



## **BLACKWATER AND HAWLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 immediately following the Planning & Payments Committee Meeting Council Chamber, Memorial Hall, Hawley Green GU17 9BW**

#### **Present – Councillors:**

Bob Harward  
Terry Hunt  
Daisy Khepar  
Dave Lister  
Trish Monks (Chair)  
Sara Usher  
Alex Worrall

#### **In attendance:**

Jo Shaw, Town Clerk and Cllr Adrian Collett, Hampshire CC

#### **C5404 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **C5405 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **C5406 COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS**

There were no Councillors questions.

#### **C5407 DEMOCRATIC FIFTEEN MINUTES**

There were no items for discussion.

#### **C5408 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

##### **a) To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024, were confirmed as a true record and duly signed.

##### **b) Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

#### **C5409 REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no matters to report from the Chair.

#### **C5410 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE AND OTHER BODIES**

There were no reports from representatives.

#### **C5411 DISTRICT & COUNTY REPORTS**

##### **Cllr Adrian Collett, Hampshire County Council**

**Hampshire CC Future Services Consultation** – the outcome of the consultation was due end June 2024

**20mph zones** – whilst no funding is available, the County Council is no longer hostile to 20mph zones, and has agreed that in circumstances where it can be demonstrated that parish council's and local residents have bona fide reasons for such a zone, these can be installed with parish council's covering the cost.

**Safe walking route from Green Lane to Hawley Primary School** – the County Council have reviewed a request to cut back foliage and install railings and have agreed to trim vegetation on this route. However, installing railings has not been agreed due to safety concerns over the width of the path.

**Flooding in Kingsway, Blackwater** – Thames Water investigations continue and funding will be required toward any solution reached.

**Hawley Park Farm** – an unauthorised shortcut route to Fernhill Lane has caused damage to the historic sunken lane due to lack of fencing and hedges fencing has been installed by Hart DC enforcement.

**Vicarage Road Potholes** – Hampshire CC have received a sum for pothole repair and it is hoped that this will include repair to the many potholes in Vicarage Road.

#### **C5412 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER REPORTS, COMMITTEE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

Councillors received the following minutes:

- The Minutes of the Planning & Payments Committee Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were received.

#### **C5413 FINANCE**

##### **1. Hampshire Trust Bank (HTB)**

Councillors noted the information circulated by the Town Clerk on HTB's 95 Dat Business Notice Account and

##### **RESOLVED**

- a) to open the Account
- b) that signatories should be Cllrs Trish Monks, Sara Usher, Terry Hunt and Alex Worrall
- c) That an initial sum of £50,000 should be deposited

##### **2. Council Insurance 2023/24**

##### **RESOLVED**

- a) that the Council's Insurance Policy be renewed with Clear Councils (previously BHIB) from 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at a cost of £9,429.21
- b) that rebuild valuation quotes be presented to the next meeting of the Council

##### **3. Internal Audit**

Councillors noted that the end of year Internal Audit would take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 by Mulberry & Co.

##### **4. Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

Councillors noted that the Annual LGPS Return had been submitted in time for the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 deadline.

##### **5. Turf Grooming Combination Tool SCH 4GCS**

Following discussion Councillors

**RESOLVED** to purchase the SCH 4GCS machine at a cost of £2,490 + VAT to be used for slitting, slicing, rolling and raking for in-house maintenance of the sports fields.

Signed Chair .....

**C5414 HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - FUTURE SERVICES CONSULTATION**

Further to minute C5371, Councillors noted the response to Hampshire County Council's 'Future Services Consultation' with collated responses in response to a request for views on proposals to change and reduce some local services to address an anticipated budget shortfall of £132 million by April 2025. [Appendix 1](#)

**C5415 POLICIES**

**Co-option Policy**

Councillors considered the draft Co-option Policy and

**RESOLVED**

1. to adopt the Policy and appendices with immediate effect.
2. To advertise the current Councillor Vacancy effective 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 until 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**C5416 INFORMATION ITEMS**

**1. Estates Report 2023/24**

The Town Clerk provided a brief verbal report on work carried out over the last financial year.

**2. Broken Bench – south side of A30 adjacent the bus stop**

Councillors agreed that the bench be removed and requested the Town Clerk confirm the cost before removal.

**C5417 OTHER BUSINESS – NOT FOR DECISION**

There was no further business for discussion.

**C5418 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC & PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was advised that the public and press were temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw for remaining items on the Agenda.

**C5419 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**C5420 MATTERS ARISING**

**C5421 BLACKWATER CENTRE**

**C5422 OTHER CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS - NOT FOR DECISION**

The meeting ended at 9.14pm

Signed Chair .....

## APPENDIX 1

Blackwater and Hawley Town Council would, of course, rather none of these proposals were necessary or likely to be implemented, however, we do understand that cuts need to be made. We have considered each of the options and commented on those which impact our parish the most.

