

EPWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Full Council held on Tuesday, 9th January 2024, at 7.00 pm, in the Chapel of Rest, Cemetery Lodge, Burnham Road, Epworth

Prior to the start of the meeting a minute's silence was held in memory of Councillor Stewart who had served the community as a town councillor for several decades during which time he served as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the town council.

Public Participation

Mr Nick Fletcher, the MP for Don Valley, attended the meeting to introduce himself. He was going to be a prospective parliamentary candidate for the new constituency of Doncaster East and the Isle of Axholme at the next general election. He believed parish and town councils did some fabulous work and he would pass his details on if anyone wanted to contact him.

- 01/01/24** **Record of Members Present**
The following councillors were present: Councillors Finch (Chairwoman), Baker, Grantham, Holt, J Whittaker, R Whittaker & Wilson.
- 02/01/24** **Apologies and Reasons for Absence**
There were no apologies, because all members were present.
- 03/01/24** **Declarations of Interest & Dispensations**
(i) Councillor J Whittaker declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 11 - Finance, a bank payment to Prestige Safety Ltd for £37.20.
(ii) No dispensations had been granted.
- 04/01/24** **Chairwoman's Report**
(i) **Toiletries** - If anyone has any unwanted toiletries from Christmas give them to Lauren at the Beauty Salon, who will then pass them onto the Women's Refuge. (ii) **Visits** - The Chairwoman would like to visit both the 'Men in Sheds' and 'Just Sing' in the New Year. (iii) **Isle Choral Society** - Raised over £500 at St. Andrews Christmas Carol Concert and there was also a similar event at the Wesley Church - with collections shared. (iv) **Facebook Post** - The Chairwoman expressed her concerns over a post made by a councillor on Facebook about the Chair's Pendant. She believed it did not give the full information and therefore did not show the Council or councillors in a good light. She hoped the councillor would reflect on the action they had taken with regard to the post. Several points of order were raised but not taken. Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Wilson - **It was resolved the report be noted.**
- 05/01/24** **Ward Councillors' Report** - Ward Councillor Mitchell was in attendance and gave the following report:- (i) **Flooding** - Lots of standing water on Birchfield Road caused by poor drainage from the school field. Action plan in place to address it by the Isle Education Trust working with North Lincolnshire Council. It was pointed out that on Carrside / Fieldside water was coming out of the grates not into it, and also there was flooding up to Rectory Street. (ii) **Transport** - New demand responsive service to replace 'Just Go'. Close to launch of Isle Shopping Bus, and an additional bus service to Doncaster. (iii) **Leisure Centre** - Closed until 1st April 2024. Most classes have moved to the Old Hub. (iv) **Highways** - Load of potholes and asked to report them.

(v) **Planning** - Nothing significant. Proposed by Councillor J Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Finch - **It was resolved that the report be noted.**

06/01/24

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Tuesday, 5th December 2023, had been circulated prior to the meeting. Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Finch - **It was resolved that they be approved as a correct record.**

07/01/24

Clerk's Report

Minute 04/12/23 Planning - The Clerk had passed onto North Lincolnshire Council the views it had expressed on the planning application considered at the last meeting of the Full Council.

Minute 05/12/23 Grant - The Clerk had paid the S145 grant of £2,352 to Epworth Music Day to help towards the cost of providing a music event in Epworth on Saturday, 22nd June 2024, and received a thank you from them.

Minute 11/12/23 Correspondence (ii) a) Mr P Riddiough - The Clerk had contacted North Lincolnshire Council to query if some of the planning conditions for use of delivery vehicles were not being met, and was told that if he suspected a breach he would have to report it using an online form. In addition, he had asked if the community wardens could take a look at the parking problem and give advice to people parking in the wrong places and enforce the parking side of it. The parking wardens were aware of the site although without restrictions were unable to issue a FPN, but would monitor and advise as needed,

Minute 11/12/23 Correspondence (ii) b) Ms E Wilson - One Way System on Church Street. The Clerk had contacted North Lincolnshire Council to ask if it could look at the problem of HGV lorries and wide vehicles on Church Street and if there was a need for a restriction.

