



## Midsomer Norton Town Council

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Mayor: Councillor Martyn Plant Locum Town Clerk: Lee Jakeman

Date	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024
Time	Start Time 7pm
Location	The Hollies, High Street, Midsomer Norton
Present	Cllrs Lynda Robertson, Gordon MacKay, Wendy Gregory, Martyn Plant (Chair), Cheryl Scott, Shaun Hughes, Deborah Thatcher and Simon Wight
Absent	Cllr Charlotte Lucas
Also, in Attendance	Lee Jakeman (Locum Town Clerk) and Kate Egan (Deputy Clerk)

### 1 - Welcome

The mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting

### 2 - Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Tim Wells,

### 3 - Declaration of Interest

1. Members to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests, or 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 declaration of interests or requests for dispensations from the Councillors.

### 4 - Public Session

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.

Four members of the public in attendance.

The Council RESOLVED to suspend the Standing Orders to enable members of the public to speak. Simon Wight introduced himself as a potential Town Councillor and spoke about why he would like to be co-opted. The Council RESOLVED to reinstate the Standing Orders for the meeting to proceed.

## **5 - Town Hall Project Management Report**

To receive a progress report from the Town Hall Project Management Team.

Director of Greenwood Projects Ltd, Steve Hunt, circulated and then discussed with members the Town Hall refurbishment Project Manager's Update.

The delay for completion (now anticipated to be until January of 2025) of the project was discussed as were the anticipated final cost of the construction phase of the project which was now estimated to be £1.562 million.

## **6 - Mayor's Announcements**

The Council noted the Mayor's Announcements, circulated with the agenda.

The Mayor advised that a new page on the Council's website allows people or organisations to book the Mayor for future events.

## **7 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 1st July 2024

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED to accept the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 1st July 2024 as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair.

## **8 - Co-option of a Town Councillor**

To consider an application for co-option of a Town Councillor onto the Town Council.  
(a) Signature of the acceptance of office form

**Decision:** RESOLVED that Simon Wight be co-opted as a Town Councillor for Midsomer Norton Town Council

Cllr Simon Wight signed the acceptance of office form and took his seat at the Council table for the remainder of the meeting.

## **9 - Policies**

1. Proposal to approve the updated Financial Regulations issued by NALC in April

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED to approve and adopt the updated NALC Financial Regulations (as circulated with the agenda for the meeting).

## **10 - Staffing Committee**

To consider the proposal from Cllr Wendy Gregory to appoint her to the staffing committee.

**Decision:**

Cllr Wendy Gregory proposed that she be appointed to the staffing committee, this was seconded by Cllr Deborah Thatcher

Cllr Cheryl Scott proposed an amendment 'to defer the appointment of a Councillor to a staffing committee for a few months to allow new councillors an opportunity to be considered', this was seconded by Cllr Gordon MacKay. The amended motion failed.

The Council RESOLVED that Cllr Wendy Gregory appointed to the staffing committee.

### **11 - Formation of a Budget Working Party**

To consider a recommendation to form a Budget Preparation Working Party and approve the draft Terms of Reference circulated with the agenda.

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED to form a Budget Preparation Working Party, this will consist of all Town Councillors. The Council RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference (circulated with the agenda).

### **12 - Grant Application from Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association**

To consider the grant application from Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association for £10,000 and to consider a recommendation that up to £8,000 be awarded (noting that the budget line is £8,000).

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED the Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association be awarded £8,000 in respect of their grant application.

### **13 - Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2024-2025**

Proposal to appoint the Internal Auditor for 2024-2025.

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED to appoint John Henry FCA as the Internal Auditor at a cost of £875 + VAT for 2024-2025

### **14 - Proposal to renew the lease on Wellow Brook Walk**

To note that the Lease with the Duchy of Cornwall for land at Wellow Brook Walk which commenced on 1st January 2016 expires on 31st December 2025.

Members are asked to consider renewing the lease for a further period and give delegation to the Clerk to begin negotiations if the Council are minded to renew the lease.

The recommendation is to delegate to the Clerk to begin negotiations with the Duchy of Cornwall for extension of the lease for a period at least 10 years. (Note, provision for legal fees need to be made within the 2025-2026 budget, circa £1,500).

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED to delegate to the Clerk to begin negotiations with the Duchy of Cornwall for extension of the lease (for land known as Wellow Brook Walk) for a period of at least 10 years.

