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Midsomer Norton Town Council

Council Offices, The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HQ

Temporary Offices, Unit 14, South Road, Midsomer Norton

Phone: 01761 418701 Email: townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk

Mayor: Cllr Gordon Mackay Town Clerk: Katie Mason

2 - Present

Cllrs Shaun Hughes, Martyn Plant, Gordon MacKay (Chair), Lynda Robertson, Deborah Thatcher, Martin Thatcher, Alun Pughe and Tim Wells.

Also Present: Deputy Clerk Kate Egan, Admin Officer Joanne Corbet

3 - Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

4 - Fire Safety – Evacuation Procedure / Recording Protocol

The Council, members of the public and the press may film/record/photograph for live and/or subsequent broadcast this meeting only when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed/recorded/photographed should advise the Clerk (in advance) who will instruct that they are not to be included in the filming/recording/photographing.

5 - Thought of the Day

Reverend Guy Scott read out a Thought for the Day

6 - Public Question Time

This section (at the Chair's discretion may last up to 20 minutes) is not part of the formal meeting of the Council and minutes will not be produced.

There were two members of the public in attendance. A member from the Carnival Group thanked the Council for its help and support over the years. The various funding streams were mentioned and how grants were fed back into the local community.

Formal meeting started at 7.25pm

7 - Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

8 - Declarations of Interest

1. Members to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
2. To receive written request for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests
3. To grant any request for dispensation as appropriate

Decision: There were no declarations of interests from Councillors and no requests for dispensations.

9 - Mayor's Announcements

December's Newsletters have been sent out. Cllr Martyn Plant and the Community Trust were thanked for putting on a wonderful Christmas Event and Tree lights switch on; it had been well received by the town.

10 - Confirm Previous Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 6th November 2023

Decision: RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Town Council meeting on 3rd November as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair Date

Decision: RESOLVED that the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6th November be accepted as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair.

11 - To note reports from the following Committees and to ratify any actions

To receive an update from the Chairs of the following Committees

1. Finance and Operations Committee - There was nothing to report.
2. Planning Committee - There was nothing to report.

12 - Reports from the Town Councils Working Parties

Verbal updates and to consider any recommendations for decisions from the following working parties.

1. Community Alcohol Partnership - A date has yet to be set for the first meeting.
2. Town Council Strategy Working Group - A draft Strategy document has been produced.
3. High Street Working Party - This is still on-going. Draft maps of the High Street are being produced at Cllr Hughes' own expense.
4. Media & Communications Working Group - Newsletters are being produced and distributed on a monthly basis.
5. Midsomer Norton Neighbourhood Development Plan - Still awaiting feedback from B&NES, a possible budget item may be included to employ a consultant to help with the Neighbourhood Development Plan

13 - Reports from Councillors representing Outside Bodies

Verbal reports from Councillors representing the Town Council on Outside Bodies.

Youth Connect - Cllr Martyn Plant attended the Youth Connect People's Awards recently in Bath, prizes and certificates were awarded for their achievements.

Norton's Got Talent - Cllr Alun Pughe attended the recent Norton's Got Talent and hopes to see future iterations extended beyond the school setting.

