

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**COUNCIL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 21st January, 2021 at 4.30 pm in the Remote Meeting on Zoom and available for the public to view on WestNorfolkBC on You Tube - Zoom and You Tube

PRESENT: Councillor G Hipperson (Chair)
Councillors B Ayres, Miss L Bambridge, P Beal, J Bhondi, R Blunt, F Bone, C Bower, A Bubb, A Bullen, Mrs J Collingham, J Collop, S Collop, C J Crofts, S Dark, M de Whalley, I Devereux, A Dickinson, P Gidney, A Holmes, M Howland, G Howman, C Hudson, H Humphrey, B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, J Kirk, P Kunes, A Lawrence, B Lawton, B Long, J Lowe, C Manning, G Middleton, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Nash, E Nockolds, T Parish, S Patel, J Ratcliffe, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, C Sampson, S Sandell, Mrs V Spikings, S Squire, M Storey, A Tyler, D Tyler and D Whitby.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lord Howard and M Wilkinson.

C:141 **PRAYERS**

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Following on from the communication the Mayor gave the previous week that Mr Peter Wilkinson, husband of the Deputy Mayor Mrs Margaret Wilkinson and previous Borough and County Councillor had passed away that day, Council held a silence in his memory.

Prayers were led by Rev Canon Ling.

C:142 **MINUTES**

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RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meetings held on 3 December 2020 and 14 January 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C:143 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There was none.

C:144 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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The Mayor referred to the changes in standing orders and proposed to bring item 10 to take after item 7. This was agreed.

C:145 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

C:146 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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Under standing order 9 Ms Yvonne Bridger asked her Public Question:

The staffed Tourist Information Centre of Hunstanton, the only seaside town in the Borough's portfolio, was closed down in the first quarter of 2020. Against a backdrop of Covid-19, this unjustified closure was effected with unnecessary haste, which precluded any form of public consultation or communication with businesses or residents. It was presented to the town as a 'fait accompli'.

Further to the planned review of the Hunstanton TIC situation by Cllr Nockolds over the coming few weeks, will the Leader of this Council, the Deputy Leader, all Councillors and all Portfolio holders add their voices to those of 2233 people who have used their voice to secure the reinstatement of a staffed TIC in Hunstanton, with effect from April 1st 2021 or as soon as is safely possible to do so?

Councillor Long gave the following response: I appreciate there are those who would like to see a staffed TIC. The first quarter of 2020 was the start of the pandemic and the staff in the TIC had to be taken into account and not put at risk. Hunstanton Town council took the decision to close the TIC. The use of the TIC had reduced considerably in recent years, and would have to be considered alongside budget issues. The unstaffed TIC was set up. TICs were a thing of the past, many big cities ceased having staffed TICs. The cost had to be considered and the safety of staff had to be managed.

By way of supplementary Ms Bridger commented that with the vaccine it would get better and asked for a funded plan to be put in place for the TIC ready for when restrictions were lifted.

Councillor Long confirmed that the decision would be reviewed but it was difficult to consider it would be able to do that soon. Safety of staff was paramount.

C:147 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES

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As the agenda for this meeting had to be dispatched prior to the amendments to the standing orders agreed the previous week, the Mayor proposed that in line with the newly agreed standing orders this

item would be taken at this point in the agenda rather than at the end of the agenda. This was agreed.

i **Cabinet: 5 January 2021**

Councillor Long proposed the recommendations from Cabinet on 5 January 2021, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nockolds: CAB217: Council Tax Support: final scheme for working age people for 2021/2022.

He reminded members that it protected those of retirement age and small children. He commented that it wasn't possible to help everyone through this, but there was a discretionary government scheme should it be needed. He suggested that if people were having problems to contact the Council.

Council debated the item. Comments were made that the scheme should be abolished and it be funded by the Government, that families were struggling and this was a missed opportunity to help people of working age as the Council had the discretion to set its own scheme. It was also suggested that the Council should lobby Government regarding funding of the scheme.

Councillor Ryves proposed an amendment instructing the Leader to write to the relevant Government Department to express profound dissatisfaction that the onus was on the Borough Council when it was a national scheme and should be fully funded by the Government. This was seconded by Councillor Lawton.

Councillor Long did not support the amendment but suggested that the LGA may be able to raise the issues each year. Individually there was little that could be done, but he acknowledged that a fully funded scheme would be beneficial.

