



ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Queens Square, Attleborough, Norfolk, NR17 2AF
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Minutes of the Virtual meeting of the Attleborough Town Council Held on Monday, 13 July 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Cllr T Crouch - presiding

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Cllr D Redmond | Cllr K Montague | Cllr B Bulmer | Cllr B Cousins |
| Cllr J Ellis | Cllr J Roper | Cllr A Busk (arr. 6.10pm) | |
| Cllr T Taylor | Cllr E Tyrer | Cllr A Westby | Cllr P Leslie |
| Cllr W Loads | Cllr L Grave | Cllr V Dale | |

In attendance – Gina Lopes – CEO & Town Clerk to Attleborough Town Council
Anne Willett – CEO's Assistant (minute taker)
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Leader of Breckland Council

017.20) Mayor's Welcome and Update

The Mayor, Cllr Crouch, apologise for the late start to the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Sam Chapman-Allen, Leader of Breckland Council.

018.20) Apologies for absence

None received

019.20) Declarations of Interest

a) To receive and consider declarations of interest in items below –

None received.

b) To receive and consider dispensations in respect of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests –

Cllr Taylor declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 14a

020.20) Resident's Questions

RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned to allow the Mayor to address questions submitted by email from various residents. (See Resident's Questions Notes attached.)

021.20a) Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 1 June 2020

There was a lengthy debate and several suggested amendments. The CEO reminded members of the importance of the Minutes and asked her Assistant to confirm if she had typed the minutes using the audio recording which she confirmed she had. Agreement could not be reached.

On the motion of Cllr Crouch, seconded by Cllr Taylor, it was

RESOLVED to defer the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council meeting held on 1 June 2020.

The Chairman will seek clarification and verification from the independent Solicitor.

022.20b) Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on the 18 June 2020

There was a long discussion regarding resolutions within the Minutes.

On the motion of Cllr Bulmer, seconded by Cllr Montague, it was **RESOLVED** to approve and accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 18 June 2020 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

023.20) Planning and Highways

023.20a) Decision notices received to-date

Decision notices below were noted for information –

3PL/2020/0400/LU – 158 Ollands Road – Single Storey extension to the rear of the property (certificate of lawfulness) – Approved.

3PL/2020/0353/VAR – Building Plot, Leys Lane – Variation of Condition No 2 on 3PL/2019/0632/D – move property 3m forward – Approved.

3PL/2020/0082/O – Plot adjoining the Bungalow, Fiddlers Green – Erection of Cottage Style Dwelling and Double Garage- Approved.

3PL/2020/0465/HOU – 100 & 102 Station Road – Joint extension to the rear of properties 100 & 102 Station Road – Approved.

3PL/2020/0446/HOU – Beulah House, London Road – Alterations & extensions to existing dwelling - Approved.

023.20b) Planning Applications received to-date

After consideration of the following planning applications it was

RESOLVED to recommend as below:

3PL/2020/0498/F – Site to the rear of & 7 Police House fronting on to Constable Close – Proposed new three-bedroom bungalow with parking – Response – Concerns regarding overcrowding of site, provision of adequate parking and that approval of this application could set a precedent for future similar applications.

3PL/2020/0187/HOU – Hill House, Burgh Common – Car Store, entrance gate and kitchen single storey extension (retrospective) – Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0516/HOU – Dayjan, 12 Arlington Gardens – Demolition of existing garage and construction of storey extensions to front and rear - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0463/HOU – 29 Ellingham Road – Wrap round extension to the rear and side of the property - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0522/LB – 52 Connaught Road – Partial Re Thatching and Repairs to rot and various items to be repaired - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0535/HOU – Cwmanne Cottage, 6 Hargham Road – First floor rear extension above existing single storey extension - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0487/HOU – Walnut Tree Farm, West Carr Road – Removal of conservatory and replacement with porch to front, replacement lean-to extension to side, change of roof material to slates extended to edges of flat roof to rear and pitched roof over first floor dormers - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0523/A – 2A Exchange Street – A 50cm tall illuminated traditional barber pole - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0595/HOU – 62 Blackthorn Road – Proposed Single Storey Rear Extension - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2019/1224/F – Unit 8, Orchard Garage, Station Road Industrial Estate – Industrial Unit Extension Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0521/F – West Farm, West Carr Road – Conversion of Outbuilding to Family Residential Annexe Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

3PL/2020/0660/LB – West Farm, West Carr Road – First Floor Rear Extension - Response – Approve subject to no neighbour concerns.

ACTION: CEO

023.20c) Other Planning Matters

i. Planning Application Appeal to Secretary of State following refusal by Breckland District Council:

3PL/2019/1054/O – Homestead, Ellingham Road – The erection of 1 No dwelling with associated garden and parking – Appeal Ref.

