

Blackwater and Hawley Town Council
Blackwater centre, 12-14 London Road, Blackwater, GU 17 9AA

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 8th June 2020 at 7.00pm. In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 this meeting was held virtually.

Present: Cllr A Collett – Chair
Cllrs B Blewett, T Hunt, D Lister, P Monks, A Tarbet and S Usher

In attendance: Jo Shaw (Town Clerk)

C4662 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Harward

C4663 Declarations of Councillor Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

C4664 Annual Meeting

RESOLVED that, as permitted under the 2020 regulations, no Annual Meeting of the Town Council shall take place until May 2021 and therefore all appointments, including that of the Chair, shall remain in place until that date.

C4665 Report of the Chair of the Council

The Chair reported on the lockdown situation and highlighted that it had been challenging for all residents, particularly those vulnerable residents who were shielding or self-isolating. He offered thanks to Fleet Aid Relief who had offered support to the parish and delivered a leaflet explaining how this could be accessed to each household. It was fortunate that many of the calls had been to thank them for the reassurance that this had offered.

C4666 Councillors' Questions

Councillor Lister pointed to the help that had been offered to the community by local groups, particularly Yelabus who had assisted with the delivery of prescription medicines.

C4667 Democratic Fifteen Minutes

There were no members of the public in virtual attendance.

C4668 Minutes

In considering the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2020, Cllr Collett requested that minute C4655 be altered to delete the words 'urge Yateley' from the final sentence. The minutes, as amended, were approved by the Chair. A copy will be posted for signature to be retained in the Council records.

C4669 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9th December 20120

C4648

Allotments – Cllr Collett had received no further information on the offer of land for use by residents for allotments.

Rail to Trail – Cllr Collett reported that the launch on 28th March 2020 was postponed until a later date.

Flood Forum – The Chair thanked those Councillors who, together with Suzanna Hope, Flood Risk Engineer from Hart had attended the drop-in day on 26th February 2020 which had been attended by a small number of residents.

C4655

Libraries – Cllr Collett reported that the decision on the future of Hampshire County Council libraries had been postponed.

C4657

Memorial Hall – The Town Clerk to contact Building Heroes to ascertain if they would still be happy to consider painting the Memorial Hall.

C4670 To Receive and Consider Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees

The minutes of the Planning and Payment Committee Meetings held on 24th February 2020 and 16th March 2020 were received.

C4671 To Receive Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no reports from outside bodies.

C4672 Audit 2019/20

- a) Councillors received and **APPROVED**
 - the Annual Internal Auditor's report dated 31st May 2020 and the recommendation that to ensure the Council comply with the best practice requirements of the Transparency Code 2015, the Minutes of Council should be uploaded to the website for 2019/20 and 2020/21.
 - the Accountant's Annual Return Workings
- b) Councillors discussed the appointment of an Internal Auditor for the forthcoming financial year and requested the Town Clerk to report on the options for the next Council meeting.

C4673 Annual Return 2019/20

- a) Councillors received and approved the Council's Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2020.
- b) Councillors noted that further investigation was required to confirm how the COIF Charities Investment Fund income in the amount of £440 should be accounted for on the AGAR return prior to approval by Councillors. The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 extended the statutory audit deadline for completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and approval was required before 31st August 2020. This would be considered at the next Council meeting.
- c) Councillors were made aware that Item 'L' on the 2020 AGAR return asks whether '*The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*' The external auditor, PFK Littlejohn indicated that the 2019 Notice of Public Rights for the period 2019/20 was only 29 days rather than the 30 consecutive days that it should have been, and as a result the Town Council must answer 'NO' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.

C4674 Asset Review

Councillors noted that following guidance from the internal auditors, changes had been made to the Asset Register for 2020/21 to include the CCLA (COIF) Investment at purchase price as a long-term investment.

C4675 Finance 2020/21

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update and reported that the Covid-19 shutdown of Council facilities would result in reduced income for the 2020/21 financial year. She reported that cost savings were being sought in all areas and a review of current suppliers would be undertaken over the coming months. Further detail would be provided at future Council meetings once further government guidance was available on the prospect of re-opening Council facilities.

C4676 Estates Report

Memorial Hall

- **Noticeboard**

The Town Clerk reported that the Council noticeboard on Hawley Green is rotten and had been removed. A replacement will be affixed on the wall of the Memorial Hall within the car park.