Councillor Ryes summed up his amendment. On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

In summing up on the substantive motion Councillor Long reminded members that a scheme had to be in place by the end of the month. He urged all to do what was possible to support those within the budget available. On being put to the vote the substantive motion was agreed.

RESOLVED: The recommendation from 5 January 2021 was approved.

C:148 CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**i Business Development - Councillor G Middleton**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube.](#)

Councillor Middleton presented his report. He updated members on the Future High Street Fund unsuccessful bid, and drew attention to the successful schemes the Council had previously achieved. He confirmed that bids prepared could be included in other funding opportunities available, including the Town Fund Bid. The Town Board would continue its work of collaborative dialogue.

Questions were posed on the future of the Guildhall project and Councillor Middleton explained that the Government had recognised the potential of this project, and others in the Future High Street Fund Bid and had encouraged them to be added to the Town Fund Bid. Advisory groups were to be set up by the Town Board to help develop schemes, including for the Guildhall and Public Realm.

Councillor Middleton responded to suggestions around the membership of the Board, and confirmed it was strong with members with a wide range of expertise.

Councillor Middleton undertook to provide information on costings and percentage success rate of bids. He agreed to go to KLACC to discuss items if requested.

In response to a question on Downham Market he explained that if funding opportunities were available for other areas in the Borough they could be taken forward, however it was King's Lynn which had been allocated for the Towns Fund.

Councillor Middleton responded to questions regarding the consultation process and Members were encouraged to contact him should they have any ideas for future projects.

ii Climate Change & Commercial Services - Councillor P Kunes

[Click here to view the You Tube recording of this item.](#)

Councillor Kunes presented his report.

He responded to questions on the Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group. He also explained that an update on tree planting would be available in his next report to Council

iii **Development - Councillor R Blunt**

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Councillor Blunt presented his report. He explained that the Housing Delivery test results had now been released. The Council had achieved 94% with the pass mark being 95%. This meant that the Council had to produce an action plan.

iv **Environmental Services & Public Protection - Councillor S Dark**

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Councillor Dark presented his report and provided an update on the work of the Revenues and Benefits Team and the amount of grants paid out. He agreed to provide further information in an email to Borough and Parish Councillors.

v **Housing - Councillor A Lawrence**

[Click here to view the You Tube recording of this item.](#)

Councillor Lawrence presented his report. He confirmed evictions had been halted until 21st February 2021.

Councillor Lawrence responded to questions on communications on rough sleepers, confirming the Council and its partners were doing their best to get people off the streets, but not everyone would engage. He encouraged Members to report to the Council, anyone who needed assistance.

He responded to questions on bringing empty properties back into the council's stock. He confirmed that it was not always possible to force properties back into use but this was being looked at.

At 5.52pm Council adjourned for 10 minutes.

Council reconvened at 6.02pm and a roll call of attendees was taken.

vi **Project Delivery - Councillor P Gidney**

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Councillor Gidney presented his report. He responded to questions on consultation processes, green spaces, play areas and the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee.

In response to a question on the planning application for Hunstanton South Road Car Park he explained that the application had been resubmitted and would be subject to the planning application process.

vii **Deputy Leader and Culture, Heritage and Health - Councillor Mrs E Nockolds**

[Click here to view the You Tube recording of this item.](#)

Councillor Mrs Nockolds presented her report and in response to questions confirmed that no decision had been taken on the TIC for Hunstanton, and reaffirmed the work being carried out for tourism in the area. She highlighted the amount of work being carried out to support and promote Hunstanton.

In response to questions Councillor Nockolds expressed her support for cultural activities in the Borough and commented that the Council had to work within the current restrictions.

viii **Leader and Resources - Councillor B Long**

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Councillor Long presented his report. He gave an update on the financial position explaining that the revised budget had been agreed in December 2020 with the funding received from Government. He confirmed that the monitoring report would be available for members the following week.

He thanked officers for being able to maintain the financial position throughout the pandemic.

He responded to questions on the Town Board and bids submitted and confirmed that bids would be made within the required criteria. He confirmed the number of responses to the consultation process was acceptable and reminded Members that the Panels did also have regular involvement in processes.

In response to a question Councillor Long confirmed that concerns had been raised with the Local MP's regarding the scheduled elections in May 2021, expressing concerns about the safety of staff working on polling stations, the difficulty in recruiting staff and availability of polling stations. He confirmed that he had completed a survey sent round on this subject. He welcomed support for the delaying of the elections.

C:149 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

None.

The meeting closed at 6.49 pm