

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Mayor
Cllr Paul Davis



Town Clerk
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Minutes of the Full Council meeting of Wellington Town Council, held at Civic Offices on Tuesday, 11th January 2022 starting at 7.00pm.

Present

Cllr P. Davis - Mayor	Cllr S. Hall	Cllr L. Jinks	Cllr J. Gorse
Cllr D. Roberts – Deputy Mayor	Cllr P. Fairclough	Cllr L. Carter	Cllr C. Barker
Cllr S. de Launey	Cllr J. Pierce	Cllr U. Ahmed	Cllr A. Lowe
Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE	Cllr K. Tomlinson	Cllr G. Cook	Cllr M. Hosken
Cllr A. McClements	Cllr J. Latter	Cllr G. Luter	Cllr J. Alvey

Also in Attendance; Rev. Tim Carter, Karen Roper Town Clerk.

65/21	Welcome - The Mayor – Cllr P. Davis, welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the December 2021 meeting was cancelled due to the Omicron variant of Corona Virus and the advice given by the National Association of Local Councils. He wished everyone a Happy New Year and sincerely thanked Rev. Carter and all the groups and individuals who organised and attended the excellent Christmas festivities. The Mayor called upon Rev. Carter to lead prayers.
66/21	Prayers - Reverend Carter invited members to pray for the New Year with all its hopes, fears and anxieties. For our young people and that the Covid situation improves giving the Health Services the opportunity to restore themselves.
67/21	Public Open Session – No members of the public were physically in attendance. Efforts were made to livestream the meeting on Facebook.
68/21	Apologies – There were no apologies received.
69/21	Declarations of Interest – Were received from Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE in respect of item 14 on the agenda referenced the Orbit. A vote was taken to approve the above declaration of interest and in favour were Cllrs: P. Davis, D. Roberts, S. de Launey, A. McClements, S. Hall, J. Pierce, K. Tomlinson, L. Jinks, L. Carter, U. Ahmed, G. Cook, J. Gorse, C. Barker, A. Lowe, J. Latter, G. Luter, J. Alvey, P. Fairclough, and M. Hosken. There were no votes against and no abstentions.
70/21	Mask Wearing – The Mayor said this item was requested to be added to the December agenda by Cllr D Roberts. He said in his view events have overtaken the situation with the arrival of the Omicron variant. Cllr D Roberts agreed there was no need for discussion at this time. Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE asked members to bear with him as he may misunderstand some comments as everyone was wearing masks. Cllr J. Gorse said she did not feel safe and asked that staff look into holding meetings in larger rooms even if there was a cost. Cllr McClements said she felt very uncomfortable and agreed with Cllr Gorse.

71/21	<p>Devolving Decision Making Power from Full Council to Policy and Resources - Cllr S. de Launey said the Government had done nothing to allow local government to legally make decisions online. He proposed that Full Council hold monthly online meetings and delegates its power to P&R to meet face to face and carry out its functions. He was 2nd by Cllr M. Hosken. Cllr C. Barker said review mechanisms should be built into the process. Cllr S. de Launey said that as soon as Full Council agree they no longer wish to meet online, face to face meetings will resume. Cllr K. Tomlinson agreed with Cllr J. Gorse that she was not comfortable this evening. She informed members that Telford and Wrekin were meeting face to face by ensuring they are quorate and politically balanced to make decisions but were reducing the numbers of members in attendance. It was felt that P&R legally enacting the wishes of full council was the best way forward at this time. Cllr A. McClements asked that all members wear their masks properly throughout the meeting. The proposal was put to the vote and the following members were in favour Cllrs: P. Davis, P. Morris-Jones MBE, S. de Launey, A. McClements, S. Hall, J. Pierce, K. Tomlinson, L. Jinks, L. Carter, U. Ahmed, G. Cook, J. Gorse, C. Barker, A. Lowe, J. Latter, G. Luter, J. Alvey, P. Fairclough and M. Hosken. There were no votes against and Cllr D. Roberts abstained.</p>
72/21	<p>Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 9th November 2021- The minutes were proposed as a true and accurate record by Cllr M. Hosken, 2nd by Cllr. L. Jinks. A vote was taken to approve the above minutes and in favour were Cllrs: D. Roberts, P. Davis, P. Morris-Jones MBE, S. de Launey, A. McClements, S. Hall, J. Pierce, K. Tomlinson, L. Jinks, L. Carter, U. Ahmed, G. Cook, J. Gorse, C. Barker, A. Lowe, J. Latter, G. Luter, J. Alvey, P. Fairclough and M. Hosken. There were no votes against and no abstentions</p>
73/21	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>a) Conservation Working Group – Minutes had been circulated to members. Cllr K. Tomlinson presented the report of the meeting held 17th November 2021. No questions were asked.</p>
74/21	<p>To receive and note the reports of the following Wellington Town Council Committees.</p> <p>a) Policy and Resources 7th December 2021 – Cllr S. de Launey confirmed the minutes had been circulated and asked if members had any questions. There were no questions.</p> <p>b) Policy and Resources 4th January 2022 – Cllr S. de Launey confirmed the minutes had been circulated and asked if members had any questions adding they could contact him by phone or email. There were no questions raised.</p> <p>c) Planning Committee held on 17th November - Cllr G. Luter presented the previously circulated minutes. Cllr M. Hosken said he felt that the Clerk of the Committee should be congratulated for his report. Cllr J. Alvey said people had complained to him about the quality of the sound and picture quality when uploading the meeting on Facebook.</p> <p>d) Planning Committee held on 8th December Cllr G. Luter presented the previously circulated minutes, there were no questions.</p> <p>e) Planning Committee held on 22nd December Cllr G. Luter presented the previously circulated minutes. Cllr K. Tomlinson said the application relating to the Charlton School had been ‘called in’ at Telford and Wrekin planning committee.</p> <p>f) Events & Communications Committee held on 30th November 2021 – Cllr A. Lowe presented the previously circulated minutes. He commented that the Festival</p>