14 - Clerk's Report

1. The Asset Module has now been added to the Rialtas Software, the items are slowly being added.
2. The Civic Awards were held on 25th November, local companies provided the food which went down very well and was enjoyed by all.
3. Posters advertising local businesses have been removed from the Town Hall Harris Fencing due to health and safety reasons.
4. The Loft Space above the Assembly Rooms in the Town Hall has now been completely cleared. Several items were disposed of, but there are some storage issues with the remaining items.
5. The Town Clerk's new hours have been approved by the Staffing Committee.
6. Remembrance Day on the 12th November was well attended, there was a heightened police presence due to a security threat.
7. Damages - The VAS camera was reinstalled following some minor vandalism, Graffiti was also removed in the Town Park and a stone was replaced in the Amphitheatre. The recently installed "danger steep drop" signs within the Town Park were stolen, there is no plan to replace them. Fence has been damaged at West Clewes, this is being repaired. The statue from the Garden of Friendship is currently safe due to the screen being damaged, the Catholic Church are arranging for a replacement.
8. The Pot Bellied Stile removed from Wellow Brook Walk has been found at B&NES and a meeting is being arranged about its possible reinstatement.
9. The Town Council donated 100 decorative Christmas trees and craft materials to children who attended the Christmas Light Switch on, on 30th November. A huge thanks to the local Men's Shed for making the trees and Jo Corbett for volunteering her time to put the packs together for the children.
10. The Welfare Miners Trust have now installed two Miners Figures within Midsomer Norton, these have been added to the Town Council's Asset List.

15 - Co-option of a Town Councillor

Co-option of a Town Councillor and signing of the Acceptance of Office Form

Decision: RESOLVED Cheryl Scott was co-opted as a Town Councillor, this was proposed by Cllr Gordon MacKay and seconded by Cllr Alun Pughe.

Cllr Cheryl Scott signed the Acceptance of Office Form which was countersigned by the Deputy Town Clerk.

16 - Policies

Following review by the Finance and Operations Committee proposal to formally adopt and approve the following policies:

1. Freedom of Information Policy
2. Data Protection Policy
3. Publication Scheme
4. Policy on Recording of Meetings
5. Retention Policy
6. Appendix A - List of Documents for Retention

Decision: RESOLVED to approve and adopt the Freedom of Information Policy, Data Protection Policy, Publication Scheme, Retention Policy and Appendix A - List of Documents for Retention.

The policy on Recording of Meetings was deferred to a later meeting.

17 - Proposal to reappoint Primrose Garden Maintenance for 2024-2025

Proposal for the Town Council to reappoint Primrose Garden Maintenance to carry out maintenance in the Town for 2024-2025 at a cost of £10,005.00

Decision: RESOLVED to suspend Financial Regulations 11 (h) as three quotes had not been obtained due to the specialist equipment required.

RESOLVED to appoint Primrose Garden Maintenance to carry out maintenance in the Town for 2024-2025 at at cost of £10,005.00

18 - Proposal to reappoint Stonebarn for 2024-2025

Proposal for the Town Council to reappoint Stone to carry out maintenance in the Town and to clear the river for 2024-2025 at a cost of £20,000 for Horticultural Labour and £4,000 for River Work.

Decision: RESOLVED to suspend Financial Regulations 11 (h) as three quotes had not been obtained due to the specialist equipment required.

RESOLVED to reappoint Stonebarn for 2024-2025 at a cost of £20,000 for horticultural labour and £4,000 for river work.

19 - Proposal to adopt the Town Hall Business Plan

Proposal for the Town Council to approve and adopt the Town Hall Business Plan.

Decision: This was deferred to a later meeting as some of the figures contained within the Business Plan needed clarification.

20 - Proposal to approve the Grant Agreement from WECA

Proposal for the Town Council to approve the Grant Agreement from WECA

Decision: RESOLVED to approve the Greenspaces Project Grant Agreement. The agreement was signed and dated by the Chair Cllr Gordon MacKay

21 - Budget

Following a review of the budget by the Finance and Operations Committee, the recommendation was to present the Budget to the Full Council for approval in December's meeting.

Decision: Following discussion this was referred back to the Finance and Operations Meeting for amending before bringing back to the Full Council in January for approval.

RESOLVED to extend the meeting at 9.20pm

22 - Proposal to approve precept 24/25

Following the approval of the annual budget for 2024-2025, a proposal to set the precept for 2024-2025.

Decision: Following a discussion this was referred back to the Finance and Operations Meeting for amending before bringing back to the Full Council in January for approval.

23 - Date of Next Meeting

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 8th January commencing at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 9.57pm