



**MINUTES OF THE ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 6th FEBRUARY 2024
AT GLOBE HOUSE, PRIORY ROAD, ALCESTER.**

Present

Councillors V Blake (Mayor), M Bowe (Deputy Mayor), K Cargill, M Cargill, W Mills, G Forman, C Neal-Sturgess, E Wilson, C Elliott, A Foster, A Leask and G Smithers.

In attendance Mrs V Lowe, Town Clerk, Cllr P Daniell (County Councillor) and Cllr S Juned (District Councillor).

The Mayor expressed his concern for The King's health following announcements this week. He confirmed that he had asked the Town Clerk to write on behalf of the Town Council to send best wishes for his recovery.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT DISCRETION OF MAYOR

There was a presentation from a resident regarding the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue consultation. The resident expressed concern at the "closed" nature of the consultation questions and queried some of the costings provided. He gave various suggestions of issues that could be raised in the Town Council's response to the consultation (see item 11).

District and County Councillors' Reports

Cllr Daniell (County Councillor) reported on the following:

- Cllr Daniell understands that an apology has been issued by Warwickshire County Council regarding the comments made about SEND provision in the recent Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny meeting.
- As regards the WFRS consultation, Cllr Daniell explained that there was only 40% availability of on call fire fighters – this varied between 64% during night-time hours and 18.9% during the day.
- An additional Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting for fire services had been arranged for 6th June. Cllr Daniell is happy to raise any issues regarding the current consultation on behalf of ATC at that meeting.
- A new handheld speed measuring device had been approved as suitable for use with community speed watch groups.
- WCC has funds available to support new EV charging points.
- The work at Hopkins Precinct is agreed and will proceed in due course.

Cllr Foster said that his speed watch group would be acquiring one of the new handheld devices. He also invited Cllr Daniell to attend the next Working Group meeting on 28th February at 7 pm at the EPCC.

Cllr Juned (Ward Member for Alcester East) reported on the following issues:

- SDC is undertaking a Peer Review of the Council as a whole to ensure that the Council learns about best practice and improves delivery and effectiveness of Council services.
- The SDC budget will be considered by Cabinet on 12th February.
- There are proposals in the budget to invest in Rural Crime Advisors and provide support for the UBUS service.



**MINUTES OF THE ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
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- Provision of £250,000 has been included in the budget to support residents with heating costs.
- A pilot scheme for a new Customer Access Terminal in Alcester library to enable better communication with SDC is being introduced for those who are not online.
- Cllr Juned attended a meeting with the Environment Agency, Severn Trent and WCC regarding flooding. She has asked officers at SDC to monitor progress.
- There have been a number of enquiries about the rebuilding of The Three Tuns. Cllr Juned confirmed that the planning permission contains a condition that rebuilding must start within 9 months of the grant.

In response to questions from Cllr M Cargill and Cllr A Foster, Cllr Juned confirmed that any flood defence work by the Environment Agency would be eligible for the CIL money previously awarded.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs D Henderson and K Foster. Cllr K Greenaway and Cllr J Harmer (District Councillor) were absent.

2. Minutes of Council Meetings

The Mayor asked Councillors to consider for approval the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 9th January 2024. The minutes were proposed to be accepted by Cllr Forman, seconded by Cllr Mills and approved by Council; they were then signed by the Mayor.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on the agenda items.

4. Mayor's Report

The Mayor's diary of meetings is an appendix to these minutes. The Mayor thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for arranging the awards evening which had been a huge success.

5. Town Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk presented her monthly report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no questions about the report. The Town Clerk highlighted the recent vandalism at Jubilee Fields. She also confirmed that there had been no requests for an election submitted to SDC.

6. Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Mayor confirmed that he was satisfied that Committee members approved the minutes from the preceding month, which were then signed. There were no questions about the minutes.

The Town Clerk presented the management accounts for the third quarter of 2023-24 which were approved as drawn. There were no questions about the accounts.

There were the following propositions from the Committee:

- 6.1** To approve the updated Community Grants policy and application form for 2024.



**MINUTES OF THE ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
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This was proposed by Cllr Bowe, seconded by Cllr Elliott and carried by Council.

- 6.2** To approve the draft Co-option Policy dated January 2024.
Cllr A Foster requested that when the Standing Orders were reviewed that consideration was given to removing the use of a secret ballot for appointments. This was noted and will be considered in due course. The policy was proposed to be adopted by Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr M Cargill and carried by Council.
The Town Clerk confirmed that she would now advertise the current vacancy in line with the new Policy.
- 6.3** To approve the draft licence agreement with Riverside Angling Club and to authorise the Mayor to sign the same on behalf of the Town Council.
This was proposed by Cllr Forman, seconded by Cllr K Cargill and carried by Council. The Mayor signed the licence which was witnessed by the Town Clerk.
- 6.4** To approve the documentation for the acquisition of the BT phone kiosk on Henley Street and to authorise the Town Clerk to sign the same on behalf of the Town Council.
The Mayor explained that BT had agreed to sell this kiosk to the Council for £1. He had offered to purchase the two kiosks on the High Street but was advised that these were not available due to land ownership issues. It was noted that these had now been removed.
The Mayor explained that it was proposed to use the kiosk to house a new defibrillator. A donation of £200 had already been received from Mr Nick Payne towards the cost. Cllr Forman proposed the motion which was seconded by Cllr Elliott and carried by Council.

