



KIRKHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2024, 7.00 PM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, MILL STREET, KIRKHAM

Attendees:

Chris Hopkinson	Councillor (Cllr.) and Chair
Neil Byers	Cllr.
James Cameron	Cllr.
Diane Ireland	Cllr.
Stewart Jones	Cllr.
Maggie Ledger	Cllr.
Shaun Patchett	Cllr.
Peter Sutcliffe	Cllr.
Michelle Welch	Cllr.
Tony Wellings	Cllr.
Elizabeth Squires - Minutes	Town Clerk

24/06/01 Apologies for Absence

To accept apologies for absence.

No apologies were received.

24/06/02 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest in an Agenda item. Members are reminded that in accordance with Section 94 of the Local Government Act, 1972, and the Council's Standing Orders, any direct or pecuniary or other interest should be declared.

Cllr. Welch and the Town Clerk declared an interest for payments that were being discussed at agenda item 24/06/10 (i).

24/06/03 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To accept as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 May 2024.

Minutes were accepted as a true record.

24/06/04 Public Participation

Matters brought to the Town Council by residents. The Chair may limit a member of the public to 3 minutes of speaking in order to ensure the smooth running of the meeting. Overall, this section will typically be limited to 20 minutes, although the Chair may, at their discretion, extend this.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

24/06/05 Policing

PCSO Jake Giddins was in attendance with two residents to support the update on the boxing incentive. They confirmed positive outcomes of the grant awarded to Adam Little for the boxing incentive for youths. Future funding of the incentive was discussed.

PCSO Giddins provided an update of incidents in the town over the past month.

24/06/06 Matters Arising

Matters arising from the 14 May 2024 meeting were addressed as part of the agenda, except for:

(i) Signage

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the quote for the 3 signs for Mill Street car park had been received and an order will be raised. An additional sign is required for the electric vehicle charger.

ACTION: The Town Clerk to obtain a quote for the additional signage and present it for approval.

(ii) D Day 80 Beacons

Cllr. Byers provided an update of the event. Cllr. Ledger asked if a bespoke beacon could be purchased. Cllr. Wellings stated that the Town Council needed to purchase a beacon as he had received complaints over the use of a skip. Cllr. Byers informed the Town Council that the Royal British Legion had advised the use of a skip, where parishes did not have a bespoke beacon. Cllr. Byers stated that Wrea Green had used a skip for their D Day 80 Beacon event. All agreed that a beacon was required and this be in situ before VE Day 80 years, 2025. He also asked about a speaker system. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that there is a speaker system. Cllr. Sutcliffe will arrange for the speaker system to be serviced.

(iii) Information Board

The Chair stated that quotes are still being obtained for a digital information board.

24/06/07 Mayors Announcements

(i) Events Attended

The Mayor (and Chair) had attended Civic Sunday at St. Michael's Church, D Day 80 Beacons and the boxing gym. Cllr. Jones had attended the Mayor of Fylde Council's barbeque.

(ii) Standing Orders

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that standing orders were in need of update. This work will be ongoing, however iterations for changes will be presented to Town Council meetings for agreement. Cllr. Ledger enquired about changes, the 'must' elements of the document and legal issues. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that there are areas within the document where wording is standard and will not be removed or amended. The NALC standing order template will be reviewed for comparative purposes. Cllr. Jones stated that once the document has been agreed in principle, that this be sent to Fylde Council for review.

(iii) Recorded Votes at Meetings

The Chair outlined how recorded votes work. Standing Orders state that *before* discussion a member can request that a vote be recorded with names allocated against each vote and this is recorded in the minutes.

The Chair stated that in his 7 years on the council, this had never been used and since all the new Cllrs. had joined the council, no councillor has ever requested this. The Chair felt that this may make the position of Councillors vulnerable. He did not want them to feel bullied by being named on a vote as he was aware that a Councillor intended to call for a recorded vote on two agenda items.