APP/F2605/W/20/3247816 – Noted for information

3PL/2019/1341/F – Land to the South of 31 Rye Lane – New single storey dwelling – Appeal Ref. APP/F2605/W/20/3251208 – Noted for information

ii. Konect Bus Service Update – Noted for information

iii. Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders – Noted for information

STRO3774 - affecting the U31154 Rose Croft for a distance of 65 metres south eastwards because of works to facilitate a new electrical connection. The road will be temporarily closed (except for access) from 15th June 2020 to 19^h July 2020 for the duration of the works.

iv. Residents email to Norfolk Highways and Breckland Planning – Agreed to send a response to Breckland for them to investigate further

ACTION: CEO

024.20) Financial Matters

a) To authorise payments –

On the motion of Cllr Dale, seconded by Cllr Montague, it was

RESOLVED to accept and approve the following payment list dated 6 July 2020

Total £29,503.25, subject to typing error petty cash amount from £484.14 to £484.18, additional payment list dated 13 July 2020, Total £3695.48.

b) To agree direct debits –

On the motion of Cllr Cousins, seconded by Cllr Bulmer, it was

RESOLVED to approve and accept the direct debit list dated July 2020

Total £27,590.68

c) To receive Income –

On the motion of Cllr Crouch, seconded by Cllr Bulmer, it was

RESOLVED to approve and accept the income list for June 2020 Total £1,931.66

d) Petty Cash Sheet – Noted for information

e) Income & Expenditure Report May 2020 – Noted for information

ACTION: CEO

025.20) Town Council Policy Reviews

a) Complaints Policy and Vexatious Guidance Review

There was discussion, Cllr Leslie advised a new Policy is part of the work of the Investigation Committee with the Solicitor and recommended deferment.

On the motion of Cllr Leslie, seconded by Cllr Crouch, it was

RESOLVED to adjourn this policy for a maximum of two months

b) Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy Review

A discussion took place regarding Councillors having a Council email address, CEO & Town Clerk advised no cyber insurance is in place at the moment because of the use of Councillors own addresses rather than Council managed accounts.

On the motion of Cllr Crouch, seconded by Cllr Bulmer, it was

RESOLVED to accept Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy.

ACTION: CEO

026.20) Amended Standing Orders

a) Debate on Standing Order 5 - In line with new empowerment enshrined in the Coronavirus Act 2020 and associated 2020 Regulations.

There was a long discussion

On the motion of Cllr Leslie, seconded by Cllr Dale, it was

RESOLVED that we vote for a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor and we agree after a vote if it's agreeable for a time it should be held.

A recorded vote was taken.

For: Cllr Ellis, Cllr Redmond, Cllr Cousins, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Leslie, Cllr Grave, Cllr Loades, Cllr Westby, Cllr Tyrer, Cllr Taylor, Cllr Montague, Cllr Dale, Cllr Redmond,

Against: Cllr Busk, Cllr Crouch,

On the motion of Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Leslie, it was

RESOLVED to hold an election for Mayor and Deputy Mayor at an Extraordinary Meeting on Monday 20 July 2020.

On the motion of Cllr Montague, seconded by Cllr Bulmer, it was **RESOLVED** to extend the meeting for no longer than 30 minutes

027.20) Coronavirus Recovery

a) Pandemic Plan and Contingency Plan – Noted for information

b) Grimsey Review; Covid 19 Supplement for Town Centres – Noted for information

c) Reopening and Economic Recovery of the Town and High Street –

The Chairman invited Breckland Council Leader Sam Chapman-Allen to speak and this included the following:-

Why I want to come and speak tonight is two-fold, firstly on the activity we have been undertaking and also to ask the Council where they want extra support. A massive thanks to the Town Council for support they have given to Attleborough Community. Attleborough has a vibrant economy and is a fantastic market town of which I am a resident. The ask tonight Chairman is how can we work together to ensure we support everyone, we have a good working relationship with many businesses and the Town Clerk has highlighted some examples of extra car parking, Lloyds Bank, Academy, Library and M & Co, I have written to these asking if they can provide greater provision. I think our next challenge is how we can we work together to support what is Attleborough's USP.

Cllrs questions included

- *What do you see our USP is?*
- *With your fantastic open space, you could make yourselves green energy efficient, monopolise on Queens Square & train station and provide walking & cycling routes - you've got a great USP there alone.*
- *Could Breckland assist with a car parking strategy and more clarity needed on Queens Square car park*
- *Breckland will issue a press statement but at this time there is no change, Breckland will not be charging for car parking.*
- *Vision of going forward is established in ANP and we look forward to working with Breckland and other key stakeholders.*

The Chairman thanked Sam Chapman-Allen for attending the meeting. Sam Chapman-Allen asked to receive the "wish list" within four weeks, the CEO & Town Clerk confirmed his letter had been circulated to Councillors for their consideration.