- **Boiler/Heating**

Councillors noted that whilst the current boiler was old it was still in good working order, however, the extensive steel pipework caused excessive air and sediment build-up. The Town Clerk reported that advice had been received and that it was proposed that converting the system to an unvented heating system, installation of an expansion vessel, replacement and re-positioning of old radiators and a system flush would allow the heating to continue working effectively in the future. It would improve heat-up time for the building, increase efficiency of the boiler and reduce energy consumption. Councillors agreed that work could more easily take place whilst the Memorial Hall was closed to the general public. It was noted that an amount had been included in the current year budget for work to the Memorial Hall boiler.

RESOLVED

1. That for the purposes of allowing this work to go ahead by a specialised commercial plumbing company as soon as possible, Council Financial Regulation 3.4 (Budgetary Control) be suspended and two quotes were not required in this instance.
2. That, following discussion, it was unanimously agreed to accept the quote from Advanced Maintenance, subject to confirmation of the timescales involved in the amount of £4,934 + VAT.

Leisure Centre

- **Generally**

The Town Clerk confirmed that redecoration had taken place to the main entrance, corridors and the bar area. New noticeboards were in-situ and strict future monitoring would take place.

- **Gym**

Councillors noted that there was no government guidance currently available on dates to re-open gym facilities, but it was likely that social distancing would be a factor.

- **Bar**

The Town Clerk outlined work that had taken place to improve the furniture and patio area around the bar. Further work to the kitchen area would take place imminently.

Grounds

- **Generally**

The Town Clerk reported that, in order to be reactive to growth and weather conditions, grass cutting was taking place in-house. The grass banks and hedges had been trimmed and the whole site generally appeared neat and tidy.

- **Car Parks**

The Facilities Officer had arranged for car parks to be cleared of overgrowth and leaf mulch and, following this work, a number of additional parking spaces had been reclaimed.

Councillors expressed concern at the number of people using the DASH/Youth Suite car park for gathering in the evenings and, in some instances, staying overnight.

RESOLVED that a gate be fixed across the entrance to deter antisocial behaviour.

- **Fly Tipping and Council Bins**

The Town Clerk reported an increase in fly-tipping incidents during the period of lockdown and had liaised with Hart District Council leading to two incidents being taken further. Council bins would now be locked to deter residents using them.

- **Sports Field**

The Town Clerk confirmed that Hawley Football Club had received notification of receipt of the FA funding for improvement of the pitches. The quotations received prior to lockdown would now be re-visited for possible further action.

Councillors noted that Frimley Cricket Club representatives continue to work on the cricket square and regularly watered the area in readiness for the possibility of resuming cricket matches.

- **Hawley Green**

Following the recent good weather, residents had been using the area for picnicking. The Facilities Manager had extended the area of cut back to include a number of 'tree islands' which now provided some shade for those gathering on the green.

The memorial tree planted by a resident, was discussed by Councillors as Trustees of the Hawley Field Trust who agreed that, whilst not setting a precedent, on this occasion an alternative location would be agreed.

- **Play Area**

Following government guidance, the play area had been closed and locked to the general public. Once guidance is received that re-opening

can take place, the area will be tidied and unlocked. Councillors noted that the annual RoSPA safety check would take place during June 2020.

- **Multi-Purpose Area (MPA)**

The Facilities Officer reported that the tennis nets and posts had been located and it may be possible, in the near future, to hire tennis courts as one of the sports currently allowed.

C4677 Hawley Fayre

Councillors noted that the Hawley Fayre had been cancelled but this situation may be reconsidered later in the year if the circumstances allowed.

C4678 Town Centre Planters

Councillors noted that owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, planters planned for Blackwater town centre had been cancelled for summer 2020 and a small cancellation charge had been paid. It was hoped to reinstate the planters in future years.

C4679 Other Business

There was no other business.

C4680 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was **RESOLVED** that the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting so that the remaining items could be considered in confidential session due to the nature of the business to be transacted.

PART II

C4681 Confidential Minutes of Previous Meeting

C4682 Staffing Update

C4683 DASH Lease – Youth Suite

The meeting ended at 9.46pm

Chair _____