### Adult social care

This is a small change which we do not feel will have a significant impact, therefore we **neutral on this proposal.**

### Hampshire Cultural Trust Grant –

This proposal does not directly impact our Parish therefore **we are neutral on this proposal,** however, we do feel it is important to keep records and artefacts secure and available in an organised way. Money could be saved by inviting volunteers in museums etc.

### Highway Maintenance

In recent years, Blackwater & Hawley Town Council have observed a consistent deterioration of the facilities for which 'Hampshire Highways' are responsible. We believe this is primarily due to the slow response in filling potholes, damaged kerbstones/safety barriers and less frequent care of verges/weed control and obscured road signs.

Given the various financial commitments made up until 2026, we would expect IMPROVEMENTS to be noticeable in the overall service during this short period of time. However the further financial commitment up to 2034 (including the significant sum, redirected from the cancelled HS2 project), annually making up for only part of the £7.5M proposed reduction from Hampshire funds, it might be expected that the slow deterioration will accelerate quite rapidly over the following years.

Not only is this likely to have a negative impact on safety for pedestrians and road users, especially cyclists, when coupled with the proposed reduction in street lighting.

The compounded financial burden on future generations to manage a significant backlog in repairs to a network increasingly less resilient to winter weather, and manage the inevitable disruption to an ever busier road network, is considered unacceptably short sighted and **we are against this proposal.**

### HWRC

Charging for discretionary services and changes to types of waste accepted.

We feel this is an attractive idea of the surface, but in our wider area we already know that fly-tipping is a problem, and we have suffered greatly from this issue regularly on the Town Council's land. We feel that any level of charging/restriction is likely to make this issue worse with the costs of cleanup being pushed down to district and Town Councils, the latter of which have insufficient funds or capability to deal with it. **We therefore object to this proposal.** That said, there may be scope for offering a chargeable collection service for waste, which, if competitively priced and marketed might appeal to those who find they can't conveniently access facilities because of the cuts being considered. There may be local enterprise who already offer this sort of service and a potential partnership to be considered.

Restricted hours and sites (combined topics):

Blackwater & Hawley residents have no obvious 'local' tip, having the option of Hartley Wintney and Farnborough about equally as accessible - so if HW closed, Farnborough is an easy alternative for most.

Farnborough would be busier but is (in our experience) a well organised site and the booking system works quite well. Off-peak hours can be quiet and perhaps more could be done to publicise using the tip at quieter times.

Signed Chair .....

If hours were to be restricted, and the two sites remain open, could they be synchronised so there was always one open? On the downside, it might get confusing as to which one was open and when.

If HW was closed and Frimley Road (Surrey Heath) became available to HCC residents, that would further help BH residents access.

Due to the availability of the WRC at Farnborough and the poor condition of that at HW we are **neutral on the proposal to close facilities**, however, we would hope that the opening hours of remaining sites would be increased to reflect the increase in demand.

### **Library Stock**

The more that library stock is reduced, the lower the usage of the libraries, which is perhaps the long term intention. As a Town Council, if this proposal is to go ahead, we would prefer to see both digital and physical stock reduced to avoid impacting any single group.

### **Passenger transport**

Where funding is being cut by Hampshire County Council, all the groups that are currently receiving funding will obviously look to other avenues to cover all or some of the grants they were receiving. In passenger transport, a lot relates to rural areas but as a result of the cuts to named services, Yellabus may see a rise in demand and therefore our contribution may be sought to be increased. Our finances are constrained as with all councils, and we are unable to increase our donation. Although our contribution is relatively small, if any shortfall cannot be met such schemes will be discontinued. These are often a lifeline for those who do not have their own transport or cannot use public transport and may lead to greater feelings of isolation, mental health issues and physical demise. However, the proposed cuts do not directly impact services in our Parish therefore we are neutral on this proposal.

On the matter of subsidised bus routes, again, this does not impact routes in our area therefore we are **neutral on this proposal**.

### **School Crossing Patrols**

The retention of School Crossing Patrols is essential to some of our Parishoners to enable them and their children to access schools on foot. By removing the patrols there will be an increase in the number of children being driven to school which will put pressure on our local roads which are already struggling to cope at peak times. Loss of this amenity will also remove the health benefits of walking for both parents and children. This is also a safety matter, which our patrols being in areas with no other crossing places and lots of traffic. This is especially relevant to the Frogmore Road patrol where a large new care home is being built, guaranteed to increase traffic at peak times . If the alternatives are well thought out, traffic controlled crossing points we will accept that, however, as this is unlikely we **strongly object to this proposal**.

### **Street Lighting**

The move to more efficient LED lamps over recent years is positive move in the right direction and should be continued until 100% energy efficient as far as is practical.

Blackwater & Hawley Town Council feel that as the levels of street lighting can be remotely controlled quickly and easily, further reduction in lighting levels and longer periods of time for some lamps to be switched off at night, can be monitored for any negative impact on safety and adjusted accordingly with little minimal overall impact on the Council finances

In acknowledging that this may be a way of saving finances and improving the carbon footprint, the overall difference made to either, is marginal and there should be no hesitation in reversing or re-assessing the proposed changes, if approved. **We therefore agree with this proposal**.

Signed Chair .....