Minute 11/12/23 Correspondence (ii) d) Mr Z Mhetu MP - Twinning Opportunities. The Clerk had thanked Mr Mhetu for his letter, and informed him for various reasons the Council was not able to proceed, but made him aware of an Epworth in the USA, and he thanked the Council for letting him know.

Minute 11/12/23 Correspondence (ii) f) National Grid - North Humber to High Marnham Grid Upgrade Project. The Clerk had invited the National Grid to give an update about the North Humber to High Marnham project, and they would get back to him in the New Year.

Minute 14/12/23 Finance (ii) Savings Account - The Clerk had applied to open an Instant Access Savings Account with Unity Trust Bank with an initial deposit of £30,000.

Minute 15/12/23 Items Raised By Councillors (iii) Planters - The Clerk had contacted North Lincolnshire Council and asked them if they would look at the refurbishment of the planters in the Market Place.

Minute 15/12/23 Items Raised By Councillors (iv) Weeding - The Clerk had contacted North Lincolnshire Council and informed them that the Council was getting complaints about the weeds in the Market Place and there was a need for it to be re-grouted urgently because it not only looked

a mess but posed a danger, and they informed him they would schedule in for the job to be done,

Minute 26/12/23 SLCC - The Clerk had renewed his membership of SLCC for 2024 at a cost of £229.

Minute 27/12/23 Facebook - The Clerk had posted most of the items suggested for Facebook.

Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor J Whittaker
- **It was resolved that the report be noted.**

08/01/24

Correspondence

- (i) a) NALC - Star Council Awards
- b) ERNLLCA - Budgeting Toolkit
- c) North Lincs Council - Electoral Register
- d) Bright HR - Benefits of Flexible Working
- e) Worknest - Employment Law Update
- f) ERNLLCA - Flooding at Allotments
- g) Kirton in Lindsey Town Council - Christmas Lighting
- h) Worknest - Christmas Party HR Toolkit
- i) Worknest - Resolving Workplace Conflict Flowchart
- j) North Lincolnshire Council - Christmas Greetings
- k) Kirton in Lindsey Town Council - Christmas Greetings
- l) North Lincs Council - Sarah Newton
- m) Croner Group Limited - Sickness Absence Policy
- n) Northern Powergrid - Transparency in Network Planning
- o) Immingham Town Council - Christmas Wishes
- p) Mayor of Grantham - Christmas Wishes
- q) Bright HR - Severe Weather Policy
- r) Crowle & Ealand Town Council - Season Greetings
- s) Barton Upon Humber Town Council - Christmas Wishes
- t) North Lincs Council - Recycle Right This Christmas
- u) Northern Powergrid - Storm Pia
- v) Mr S Robinson - Pothole Near The Thurlow
- w) Worknest - Fire Safety Legislation Changes
- x) ERNLLCA - NALC Legal Update

Proposed by Councillor Grantham and seconded by Councillor Holt
- **It was resolved that the information be noted.**

(ii) a) Public Technology - Digital Transformation Survey. A request to complete a survey to help understand the Council's existing digital strategy and its plans for the future. Proposed by Councillor R Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that the Clerk should fill in the Digital Transformation Survey on behalf of the Council.**

b) ERNLLCA - Essentials of Being a Good Employer. Details of an online course due to be held on Wednesday, 7th February and also Tuesday, 12th March 2024, at 10.00 am. Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Grantham - **It was resolved that the Clerk should be allowed to attend the 'Essentials of Being A Good Employer' training course on behalf of the Council at a cost of £30 + VAT.**

