



Midsomer Norton Town Council

Council Offices, The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HQ
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Mayor: Councillor Martyn Plant Locum Town Clerk: Lee Jakeman

Date Monday 4th November 2024
Time 7pm
Location The Hollies Council Chambers, Midsomer Norton
Present Cllrs Wendy Gregory, Shaun Hughes, Gordon MacKay, Martyn Plant (Chair), Amanda Taylor and Simon Wright
Absent
Also, in Lee Jakeman (Locum Town Clerk), Kate Egan (Deputy Town Clerk)
Attendance and Dave Gossett (B&NES Council, Officer).

1 - Apologies

Cllrs Charlotte Lucas, Lynda Robertson, Cheryl Scott and Tim Wells

2 - 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.

The meeting was suspended at 7.02pm allowing members of the public to speak. Amanda Taylor spoke briefly about being co-opted as a Town Councillor. The meeting resumed at 7.03pm

3 - Town Hall Refurbishment

To receive a presentation from Greenwood Projects regarding the ongoing refurbishment of the Town Hall.

Steve Hunt from Greenwoods gave a verbal presentation on the latest update on the Town Hall Refurbishment. The progress is slow at the moment. Questions were raised by the Councillors which were replied too. Certain items were considered confidential and were discussed under the closed session at the end of the meeting.

4 - 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 dispensation.

5 - Mayor's Announcements

Mayor's Announcements had been sent out prior to the meeting and Cllr Martyn Plant gave a verbal update. He mentioned his visit to Sustran and the Active Way Event, meeting with the Mayor of Radstock and maybe the two Councils working together on joint projects. The Mayor attended the Somerset Prostate Screening and mentioned upcoming events - Midsomer Norton Carnival on Monday 11th November, Somer Valley Care Home Opening on 18th November and the MHA Communities Fundraising Concert on 7th December.

6 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 7th October 2024.

Decision: The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 7th October as a true record, these were signed and dated by the mayor.

7 - Co-Option of a Councillor

To consider the co-option of a Town Councillor for Midsomer Norton Town Council.

Decision: The Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Amanda Taylor as a Town Councillor to Midsomer Norton Town Council, this was proposed by Cllr Martyn Plant and seconded by Cllr Shaun Hughes. Cllr Amanda Taylor signed the acceptance of office form and was welcomed to the Town Council.

8 - Resignation of a Town Councillor

To note the resignation of Deborah Thatcher as a Town Councillor. A Notice of Casual Vacancy was published on Monday 21st October giving 14 days (after the date of the notice) for submission of a request (by 10 members of the electorate) for an election to fill the said vacancy, the deadline is Friday 8th November 2024.

The Council noted the resignation of Deborah Thatcher as a Town Councillor, she was thanked for all her hard work and efforts on the Town Council and had served on several committees.

9 - Appointment of new Councillor to Finance Committee and Staffing Committee

Due to the resignation of Deborah Thatcher, to consider the appointment of a replacement Councillor on the Finance Committee and the Staffing Committee.

Decision: Cllr Wendy Gregory proposed an amendment to defer the appointment of a Councillor, this was seconded by Cllr Shaun Hughes and **RESOLVED** by the Council.

Cllr Gordon MacKay proposed that he be appointed to the Finance Committee, this was seconded by Cllr Mandy Taylor and **RESOLVED** by the Council.

10 - Town Hall Preparation for Opening / Out of Scope Works

To receive a report regarding preparations for the return of the Town Hall, following construction works, the operating model, works to the assembly rooms and consideration of proposed phase 2 works. (To Follow)

Decision: The Council **RESOLVED** to create a working party for all members of the Council to be responsible for providing input and guidance to officers, with regard to out-of-scope works required to complete phase 1 and oversee any spend of the £50,000 Town Hall Contingency Budget.

The Council **RESOLVED** to defer any decisions regarding phase 2 until further information has been received.

11 - Regeneration Programme of Midsomer Norton

To receive the minutes of a meeting of the High Street Regeneration Steering Group held on Thursday 17th October 2024.

To consider a proposal from B&NES to request that the masterplan and regeneration plan are undertaken in partnership with Midsomer Norton Town Council and to appoint a Council representative to attend quarterly High Street Steering group meetings.

(Clerk's Note Dave Gosset from B&NES was on hand to expand on the topic and take questions).

It was noted that Cllr Gordon Mackay had been appointed recently as the Council representative of the High Street Steering Group.