Cllr. Cameron stated that he understood that recording of votes was anonymous. Cllr. Wellings disagreed and stated that names are recorded. Cllr. Jones discussed his understanding, and that the option to record names be kept within standing orders. Cllr. Patchett stated that the Cllrs. have voted on many issues over the past year of his tenure and this has not been raised. The Chair stated that there were a couple of recent issues that were contentious and that

Other options were discussed such as recording the number of votes i.e. for, against or abstained.

Cllr. Wellings stated that he was going to ask for a recorded vote for the next agenda item and felt that certain votes need to be recorded. He went on to say that as Councillors they should have the courage of their convictions and not be ashamed to have their name recorded for some, not all, votes and it was important for Councillors to understand this.

Cllr. Ledger understood Cllr. Patchett's point of view, and that on most issues was in agreement for her name to be assigned to how she had voted, other than contentious issues where Councillors may be put at risk. Cllr. Byers stated that recording of votes could be a safeguarding issue for the Cllrs.

The Chair proposed that if a recorded vote was called *in this meeting* the item would be moved to In Committee. This would enable Cllrs. to consider how they vote in future meetings. Cllr. Jones reiterated his point but stated this be used for major issues. Cllr. Sutcliffe stated that recorded votes, if introduced, should be recorded for every decision. He gave examples. He went on to say that named voting should only be used for major issues. Cllr. Patchett stated that the votes could be recorded, albeit anonymously, rather than naming individual Cllrs and that he had personal experience of vexatious intent as a new Cllr and agreed to recording the vote without naming.

Cllr. Wellings stated that in government every vote is recorded and at Fylde Council the meeting is recorded, he went on to say that Cllrs. needed to have the courage of their convictions when making decisions and spending public money. Cllr. Patchett challenged this, as voting for decisions made in the past had not been recorded, such as the boxing grant. Cllr. Wellings said that the boxing grant was a police initiative. Cllr. Sutcliffe challenged this as the boxing grant was not paid directly to the police, but to a local business.

Cllr. Wellings asked that the following be minuted (*sic*):



'I have a grave concern that we are spending public money on a private business and we are not going to be held account for it because people will not know who voted which way.'

Cllr. Patchett raised the boxing grant again and stated that this had been paid to a business, this was disputed by Cllr. Wellings. Cllr. Ledger confirmed that in the past votes had not been recorded, the purpose of this discussion was to draw a line underneath this and collectively agree how to record voting.

Cllr. Wellings stated that Cllrs. can vote how they wish but he would not sit on a council that is hiding from the public as he has the courage of his convictions.

Cllr. Ledger stated that she had not gleaned the potential safeguarding issues related to council decisions. Cllr. Wellings asked how Fylde Council protected the Cllrs. from safeguarding issues.

The Chair reminded the meeting that Kirkham Town Councillors are not paid, the work is voluntary and he had the courage of his convictions, however was concerned how this may affect his staff in his business as members of the public are consistently coming into the shop, as they know he is Mayor and his staff should not be placed in a vulnerable position because of the way he votes at council meetings.

Cllr. Byers stated he will stand by his convictions; the recent Kirkham Pride has been challenging for him and attitudes within the town have been worrying.

Cllr. Welch asked if individual Cllrs. could request that their way of voting be noted if they wanted this with their name recorded if they felt the need.

Cllr. Jones informed the meeting how the borough and county council record their votes, in essence the meetings are videoed, however acknowledged that Councillors should protect themselves. For major decisions a recorded vote was important.

Cllr. Ledger stated that KPMG LLP recommendation is that the number of votes should be recorded without naming individuals. Names could be recorded, however on sensitive issues, for safeguarding reasons, this needs to be considered. Cllr. Ledger asked Cllr. Wellings if he could compromise on this view for sensitive issues. Cllr. Wellings said that this is what a recorded vote is and should name.

Cllr. Sutcliffe asked if the grant to Blossoming Buds required naming of Councillors given that this was the use of the Mayor Making budget for 2024/25. The Chair stated that a decision such as this was still in need of ratification by the council.