- c) **HWRA** - Rural Life Survey on Alleviating Loneliness. A request to complete a survey to do with rural life and alleviating loneliness. Proposed by Councillor Holt and seconded by Councillor J Whittaker - **It was resolved that the survey be noted, however councillors be allowed to fill it individually if they wished to do so.**
- d) **Government Events** - Social Media Strategy & Analytics. Details of an online course due to be held on Tuesday, 6th February 2024. Proposed by Councillor J Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that the information be noted.**
- e) **North Lincs Council** - Sustainable Planting Scheme. Information about a scheme to encourage sustainable planting within the local community, with North Lincolnshire Council providing a grant to do so, however the closing date was 22nd January 2024. Proposed by Councillor J Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that the Clerk should contact North Lincolnshire Council (and also copy in the ward councillors) to inform them that whilst the Council liked what opportunities could be taken with the grant due to the short time frame it was not practical for the Council to do so, however it would still like to go ahead with it but needed more time.**
- f) **Northern Powergrid** - New Distribution Future Energy Scenarios. An invitation to learn more about the DFES by attending a webinar on Thursday, 1st February 2024, from 11.00 am to 12.00 noon. Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that the information be noted.**
- g) **Community Vision** - New Funding Opportunity. Information about a new funding opportunity to support charities and other not for profit organisations with energy assessments as well as funding for capital costs that will improve the energy efficiency of their buildings, reduce running costs and help to lower carbon emissions. Proposed by Councillor Holt and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that the new funding opportunity be delegated to the Combined Cemetery & Environment Committee to look into.**
- h) **Worknest** - Tackling Toxic Behaviours in Town & Parish Councils. Details of a free webinar due to be held on Thursday, 15th January 2024, at 2.15 pm. Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that the information be noted.**
- i) **North Lincs Council** - D-Day 80th Anniversary Commemoration Grant. Information about a grant to help commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings and the Battle of Normandy in 1944. Up to £250 is available and the closing date is 12 noon on Monday, 22nd January 2024. Proposed by Councillor J Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Grantham - **It was resolved that the Clerk should apply for a grant of £250 from North Lincolnshire Council to help towards the cost of hiring a singer and room to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.**

09/01/24

Publications

The following publications had been received:-

Alliance Volunteer Hub - Newsletter
 ERNLLCA - Newsletter
 Public Sector Network - Newsletter

November 2023
 December 2023
 December 2023

Rural Services Network - Rural Funding Digest	December 2023
HWRA - Newsletter	Winter 2023
North Lincolnshire Council - Forthcoming Meetings	January 2024
SLCC - The Clerk	January 2024
ERPF - Bulletin	
ERVAS - Community Vision	
Fields In Trust - News	
ICCM - Member Newsletter	
NALC - Chief Executive's Bulletin	
NALC - Events	
NALC - Newsletter	
North Lincs Council - Business Focus	
Public Sector Executive - Online Newsletter	
Rural Services Network - Rural Bulletin	
SLCC - News Bulletin	

Proposed by Councillor R Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Finch
- It was resolved that the information be noted.

10/01/24

Committee / Working Group Reports

i) **Planning Committee** - The minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on Monday, 11th December 2023, were circulated prior to the meeting. Proposed by Councillor R Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that they be approved as a correct record.**

ii) **Personnel Committee** - The minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held on Monday, 18th December 2023, were circulated prior to the meeting. Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor R Whittaker - **It was resolved that they be approved as a correct record.**

11/01/24

Finance

(i) **Accounts for Payment**

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT - JANUARY 2024

Payments made before or since last meeting:-

20.11.23	300003	Royal British Legion	S137 Grant	25.00
20.12.23	DD	EDF Energy	Electricity	19.00
	DD	EDF Energy	Electricity	32.00
	DD	EDF Energy	Electricity	34.00
	DD	EDF Energy	Electricity	126.00
27.12.23	DD	Everflow	Water Rates	24.08
	DD	Vodafone	Mobile Phone Charges	17.16
28.12.23	DD	Talk Talk	Telephone & Broadband Charges	26.34
29.12.23	BP	Wages / Tax & NI / Pension	Month 9	3,454.03
31.12.23		Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges	18.00
02.01.24	DD	Scottish Power	Electricity	35.83
	DD	North Lincs Council	Business Rates	62.00
08.01.24	BP	SLCC	Annual Membership	229.00
	BP	Epworth Music Day	S145 Grant	2,352.00

Proposed by Councillor J Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Wilson
- It was resolved that the action taken be approved.

Note: Councillor J Whittaker had earlier declared an interest in this item and therefore left the room whilst the rest of the item was discussed.

