocation of approximately 200 reptiles (predominantly slow worms and grass snakes) from the Key Site to Bincombe Beeches was discussed. It was noted that the Town Council's ecologist had raised concerns that this was a significant number which could impact on existing reptile population at the Reserve. It was AGREED that Crewkerne Town Council would permit the use of Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve as a receptor site, subject to the results of baseline surveys (carried out at Taylor Wimpey's expense) being favourable to the move.

118 HAPPY VALLEY EVENT SUMMER 2025

24/25 To consider dates and quotes for a skate jam event

It was AGREED to book Rubicon to deliver a skate jam event at Happy Valley and make provision in the 25/26 Budget for the £1,500 fee as well as for first aid cover and toilet provision. All arrangements were delegated to the Deputy Clerk. The provisional date would be 2 August 2025.

119 COMMITTEE REVIEW WORKING GROUP

24/25 To receive a report from the Town Clerk following the initial meeting of the Working Group

A report from the Town Clerk was noted. Town Councillors agreed that they would look at this again in the future, and the Town Clerk would model a revised meetings schedule for them to look at.

120 TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES AND APPROVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN:

24/25

- a. Planning and Highways Committee 10 June 2024 and 14 October 2024.
- b. Joint Burial Committee 1 October 2024.
- c. Youth Service Steering Group 21 October 2024.
- d. Amenities Committee 16 September 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 representatives to Outside Bodies were received.

121 **MATTERS OF REPORT**

24/25

Councillors raised the following points:

- Cllr. Samuel expressed thanks to all staff and volunteers involved with the Lighting Up and Christmas Market events which had been very well received and attended.
- Cllr. Best expressed thanks to John Wyatt and Hardwills for their assistance with erecting the Christmas tree in challenging conditions. He noted that there is further work to be done to the tree collar to account for the angle of the land.
- The Town Clerk clarified that no response had been received to a letter requesting that the Heras fencing on the A30 at the end of Church path be removed.
- Cllr. Head encouraged more councillors to get involved with the Christmas events in the future.
- Cllr. Livesley reported that some town centre businesses remain concerned about the use of the parking bays by the Wednesday market, but noted that the principal aim of keeping the road and additional bays open was being achieved by current arrangements.
- A plastic pallet left on East Street was noted as possibly belonging to the White Hart.
- Cllr. Ashton reported on progress with the campaign against the decision to close the stroke unit at Yeovil Hospital, noting that the ICB have agreed to a meeting.
- Some discussion took place around the lack of EV charging points in Crewkerne.
- Cllr. Nathan expressed concern that Somerset Council appeared to be no longer fixing broken streetlights, having reported several defective lights around the town some time ago. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the outstanding road markings in the town would be refreshed by the end of the current financial year.
- Cllr. Rawe suggested alternative locations for the tennis courts storage box, and the Town Clerk confirmed that a different box had been ordered.

122 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

24/25

Monday 27 January 2025, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall.

Cllr. Samuel thanked everyone for their efforts in 2024 and wished everyone well for the festive break.

The meeting closed at 20.05.

Signed:

Dated:

TC16December2024