7. Community Grants

The following Councillors were appointed to the Community Grants Working Group – Cllrs M Cargill, K Cargill, Wilson, Bowe, A Foster and Leask. The Town Clerk will arrange a meeting of the Working Group after the application process has closed in April.

8. Planning Committee

The Deputy Mayor, as Chair of the Committee, confirmed that he was satisfied that Committee members approved the minutes from the preceding month, which were then signed. The Deputy Mayor gave a summary of items discussed at the Committee meeting.

9. Lead Councillors

9.1 Cemetery

A report from Cllr Forman had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Cllr Forman reported that a resident had kindly made a donation towards the replacement of the cemetery gates and so quotations were being sought for exact copies to be made.

9.2 Play Areas

A report from Cllr Smithers had been circulated in advance of the meeting together with the results for the parents and teen surveys recently completed.



**MINUTES OF THE ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 6th FEBRUARY 2024
AT GLOBE HOUSE, PRIORY ROAD, ALCESTER.**

Cllr Smithers explained that further survey work would be undertaken in person at the play areas and also via the schools.

The Mayor announced that the agenda order would be altered and that item 10 would be taken at the end of the meeting.

11. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Consultation

Councillors discussed the consultation document in detail and considered a draft response prepared by the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Deputy Mayor. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would submit a formal response from the Town Council taking into account comments made by Councillors and members of the public during recent meetings. The Town Clerk will publicise the response once submitted.

12. Town Council Representatives

Church Street Property Trust – Cllr M Cargill reported on the grants made at the recent meeting.

Alcester War Memorial Town Hall – Cllr Forman reported that due to increasing costs, the hire fees were being increased by 10% from February 2024. She also reported that a recent fire inspection had highlighted that the back door was not compliant and would need to be replaced.

United Charities – Cllr K Cargill reported that the end of year accounts had been approved. There was no progress with the plans for additional housing stock.

The Greig Hall – Cllr A Foster reported that work was required on the drainage at the rear of the Hall which was being funded by ATC as the problem stemmed from the pre-handover period. The AGM will be held on 21st February.

Two Shires Greenway – Cllr Wilson had circulated the AGM minutes in advance of the meeting. He updated Councillors on the progress to date. It was noted that the section between Salford Priors and Wixford (3.7 km) should be completed in summer 2025 at a cost of £400,000.

13. Payment of Accounts

The Town Clerk presented the Payment of Accounts for the preceding month. The accounts were proposed to be approved by Cllr Neal-Sturgess, seconded by Cllr Mills and carried by Council.

14. Dates of future meetings

Planning Committee - Monday 19th February at 7 pm by Zoom

Finance & General Purposes Committee - Tuesday 27th February at 7 pm.

Full Council - Tuesday 5th March at 7 pm.

All meetings at Globe House unless otherwise stated.

Cllr M Cargill proposed a motion that in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public be excluded from the meeting for item 10 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. This motion was seconded by Cllr K Cargill and carried by Council.



**MINUTES OF THE ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 6th FEBRUARY 2024
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The public left the meeting.
The meeting continued in confidential session.

The meeting reopened and the Town Clerk reported that the following propositions had been passed unanimously by Council.

Squash Courts

- 10.1** To authorise the Town Clerk to accept the quotation from Chillaire Ltd in the sum of £10,895 plus VAT for the installation of a heating and ventilation system at the squash courts.
Proposed by Cllr Mills, seconded by Cllr M Cargill and carried by Council.
- 10.2** To authorise the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to sign the Agreement between Stratford on Avon District Council and Alcester Town Council to secure a payment from the Rural England Prosperity Fund for the Community Shed project.
Proposed by Cllr Neal-Sturgess, seconded by Cllr M Cargill and carried by Council.
- 10.3** To delegate authority to the Town Clerk to authorise expenditure up to a maximum figure of £148,600 plus VAT (with any one item up to £10,000 plus VAT) on the squash courts renovation project. This replaces the delegation made at the meeting of 7th November 2023.
Proposed by Cllr Mills, seconded by Cllr Neal-Sturgess and carried by Council.

The Mayor closed the meeting.

Appendix

MAYOR'S REPORT 6 FEBRUARY 2024

Mayor's Diary since the last Council Meeting:

- 14 January – AMVC Concert St Nicholas Church
- 15 January – Degree Presentation Ceremony Warick University
- 15 January – Planning Committee Meeting
- 19 January – Mayor's Civic Awards Night
- 22 January – Visit to Alcester Fire Station
- 24 January – Window Wanderland Judging
- 25 January – WTN Zoom Meeting
- 25 January - Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk meeting
- 26 January – Solihull Civic Dinner
- 30 January – F & GP Committee meeting
- 1 February – Community Shed Meeting
- 3 February – Alcester Male Voice Choir 50th Anniversary Dinner
- 4 February – Warwick Sikh Film Night
- 6 February – Gaydon Museum Trip