Payments submitted at this meeting:-

09.01.24	BP	Prestige Safety Ltd	Fire Extinguisher & Blanket Service	37.20
	BP	MWQA Ltd	Monthly H&S Competent Person Fee	72.00
	BP	Torne Valley Ltd	Refuse Sacks / Grease / Oil / Timers	43.30
	BP	J R Cockin Electrical Contractors	Annual PAT Testing	180.00
	BP	Torne Valley Ltd	Gloves & Bin Bags	10.87
	BP	Torne Valley Ltd	Bin Liners	2.24
	BP	Mr S Quantrill	Mileage	7.43

Proposed by Councillor R Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Finch
- It was resolved that these accounts be paid.

12/01/24

Beacon

Since the last meeting of the Full Council the Clerk had received an email from North Lincolnshire Council confirming their position remained the same. It was not willing to relocate the Beacon, however it had no objection if Epworth Town Council wished to do this and found an alternative site which was not on North Lincolnshire Council's land. The Clerk had made an official approach to Mr Mills and he was prepared to have the Beacon on his land and possibly grant the Council a lease for the land, whilst Councillor Grantham offered to pay for it to be moved and relocated. The Clerk had also sought advice on whether planning permission would be needed and was told it may fall under permitted development. Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Holt - **It was resolved that:- (i) The Council should take responsibility for the Beacon. (ii) The Clerk make a permitted development enquiry. (iii) The Clerk liaise with the landowners to progress it.**

13/01/24

Website

The Clerk had obtained three quotes for a new website and provided councillors with a copy of them, however it was suggested that the Clerk ask for an online demonstration and the names of 2 / 3 councils who use them in order to see how easy they were to use and then feed this back to Council. Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Baker - **It was resolved that this item be deferred until the next meeting.**

14/01/24

Storage Cupboard & Scanner

(i) Storage Cupboard - The Personnel Committee recommended that Full Council should purchase a storage cupboard for the Office, therefore the Clerk had obtained the following quotes:-

Furniture@work	£226.00 + VAT
Racking Solutions	£196.65 + VAT
Viking Direct	£209.00 + VAT

Proposed by Councillor Holt and seconded by Councillor Finch - **It was resolved that the Clerk be allowed to purchase a Storage Cupboard up to a cost of £226 + VAT.**

(ii) **Scanner** - The Personnel Committee recommended that Full Council should purchase a scanner that meets the needs of the Clerk, therefore the Clerk had obtained the following quotes:-

Ebuyer (UK) Limited	£308.31 + VAT
Smart Teck	£314.84 + VAT
The Scanner Shop	£309.00 + VAT

Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Wilson - **It was resolved that the Clerk be allowed to purchase a Scanner of his choice up to a cost of £320 + VAT.**

15/01/24

Lawnmower

The Clerk had obtained the following quote to service the lawnmower:-

Torne Valley Ltd	£75 + VAT (plus parts)
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Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor R Whittaker - **It was resolved that the Clerk should ask Torne Valley Ltd to service the lawnmower at a cost of £75 + VAT plus parts.**

16/01/24

Parish Precept for 2024 / 2025

This item was deferred from last month due to constraints and the Clerk provided councillors with detailed information to enable them to consider a precept figure for the forthcoming financial year.

PRECEPT FOR 2024/25

RECEIPTS

Cemetery	3,330
Hanging Baskets	2,275
Wayleave	10
Bank Interest	600
	6,215

PAYMENTS

Wages / Salaries	Wages / Tax / NI	52,690
Administration	Insurance	1,390
	HR Support	2,000
	Computer Systems & Back-Up	1,535
	Subs / Memberships / Fees	1,500
	Training Costs	2,500
	Audit	1,365
	H & S Support	1,000
	Room Hire	350
	Advertising & Public Notices	300