Decision: The Council **RESOLVED** that the masterplan and regeneration plan are undertaken in partnership with Midsomer Norton Town Council and also **RESOLVED** the following: -

Councill representative to attend quarterly High Street Steering Group meetings, review and contribute comments to project documents and draft plans, where appropriate, use website and social media for project outreach, where appropriate using existing events for project outreach, provide officer time for meetings, administration and occasional public events and all project materials to include the Town Council logo.

12 - Youth Connect Southwest

To consider the update from the meeting between Youth Connect Southwest and Midsomer Norton Town Council. Also, to consider the proposal to renew the service level agreement for a further two years for a cost of £27,720 per annum excluding VAT.

The Council **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders 3x (the time limit for meetings not to exceed two hours) to complete the items of business at 8.59pm.

Decision: Members noted that the current contract for provision of Youth Services expires on 31st March 2025. The Council were in general agreement that they would wish to extend the existing contract and service provision for a further 12 months (to 31st March 2026) broadly in line with the correspondence received from Youth Connect South West (YCSW) (the proposed level of increase would need some further explanation / justification). The Clerk would arrange for an appropriate SLA to be drafted by YCSW for consideration by the Council.

13 - Neighbourhood Development Plan

To receive and consider correspondence from Place Studio regarding progressing a Midsomer Norton Neighbourhood Plan.

Decision: The Council noted the correspondence from Place Studio, regarding an outline for support in producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), including their anticipated consultant costs. Members acknowledged that there was currently no budgeted funding set aside by the Council to undertake the activity. Members were advised by the Clerk that the overall cost of producing a NDP should be appreciated and budgeted for (e.g. a referendum is required to adopt an NDP which will attract similar costs to that of an election). Members further noted that the appointment of a consultant / contractor should be undertaken in accordance with financial regulations (e.g. obtaining more than one quote).

Members agreed that they were keen to produce a NDP and that allocating of funds would form part of the ongoing budget deliberations.

14 - Committee Meeting Minutes

To receive the minutes and consider any recommendations for the following committee meetings:

- Finance and Operations Committee - 21st October 2024
- Planning Committee - 21st October 2024
- Staffing Committee - 14th October 2024

The Council noted the Draft Minutes for the above committees.

A general discussion occurred regarding the Finance and Operations Committee meeting and its vision of the budget currently, in that it was minded continuing to do that which the Council currently undertakes, minimise upward pressure on the level of the precept, and ensures that that the Town Council has an appropriate level of general reserves. It was felt that further discussions through the budget working group might be helpful in refining the budget.

15 - Midsomer Norton Recreation Ground - Charity No 304582

To consider a recommendation that:

Midsomer Norton Town Council as Sole Trustee of Midsomer Norton Recreation Ground charity (No:304582) appoints the following Town Council officers as signatories to the Midsomer Norton Recreation Bank account with Unity Trust Bank with full administrative and payment access:

Jo Corbett
Caroline Brown

Decision: The Council **RESOLVED** that Midsomer Norton Town Council as Sole Trustee of Midsomer Norton Recreation Ground Charity appoint Town Council Officers Jo Corbett and Caroline Brown as signatories to the Midsomer Norton Recreation Bank account with Unity Trust Bank with full administrative and payment access.

16 - Reports from Councillors representing Outside Bodies

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

Cllr Martyn Plant gave a verbal update on the Community Trust regarding bookings at the Somer Centre, lease negotiations between the Town Trust and the Community Trust, events, finance report and current purchases.

Cllr Gordan MacKay gave a verbal update on the High Street Regeneration Consultation, which was held at the recent Farmers Market, the silent disco, both the Community Trust and the Town Trust had received funding from Microsoft to help with IT. The Community Toilet scheme is now up and running in locations around the town, water refilling points. The Town Trust Archive is now stored at the Somer Centre.

17 - Date of Next Meeting

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 2nd December in the Hollies, Midsomer Norton commencing at 7pm

18 - 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.

19 - Town Clerk Recruitment

To receive any updates on the Town Clerk Recruitment.

The Mayor gave a verbal update to members regarding progress with the recruitment of a Town Clerk including dates of interviews and levels of interest in the position.

20 - Wellow Brook Walk Lease

To receive an update regarding the lease pertaining to Wellow Brook Walk and consider any recommendations.

Decision: The Council noted a report on the topic of the renewal of the lease for Wellow Brook Walk, which is due to expire on 31st December 2025, and the various options proposed by the owner of the land regarding extending the lease. All options had merit and all options ensured that the Council would continue to have ownership of the land. Members were of the view that all options should remain open until the budget setting process had been completed.

21 - Town Hall Refurbishment

To consider confidential items concerning the Town Hall Refurbishment.

Members were briefed on contractual matters relating to the Town Hall Refurbishment Project.

Meeting closed 9.48pm