Cllr. Patchett stated that if votes are recorded, if Councillors have a strong view they can request that their name is included. Cllr. Wellings stated that the Blossoming Buds vote had been tied and stated that a named vote is just that.

The Chair quoted standing orders, that this had not been standard practice and agreed that recording votes without names was good practice, any one Councillor can request a recorded vote before discussion (including names). The Chair stated that standing orders need to be clearer. Cllr. Wellings reiterated his point about the naming of who voted. The Chair proposed that these items be discussed In Committee, he put this to the Councillors. Cllr. Wellings disputed

this and stated that this was an issue. Cllr. Wellings queried why the votes in this meeting would be contentious.

Cllr. Sutcliffe asked how was a payment to a business in the town different to the grant afforded the boxing initiative. Cllr. Wellings stated that the boxing was a police initiative.

Cllr. Wellings queried the payment to a business when other organisations were providing the same service. He asked Cllr. Welch to contribute to this. Cllr. Welch discussed the provision of similar services throughout the town. Cllr. Ireland asked if these other provisions were provided free of charge, Cllr Welch believed that some required a modest contribution, which concerned Cllr Ireland, and she was happy that the grant being given to Blossoming Buds was to provide essential services to young mothers and babies who could not afford a modest contribution.

Cllr. Wellings stated he would not be part of a council that was not prepared to stand by its convictions. Cllr. Wellings left the meeting.

The Chair requested that a 10-minute break was taken, this was agreed. Recording of the meeting was paused.

Meeting resumed and the Chair reiterated his proposal that if any Councillor calls for a recorded vote *in this meeting*, it would be dealt with In Committee. The remaining nine Cllrs. voted in respect of not naming when votes were recorded, this proposal was then passed.

Voting: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstention.

(iv) Ratification of Decisions (Blossoming Buds and Licenced Premises)

The Chair asked that the decision previously discussed to grant Blossoming Buds £500, to come out of the budget for Mayor Making to be approved. Cllrs. voted to approve the grant.

Voting: 6 for, 2 against, 1 abstention.

The Chair asked for formal ratification of the decision to reject the licenced premises 87 Station Road. Cllrs. voted against the licenced premises. The licencing hours were queried.

Voting: 1 for, 6 against, 2 abstentions.

(v) Twinning Event

The oak tree donated by the Mayor of Ancenis Saint-Géréon has been planted in the People's Park.

(vi) Disabled Facility at the Community Centre

The Town Clerk informed the Cllrs. that work on the disabled facility continues.

(vii) Grant William Segar Hodgson

The Town Clerk informed the Cllrs. that the grant was being discussed by Fylde Council and a decision will be made.

(viii) CCTV

A solar panel is required for The Close Park. Costs will likely be in the region of £2,000 including labour and SD card. Cllrs. voted in favour of the installation of the CCTV.

Voting: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

(ix) Electric Vehicle Charger

The electric vehicle charger is in situ and needs to be tested. Cllr. Patchett offered to arrange testing of the electric vehicle charger.

(x) Community Centre Boiler

The Town Clerk informed the Cllrs. that the boiler has been repaired. Concerns were raised by the Town Clerk that parts for the boiler are difficult to source. Cllrs. discussed the viability of a service plan for the boiler. Cllrs. voted to approve a service plan.

Voting: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

ACTION: Town Clerk to obtain quotes and feedback to the next meeting.

(xi) Website Domain

The Town Council have asked the website developer to change the domain to be kirkhamcouncil.gov.uk rather than kirkhamcouncil.co.uk. Work is ongoing to arrange for this. Cllr. Byers is working with the website developer to ensure the site has been developed as agreed. Bios and photos of the Cllrs. are still required.

ACTION: The Town Clerk to arrange for bios and photos for the website.

(xii) Accountant Year End

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the previous arrangement to use a local accountant has not materialised. The year-end accounts have been taken to a previous supplier. The accounts need to be approved and paperwork authorised prior to sending to the external auditors. An extraordinary meeting will be arranged. The meeting to be arranged for 6pm, date to be confirmed when the accounts were available.