	<p>to be held on 6-8th May 2022 had been organised as face to face events and he recognised this could be a problem relating to Covid and its variants going forward.</p>
75/21	<p>Budget – Unfortunately a previous version of the budget document had been sent out with the papers for this meeting and Cllr de Launey explained that one figure quoted in personnel costs was incorrect but this was the only change</p> <p>The final / correct document had been circulated by email to all councillors on 9th and 22nd December 2021 and members had been encouraged to forward questions. A hard copy was tabled at this meeting.</p> <p>The proposed final budget was recommended for acceptance by the Policy and Resources Committee held on 4th January 2022 and proposed a precept increase of 1.58% on a band D property amounting to £1.15 per annum or £0.02 per week. Members made the following comments;</p> <p>Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE– said he did not agree with an increase in the precept and felt strongly that we should follow the lead of the Borough Council who are proposing no increase. In his view the budget should be reduced by £25,000.</p> <p>Cllr L. Carter thanked Cllr S. de Launey for his work on the budget and listed all the services it provides for but he agreed with Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE, that there should not be an increase for the next 2 years. He represented College ward which was rated in the top 10% of the worst areas of deprivation. People would be trying to recover from the pandemic and deal with inflation, energy and cost of living rises. The Government, fire and police authorities were increasing their precept and he felt the town council should reconsider various budget headings such as members’ / mayoral allowances.</p> <p>Cllr L. Jinks asked why our reserves could not be used to cover the budget increase. Cllr S. de Launey explained that we have £95,000 equating to 2 months operating costs and these are our only reserves. He added that NALC suggest 6 months of operating costs but it has not been our policy to hold on to public money in reserves.</p> <p>Cllr A. Lowe said Councillors allowances are a token £600 per annum and following tax this equates as £400 so we do the job for the love of our town not for any monetary reward.</p> <p>Cllr A. Usman said he could not support a budget increase as he also represents College ward and the Town Council should be taking a lead.</p> <p>Cllr C. Barker said he felt savings could be made if the budget was looked at line by line.</p> <p>Cllr K. Tomlinson said if members are not happy with the presented budget alternative budgets should be forwarded for discussion.</p> <p>Cllr S. de Launey said P&R do go through the budget line by line every year.</p> <p>Cllr J. Pierce said there should be a floral baskets audit of placements. Some were inappropriately placed and this was a waste of resources and may enable the budget to be cut back.</p> <p>The Clerk assured Cllr J. Pierce that there had been an audit of the positions of hanging baskets.</p> <p>Cllr P. Fairclough reminded members of how far things had improved over recent years with the location of the Council offices, the Peace Garden, amazing floral displays and many additional events happening to name but a few.</p> <p>Cllr J Alvey thanked Cllr P. Fairclough for reminding the Council of these positive things none of which can be done without money.</p> <p>Cllr D Roberts said this budget was circulated well before Christmas and was surprised that members wait until the date of the decision to raise these issues.</p> <p>Cllr M Hosken said he supported the Chairman of Policy and Resources and confirmed he explains the budget cost by cost at the P&R meetings. Members have the opportunity to say how they feel and have the right to stand, discuss, debate, argue and vote. He found it surprising and disappointing that a political stance is being taken tonight.</p> <p>Cllr S. de Launey confirmed that members of P&R discussed the budget in detail and</p>