	Payroll Charges	290
	Printing & Photocopying	170
	Postage	25
	Bank Charges	100
	Travelling Expenses	500
	Stationery	200
	Election Costs	3,000
	Website Provision	2,000
Cemetery / Lodge / Chapel of Rest	Repairs & Maintenance	2,600
	Electricity	3,365
	Telephone & Broadband	455
	Business Rates	660
	Water & Sewerage	205
	PAT Testing	150
	Extinguisher Servicing	35
	Cleaning Materials	50
	Tree Work	3,500
	Grass & Hedge Cutting	1,240
	Memorials Safety	2,350
	Waste Collection	735
	Pest Control	300
	Topsoil	500
	Machine Maintenance	220
	Fuel for Mower	150
	Grave Markers	30
	Weedkilling	1,000
Closed Churchyard	Churchyard Maintenance	1,000
	Grass Cutting	960
QE2 Play Park	Equipment Maintenance / Monitoring	3,000
	Grass Cutting & Hedge Cutting	1,300
	Safety Inspections	200
Epworth in Bloom	Hanging Baskets / Planters	4,500
	Water Bowser Maintenance	100
Assets	Equipment	1,000
	Street Furniture	1,000
Donations / Grants	S137 Grants	2,500
	Other Grants	2,500
Civic	Epworth Show	60
	D-Day	350
Projects	Parking	6,000
	Beacon	2,500
		<hr/>
		115,430

PRECEPT CALCULATIONS

Opening Bank Balance		55,880
<u>Add</u>	Receipts	6,215
<u>Less</u>	Payments	<u>115,430</u> -53,335
General Reserve		-30,000
		<hr/> 83,335
<u>Less</u>	Grant	1,476
Precept		<hr/> 81,859

Proposed by Councillor J Whittaker and seconded by Councillor R Whittaker - **It was resolved that the Council should set a precept of £81,859 for the financial year 2024 / 2025, and also accept the grant of £1,476 from North Lincolnshire Council.**

17/01/24

Social Media & Communications Policy

At the last meeting of the Full Council it agreed to look at clarifying Section 12 of the Social Media & Communications Policy with regard to under what certain circumstances it would elect a nominated individual(s), however there was a general consensus there was no need to alter it. Proposed by Councillor R Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Finch - **It was resolved that there was no need to alter the existing Social Media & Communications Policy.**

18/01/24

Chairman / Chairwoman's Pendant

The Chairwoman sought permission to refinish the pendant, so it will match the chain of office and bring the pendant back to its original state, and was prepared to pay for it personally. Proposed by Councillor J Whittaker and seconded by Councillor Grantham - **It was resolved that permission be given for the work to be done subject to it being of no cost to the Council.**

19/01/24

Items Raised By Councillors

(i) **Market Cross** - At the last meeting of the Full Council the Clerk was asked to seek advice from the Conservation Officer at North Lincolnshire Council about cleaning the Market Cross. He suggested a system called DOFF Steam Cleaning which used a low pressure steam system and is approved by both RIBA and Historic England for the cleaning of masonry on historic structures. Given the structure was listed Listed Building Consent would need to be obtained before any cleaning was allowed to take place. Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Holt - **It was resolved that the Clerk should seek quotes to clean the Market Cross.**

(ii) **Review of Standing Orders & Policies** - Councillor Baker felt the standing orders needed to be reviewed, but this was too much for the whole council to do and therefore suggested a working group to look at them and then bring them back to Full Council. Proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor R Whittaker - **It was resolved that a Working Group be set up to look at the Standing Orders and Policies - with Councillors Baker, R Whittaker, Holt and J Whittaker being members of that group.**

- 20/01/24** **Administrative Assistant**
At the last meeting of the Full Council it agreed to look at employing someone to help the Clerk with administration for six hours per week for six months. Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Holt - **It was resolved that the Personnel Committee should be given the authority to interview and appoint an Administrative Assistant and all matters associated with it.**
- 21/01/24** **Facebook**
Councillors considered items for Facebook and suggested the following: Vacancies, Epworth Lights Committee, Epworth Park Run, Potholes / Roads / Pavements, Flooding, Bin Collection. Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Holt - **It was resolved that the Clerk post the above items on the Council's Facebook page.**
- 22/01/24** **Date, Time & Place of Next Meeting**
The next meeting of the Full Council is due to be held on Tuesday, 6th February 2024, at 7.00 pm, in the Small Hall of the Imperial Hall, Chapel Street, Epworth. Proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Grantham - **It was resolved the information be noted.**
- 23/01/24** **Closure of Meeting**
The Chairwoman declared the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.