It was agreed to defer the correspondence items due to time constraints.

029.20) Exclusion of Press and Public

On the motion of Cllr Bulmer, seconded by Cllr Dale, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 given the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed.

Cllr Taylor declared her pecuniary interest in Litigation Item and would leave the meeting but return for Staff Grievances.

8.25pm The Town Council staff left for the remainder of the meeting.

030.20) Update from Investigation Committee/Solicitor

a) Litigation

b) Staff Grievances

Members reviewed the Anthony Collins Solicitor's reports by the Investigation Committee.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Notes of Residents' Questions

The Chairman read out several questions, previously submitted by email, from residents within the time allowed for this item which included the following:

Q) Several questions on Freedom of Information all very similar -

To the council, it has been brought to my attention that there are a number of residents who claim that they contact the council with questions, complaints and FOI requests but receive no reply or acknowledgement? Are councillors aware of this issue and will they please investigate this matter as it is damaging the reputation of the council.

“Why does Attleborough Town Council not respond to all Freedom of Information requests?”

I am aware that Freedom of Information requests made to the council are being unanswered. I have heard from Attleborough residents who have had this problem and have experienced it within my family. Are councillors aware that ATC employees are failing to meet their legal obligations under the Freedom of Information Act and what actions will councillors take to ensure that Freedom of Information requests are answered fully within the required timescale

A) The Town Council does respond to FOI requests, in line with GDPR and Data Protection Law, however, sometimes we do receive repeated requests, unfortunately the response given is not always the one desired by the receiver, most information requested is already on our website. Matters pertaining to staff details will not be disclosed in line with the above regulations

Q) Is the Investigation Committee undertaking 360-degree feedback to obtain evidence of ATC's staff and councillors interaction with their customers I.e. the businesses and residents of Attleborough in order to obtain the full picture?

Who chose the solicitors involved? Are they the same Company that ATC usually use or are they independent of the events thus far?

A) It is not the role of the Investigation Committee to undertake research on how to engage with residents & Businesses, they have been appointed to liaise with the appointed Solicitors to resolve staff grievances of bullying and harassment by certain Councillors and a litigation matter.

The Solicitors are specialised in local government hence why they were chosen and are also new to the issues under investigation

Q) When is Queens Square seating area going to be sorted grass needs cutting and flower borders sorting out?

A) The Grass is cut on Thursday and flower borders will shortly receive attention, the new benches have been installed by Breckland to help with the reopening of shops etc.

Q) Resident's continued complaint regarding boundary issue, this matter relates to an insurance dispute that has been dealt with and the Council has been advised not to continue corresponding on this matter

- 1) Why if as stated by the Mayor, ATC has been run so efficiently over the preceding weeks/months, have my complaints NOT been acknowledged/actioned. I am still waiting to discuss this matter as per your published complaints procedure.
- 2) Why haven't you replied/acknowledged my email 02/06/2020?

- 3) Why have I not received the details of the plan of works/maintenance of the boundary hedge as requested? There are still two dead trees that will cause a further problem, ATC have yet to advise what they propose they do!?
 - 4) What in the opinion of the mayor constitutes "Correspondence"?
 - 5) Why has ATC rolled over on a potential £14,000 insurance claim, when the clerk went out her way to make sure my £2,000.00 was never brought forward for discussion in any way, shape or form!
- A) The Town Council has dealt with your complaints and we are sorry you have not been satisfied.

Q) At last month full council meeting Cllr Crouch said he would take a selection of the publics questions. On average how many questions are submitted each month? Who decides which questions are read out and answered? And do you reply individually to the questions that you do not read out in your full council meeting?

A) I read out as many as possible within the time limit and others are answered in due course

Q) You average £108.83 per month on mobile phone expenditure, how many phones are covered under this contract?

A) six

You average £286.58 per month on town hall phone bills. Are you confident this is a competitively priced service you are receiving?

A) Yes

In the last fiscal year, outgoings on staff salaries are broken down as follows:

Salary: £121,682.93.

Hmrc tax / nic: £60,450.06

Pension £61,232.87

Queries relating to the above are as follows:

How many people are employed on the itemised payroll data above?

A) Nine

Why are your pension contributions so high?

A) They are in line with local government pensions and other councils

Please find attached a spreadsheet I put together of last year's accounts based on account information posted on the ATC website.

As you will see from the figures processed, I make your staff costs out to be £243,365.86 for the last financial year.

I have clearly missed something when processing your figures, although all figures do tie up with your posted accounts.

Could you please explain why staff costs have been posted as £306,775 for the last financial year?

I'd like to know where the other £63,409.14 has been allocated.

Please also note I still await a response to the attached email submitted 01.06.20.

A) The variance is staff movement between the financial years

The Chairman confirmed the remaining long and detailed questions will receive a response in due course once adequate consideration can be given to them.