ACTION: The Town Clerk to arrange an extraordinary meeting to sign off the annual accounts.

(xiii) Town Centre Update

The Chair updated the meeting about a discussion held with Fylde Council. The contractors have requested an area on the car park for offices while Eagles Court is vacated and the project is handed over to Fylde Council. Cllrs. did not agree to the use of a car park, however they voted to allow the use of Memorial Park.

Voting: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

An update on the Hillside and how this would be used was also provided by the Chair.

Work on Lloyds TSB (the former Girls School) is ongoing.

Cllr. Sutcliffe asked about when the town centre project would end. The Chair informed the meeting that this is now estimated for end June 2024.

(xiv) Flooding Complaints

Cllr. Jones informed the meeting that the flooding claimants have now received letters from Lancashire County Council. The Chair confirmed that those claimants that he had spoken to have been turned down.

24/06/08

Leisure Parks and Open Spaces (LPAOS)

(i) Feedback LPAOS Committee

In the absence of Cllr. Wellings the Town Clerk deferred the update to the next meeting.

(ii) Flooding

Deferred until the next meeting.

(iii) In Bloom

Cllr. Welch updated the meeting in respect of In Bloom issues. The In Bloom competition judging is scheduled for 23 July 2024. The In Your Neighbourhood includes the Library, Kirkham and Wesham Train Station and work undertaken in the town by the In Bloom group.

24/06/09 Planning

Planning details were added to the Kirkham Town Council meeting agenda. These continue to be forwarded to the Cllrs. when they are received by the Town Clerk.

(i) Applications: Fylde Council

There was one application to note, no objection was made.

(ii) Decisions: Fylde Council

The one granted decision, two issued decisions and the one decision, prior approval not required were noted. A further decision on St. George's Park was presented and this had been issued. Cllrs. had been sent the information.

24/06/10 Finances

(i) Payment of Invoices

Cllr. Byers presented the invoices pending approval. The Town Clerk had emailed the Cllrs. a revised listing prior to the meeting of invoices received since the last Town Council meeting. The invoice for Blossoming Buds was also added and approved.

Cllrs. agreed to the payment of all invoices excluding Cllr. Welch who had previously declared an interest for an In Bloom payment.

(ii) Presentation of Bank Balances as at 6 June 2024

The Cllrs. noted the bank balances as at 6 June 2024. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the VAT reimbursement was not included in the balances.

(iii) Payment Methods

The Town Clerk requested the use of PayPal for the Hallmaster room booking service. A transaction fee would be applied to all payments made in this manner. Cllrs. voted to allow PayPal to be used for the payment of room hire.

Voting: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

(iv) Plaque for Memorial Park

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the plaque for the Memorial Park needed to be agreed and ordered. Options were presented, either a plinth or a soldier holding the plaque. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that Cllr. Wellings as Chair of LPAOS wanted approval up to a maximum value (including the plaque) of £2,000. Cllrs. voted.

Voting: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

24/06/11 Bookings

General Update

There continue to be additional bookings at the William Segar Hodgson Pavillion and the Town Clerk informed the meeting that if the grant was forthcoming from

Fylde Council, improvements could be made to make the building more attractive to hirers. Cllr. Cameron asked about the windows on the Pavillion. The Town Clerk confirmed that these had been installed and the invoice was to be paid, approved at 24/06/10 (i) above.

Part 2 Exclusion of Press and Public – Confidential Items Discussion (In Committee)

The proposal is for:

Exclusion of Press and Public Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and defined in Paragraph 1, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. It is proposed that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the press and public are excluded from the forthcoming items of business.

Councillors are asked to agree this action and this will be minuted.

Councillors agreed exclusion of the members of the public (no attendees), and no press were present.

Staffing issues were discussed.

24/06/12 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 July 2024 @ 7.00 pm.

Signed



Cllr. Hopkinson, Mayor and Chair

Elizabeth Squires, Town Clerk