(Clerk's Note: Members discussed and noted that the ownership of the land would require proper consideration of the on-going maintenance levels and costs as [part of budget setting]).

### **15 - Formal Council Representative for the High Street Regeneration Steering Group**

- To provide an update on an initial meeting of the (B&NES) High St Regeneration Steering Group held on Thursday 11 July
- To consider a recommendation to appoint Cllr Gordon MacKay as the Town Council representative for the High Street Regeneration Steering Group.

**Decision:** The Council noted the updates from the initial meeting of the B&NES High Street Regeneration Steering Group and the Council RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Gordon MacKay as the Town Council representative.

### **16 - To note reports from the following Committees and to ratify any actions**

To receive an update from the Chairs of the following Committees

- Finance and Operations Committee
- Planning Committee
- Staffing Committee

The Council noted the draft minutes from the Committees mentioned above and the relocation of staff offices.

### **17 - Reports from the Town Trust**

- To note the Updated Masterplan for the Town Park.
- To note the Minutes of the Town Trust Management Committee Meeting held on 22nd July 2024
- Members are asked to review and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Town Trust Management Committee. In light of the appointment of the Town Trust Secretary. Recommendation: to adopt the terms of reference circulated with the agenda.

**Decision:** The Council noted the updated Masterplan for the Town Park, the minutes of the Town Trust Management Committee and RESOLVED to adopt and approve the amended Terms of Reference (circulated with the agenda).

### **18 - Reports from Councillors representing Outside Bodies**

Verbal reports from Councillors representing the Town Council on outside Bodies

Cllr Gordon MacKay gave a verbal update on the Town Trust and Community Trust.

### **19 - Code of Conduct Complaint**

To note that the Monitoring Officer had received a Code of Conduct complaint in relation to a Midsomer Norton Town Councillor and to note the following decision: "Based on the findings set out above the Deputy Monitoring Officer takes no action

as to the complaint and if proven, would not be a breach of the Code of Conduct under which the subject member was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct."

## **20 - Date of Next Meeting**

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 7th October commencing at 7pm

The Deputy Clerk left the meeting 8.50pm

## **21 - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Proposal under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

## **22 - Investigation Report into the Effectiveness of Midsomer Norton Town Council**

Members noted an independent confidential investigation report commissioned by the Town Council.

Members also considered a covering report from the Locum Clerk providing background, a list of recommendations from the confidential report, and a proposed list of actions that the council might undertake to satisfy the recommendations (of the confidential report).

Members were asked to consider the following recommendations from the Locum Clerk.

1. To acknowledge receipt of the confidential report.
2. To acknowledge receipt of the 17 recommendations
3. To intend to implement the 17 recommendations in line with the comment of the Locum Clerk and suggested outcomes and actions.
4. To publish the 17 recommendations and the comments of Locum Clerk and suggested outcomes and actions (i.e. paragraph 15 of the Confidential report LJ/09).

Councillor Sean Hughes proposed an amendment that the 4<sup>th</sup> recommendation be amended to include the publishing of the entire confidential independent investigation report. The proposal; was seconded by Councillor Deborah Thatcher.

The motion was not carried,

*(Clerk's Note: Councillor Sean Hughes asked for the vote to be recorded. For – Councillors Wendy Gregory, Shaun Hughes and Deborah Thatcher, Against, Councillors Gordon Mackay, Martyn Plant, Lynda Robertson, Cheryl Scott and Simon Wight.)*

**Decision:** The Council RESOLVED:

1. To acknowledge receipt of the confidential report.
2. To acknowledge receipt of the 17 recommendations
3. To intend to implement the 17 recommendations in line with the comment of the Locum Clerk and suggested outcomes and actions.
4. To publish the 17 recommendations and the comments of Locum Clerk and suggested outcomes and actions (i.e. paragraph 15 of the Confidential report LJ/09).

*(Clerk's Note: Councillor Sean Hughes asked for the vote to be recorded in the minutes. For: Councillors Gordon Mackay, Martyn Plant, Lynda Robertson, Cheryl Scott and Simon Wight. Against: Councillors Wendy Gregory, Shaun Hughes and Deborah Thatcher)*

*(Clerk's Note: During the debate on the above item it was RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to extend the meeting beyond the 2 hours prescribed in Standing Order 3(x) in order that the matter could be concluded).*

Meeting Closed at 9:52 pm