	<p>voted all in favour on 4th January. The choice of setting no increase in the precept was discussed and options to achieve this were given.</p> <p>Cllr L. Carter said the narrative around the budget arrived yesterday at 5.00pm and the option given at P&R was either freeze this year or next year which was the election year. It was felt that things were changing rapidly with the cost of living rising, the triple pension lock removed, energy prices rocketing and the Government raising the precept for adult social care, it was therefore right to argue for no increase. Cllr A. McClements agreed.</p> <p>Cllr P. Morris Jones MBE said as Telford and Wrekin are not going to increase the precept we should do the same.</p> <p>Cllr S de Launey asked if anyone would like to propose a change and if the budget is voted down that members are aware that this is the last opportunity to set the precept.</p> <p>Cllr S. deLauney proposed acceptance of the budget and was seconded by Cllr M Hosken.</p> <p>The following members voted in favour Cllr M. Hosken, Cllr S. de Launey, Cllr D. Roberts, Cllr S. Hall, Cllr A. Lowe, Cllr P. Fairclough, Cllr K. Tomlinson. Cllr J. Alvey (8)</p> <p>There were no members voting against</p> <p>Abstaining were Cllr L. Carter, Cllr A McClements, Cllr P. Davis, Cllr G. Luter, Cllr L. Jinks, Cllr P. Morris-Jones, Cllr J Pierce, Cllr U. Ahmed, Cllr. J. Latter, Cllr J. Gorse, Cllr G. Cook, Cllr C. Barker (12)</p> <p>Acceptance of the budget for 2022/23 was carried.</p>
76/21	<p>To set the Precept for 2022/23 as £527,243.00</p> <p>Cllr S. deLauney proposed acceptance of the suggested precept following approval of the budget and was seconded by Cllr M. Hosken.</p> <p>The following members voted in favour Cllr M. Hosken, Cllr S. de Launey, Cllr D. Roberts, Cllr S. Hall, Cllr A. Lowe, Cllr P. Fairclough, Cllr K. Tomlinson. Cllr J. Alvey (8)</p> <p>There were no members voting against</p> <p>Abstaining were Cllr L. Carter, Cllr A McClements, Cllr P. Davis, Cllr G. Luter, Cllr L. Jinks, Cllr P. Morris-Jones, Cllr J Pierce, Cllr U. Ahmed, Cllr. J. Latter, Cllr J. Gorse, Cllr G. Cook, Cllr C. Barker (12)</p> <p>Acceptance of the precept for 2022 was agreed as £527,243.00</p>
77/21	<p>To Receive Nominations to the Events and Communications Committee - Cllr J. Pierce nominated Cllr J. Gorse as there were no further nominations, Cllr J. Gorse was welcomed to the Events and Communications Committee.</p>
78/21	<p>Agree changes to Standing Orders – To confirm the proposal to have every vote recorded in the minutes as a named vote. Cllr Lowe asked if it was necessary as it seems like additional work for staff. Cllr Roberts said there had been no debate and she felt it should have been on an agenda for discussion. Cllr Jinks said she would support making Councillors responsible and accountable. The Clerk said the issue was proposed, seconded, voted upon and enacted in minutes since November 2021. The reason it is brought before members this evening is so the Standing Orders can be updated.</p>

	Voting for were Cllrs: D. Roberts, P. Davis, P. Morris-Jones MBE, A. McClements, S. Hall, J. Pierce, K. Tomlinson, L. Jinks, L. Carter, U. Ahmed, G. Cook, J. Gorse, C. Barker, J. Latter, G. Luter, J. Alvey, P. Fairclough and M. Hosken. Voting against were Cllr S. de Launey and Cllr A Lowe there were no abstentions.
79/21	<p>Loan Guarantor for the Orbit – Cllr S. de Launey gave an oral report making the following comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Orbit wishes to purchase its building via a mortgage b. T&W have released the Town Council from being a guarantor for the Pride in your High Street funding. c. The maximum amount of money to be underwritten for the Orbit would be £17,500.00 equating to one year's payments. d. The building will be worth more than the mortgage and would be sold should things go wrong and the town council would become a creditor. e. The town council would be highly unlikely to lose the £17,500.00 but this could not be guaranteed. <p>Voting in favour were Cllrs: D. Roberts, P. Davis, A. McClements, S. Hall, J. Pierce, K. Tomlinson, L. Jinks, L. Carter, U. Ahmed, G. Cook, J. Gorse, C. Barker, J. Latter, G. Luter, J. Alvey, P. Fairclough, M. Hosken, Cllr S. de Launey and Cllr A Lowe. No members voted against. Abstaining was Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE.</p>
80/21	<p>Wellington Regeneration Partnership Meeting Report held on 17th November 2021 – Cllr. S. de Launey presented the previously circulated minutes and asked if members had any questions. Cllr Jinks said that the report mentioned requests for improvement of the provision of WiFi and asked if there was still a real need. Cllr Lowe said that the Orbit and Market Traders are suffering connectivity problems. Cllr Carter said he felt there was often a misunderstanding between provision of Wi-Fi and Broadband. Broadband improvements would need negotiations with BT.</p>
81/21	<p>Climate Change Emergency Working Group meetings of 2nd December 2021 and 6th January 2022 – The Clerk had circulated the minutes. Cllr. A. Lowe presented the report stating there was a debate about whether the steering group should replace the Climate Change Emergency Group.</p>
82/21	<p>The date of the next meeting was agreed as 8st February 2022 via Zoom.</p>

Chairman.....8th February 2022